

## The Influences of Content Creation and Community Building on Purchase Decision during COVID-19: A Case Study of Sociolla

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective** – This study aims to ascertain the influence of social media marketing via Instagram, which includes content creation and community building, on purchase decision in Sociolla during the pandemic.

**Methodology** – This study collected primary data from respondents via questionnaires. The respondents were 101 people with customers who became Sociolla followers and made online purchases on Sociolla during the COVID-19 pandemic. SPSS was used to analyze the data in this analysis. Analytical techniques include multiple linear regression analysis, the *t* test for partial hypotheses, the *F* test for simultaneous hypotheses, and the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ).

**Findings** – This study found that content creation and community development had a significant positive effect on purchase decision. The partial results (*t* test) indicate that the variables relating to content sharing most influence purchase decision. While concurrently (*F* test) demonstrates that content creation and community building have a significant effect on purchasing decisions.

**Novelty** – Although the relationship between community building and purchase decision has been examined in past research, the specific relationships examined in this study in comparison with the content creation-purchase decision relationship has not yet been previously investigated using a local cosmetic brand followers in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** *Sociolla, social media marketing, content creation, community building, purchase decision, COVID-19*

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The use of the online platform is essential to reduce the risk of people getting infected with COVID-19 (Wong et al., 2020). The increasing use of online platform services during this pandemic provides an opportunity for Sociolla as a beauty products e-commerce with premium quality. Sociolla is one of the cosmetic companies in Indonesia established in March 2015 that deals with social media marketing content to attract consumers. Customers are more likely to stay on a social media account if the content creation keeps them interested at every step of the buying process (Appel et al., 2020). Content marketing is the marketing strategy of creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience – to generate profitable customer action (Vinerean, 2017). Content creation can increase the importance of how an offering is presented, introduced, and demonstrated on the

commercial website (Jaakonmäki et al., 2017). The uses of content marketing include increasing brand recognition, trust, authority, credibility, loyalty, and authenticity (Fog et al., 2022). Furthermore, it can improve search engine optimization, if providing relevant content (Tomasi & Li, 2015).

There are various types of beauty products offered, ranging from skincare, cosmetics, hair, body, beauty tools to fragrances. Also, it can be proved from Table 1 that Sociolla is the most beauty and cosmetics e-commerce that has the top number of monthly visits among the competitors.

Table 1. Sociolla Competitors in Indonesia

No.	Site	Monthly Visits	Category	Category Rank
1.	sociolla.com	2.0M	Lifestyle > Beauty and Cosmetics	#222
2.	thebodyshop.co.id	374.8K	Lifestyle > Beauty and Cosmetics	#1,190
3.	sephora.co.id	287.5K	Lifestyle > Beauty and Cosmetics	#1,435
4.	kiehls.co.id	21.3K	Lifestyle > Beauty and Cosmetics	#11,901

According to the previous research from Kyriakopoulou and Kitsios (2017), since social media marketing is different from traditional marketing, businesses must place attention to developing social media strategies to increase brand loyalty (Bilgin, 2018). Social media marketing is closely related to relationship marketing, in which brands must shift their focus away from “selling” and toward “creating relationships” with consumers. Therefore, community building from their social media is important for Sociolla to improve their sales. The consumer is thus introduced to new products or informed about the products-services. It is widely recognized that consumers’ brand loyalty is manageable if the brand itself places a premium on superior customer service to maximize the customer experience.

When we go to specific problem identification, the COVID-19 pandemic affects the consumers’ behavior of Indonesians. People who previously shopped offline in physical outlets are now starting to turn to online shopping (Handayani & Nilasari, 2021). Most of the recent year’s appearance indicates the increase of Indonesian people shopping online, especially on social media.

Social media has always been associated with digital literacy. With cognitive and technical skills, digital literacy is defined as the ability to use information and communication technology (ICT) to find, evaluate, utilize, create, communicate, and create content/information using information and communication technology (Kusumo et al., 2022). The urgency of digital literacy correlates to critical, creative, innovative thinking actions; problem-solving, effective communication, and collaborating with many people.

This shift in people’s “consumer” behavior is the driving force behind this research, which aims to investigate the relationship between consumer shopping preferences and popular social media platforms. Considering the social media phenomenon affecting online purchasing and selling transactions, it is worthwhile to conduct research to find a solution to the problem, as failure to do so will be harmful to society. As a result of the phenomenon, more online transactions take place on social media than in the marketplace. Consumers, on the other hand, gain a variety of benefits from the marketplace. To achieve these research objectives, the following research questions were proposed for this investigation: (1) Does content creation influence purchase decision of Sociolla consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic? (2) Does community building influence purchase decision of Sociolla consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Content Creation

Content creation marketing is a strategy for attracting a new audience to learn about a company's products and services (Vinerean, 2017). After the audience recognizes the company's product, the next goal is to encourage and attract the audience to become customers and those who have already become customers to remain loyal to the company's products or services (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

When it comes to social media marketing, interesting content becomes the core strategy component. To be trusted by the target consumer, the content created must be exciting and representative of the company's personality (Gunelius, 2011). A content strategy includes everything from content creation to distribution to customers. Content strategies that are well-planned yield more effective and maximum results for businesses.

Therefore, from a particular perspective, content creation can be defined as the design and images that contain the information that comprises a website's page. Good content is the key to attracting customers to a website, retaining their interest, and establishing a presence that results in repeated purchases (Bouchra & Hasnaa, 2020). Thus, content creation has two objectives: attracting new audiences to learn about the company's products and encouraging existing audiences to become consumers.

### Community Building

The social web is a wide range of online communities of individuals in which human beings from all over the world interact via technology. Social networking enables the formation of an online community with shared interests. Community building aims to identify consumers interested in the products or services offered by a business. There is an interaction between individuals and the establishment of relationships (Gunelius, 2011). It has occurred on social media; real community gathering places such as Facebook groups, business Instagram accounts, and business Twitter accounts are examples of places where the community congregates.

The following factors contribute to the importance of community building in marketing for businesses: (1) Simple methods for gaining customer trust (Anwar et al., 2020). When a business is interactive and actively reviews customer feedback, customer loyalty increases. It results in consumers developing a sense of trust in the company due to the constant communication; (2) Increases the brand's value. Brand image can be used as a strategy to enhance the organization's image and value (Mills et al., 2022); (3) Be aware of community needs (Traverso-Yepez et al., 2012). Companies can easily manage consumer needs based on their feedback in the available community with regular communication.

### Purchase Decision

The term "purchase decision" refers to the likelihood that a customer will buy a specific product directly from the customer's needs, attitudes, and perceptions regarding the product's creation (Keller, 2001). Consumer purchasing decisions are a comprehensive process that combines knowledge to assess multiple options and select one (Harahap & Amanah, 2018). A purchase decision is a consumer decision that will occur if the consumer's desire to buy an item is unanimous, which includes what goods to purchase, whether to purchase, when to purchase, where to purchase, how to pay (Sumarwan, 2004). According to some of these theories, purchase decisions are the process of evaluating and selecting various alternatives based on specific interests by determining the most profitable option.

### Research Framework

According to Aldi (2018), consumers' decision to purchase a product is motivated by an awareness of the product's ability to meet their needs and desires. Once the consumer is aware of his or her needs and

desires, the consumer will follow up to ensure that those needs, and desires are met. The flow of the research framework is shown in Figure 1.

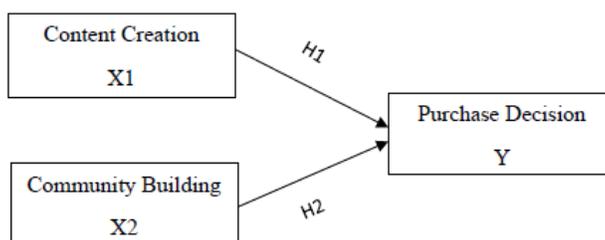


Figure 1. Framework Model

## Hypothesis Development

### Content Creation Towards Purchase Decision

Customer purchase cycle includes recognition, searching for information, weighing the pros and cons of different options, making a purchase decision, and acting after the purchase (Oblak et al., 2017). The content posted on Instagram is appropriate for the social preferences of its users, who frequently consult their social networks while deciding what to buy. Studies have revealed that content creation influences customers in purchasing from a clothing company (Yodi et al., 2020). The relationship between content creation and purchase decision is also evident in handicraft industry (Juharsah & Hartini, 2022). Based on this description, the study's first hypothesis is:

*H1: There is positively influences between content creation towards purchase decision during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

### Community Building Towards Purchase Decision

According to Juharsah and Suhartini (2022), community building means building a community. In social networking activities, it is not uncommon for a company to look for a neighborhood where the community has the same interests as the product. This study's premise is that content creation influence on purchase decision, which is consistent with previous study by Juharsah and Suhartini (2022) who found that community building can lead to better purchasing decisions. Gunelius (2011) asserted that community building set up by building online communities on the Internet that have similar interests can occur with social networking. A community building formed by Starbucks Indonesia was one of the factors affecting the consumer purchase decision (Mileva & Fauzi, 2018). Based on this description, the study's second hypothesis is:

*H2: There is positively influences between community building towards purchase decision during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

## III. METHODOLOGY

### Research Approach

This research utilizes the quantitative explanatory method; a technique that elucidates the relationship between two variables, or the way one variable affects another. Quantitative research methods can be interpreted as research methods based on the philosophy of positivism, used to research on certain populations or samples, sampling techniques are generally carried out randomly, data collection using

research instruments, quantitative/statistical data analysis with the aim of testing established hypotheses (Sugiyono, 2015). The outcome of the analysis will be used to determine whether the researcher rejects or accepts the previously proposed hypotheses.

The authors chose Sociolla as the source of data for this study. The research period was from January to May 2022. This research process begins with preparation, continues with data collection, data processing, and concludes with data analysis. The study chose an online survey platform to increase response rates. The survey included questions with a 5-Likert scale measurement and was distributed to respondents via social media and online messenger networks. Respondents in this study provided specific addresses for respondents who followed Sociolla on Instagram and purchased products on Sociolla during the pandemic without specifying their domicile area.

### **Data Collection Method**

Data collection techniques are used in scientific research to collect relevant, accurate, and reliable data. To collect the data, a questionnaire, entailing posing a series of questions or written statements to relevant parties (respondents) and having them respond, was distributed. Screening questions were involved: those who had followed Sociolla's Instagram account and had done a transaction through Sociolla's web during the pandemic through WhatsApp and Instagram, shared to a Telegram group, and used paid promote on Twitter.

In this study, the responses to the questionnaire serve as primary research data. Primary data is specifically collected to answer questions in the study (Indriantoro & Supomo, 2002). The questionnaire will directly identify the respondents who meet the appropriate criteria for this study such as following Sociolla on Instagram and ever ordering in Sociolla during a pandemic. The data collection tool was social media and online messengers (i.e., Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Telegram). The questionnaire itself utilized a five-point Likert scale, with respondents selecting from (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Somewhat Disagree, (4) Agree, to (5) Strongly Agree. The original items are in English and were translated into Bahasa Indonesia. The dimensions of the measurements were adapted from previous studies (Smith et al., 2012; Pangaribuan et al., 2019; Liberato et al., 2011; Azhar & Roshan, 2014).

## **IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The respondent's data in the questionnaire given to the respondent constitutes the respondent's profile in this study. Participants in the study were followers of Sociolla's Instagram account. The Slovin formula selected a minimum of 100 respondents from Sociolla's total Instagram account follower population of 1,029,264 followers for the study. This study managed to get 101 completed questionnaires. The respondent profile contained in the questionnaire seeks to collect data from respondents who completed the questionnaire related to this study, which is then grouped and summarized to form information about this study. These respondents' characteristics/identities are based on their gender, age, education, domicile, occupation, and income.

According to 101 valid questionnaires, female dominance is obvious to notice since women comprised 96.60% of the overall sample population. Since the number of female respondents is higher than the number of male respondents, we can conclude that followers of the Instagram account Sociolla are predominantly female. Sociolla is more focused on producing products that women need, such as skincare and cosmetics. Therefore, the account Sociolla Instagram is more followed by women. The majority of 56.4% or 57 respondents were aged between 21-25. Approximately 24.8% were 16-20, and those over the age of 26 were the least likely to respond, which amounted to 18.8% or 19 respondents being aged over 26. The majority of 35.6% or 36 respondents come from Jabodetabek (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi). The other 30.7% came from East Java, 7.9% came from Central Java, 4% came from West Java, and DI

Yogyakarta 3%. Approximately 18.9% of the sample came from outside Java Island. Over 58.4% of the sample has received at least some college degree. Among them, 56.4% have a bachelor’s degree or equivalent and 2% have a graduate degree. Respondents’ higher-than-average educational attainment stands out prominently. The respondents who work as students account for the largest proportion of respondents in this study, accounting for 58 people or 57.4%, followed by respondents who work as private employees, who account for 19 people or 18.8%, and respondents who work as civil servants, who account for 7 people or 6.9%.

Table 2. The Result of Validity Test

Variable	Indicator	r-table	r-calculation	Sig	α (0.05)	Status
Content Creation (X <sub>1</sub> )	X1.1	0.195	0.736	0.000	0.05	Valid
	X1.2	0.195	0.861	0.000	0.05	Valid
	X1.3	0.195	0.860	0.000	0.05	Valid
Community Building (X <sub>2</sub> )	X2.1	0.195	0.681	0.000	0.05	Valid
	X2.2	0.195	0.696	0.000	0.05	Valid
	X2.3	0.195	0.768	0.000	0.05	Valid
	X2.4	0.195	0.707	0.000	0.05	Valid
Purchase Decision (Y)	PI.1	0.195	0.699	0.000	0.05	Valid
	PI.2	0.195	0.718	0.000	0.05	Valid
	PI.3	0.195	0.542	0.000	0.05	Valid
	PI.4	0.195	0.653	0.000	0.05	Valid
	PI.5	0.195	0.584	0.000	0.05	Valid
	PI.6	0.195	0.397	0.000	0.05	Valid

All statement items (see Table 2) that are used to measure the variables in this study have a significance value of 0.05 and a value of r calculate > r table (0.195), indicating that the indicator is valid for use as an instrument in the research or that the research questions can be used to measure the variables studied. A reliability test is a technique used to determine the reliability of a questionnaire that serves as an indicator of a variable or construct. If the answer to the statement is consistent or stable over time, the questionnaire is declared reliable. The reliability of a statement is determined using the SPSS application, which generates a Cronbach’s Alpha value for each research variable. If the Cronbach’s Alpha value is 0.60, the test results are considered reliable (Ghozali, 2011). The alpha formula is used to determine reliability in this study. According to table 3, all variables indicate the Cronbach’s Alpha value greater than 0.60, meaning that the indicators used in this study are said to be reliable.

Table 3. Reliability Statistics Result

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Status
Content Creation (X <sub>1</sub> )	0.751	Reliable
Community Building (X <sub>2</sub> )	0.670	Reliable
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.677	Reliable

**Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)**

The coefficient of determination is used to quantify the influence of independent variables (X<sub>1</sub> and X<sub>2</sub>) on dependent variables (Y); in this study, the influence of content creation (X<sub>1</sub>) and community building (X<sub>2</sub>) on purchase decision will be quantified (Y). Table 4 shows the coefficient values determined in this study. According to the determination coefficient results above, the value R indicates a value of 0.700 that approaches 1, and the coefficient of determination (R-square) is 0.628 x 0.628 = 0.394, indicating that the independent variable content creation (X<sub>1</sub>) and community building (X<sub>2</sub>) has a simultaneous effect of 39.4% percent on purchase decision in Sociolla (Y).

Table 4. Model Summary

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error
1	0.628	0.394	0.382	2.225

Predictors: (Constant), Content Creation, Community Building  
 Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision

**Multiple Linear Regression**

Multiple linear regression is to analyse relationship between the influence of content creation and community building on purchase decision in Sociolla. Multiple linear regression is carried out with a significance level of 0.05 using the SPSS application for Windows. The influence of independent variables on dependent variables is described using the following equations, which are based on the results of the regression calculations described below.

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + \epsilon_i$$

$$Y = 11.177 + 0.867X_1 + 0.189X_2 + \epsilon_i$$

The description of the above equation is explained by the following description:

- a) Constant (b0) = 11.177 indicates the value 11.177, which means that if all variables are constant, i.e., content creation (X1) and community building (X2), the bound variable number indicates -11.177 percent as the dependent variable’s result value, allowing it to observe purchase decision on Sociolla during the pandemic.
- b) Content creation (X1) towards purchase decision (Y)/b1 = 0.867. The value of 0.867 indicates that content creation has a positive effect on purchase decision in Sociolla (Y), indicating that every additional 1% of respondents’ responses about content creation will affect variable purchase decision (Y) with a value of 86.7%.
- c) Community building (X2) towards purchase decision (Y)/b1 = 0.189. The value of 0.189 (See Table 5) indicates that community building has a positive effect on purchase decision in Sociolla (Y), indicating that every additional 1% of respondents’ responses about community building will affect variable purchase decision (Y) with a value of 18.9%.

Table 5. Coefficients

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1   (Constant)	11.177	1.835		6.093	0.000
Content Creation	0.867	0.154	0.512	5.625	0.000
Community Building	0.189	0.092	0.187	2.052	0.043

Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision

**F-test**

F-Test is a simultaneous test of independent variables affecting together or not on dependent variables. From Table 6, it is known that F calculates 31.873 > F table 3.94 with a significant value of 0.000 < 0.05 which means that it has a significant effect. The regression model can then be used to predict social media marketing variables; in other words, there is an effect of content creation (X1) and community building (X2) on purchase decision variables simultaneously (Y).

**T-test**

A partial test (t-test) is a test that is used to determine the influence of each independent variable (X1 and X2) on the bound variable (Y). If t calculates to be greater than t table, then either the independent

variable (X) has an effect on the bound variable (Y) or the hypothesis is accepted. If the value *t* calculates the *t* table, then either the independent variable (X1 and X2) has an effect on the bound variable (Y) or the hypothesis is rejected. Similarly, when the variable is viewed through the lens of a significant value of 0.05, it is said to be significant.

Table 6. ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	315.556	2	157.778	31.873	0.000
Residual	485.117	98	4.950		
Total	800.673	100			

Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision

Predictors: (Constant), Content Creation, Community Building

The *t* calculates content creation 5.625 > *t* table 1.985 with a significant value of 0.000 which < 0.05, which means that content creation has a significant effect on purchase decision (see Table 7). So, it can be concluded that the content creation variable affects the purchase decision variable. The *t* calculates community building 2.052 > *t* table 1.985 with a significant value of 0.043 which < 0.05, which means that community building has a significant effect on purchase decision. So, it can be concluded that community building variables affect purchase decision variables.

Table 7. T-test Result

Variable	T-result	T-table	Significance
1 Content creation (X1)	5.625	1.985	0.000
2 Community building (X2)	2.052	1.985	0.043

## Discussion

Following data analysis, the next step is to discuss the findings regarding the influence of content creation (X1) and community building (X2) on purchase decision (Y), specifically on Sociolla’s Instagram account followers who made online purchases during the pandemic. Based on the results of the analysis above, the following conclusions can be drawn about this study:

### Content Creation (X1)

According to the results of the multiple linear regression tests, content creation has a value of 2.459, indicating that it influences purchase decision in Sociolla, with a calculation of 6.247 > *t*-table 1.985 and a significant value of 0.000 < 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that content creation has a positive and significant effect on purchase decision in Sociolla, both partially and simultaneously.

These findings are consistent with Gunelius’s (2011) theory of social media marketing, which states that attractive content creation is the cornerstone of social media marketing strategies and must accurately reflect a business’s personality to earn the target consumer’s trust. Nur’s previous research (2021) demonstrated that content creation positively and significantly affects purchasing decisions both partially and simultaneously.

### Community Building (X2)

According to the results of the multiple linear regression tests, community building has a value of 0.763, indicating that it influences purchase decision in Sociolla, with a calculation of 3.247 > *t*-table 1,985 and a significant value of 0.002 < 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that community building has a positive and

significant effect on purchase decision in Sociolla, both partially and simultaneously. These findings are consistent with previous research by Mileva and Fauzi (2018) demonstrated that community building positively and significantly affects purchasing decisions.

## V. CONCLUSION

In this research study, hypotheses developed to analyze the effects of social media marketing on purchase decisions were studied in this research study using variable of content creation and community building. A total of 101 responses were collected via questionnaires, most of the respondents were university students having the same background. The study examined each of the observed variables to see which had an effect score value, whether it directly affects purchase decisions or not.

According to the findings of this study, content creation has a value of 2.459, indicating that it influences purchase decisions in Sociolla, with a calculation of  $6.247 > t\text{-table } 1,985$  and a significant value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Thus, it can be concluded that content creation has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions in Sociolla, both partially and simultaneously. Besides, community building  $3.247 > t\text{-table } 1,985$  with a significant value of  $0.002$  which  $< 0.05$ , which means that community building has a significant effect on purchase decisions. So, it can be concluded that community building variables affect purchase decisions variables.

Regarding the result that we had, the variable who have the most influence in this research is content creation ( $t = 6.247$ ). This indicates that Sociolla did a good job on making authentic and unique marketing content on social media and that easy-to-use social media channels encourage respondents to shop on social media. Therefore, Sociolla has developed significant Instagram as a product marketing tool to influence purchase decisions.

### Theoretical Implications

The two main hypotheses are formulated and tested to answer the research question. The results showed that people plan to buy skincare or other beauty products because they create content and build communities. The analysis showed that content creation and community building significantly impact purchasing decisions. It indicates that Sociolla already does social media marketing using indicator content creation and community building, and it is in line with past studies by Juharsah and Suhartini (2022), Mileva and Fauzi (2018), and Yodi et al. (2020).

### Managerial Implications

From the results of research on the influence of social media marketing on purchase decision in Sociolla, the following recommendations have been advised. First, Sociolla should consider both independent variables contained in this study (Content Creation and Community Building) because they positively and significantly impact purchase decision toward products sold on Sociolla. This is demonstrated by creating engaging content related to community building, such as giveaway skincare or other beauty care, conduct flash sale which encourages many followers to participate in each event hosted by Sociolla. As a result, content creation and community building become variables that consumers consider when deciding how to behave. If the company further increases content creation and community building, it can increase purchase decision interest. Second, since the pandemic many people prefer to shopping via online rather than go to offline store because it is safer and can safe their time. Sometimes, customer not only order product from Sociolla for themselves. Usually, they bought for a gift to their families or friends. Therefore, Sociolla should do an innovative regarding the packaging because packaging is the important factor when they want to order for gift. It would be great if Sociolla can use eco-friendly

packaging. Finally, it is advised if Sociolla can maximize its marketing to university students via social media, for example, to provide a promotion for those having perfect GPA this semester.

### Future Study and Limitation

Future empirical and theoretical studies are required to conduct additional analysis on the observed variable in various market segments. Diverse market segments with varying degrees of mind perception should be investigated further for future research. Due to the breadth of the variables affecting social media marketing or purchase decisions, it would be fascinating to include any related variable and analyze any indication that could have an impact on future expansion of this study. Additionally, this paper is limited to the period of the pandemic, but additional research may be conducted following the pandemic to incorporate additional variables. It will vary according to the duration, scope, and location of the research. Other than that, this research only focuses on Instagram. For the following research, it can use another platform to view from another point of view of social media. As such, this study report may serve as a starting point for future research on business topics related to digital marketing. Then, additional research can be conducted to replace or add additional variables influencing purchase decisions.

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