

Digital Behavior and Sustainable Consumption in Indonesia's Post-Pandemic Marketplace

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the transformation of consumer behavior in Indonesia after COVID-19, focusing on the growth of online shopping and sustainability awareness.

Methodology: A quantitative survey involved 500 respondents aged 18 years and above from Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, Denpasar, Makassar, and Medan. Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results: Online shopping increased from 35% before the pandemic to 70% afterward, while offline shopping declined from 65% to 30%. Consumers became more digitally engaged, cautious, and selective, prioritizing convenience, competitive prices, and product variety. In addition, 61% considered environmental and ethical aspects in purchasing decisions, indicating stronger sustainability awareness.

Conclusion: The pandemic accelerated lasting changes in consumer behavior by strengthening digital adoption and sustainability-oriented purchasing. Online shopping has become the dominant consumption mode, while ethical considerations increasingly shape purchase decisions.

Limitations: The study focuses on urban consumers and uses a cross-sectional design, limiting generalizability to rural populations and long-term behavioral changes.

Contributions: This study extends recent applications of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework by integrating digital shopping environments and sustainability-oriented evaluations in explaining post-pandemic consumer behavior. It also provides practical insights for businesses and policymakers seeking to align strategies with evolving digital and sustainable consumption preferences.

Keywords: *Digital Consumer Transformation, E-Commerce Adoption, Online Purchasing Behavior, Post-Pandemic Consumer Behavior, Sustainable Consumption*

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1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic fundamentally transformed how individuals interact with markets worldwide, reshaping consumption and service utilization patterns. In Indonesia, the impact of the pandemic extended beyond public health, significantly influencing consumer attitudes, motivations, and behavioral priorities. As one of the largest digital economies in Southeast Asia, Indonesia presents

a unique context in which rapid digital adoption intersects with evolving socio-economic and cultural dynamics of the country. Recent evidence indicates that digitalization has increasingly influenced consumer decision-making processes by improving accessibility, personalization, and transaction convenience through digital platforms ([Pranata et al., 2024](#); [Sabirin et al., 2025](#)).

Understanding these behavioral changes is critically important for both academic and practical reasons. From a theoretical perspective, the post-pandemic period offers a natural setting to re-examine consumer behavior models under conditions of disruption and uncertainties. From a practical standpoint, businesses and policymakers require evidence-based insights to adapt their strategies in response to increasingly digital, selective, and sustainability-oriented consumers. In the post-pandemic era, a “new normal” has emerged, characterized by increased reliance on digital platforms, heightened awareness of consumer values, and growing concern for environmental sustainability. Studies in Indonesia demonstrate that consumer behavior is increasingly shaped by the interaction between digital engagement, trust, cultural values, and sustainability considerations ([Sabirin et al., 2025](#); [Rudiyanto & Sudrajat, 2025](#)).

Consequently, consumption patterns have become more complex and multidimensional. Despite the growing body of literature on consumer behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic, several gaps remain. First, many existing studies focus primarily on short-term behavioral responses during the crisis, such as panic buying or temporary shifts to online shopping, rather than long-term structural changes in consumer behavior after the pandemic. Second, prior research often treats digital transformation and sustainability awareness as separate phenomena with limited integration between these two dimensions. Recent studies suggest that sustainability-oriented consumption is increasingly connected with digital marketing strategies, environmental awareness, and consumer perceptions of responsible business practices ([Deny et al., 2026](#); [Ismaliyanto et al., 2026](#)). Third, there is a lack of empirical studies that provide comprehensive evidence from developing countries, particularly Indonesia, where digital adoption, cultural diversity, and socioeconomic differences create distinct consumption dynamics.

Addressing these gaps, this study aims to analyze the evolution of consumer behavior in Indonesia in the post-pandemic period by integrating two key perspectives: digital transformation and sustainability. This study offers several novel contributions. First, it provides empirical evidence of long-term behavioral shifts by comparing pre- and post-pandemic consumption patterns. Second, it develops an integrated analytical perspective that links digital consumption behavior with ethical and environmental considerations. Third, it contributes context-specific insights from Indonesia, thereby enriching the literature on consumer behavior in emerging market countries. Based on this background, the central research question of this study is as follows: *How has consumer behavior in Indonesia evolved following the COVID-19 pandemic, and to what extent has the pandemic acted as a catalyst for long-term changes in consumption patterns?*

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Consumer Behavior During a Crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted consumer decision-making processes in various contexts ([Andayani, 2021](#); [Sijabat, 2024](#)). Early studies consistently reported short-term behavioral responses, such as panic buying, stockpiling, and risk-averse consumption. However, these studies largely emphasize immediate reactions rather than long-term behavioral transformations. More recent research ([Tien et al., 2021](#); [Triwahono et al., 2024](#); [Verhoef et al., 2023](#); [Yusup et al., 2020](#)) suggests that the pandemic triggered structural changes in consumer behavior, including increased digital dependency and heightened risk awareness.

Nevertheless, a key limitation of these studies lies in their generalization across global contexts without adequately considering socioeconomic diversity, particularly in emerging economies such as Indonesia. Furthermore, while prior studies acknowledge increased consumer caution and selectivity ([Damberg et al., 2024](#); [Sun et al., 2025](#)), they often treat these changes as isolated outcomes rather

than as part of an integrated behavioral shift influenced by technological, psychological, and environmental factors. This indicates the need for a more holistic analytical framework.

2.2 The Acceleration of Online Shopping

A substantial body of literature highlights the rapid growth of e-commerce during the pandemic ([Gu et al., 2021](#); [Verma & Naveen, 2021](#)). Indonesia home to over 200 million internet users and a digitally literate young population has undergone an accelerated wave of digital transformation, largely driven by the necessity of remote shopping during lockdown periods ([Isman & Maulidizen, 2025](#); [Ssenyonga, 2021](#)). Major e-commerce platforms such as Tokopedia, TikTok, Instagram, Shopee, Bukalapak, and Lazada experienced unprecedented user traffic and transaction volumes at the height of the pandemic.

In the present landscape, online shopping has evolved from a mere alternative to a fundamental aspect of the Indonesian consumer's experience. Shoppers have become increasingly comfortable with mobile-based financial technologies, including digital wallets such as OVO, GoPay, and Dana, and integrated logistics systems. This behavioral evolution is marked by greater online engagement; consumers now invest more time in researching products, reading user-generated reviews, and comparing prices across multiple platforms. Convenience, delivery reliability, and digital trust emerged as the primary determinants influencing purchasing intentions.

Furthermore, the convergence of social media and e-commerce widely known as *social commerce* has introduced new consumption dynamics, in which influencers, micro-celebrities, and peer networks exert significant influence on consumer decision-making. The rise of livestream shopping, TikTok Shop campaigns, and Instagram-based retailing exemplifies how Indonesian consumers have fully embraced a digitally integrated marketplace in the post-pandemic era ([Mada & Prabayanti, 2024](#); [Utami & Ahmadi, 2024](#)).

2.3 Covid-19 as a Behavioral Turning Point

The influence of Covid-19 on the evolution of consumer behavior is both profound and far-reaching. The pandemic functioned as a disruptive shock while simultaneously acting as a catalyst for the change. For many consumers, it prompted a reassessment of spending priorities, shifting attention toward essential goods and personal well-being. In contrast, urban populations have increasingly turned to digital technologies as reliable tools for fulfilling their daily necessities ([Ding et al., 2022](#); [Lakner et al., 2021](#)).

Concerns regarding hygiene and safety have become pivotal criteria for evaluating products, particularly in categories such as food, personal care, and healthcare. Contemporary consumers display a clear preference for contactless delivery systems, digitally accessible medical services, and brands that exhibit genuine social responsibility and corporate responsibility. Notably, risk perception, once a peripheral consideration, has emerged as a central determinant influencing how individuals engage with markets, brands, and service providers.

Beyond material consumption, a psychological transition has also occurred, emphasizing the importance of mental well-being, balanced lifestyles, and efficiency in daily routines. This transformation is reflected in the growing demand for ready-to-eat food products, virtual services such as telemedicine and online education, and hybrid retail models that merge physical and digital shopping experiences ([Bicer & Halicioglu, 2022](#); [Celentano et al., 2022](#)).

2.4 Sustainability and Ethical Consumption

A notable transformation in the post-pandemic era is the growing emphasis on sustainability and ethical consumption ([Dima, 2024](#); [Kaiser et al., 2021](#)). The Covid-19 crisis has heightened global awareness of environmental vulnerability and humanity's role in ecological degradation. In Indonesia, this awareness has translated into greater appreciation for locally produced goods, declining use of disposable plastics, and an increasing tendency to support brands that embody social and environmental responsibility ([Viodita Amanda et al., 2025](#)).

Among Millennial and Generation Z consumers, there is a particularly strong inclination toward sustainable consumption practices such as eco-conscious packaging, ethically sourced materials, and transparent supply chain management. Brands that neglect these evolving expectations risk losing relevance to competitors who demonstrate genuine commitment to environmental stewardship and social accountability. Both government institutions and private enterprises have begun to respond to this paradigm shift. Various initiatives, ranging from circular economy programs and green logistics development to digital sustainability campaigns, are steadily gaining momentum.

The rise of platforms such as *Thrift Shop Indonesia* and the expansion of sustainable local brands illustrate a deliberate behavioral transition toward environmentally and ethically aware purchasing decisions ([Bausch et al., 2021](#); [Marsuni et al., 2023](#); [Nurmasari, 2020](#)). However, this development poses strategic challenges for businesses seeking to adapt. Firms must refine their digital marketing strategies, diversify their product portfolios to align with post-pandemic consumer demands, and create distinctive value propositions capable of attracting increasingly discerning consumers ([Amam, 2024](#)). Based on this background, the central research question addressed in this article is: How has consumer behavior in Indonesia evolved following the Covid-19 pandemic, and to what extent has the pandemic served as a catalyst for changes in national consumption patterns?

2.5 Conceptual Framework

This study adopts a conceptual perspective that views post-pandemic consumer behavior as a multidimensional outcome influenced by the effects of COVID-19, digital transformation, and sustainability awareness. The pandemic served as an external trigger that altered consumer priorities, particularly by increasing health concerns and mobility limitations. These changes encourage a greater reliance on digital platforms, as reflected in the growing use of e-commerce, digital payments, and online information searches.

Simultaneously, consumers have become more aware of health risks and have developed more cautious and selective purchasing patterns. These shifts collectively shape post-pandemic consumer behavior, characterized by a stronger preference for online shopping, increased selectivity, and greater reliance on trust and information transparency. Sustainability awareness provides an important contextual dimension, as consumers increasingly consider environmental and ethical factors in their purchasing decisions. Rather than acting as a purely causal variable, sustainability represents a value-based orientation that reinforces emerging consumption patterns in digital marketplaces.

2.6 Research Propositions

- P*₁: The post-pandemic context is associated with a noticeable shift in consumer behavior from offline to online purchasing
- P*₂: Consumer behavior in the post-pandemic era has become more selective, cautious, and digitally oriented
- P*₃: Consumer motivation toward online shopping is largely driven by convenience, competitive pricing, and a greater product variety
- P*₄: Digital transformation and sustainability awareness are increasingly reflected in consumer behavior, shaping more responsible and value-oriented purchasing patterns

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Types of Research

This study adopted a quantitative research design utilizing a survey-based approach ([Gul, 2023](#); [Sharp, 2003](#)). The primary objective was to obtain empirical insights into consumer behavior patterns in Indonesia post-Covid-19 era, particularly focusing on online shopping tendencies and awareness of sustainability-oriented consumption.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population of this research includes Indonesian consumers aged 18 years and above who have engaged in purchasing activities, both online and offline, after the Covid-19 pandemic. The study involved 500 respondents from six major Indonesian cities: Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, Denpasar, Makassar, and Medan. These locations were deliberately selected to ensure geographical diversity, variation in economic development, and different levels of digital adoption, thereby offering a representative overview of consumer behavior across urban areas in Indonesia.

3.3 Sampling Techniques

A purposive sampling method was applied with several inclusion criteria. Respondents were required to be at least 18 years old, reside in one of the six selected urban areas, have purchased goods or services after the COVID-19 pandemic, and voluntarily consent to participate in the survey. The sample distribution was proportionally adjusted according to the estimated population size of each selected region to maintain representativeness.

3.4 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected online using the Google Forms platform. The research instrument was a structured, closed-ended questionnaire designed to align with the study's objectives. Prior to participation, respondents were required to review an informed consent statement outlining the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and voluntary participation rights, including the freedom to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Only participants who provided explicit consent by selecting the agreement option were granted access to the questionnaires.

This online distribution method was selected to ensure efficient data collection, broader geographical coverage, and ease of participation. The questionnaire consisted of multiple items measuring patterns and frequency of post-pandemic consumption, online shopping intensity and preferences, perceived health and safety risks, sustainability awareness and attitudes toward eco-friendly products, and determinants of purchasing decisions.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis to summarize the respondent characteristics and identify general patterns in consumer behavior. Descriptive analysis was chosen to present a clear and comprehensive overview of the behavioral trends observed in Indonesia post-pandemic consumption landscape.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure the quality and rigor of the research instrument, validity and reliability tests were conducted prior to the data analysis. Content validity was established by developing the questionnaire items based on an extensive review of the relevant literature on consumer behavior, digital adoption, and sustainability awareness. In addition, the instrument was reviewed by academic experts to ensure that each item appropriately represented its intended construct.

Construct validity was assessed by examining the consistency of responses across related items for each variable. The results indicated that all measurement items were aligned with their respective constructs and were suitable for further analyses. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach alpha coefficient to evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement scales. The results showed that all variables achieved acceptable reliability levels, with Cronbach alpha values exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70. This indicates that the instrument provides consistent and reliable measurements across all respondents.

3.7 Sample Justification

A sample size of 500 respondents was considered adequate to provide a comprehensive representation of consumer behavior patterns in Indonesia post-pandemic context, particularly within urban populations. A relatively large sample size enhances the stability and reliability of descriptive statistical analyses and allows for a more accurate depiction of behavioral trends. The selection of the

six major cities Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, Denpasar, Makassar, and Medan was based on several considerations.

First, these cities represent key economic and population centers in Indonesia with varying levels of digital infrastructure and consumer purchasing power. Second, they reflect the geographical diversity across the western, central, and eastern regions of Indonesia. Third, urban populations in these areas tend to have higher exposure to digital technologies and e-commerce platforms, making them highly relevant for analyzing post-pandemic consumer behaviors.

Furthermore, purposive sampling ensured that all respondents met specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, namely, having purchasing experience in the post-pandemic period. This approach strengthens the relevance and applicability of the findings, particularly in capturing the behavioral patterns of active consumers. However, the focus on urban respondents may limit the generalizability of the findings to rural populations. Despite this limitation, the selected sample provides meaningful insights into the dominant trends shaping consumer behavior in Indonesia evolving digital marketplaces.

4. Results and Discussions

This study involved 500 respondents from six major Indonesian cities: Makassar, Surabaya, Denpasar, Jakarta, Bandung, and Medan. All participants were aged 18 years and above and had purchasing experience before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire designed to measure consumer behavior patterns, changes in purchasing habits, online shopping frequency, and sustainability awareness. A key finding of this study is the significant shift in consumer purchasing channels after the pandemic. Figure 1 presents a comparative distribution of consumer preferences for offline and online shopping before and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

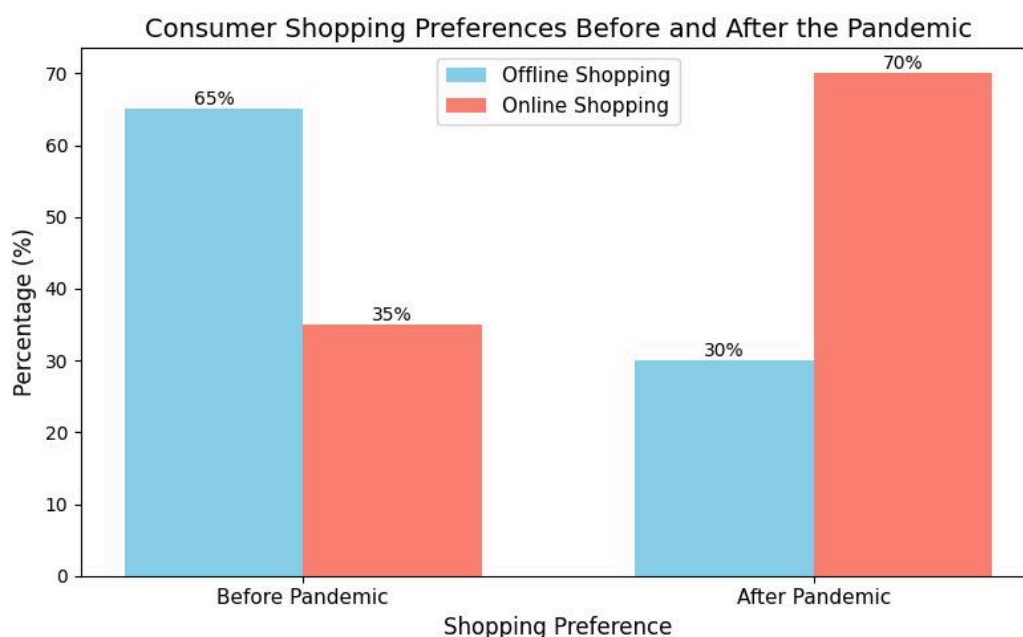


Figure 1. Consumer shopping prevention before and after the pandemic

The results indicate a substantial decline in offline shopping, from 65% before the pandemic to 30% in the post-pandemic period, representing a decrease of 35 percentage points. In contrast, online shopping increased markedly from 35% to 70%, indicating a doubling of consumer reliance on digital purchasing channels. This shift reflects a clear reversal of consumer preferences. Prior to the pandemic, offline shopping was the dominant mode of consumption, accounting for nearly two-thirds of the total consumer activity. However, in the post-pandemic period, online shopping has emerged as the primary channel, accounting for most transactions.

From a statistical perspective, the magnitude of change (± 35 percentage points) suggests a strong structural transformation, rather than a temporary behavioral adjustment. The near symmetry between the decline in offline shopping and the rise in online shopping indicates a direct substitution effect, wherein consumers have transitioned from physical to digital platforms. Overall, these findings demonstrate that the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital commerce, leading to a

This decline suggests that the convenience and interpersonal nature of traditional shopping experiences have been gradually replaced by the speed, practicality, and accessibility of the e-commerce experience. Consequently, traditional retail outlets, such as wet markets, supermarkets, and shopping malls, experienced declining foot traffic, whereas online platforms, such as Shopee, Tokopedia, Lazada, and TikTok Shop, experienced substantial user growth. This trend is supported by empirical evidence. [Gupta and Mukherjee \(2022\)](#) and [Handayani, Suhartati, Irawan, and Zulfadhilah \(2024\)](#), confirmed a sharp increase in online purchasing activity compared to the pre-pandemic period.

This surge is largely attributed to restrictions on mobility, concerns about virus transmission in public areas, and growing consumer confidence in digital transactions. Many respondents reported shifting their daily purchases, including food, clothing, and healthcare products, to e-commerce platforms such as Shopee, Tokopedia, and Bukalapak. The availability of user-friendly interfaces, attractive promotional offers, and efficient logistics systems were identified as the key motivating factors. Furthermore, the integration of digital payment systems, such as e-wallets and online banking, has further reinforced trust and convenience, fostering a sustained preference for online shopping.

Collectively, these findings illustrate that the pandemic accelerated digital transformation in Indonesia retail sector, leading to a long-term behavioral shift among urban consumers. The study also revealed that the proportion of online shoppers nearly doubled from 35% to 70% in the post-pandemic period. This growth is not limited to the younger generation or metropolitan consumers but also extends to older age groups and semi-urban regions, such as Makassar and Denpasar. Hence, online shopping has evolved from a temporary adaptation to a habitual form of consumption behavior embedded in daily life.

This 40% shift from offline to online shopping represents a structural transformation in Indonesia market dynamics. Such a shift can be examined through the lens of development economics and consumer adaptation theory. According to [Lewis \(1954\)](#) and [Ghate \(1992\)](#), Dual Sector Model, developing economies traditionally rely on conventional market mechanisms characterized by face-to-face transactions. However, external shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, can accelerate the growth of modern market systems, including digital commerce, owing to their efficiency, scalability, and adaptability.

In the Indonesian context, this theoretical framework is particularly relevant, given the pre-pandemic divide between traditional and digital markets. Rapid Internet penetration, affordable mobile technologies, and the expansion of electronic payment infrastructures have significantly enhanced digital inclusion, even across secondary cities such as Makassar and Denpasar. This evolution aligns with the concept of “technological leapfrogging,” where developing nations bypass intermediate stages of modernization through the accelerated adoption of advanced technologies. Further supporting evidence from Bank Indonesia in 2023, reveals that e-commerce transactions more than doubled since 2020, with notable adoption among adult consumers and non-metropolitan populations.

This trend underscores that digital market participation has become a cross-demographic and cross-geographic phenomenon rather than being confined to younger or urban users. Finally, in accordance with theory of consumer behavior, habitual buying emerges when consumers repeatedly derive satisfaction from efficiency, affordability, and convenience. Thus, the rise in online shopping from 35% to 70% suggests that Indonesian consumers have entered a stage of sustained digital consumption, where technology-driven purchasing behaviors have become an integral component of everyday life.

4.1.2 Transformation of Consumer Behavior in the Post-Pandemic Era

The Covid-19 pandemic has acted as a critical turning point in reshaping consumer perceptions of the overall consumption process. Based on the survey findings, over 80% of respondents reported becoming more cautious and selective in their purchasing decisions, in terms of product choice and preferred shopping channels. Concerns about virus transmission, social distancing measures, and the

need to maintain productivity from home have collectively encouraged consumers to adopt digital platforms rapidly as part of their daily purchasing routines.

Empirical evidence supports these changes in behavior. ([Fan, Teng, Chew, Smith, & Copeland, 2021](#)) observed that the pandemic significantly altered shopping patterns, with approximately 60% of respondents shifting from in-store purchases to digital platforms, primarily because of health and safety concerns. Similarly, [Brown, Rocha, and Cowling \(2020\)](#) found that consumer awareness of product hygiene and sanitation increased substantially, with 75% of participants emphasizing the importance of cleanliness and transparency in product information. These findings highlight the growing prioritization of safety, trust, and information accessibility in modern consumption.

This situation also gave rise to the phenomenon known as “forced digital adoption,” wherein consumers who were previously unfamiliar with online shopping were compelled to adapt during the pandemic. Many of these new users continued to rely on digital commerce post-pandemic, largely because of positive experiences such as price discounts, transactional convenience, and efficient delivery services. As a result, what began as a temporary adjustment has evolved into a sustained, long-term behavioral shift.

Further analysis from this study reveals that consumer decision-making after the Covid-19 pandemic revolves around three primary dimensions: pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages. Each of these phases influences consumers and marketers in distinct ways. From the consumer perspective, the pre-purchase stage involves identifying needs and seeking information about available alternatives processes that are increasingly facilitated by fast and accessible online sources. During the purchase stage, consumers evaluate whether the act of purchasing is a convenient or stressful experience and assess the product's perceived value.

In the post-purchase stage, consumers determine whether the product fulfills their expectations, provides satisfaction, and aligns with their environmental values, including disposal practices and sustainability impacts. From the marketer's perspective, similar considerations apply, but from a strategic viewpoint ([Madichie, 2009](#); [Stanton, 1981](#)). In the pre-purchase phase, marketers must analyze consumer needs, preferences, and attitudes to design persuasive communication and positioning strategies. During the purchase phase, situational factors such as store ambiance, time constraints, and display arrangements influence buying decisions.

The post-purchase phase focuses on ensuring consumer satisfaction, encouraging repeat purchases, and fostering positive word-of-mouth or online referrals. Taken together, these insights indicate that the pandemic intensified the influence of external environmental factors on consumer decision-making, particularly by accelerating the integration of digital platforms into everyday consumption. Importantly, even after easing restrictions, this digitally mediated purchasing behavior remains dominant among consumers, suggesting a long-term structural transformation in Indonesia consumption landscape.

4.1.3 Consumer Motivation Toward Online Shopping

From a motivational perspective, respondents identified three primary factors influencing their transition to online shopping platforms. The growing preference for online shopping is driven by several factors, including the convenience of access and direct home delivery, which eliminates the need for physical store visits; competitive pricing supported by frequent promotional offers and discounts; and a wider variety of product choices compared to those available in conventional retail outlets. Approximately 74% of the participants reported that they browse and make purchases through online shopping applications more frequently than they visit physical stores. This behavioral pattern reflects a fundamental change in consumer decision-making, where purchasing choices are increasingly guided by online reviews, product ratings, and peer recommendations rather than in-store experiences or direct seller interactions. However, offline shopping continues to retain its relevance, particularly for certain product categories such as fresh groceries, fashion items, and electronic goods, where

consumers still value the ability to physically examine, test, or negotiate before purchasing the product.

These observations align with the findings of [Kholifah, Wiyadi, Saputro, and Sholahuddin \(2023\)](#) and [Bunga, Komarun, and Nur \(2025\)](#), who emphasized that price, location, and promotional strategies significantly shape consumer trust and purchasing decisions in e-commerce. Among these factors, price is the most influential indicator of product value. Consumers tend to compare prices across multiple platforms before making purchase decisions. When prices are reasonable and competitive, they enhance consumer trust and encourage transactions. Conversely, prices that seem excessively low or unrealistic can trigger doubts about product authenticity and seller credibility.

In addition, the geographical location of sellers influences consumer confidence ([Putri, Jokolelono, Paembonan, Yunus, & Yunus, 2025](#)). Buyers generally feel more secure when dealing with vendors whose locations are clearly identifiable, easily accessible, or situated within the same region, as these conditions often correspond to faster delivery times and lower shipping costs. Promotional activities, such as discounts, cashback offers, and free shipping programs, serve not only to attract attention but also to reinforce trust in the reliability of both the e-commerce platform and the brand. Transparent and consistent promotional practices strengthen customer loyalty and improve conversion rates in online retail.

In summary, the synergistic effect of pricing strategies, seller proximity, and promotional incentives played a decisive role in shaping post-pandemic consumer behavior. These factors collectively contribute to the formation of long-term trust-based relationships between consumers and digital marketplaces, ensuring sustained participation in the online retail ecosystem.

4.1.4 Sustainability Awareness and Ethical Consumption in the Post-Pandemic Era

Beyond the widespread digital transformation, this study also reveals that consumer awareness of sustainability increased significantly following the Covid-19 pandemic. Among the 500 respondents surveyed, approximately 61% indicated that environmental considerations influenced their purchasing decisions. These consumers tend to favor brands that implement eco-friendly packaging, maintain production transparency, and uphold corporate social responsibility.

The growing popularity of online shopping platforms has further supported this shift by providing greater access to locally produced goods, recycled products, and clear information on the ethical practices of manufacturers. This indicates that e-commerce is no longer merely a tool for convenience but also a channel that facilitates socially and environmentally responsible consumption behavior. This trend is particularly strong among younger consumers aged 18–35 years, especially in Makassar and Bali, where exposure to sustainability-related messages through social media and digital influencers is high. The interplay between digital convenience and ecological consciousness positions online shopping as a strategic medium for promoting mindful and sustainable consumption practices.

Supporting these findings, [Bristowe and Heckert \(2023\)](#) demonstrated that consumers show a clear preference for brands actively engaged in sustainability and social responsibility initiatives, with 68% of respondents favoring products from companies contributing to environmental or social causes. This suggests that corporate engagement in sustainability significantly enhances brand loyalty, particularly among educated and younger generations, who value purpose-driven brands. This shift represents a broader transformation in consumer behavior, where purchasing decisions are no longer determined solely by price or product quality but also by the ethical and environmental values upheld by the company.

Brands that demonstrate tangible contributions to environmental protection, carbon reduction, waste management, and community empowerment are perceived as trustworthy and deserving of consumer support. For example, products using biodegradable packaging or companies that allocate a portion of their profits to social initiatives tend to attract more environmentally conscious buyers. These findings underscore the strategic importance of embedding sustainability and ethical responsibility into brand

identity. Rather than treating sustainability as a short-term marketing tactic, firms should approach it as a long-term commitment. This orientation not only enhances corporate reputation but also fosters emotional and value-based connections between brands and consumers, which is an essential factor for long-term competitiveness in the post-pandemic marketplace.

4.1.5 Digital and Sustainable Consumer Transformation: Implications for Businesses and Policymakers.

The substantial transformation in consumer behavior has profound implications for both business practitioners and policymakers. For entrepreneurs, these findings highlight the urgent need to adapt swiftly to consumer characteristics that are increasingly digitally oriented, selective and environmentally conscious. Consequently, marketing efforts must shift toward digital channels, emphasizing engaging visual communication, transparent services, and real-time interactions.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers have become more familiar with digital ecosystems and more critical in their evaluation of products and services. They also demonstrate heightened awareness of sustainability and ethical practices, which compel businesses to adopt strategic transformations to maintain relevance and competitiveness in a rapidly evolving marketplace. From a managerial standpoint, this shift necessitates a transition from conventional marketing models to personalized, data-driven, and interactive digital strategies. Consumers today rely heavily on social media, e-commerce platforms, and online reviews to make purchasing decisions.

Consequently, building a strong and credible online presence is indispensable. Content such as short videos, visual storytelling, and authentic customer testimonials should be developed to create emotional resonance and strengthen consumer trust in the brand. Empirical evidence supports these findings. [Ningsih, Murti, and Budiastuti \(2022\)](#) and [Santoso, Maulidani, Riduansah, Saiful, and Hakim \(2025\)](#) emphasized that technological adaptation is essential for businesses to meet evolving post-pandemic consumer demands. Their research found that consumers tend to favor brands that offer integrated digital access, including mobile applications, online stores, and active social media engagement. Similarly [\(Davis, Assaf, McCorkell, Wei, Low, Redfield, Austin, & Akrami, 2021\)](#) reported a surge in technology adoption in retail activities during the pandemic.

In parallel, digital payments and online food delivery services have experienced significant growth in new users, illustrating a long-term behavioral shift toward digital service interaction ([Hartati, Kalsum, & Kosim, 2022](#); [Kasi, Tulung, & Tumewu, 2022](#); [Mas et al., 2022](#)). In addition to technological adaptation, service speed and transparency are key determinants of customer satisfaction. Modern consumers expect instant access to information, clear product descriptions, and secure and seamless transactions. Features such as real-time chat support, responsive social media communication, and transparent return policies have evolved into the baseline standards in contemporary digital markets.

Moreover, environmental and ethical considerations increasingly shape the purchasing decisions. Businesses are now expected to embody sustainable values through eco-friendly packaging, energy-efficient operations, and support for locally sourced and ethically produced products. Companies that neglect sustainability risk losing market share to competitors who align their operations with the principles of social and environmental responsibility. Overall, this transformation signifies not only technological evolution but also a cultural shift in consumption patterns.

Success in the digital marketplace depends on a company's ability to be adaptive, innovative, and value-oriented, aligning its offerings with consumers' evolving expectations and ethical standards. At the policy level, the local governments in Indonesia play a crucial role in facilitating this transition. Strengthening digital infrastructure, particularly in remote and underdeveloped regions, is vital to ensuring equitable participation in the digital economy. Expanding internet accessibility and providing digital literacy and e-commerce training for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) can enhance product competitiveness, broaden market reach, and improve service quality ([Rauf, Syam, & Randy, 2024](#); [Wirdiyanti, Yusciantoro, Sugiarto, Harjanti, Mambea, Soekarno, & Damayanti, 2023](#)).

This transformation has also created new opportunities in the digital service sector, such as GoFood and GrabFood, which gained widespread adoption during the pandemic and have maintained relevance in the post-pandemic era. Consumers now prefer to fulfill their daily needs through digital channels, driven by convenience and cost efficiency. These platforms exemplify how technology adoption can contribute to economic resilience and food security, which have become key policy priorities in Indonesia economic recovery agenda ([Fan, Teng, Chew, Smith, & Copeland, 2021](#); [Rauf, Wijaya, & Tari, 2021](#); [Rauf, Wijaya, & Tari, 2022](#)). Equally important, regulatory support must be directed toward the promotion of sustainable commerce. Governments can offer incentives to environmentally responsible businesses, particularly those that utilize recycled materials, reduce waste, or emphasize ethical local production.

Such initiatives directly contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, collaboration between business actors and local authorities is essential to ensure that digital transformation and sustainability practices evolve into long-term economic foundations rather than short-lived trends. For Indonesia traditional retail sector, the integration of digital technologies presents a path to survival and growth. Digitizing traditional markets and forming partnerships with local logistics providers can preserve the personal touch of traditional trade while improving operational efficiencies. Through dedicated platforms or collaborations with major e-commerce channels, traditional vendors can sell products online and remain competitive in the evolving retail landscape.

Furthermore, collaboration with community-based delivery services enables traditional retailers to expand their customer bases and enhance service quality. Such partnerships provide not only economic benefits but also contribute to building inclusive, local supply chains. Additionally, the application of digital tools for transaction recording, inventory management, and financial tracking empowers small businesses to operate more efficiently and make data-driven decisions to improve their performance. With the right combination of policy support, technological adaptation, and sustainability commitment, both modern and traditional businesses can coexist and thrive in an inclusive digital ecosystem ([Böttcher, Empelmann, Weking, Hein, & Krcmar, 2024](#); [Das, 2024](#)). This holistic transformation represents not only a response to consumer demands but also a strategic pathway toward resilient and sustainable economic growth in the digital age.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a structural shift in consumer behavior in Indonesia, characterized by a rapid transition from offline to online purchasing. Digital platforms have emerged as the dominant consumption channels, reflecting an increased reliance on convenience, efficiency, and information accessibility. Simultaneously, consumers have become more selective and risk-aware, indicating a more deliberate and informed decision-making process. The findings also reveal that sustainability awareness is increasingly embedded in consumer preferences, suggesting that purchasing decisions are shaped not only by economic considerations but also by ethical and environmental value.

This study contributes to the literature by integrating digital transformation and sustainability awareness into a unified framework to explain post-pandemic consumer behavior in an emerging market context. It provides empirical evidence that these changes represent a long-term behavioral shift rather than a temporary response to crisis conditions. From a practical perspective, the results offer strategic insights for businesses and policymakers to align with evolving consumer expectations by strengthening their digital capabilities while incorporating sustainability into their value propositions.

5.2 Research Limitations

This study had several limitations. First, it focuses primarily on urban populations, which may not fully represent consumer behavior in rural areas, where digital infrastructure and access remain limited. Second, the use of a cross-sectional design restricted our ability to capture behavioral changes

over time. Third, reliance on self-reported survey data may introduce response bias, potentially affecting the accuracy of the findings.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Future research should adopt longitudinal approaches to better understand the sustainability of behavioral changes over time. Expanding the scope to include rural and less digitally developed regions will provide a more comprehensive national perspective. Additionally, qualitative or mixed-method studies could provide deeper insights into consumer motivations and attitudes. Further research should explore generational differences, the long-term environmental impact of increased e-commerce activity, and the role of emerging technologies in shaping future consumption patterns.

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Author Contributions

AA was responsible for conceptualization and original draft preparation, while AA and RR jointly contributed to the methodology, data analysis, and manuscript review and editing. RR handled data collection and supervision. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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