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Gender-based Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influences in Buying Fashion Products in Surabaya, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Objective – As sales in the fashion industry continue to grow, consumer behaviour with respect to purchasing fashion products has also grown. This paper provides an overview of consumers' susceptibility to interpersonal influence (CSII) and examines whether there is the difference between male and female consumers with respect to buying fashion products in Surabaya, Indonesia.

Methodology/Technique – The conceptual framework in this paper compares males and females in terms of their normative susceptibility to interpersonal influences (NSI) and informative susceptibility to interpersonal influences (ISI). The study uses a quantitative methodology with an independent sample t-test for analysis. The data is collected through the distribution of questionnaires to 200 respondents, being 100 males and 100 females, falling between the ages of 17 and 45 years old. Further, all respondents live in Surabaya, Indonesia.

Findings – There study results show that thre is no difference in normative susceptibility to interpersonal influences (NSI) between males and females however, there is a difference in informative susceptibility to interpersonal influences (ISI) between male and female, with respect to purchasing fashion products.

Novelty – This study provides an insight into the similarity in normative susceptibility to interpersonal influences and differences in informative susceptibility to interpersonal influences (ISI) between males and females. This information may be useful for fashion manufacturers, vendors and other interested stakeholders.

Type of Paper: Empirical.

Keywords: Gender-based Marketing; Consumers' Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influences; Purchasing Behavior; Fashion Products.

JEL Classification: M30, M31.

1. Introduction

It is projected that the fashion industry in Indonesia will grow by around 9 to 11% in 2025. One of the primary reasons for this is the annual Fashion Week held in Indonesia. The fashion industry is among one of the largest creative industries in Indonesia, contributing around 5.9% toward Indonesia's gross domestic product on average each year.

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Further, the Indonesian Government provides educational resources in support of the domestic fashion industry (Ministry of Indonesian Trade and Industrial).

The purchasing power of the Indonesian population has steadily increased over the last 5 years; the consumption of textile products, for example, has increased from 5.03kg per capita in 2009 to 6.82kg per capita in 2014. The Indonesian fashion industry has an advantage over other industries, as many brands (approximately 200) are manufactured in Indonesia, including, Zara, Adidas, Nike, The North Face, Amer Group, Salomon, Arcteryx, Calvin Klein, and H&M (http://duniaindustri.com).

The growth of the fashion industry is also largely supported by local consumers. To understand the purchasing behavior of consumers in Indonesia, the social learning theory can be useful. This theory considers the effect of social and environmental circumstances on consumers' purchasing decisions (Sadachar, et al., 2016). Further, the examination of consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influences is also useful for marketing research (Hoffmann and Broekhuizen, 2009).

The impact of the global culture, media imagery and the rapid development of information technology has resulted in differences between the way men and women act when purchasing products (Chen and Ha, 2016; Lam and Yee, 2014). This study aims to examine whether normative and informative susceptibility to interpersonal influences are different between males and females, with respect to their purchase of fashion products.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Gender-based Marketing

Gender, ethnicity, marital status, and living situation have been found to have an impact on both informative and normative influences (Girard, 2010). A study conducted by Khare, et al. (2011) shows that demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, education and income, are all considered moderators on consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influences. Advertisers therefore often used gender-based styles when marketing their products. For example, masculine style is short and clipped whereas feminine style uses extravagant language and plays on emotions (Christopher, 2016). Further studies have also stated that where an advertisement meets the preferences of the consumer, this tends to have a positive influence on the consumer's decision to purchase.

It has been shown that men are drawn toward clothing that is well-tailored, as it may positively enhance the image they communicate to others (Neil, et al., 2013). Further, Ruane and Wallace (2014) state that historically, the consumption of fashion products has largely been considered a female issue as it is believed that women are more concerned with the clothing they were, are more actively engaged with the fashion industry and are more likely to express their individuality through the way that the look and are perceived by others (Napompech and Kuawiriyapan, 2011).

2.2 Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influences (CSII)

Consumer susceptibility to interpersonal influence (CSII) refers to the need of an individual to identify their personal image in order to shape other's opinions of them, as well as their conformity to other's expectations of them (Bearden et al, 1989). The two dimensions of the effect of consumer susceptibility on interpersonal influence are normative and information influences. Normative influence reflects the tendency of a consumer to conform to the expectations of others, while informative influence refers to the tendency of people to accept information from others as a result of the credibility of that information (Hoffmann and Broekhuizen, 2009). A study by of Khare, et al. (2011) found that normative influences do indeed have an effect on consumer involvement with the fashion industry, whereas informative influences do not.

2.3. The Influence of Purchasing Behavior on Fashion Products

A study by Kothari and Chopra (2015) states that consumers purchase products, even those they do not need or use, primarily due to the occurrence of significant negative events or feelings or low self-esteem (Kothari and Chopra, 2015). Further, Koca and Koc (2016) studied purchasing behavior based on gender and found that women are more likely to be influenced by fashion, while men were more likely to be influenced by brand name (Koca and Koc, 2016). Overall, the purchasing process begins with a need for a product, followed by the identification of products that match those needs, and an evaluation of the available alternatives. Baker (2003) states that consumers undertake more detailed research into the available products if the products they are searching for is typically high in price, or if there are considerable differences between available brands. Another study by Hangzhou (Chen and Ha, 2016) found that global cultural eclecticism and mass media imagery has a larger impact among young females' fashion choices in the city.

Further, Lam and Yee (2014) determined that information technology, self-identity issues, changing work practices of men, and media influence have a positive effect on the male purchasing behavior. Noh et al. (2015), also found that male college students often desire clothing that is comfortable, gives them confidence, and meets their expectations of comfort.

2.4. Fashion Products

The word "fashion" in this study refers to the symbolic, aesthetic, and cultural aspects of the way in which society uses material objects to express their tastes, lifestyle, social status and membership within a community (Pan, et al., 2015). A related term to this is "clothing" which provides not only one of the basic human needs, but also allows people to express their individuality and have a social influence, depending on the brands and styles they adopt (Koca and Koc, 2016).

The fashion industry is continuously changing. The fashion paradigm is shifting from the total consumer experience to a smart consumer experience concept. The consumer experience is reflective of the change in the way consumers think, obtain information, and make purchasing decisions, enabling them to maximize their overall experience (Kim et al., 2014). The importance of fashion is among people between 18 and 35 years old, with most consumers in this age range relying primarily on mass media to locate and purchase their products (Leung, et al., 2015).

3. Research Method

This study uses a quantitative methodology with an independent sample t-test. The data was collected using questionnaires distributed to 200 respondents; 100 males and 100 females, falling within the ages of 17 to 45 years old, living in Surabaya, Indonesia. The questionnaires contained 12 items, adapted from Bearden et al. (1989). The hypotheses examined in this study are:

H1: There is a difference in normative susceptibility to interpersonal influences between males and females.

H2: There is a difference in informative susceptibility to interpersonal influences between males and females.

The conceptual model of the study is shown in Figure 1:

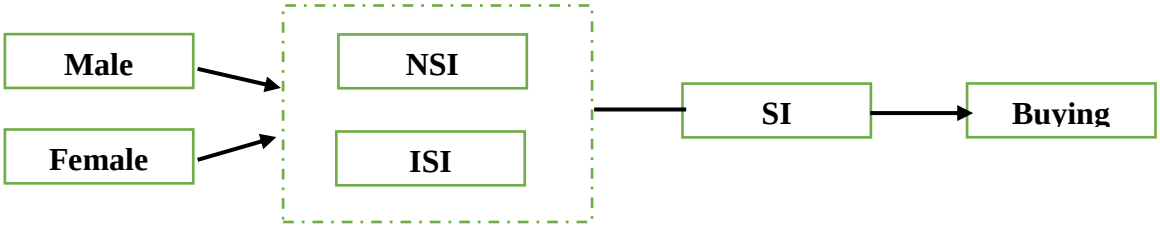

Figure 1. Comparison between Male and Female in Consumers' Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence
Source: Author

The conceptual framework of this study identifies the difference in normative (NSI) and informative susceptibility (ISI) to interpersonal to interpersonal influences (SI) between males and females, when purchasing fashion products.

4. Results and Discussion

Overall, this study examines 200 respondents. The respondents chosen were aged between 20 and 35 years old, were employed (regardless the income level) and had a minimum education level of high school graduate. Validity and reliability tests were conducted on the data. Table 1 shows the results of respondents' responses toward the questionnaire items.

Table 1. Respondent's Responses

Indicators	Results	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Nor1	Freq.	27	64	49	54	6	200
	% valid	13.5	32	24.5	27	3	100
Nor2	Freq.	27	49	45	58	21	200
	% valid	13.5	24.5	22.5	29	10.5	100
Nor3	Freq.	20	61	42	57	20	200
	% valid	10	30.5	21	28.5	10	100
Nor4	Freq.	19	88	52	38	3	200
	% valid	9.5	44	26	19	1.5	100
Nor5	Freq.	13	17	40	90	40	200
	% valid	6.5	8.5	20	45	20	100
Nor6	Freq.	19	49	89	40	3	200
	% valid	9.5	24.5	44.5	20	1.5	100
Nor7	Freq.	28	88	60	23	1	200
	% valid	14	44	30	11.5	0.5	100

Nor8	Freq.	14	72	61	45	8	200
	% valid	7	36	30.5	22.5	4	100
Inf1	Freq.	3	21	35	104	37	200
	% valid	1.5	10.5	17.5	52	18.5	100
Inf2	Freq.	0	6	23	99	72	200
	% valid	0	3	11.5	49.5	36	100
Inf3	Freq.	1	9	30	131	29	200
	% valid	0.5	4.5	15	65.5	14.5	100
Inf4	Freq.	1	10	36	90	63	200
	% valid	0.5	5	18	45	31.5	100

Source: Primary data, Author.

Table 1 details all of the respondents' responses to the questionnaire. The items in the questionnaire are adapted from Bearden and Teel (1989), which have also been used by Tjiptono et al. (2004), translated into the Indonesian language. The questionnaire items for normative susceptibility to interpersonal influences (NSI) are: "I rarely purchase the latest fashion styles before I am sure my friends agree to it" (Nor1), " For me, it is important that others like the fashion product I buy" (Nor2), "In buying fashion products, I used to buy the brands I think people will like" (Nor3), "I often buy the fashion products that people expect me to buy" (Nor4), "I like to know that the fashion product I buy will receive a good impression from others" (Nor5), "I feel a sense of belonging if I buy the same fashion products used by others" (Nor6), "I buy a fashion product if I want to be similar to someone" (Nor7), and "I identify myself by buying fashion products that other people also buy" (Nor8).

The questionnaire items for informative susceptibility to interpersonal influences (ISI) are: "to reassure myself about the fashion product I buy, I observe what the people wear" (Inf1), "I will ask friends if I am not experienced enough about a fashion product" (Inf2), "I often ask others to help me in choosing the best alternative of a fashion product class" (Inf3), and "I often collect information from others about fashion products before I purchase a product" (Inf4).

Table 2. Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Item Means	3.232	2.405	4.185	1.780	1.740	.385	12

Source: Primary data, Author

Table 2 provides a summary of the item statistics. The average response to all 12 items in the questionnaires is 3.232, which means the extreme response values are not shown here.

Table 3. Item-Total Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	N
NOR1	2.74	1.090	.392	.716	200
NOR2	2.99	1.226	.395	.716	200
NOR3	2.98	1.182	.569	.688	200
NOR4	2.59	.952	.553	.695	200
NOR5	3.64	1.094	.559	.691	200
NOR6	2.80	.920	.432	.711	200
NOR7	2.41	.886	.356	.721	200
NOR8	2.81	.996	.344	.722	200
INF1	3.76	.927	.263	.731	200
INF2	4.19	.751	.180	.738	200
INF3	3.89	.714	.165	.739	200
INF4	4.02	.862	.146	.743	200

Source: Primary data, Author

Table 3 shows the item-total statistic used to test the validity of the data. The column labelled "Corrected Item-Total Correlation" shows that each r value in this column is more than the r table of 0.139 (df = 198) hence all items are considered valid. The column labelled "Cronbach Alpha" where items are deleted shows that each item is higher than 0.6, hence the items are reliable for further tests.

Table 4. Group Statistics of NSI (All Components)

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Normative	Male	100	22.9000	5.85947	.58595
	Female	100	22.9700	4.72358	.47236

Source: primary data, author

Table 4 shows that the average values for NSI among males and females are almost identical, as the difference is only 0.07. This means that normative susceptibility to interpersonal influences in buying fashion products is stronger among the female respondents. This is consistent with the findings of Ruane and Wallace (2014), who state that fashion is an issue relevant to females primarily.

Table 5. Independent Sample Tests of NSI (All Components)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Dif-	Std. Error Dif-	95% Confidence Interval of the

							ference	ference	Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Normative	Equal variances assumed	2.827	.094	-.093	198	.926	-.07000	.75263	-1.55420	1.41420
	Equal variances not assumed			-.093	189.467	.926	-.07000	.75263	-1.55462	1.41462

Source: Primary data, Author

Table 5 shows the independent sample t test based on the value of the t table which is 1.972. A homogeneity test must be conducted prior to the independent sample t test with the F test (Levene's test). If the variances are equal, the t test uses the assumed equal variances, and if the variances are not equal, the t test will use the equal variances not assumed. Based on the table above, the significance value of the F test is 0.094, which is higher 0.05, hence the variances are equal and the t test uses the assumed equal variances. The next step is to test the independent sample t test to examine whether there are differences between males and females in the normative element of susceptibility to interpersonal influences, with respect to purchasing fashion products in Surabaya, Indonesia.

A two-sided test using a significance value of 5% is used, and the t table is 1.972. The value of t measured is -0.093. As - t table ≤ t value measured ≤ t table (-1.972 ≤ -0.093 ≤ 1.972), and the significance is more than 0.05 (0.926), the alternative hypothesis as stated above is rejected, meaning that there is no difference between males and females in respect of the normative element of susceptibility to interpersonal influences in purchasing fashion products in Surabaya, Indonesia.

The t measured value is also negative (-0.093) meaning that group 2 (females) have a higher average score than group 1 (males). As is seen in Table 4, the average score of group 1 is 22.90 and the average score of group 2 is 22.97. This difference is not particularly significant, being only 0.07 for the NSI element.

Table 6. Group Statistics of NSI (Each Component)

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Nor1	Male	100	2.6200	1.10810	.11081
	Female	100	2.8600	1.06382	.10638
Nor2	Male	100	2.9000	1.28315	.12831
	Female	100	3.0700	1.16563	.11656
Nor3	Male	100	3.0500	1.27426	.12743
	Female	100	2.9100	1.08334	.10833
Nor4	Male	100	2.5500	.99874	.09987
	Female	100	2.6300	.90626	.09063
Nor5	Male	100	3.7300	1.17941	.11794
	Female	100	3.5400	.99919	.09992
Nor6	Male	100	2.7400	.94943	.09494

	Female	100	2.8500	.89188	.08919
Nor7	Male	100	2.3800	.83823	.08382
	Female	100	2.4300	.93479	.09348
Nor8	Male	100	2.9300	.99752	.09975
	Female	100	2.6800	.98350	.09835

Sources: Primary data, Author

Table 6 shows the average of each of the components (based on questionnaire items Nor1 to Nor8) measured in normative susceptibility of interpersonal influences in purchasing fashion products.

The average for the females in 5 out of the 8 items in the NSI test are higher than the male score for the same item. This highlights that most female respondents consider positive expectations of others is important when deciding to purchase fashion products. This means that psychologically, emotions are a relevant consideration for females (Christopher, 2016) and marketing studies have previously shown that females are relatively influenced by these considerations.

Table 7. Independent Sample Test of NSI (Each Component)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Nor1	Equal variances assumed	.500	.480	-1.562	198	.120	-.24000	.15361	-.54292	.06292
Nor2	Equal variances assumed	.497	.482	-.981	198	.328	-.17000	.17335	-.51186	.17186
Nor3	Equal variances not assumed	6.914	.009	.837	193.003	.404	.14000	.16725	-.18988	.46988
Nor4	Equal variances assumed	.602	.439	-.593	198	.554	-.08000	.13486	-.34595	.18595
Nor5	Equal variances assumed	.343	.559	1.229	198	.220	.19000	.15458	-.11483	.49483
Nor6	Equal variances assumed	.690	.407	-.844	198	.399	-.11000	.13026	-.36688	.14688
Nor7	Equal variances assumed	1.262	.263	-.398	198	.691	-.05000	.12556	-.29760	.19760
Nor8	Equal variances assumed	.112	.738	1.785	198	.076	.25000	.14008	-.02625	.52625

Sources: Primary data, Author

Table 7 contains the details of independent sample t test based on the NSI items in the questionnaires (Nor1 to Nor8). Only Nor3 has a significance value of 0.009, which is less than 0.05, hence the variances are not equal and the t test therefore uses equal variances not assumed. The value of t measured for Nor3 is 0.837, which is less than the t table (1.972). As the significance value is less than 0.05, the first alternative hypothesis, particularly with respect to Nor3, is accepted, demonstrating the difference between males and females in this item.

Group 2 has a lower average score than group 1, because the t value measured is positive (0.837). The average score for the males is 3.05 and for the females is 2.91. Similar conditions are found for Nor5 and Nor8, as the t values measured (Table 7) are positive (1.229 and 1.785), thus, group 2 has a lower average score than group 1 for both items.

The Nor3 statement is: "In buying fashion products, I used to buy the brands I think people will like them". Based on the results above, females pay less attention to buying brands they think people will like, while males think this is an important consideration when purchasing fashion products.

Further, the Nor5 statement is: "I like to know that fashion product that I buy will get good impression from others". The results show that males are more agreeable to this statement than their female counterparts. The same is true for Nor8 which states: "I identify myself by buying fashion products which the other people also buy". The males in the study demonstrated that they think it is important to identify themselves from the fashion products bought by others.

This is an exception because males become are sensitive towards others' opinion about their fashion style. It is important for males to conform to the expectations of others when deciding what fashion products to purchase and wear, thus the normative element of CSII is reasonably higher for males (Bearden et al, 1989).

Table 8. Group Statistics of ISI (All Components)

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Informative	Male	100	16.2300	2.06879	.20688
	Female	100	15.4700	2.47188	.24719

Source: Primary data, Author

Table 8 shows that the average score for ISI between males and females are almost identical, with a difference of 0.76. However, the results show that males have a higher average than females, because males tend to do more research about fashion brands before purchasing, which leads to an increase in comfort and confidence when wearing the product (Noh et al., 2015).

Table 9. Independent Sample Test of ISI

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Informative	Equal variances	2.205	.139	2.358	198	.019	.76000	.32234	.12435	1.39565

	assumed								
	Equal variances not assumed			2.358	192.041	.019	.76000	.32234	.12422	1.39578

Source: Primary data, Author

Table 9 shows that the independent sample t test, based on the value of the t table, is 1.972. Further, the significance value is 0.139 in the F test (Levene's test), which is higher than 0.05, meaning the t test used in this part is equal variances assumed.

To test whether there is a difference between males and females in the informative element of susceptibility to interpersonal influences in purchasing fashion products in Indonesia, a two-sided test was used with a significance value of 5% and a t table of 1.972. This value is less than the t value measured (2.358).

Since the t table is less than the t value measured (1.972 < 2.358), and the significance is more than 0.05 (0.019), the second alternative hypothesis is accepted, meaning that there is a difference between males and females in the informative element of susceptibility to interpersonal influences in purchasing fashion products in Surabaya, Indonesia. As the t measured value is positive (2.358), group 1 has a higher average score than group 2. The average score of group 1 is 16.23 while the average score of group 2 is 15.47, the difference is therefore 0.76.

Table 10. Group Statistics of ISI (Each Component)

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Inf1	Male	100	3.8900	.90893	.09089
	Female	100	3.6200	.92965	.09296
Inf2	Male	100	4.2400	.76700	.07670
	Female	100	4.1300	.73382	.07338
Inf3	Male	100	3.9000	.65905	.06590
	Female	100	3.8800	.76910	.07691
Inf4	Male	100	4.2000	.71067	.07107
	Female	100	3.8400	.96106	.09611

Source: Primary data, Author

Table 10 shows the mean of each component (based on questionnaire items Inf1 to Inf4) measured in informative susceptibility of interpersonal influences in buying fashion. The results show that males typically ask their friends to help them choose the clothes they are going to wear, to increase their confidence and help them achieve their expected social status and sense of belonging within a community (Noh et al., 2015; Pan, et al., 2015).

Table 11. Independent Sample Test of ISI (Each Component)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Inf1	Equal variances assumed	3.494	.063	2.077	198	.039	.27000	.13002	.01361	.52639
Inf2	Equal variances assumed	3.080	.081	1.036	198	.301	.11000	.10615	-.09933	.31933
Inf3	Equal variances Not assumed	4.134	.043	.197	193.459	.844	.02000	.10128	-.17976	.21976
Inf4	Equal variances Not assumed	6.419	.012	3.012	182.347	.003	.36000	.11953	.12416	.59584

Sources: Primary data, Author

Table 11 details the independent sample t test based on the ISI items contained in the questionnaires (Inf1 to Inf4). The components of Inf3 and Inf4 have a significance value of 0.043 and 0.012, which is less than 0.05, meaning the variances are not equal and the t test therefore uses equal variances not assumed. As the significance value for both components is less than 0.05, the first alternative hypothesis, particularly with respect to Inf3 and Inf4, is accepted meaning there is a difference between males and females in these items. All the t values measured are positive, therefore, group 1 has a higher average score than group 2, as shown in Table 10.

The results show that males tend to reassure themselves about the fashion items they buy by observing others (Inf1), asking their friends if they do not know enough about the fashion product (Inf2), asking friends/others to help them choose the best alternative of fashion products (Inf3) and asking for more information about the fashion product before they purchase (Inf4). These findings are consistent with the study by Lam and Yee (2014) which found that information technology, changing work practices of men and media influences may affect male fashion consciousness.

There are several findings from this study:

1. Males and females are relatively similar in their normative susceptibility of interpersonal influences with respect to buying fashion products.
2. Overall, there is a difference between males and females in terms of informative susceptibility of interpersonal influences with respect to buying fashion products.
3. The similarity in normative susceptibility of interpersonal influences in buying fashion products between males and females is influenced by the new paradigm of clothing. In the past, clothing and fashion have been issues that are typically associated with females, whereas, in recent times, males have also begun to consider these issues as important.
4. The difference in informative susceptibility of interpersonal influences in buying fashion products between males and females is the result of changes in information technology, internet and media exposure and the new paradigm of fashion which affects the way people think of, purchase and wear clothing.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, there is no difference between male and female normative susceptibility to interpersonal influences (CSII) with respect to purchasing fashion products, however there is a difference between informative susceptibility to interpersonal influences between males and females. This study uses 200 specific respondents aged between 17 to 45 years old. The analysis technique used is independent t-testing, which is typically unable to provide a broadened analysis. The result in this study are very specific to consumers in Surabaya City, Indonesia. Hence, future research may examine more respondents in more cities, to allow for more generalized results.

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