



Digital Literacy in Developing Public Understanding of Advertisements on the Shopee Platform

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Abstract

The presence of technology in digital marketing activities that support buying and selling activities poses a challenge for society in understanding and using it. This study aimed to determine efforts to improve *Shopee* users' literacy in responding to digital advertisements before making purchasing decisions. This article was written using a qualitative descriptive method by collecting relevant information and based on observations through interviews to obtain empirical views on the matter. The results of the study indicated that literacy was an important ability to face technological developments in buying and selling activities. Improving literacy can develop digital users to be more discerning in receiving information and using the *Shopee* platform, as well as advance the quality of digital platform users in Indonesia.

Keywords: digital literacy, public understanding, *Shopee*

Introduction

The presence of technology allows companies to facilitate easier interactions with all customers. Technology includes the interconnection of physical devices to collect and exchange data, as well as the use of artificial intelligence to automate repetitive tasks. In the business world, the application of technology significantly influences all aspects of buying and selling activities, including promoting products through digital channels. With the advancement of technology, online shopping platforms are evolving and implementing creative promotions such as digital advertisements. Digital advertising is a promotional medium that uses technology to convey information about a product offered to the public. Digital marketing promotes subtly yet effectively by leveraging advancements in digital technology (Bagus et al., 2023).

As technology advances, literacy becomes essential for individuals to understand whether the information they read is genuine or not. Digital literacy refers to the knowledge and skills users need to utilize digital media, such as communication tools, the internet, and more (Sulistyarini et al., 2022). The urgency of digital literacy for the Indonesian community lies in its ability to make internet usage and access a medium for learning, expanding knowledge, and acquiring new skills more easily, effectively, and cost-efficiently (Ekosputri, 2023).

In the digital age where online shopping platforms such as *Shopee* have become ubiquitous, digital literacy has emerged as an important factor in shaping the public's understanding and engagement with advertisements. As consumers are increasingly bombarded with a plethora of digital advertisements, it is important to explore how

digital literacy impacts their ability to understand and critically evaluate these promotional messages. This research focuses on examining the role of digital literacy in increasing the public's awareness and interpretation of advertisements on the Shopee platform. By investigating how different levels of digital literacy impact consumers' perceptions and responses to online advertisements, this research aims to provide insights into the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies and how better literacy can result in more informed and empowered consumers.

In this modern era, many new things must be learned as part of the adaptation process to advancements in times. Science and technology (IPTEK) in Indonesia lag significantly behind European countries. The slow implementation of technology in Indonesia is due to a lack of support for technological research, particularly in terms of budget. Therefore, technological development in Indonesia can be achieved through support from industry players (Suprianto, 2023). The ability to adapt technology to the needs of the Indonesian community varies across generations. According to observations by Putut Pamilih Widagdo, the baby boomer generation uses technology focused on utility, using mobile phones according to daily work obligations. In contrast, generations X, Y, and Z use technology more specifically, employing trending applications, making them tend to rely on their phones constantly for light and up-to-date information (Dharma, 2020). However, generations X and Y might have digital literacy skills similar to their predecessors. The lack of digital literacy in the Indonesian community is prevalent among the baby boomers and Generation X. Those aged 40 to 50 and above have experienced the transition from the traditional to the modern era. Rapid technological advancements have caused baby boomers to have different views, thoughts, and ideas about using information technology to complete their tasks.

Efforts to enhance technological knowledge in Indonesia can begin with the application of literacy as a benchmark for the awareness of the importance of studying technology. Technology encompasses all activities, including buying and selling. One technological innovation in business

is the market space. Marketplace is a place for wholesale and retail transactions accessed via the Internet (Studi & Administrasi, 2023). Trading facilities in the market space are only two-way: seller and buyer. The working concept is that products produced by sellers are provided in this market space for buyers (Teknologi, 2021).

Method

The method used in this study was a qualitative descriptive method that analyzes the public's literacy understanding of digital advertisements on the *Shopee* platform. The researchers conducted interviews and direct observations to observe, analyze, and describe the situation regarding the advertisements. The researchers actively participated as *Shopee* users when performing activities such as searching for, reading, and reacting to advertisements. This approach aims to empirically understand the user experience.

Results and Discussion

Literacy can be defined as the ability to read and write, which is essential for individuals to adapt to the advancements of the times (Ginting, 2020). Enhancing literacy is one of the efforts to advance society's ability to adapt to the world of technology. Digital literacy is the ability to understand information from various sources accessed through technological devices (Perpustakaan.bsn.go.id, 2021).

To identify the lack of literacy among the public in using the *Shopee* platform, observations were made through interviews with several respondents who are still indifferent to the use of technology in buying and selling activities and who have had poor experiences in purchasing goods on the *Shopee* platform. Digital literacy that can be improved to enhance public understanding of digital advertisements involves using application features and knowledge about the products in the advertisements. The following are two cases that cover the same topic, discussed through empirical views from several respondents via interviews.

Product knowledge

In the first case, there was a misunderstanding in scrutinizing the

information in digital advertisements, including the product description and the name of the item to be purchased. This is based on interviews conducted with informants M, S, D, and S, who are users of the *Shopee* platform: In the displayed advertisement, the title promoted a high-quality product at a very low price. However, the advertisement title did not include the relevant brand, only stating the type and model of the product and highlighting its outstanding features at a very affordable price. The photo in the advertisement was an illustration of a sophisticated-looking product, with product specifications that seemed unrealistic. The advertisement title combined the type of product and its features into one confusing sentence. When the item arrived at home, the product did not match the photo in the advertisement. Worse, the product was of very poor quality and experienced system malfunctions within less than three days of use.



Figure 1. Related product advertisements



Figure 2. Product Review

The digital advertisement encountered by the respondents was for a smartphone (Figure 1), promoting a device with very high specifications at a very low price. Without rational thinking, people who are unaware of the authenticity of the product being sold will purchase and spend money on an item that is not worth its price. In the *Shopee* advertisement review feature, it can be seen that the advertisement has very good reviews (Figure 2). Consumers, who only pay attention to the physical appearance of the product without detail, give five-star reviews without knowing the product's performance. This becomes a point that convinces more people to buy the product.

When looking at similar advertisements, many irregularities can be found that should alert the public when making purchases through online platforms. The discrepancy between the product description and photo can be identified through the appearance of the advertisement, which includes different product information and lacks the smartphone brand name. The price range set for the product does not match the high specifications that should be sold at a very high price.

Several factors can be identified that influence the lack of literacy among users in reading digital advertisements on the *Shopee* platform, including, such as: (1) Lack of further knowledge about the displayed advertisements. Users focus only on the headline that the product has high features and a low price. Users do not further identify the truth of the digital advertisement; (2) Being tempted by the headline. The language used in the advertisement is persuasive (Az-Zahra, P. J, et al., 2023), aiming to attract customers to the offered advertisement. In this case, the advertisement highlights a quality product at a low price and other advantages, making customers tempted by the digital advertisement.

Knowledge of Reservation Features

The second case involves a lack of digital literacy regarding the use of the *Shopee* application for placing orders. Based on interviews conducted with D and A, who are new users of the *Shopee* platform. Mistakes in ordering variants and units of products occurred because they did not understand the feature for

selecting the desired variants and quantities, and they did not leave notes for the seller. The difficulty in understanding how to place orders was due to the advertisement containing many incomprehensible sentences. Additionally, they were unaware of the chat feature for communicating with the seller. This issue arose from the lack of ordering instructions in the advertisement.

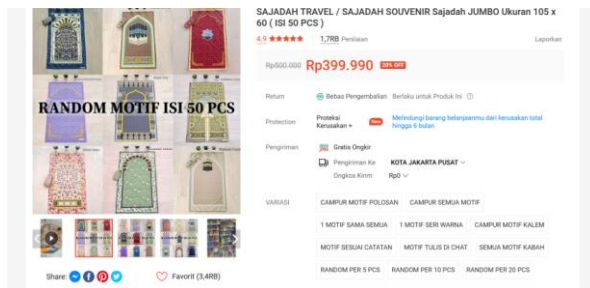


Figure 3. Shopee Product Advertisement

Table 1. Product Description
Product Description of Sejadah Travel

<p>Paket etalase ini adalah paket sajadah + pouch sebanyak 50 piece saja paket ini boleh minta motif tinggalkan di note / catatan saat melakukan check out</p> <p>cara melihat motif ready cukup klik motif satuan atau minta share motif ready di no wachat 08127000EE7</p> <p>E = 3 , o = 0 , i = 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - paket grosir isi 50 piece ini tidak ada free sablon yah kak - cut off 17.00 wib kecuali permintaan khusus - Sajadah travel adalah sajadah yang terbuat dari kain katun polyester printing - Hanya selebar kain dan ada kantong kecil yang dinamakan pouch Sesuai diphoto - Bukan sajadah busa yang tebal seperti karpet... - Sajadah travel cocok untuk dibawa kemana mana karena tipis dan ukurannya 105 x 60 cm ukuran pouch 10 x 20 cm - pesanan di proses tolong yang butuh cepat sebaiknya pakai instant , sameday atau bisa tanya ke no.wachat itu - Banyak orang menggunakan sajadah travel ini sebagai oleh oleh haji dan umroh buat kenang kenangan.... - Sebagian besar orang menggunakan sajadah travel ini buat acara pernikahan , tahlilan , ulang tahun , tasyakuran aqiqah.... <p>Informasi penting :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kalau kakak belum pernah beli sebaiknya beli 1 dulu sebagai contoh jangan merusak penilaian toko orang karena kecerobahan kakak didalam belanja... - Memberikan penilaian harus bijak supaya pintu surga selalu terbuka buat kakak.. - Kita pasti melayani komplain salah kirim dan salah quantity tapi kita cuman melayani komplain yang memberikan bintang 5 - yang memberikan bintang dibawah 5 artinya sudah tidak mau komplain tolong di mengerti <p>Butuh cara bijak untuk menyelesaikan masalah bukan dengan merusak penilaian toko orang menjadi kebiasaan kakak...</p> <p>TUHAN akan selalu membuka pintu surga kepada orang orang baik seperti kakak</p> <p>Terima kasih</p> <p>Selamat berbelanja</p>

The following is an advertisement encountered by the respondents Figure 3.

According to them, the advertisement was difficult to understand due to the language used for selecting product variants. The product description in the advertisement in Table 1 did not provide ordering guidelines. According to the respondents, this posed difficulties for potential consumers with limited knowledge of using Marketspace for online purchases.

The primary factor in the second case is the lack of literacy related to using the *Shopee* platform. Many users do not understand how to view the terms and conditions of orders in advertisements, customer reviews, or product descriptions, leading to ordering issues.

Based on the two cases above, it is evident that customer literacy regarding digital advertisements is very low. The tendency to manage digital literacy needs significant improvement, particularly in the ability to evaluate information (Mohammad Naufal Zabidi & Abd. Bassith Tamami, 2021). Therefore, a comprehensive strategy is needed to enhance digital literacy among the public, especially *Shopee* users, to critically identify and understand digital advertisements. The strategy includes: (1) Enhancing Product Knowledge: The most important aspect of scrutinizing digital advertisements on the *Shopee* platform is knowing the information about the products being sold. Product knowledge is a collection of information about a product, including category, brand, terminology, attributes or features, and price (Innay, 2020). By knowing the authenticity of the products being sold, users will be cautious of digital advertisements offering products with excellent specifications but unrealistic prices; (2) Language and Word Usage: Language is a key component in communication to convey intended messages (Mailani et al., 2022). Proper language will be easily understood and scrutinized by everyone. Language similarity is the main reason for the ease with which someone receives information and intent. Literacy is a social skill based on the ability to use language. Therefore, information must be conveyed in the correct language to be easily understood by the recipient. In digital advertisements, literacy is crucial for understanding the conveyed information; and (3) Improving Skills in Using *Shopee***: By learning about the features in the *Shopee*

application, viewing advertisement terms and conditions, reading product descriptions, and performing digital operations in daily life. This can help users make informed decisions before purchasing products in digital advertisements.

A solution to implement digital literacy on the *Shopee* platform is through well-constructed advertisements, in terms of language and images displayed in the ads. Advertisement language is essential to build a good cycle in buying and selling. Individuals with low literacy levels will more easily accept the apparent message made and determined by the media (Raharjo & Winarko, 2021). Therefore, clear communication language is needed in the advertisement.

Communicativeness is a crucial trait of advertisement language to make it easy for the public to understand, digest, and comprehend, with uncomplicated sentence structures that do not confuse the audience with the content (Putri, 2022). A strategy to support enhancing digital literacy among the public for understanding advertisements can be implemented by providing text on the thumbnail or main photo of the advertisement containing clear instructions and commands to "check description". This can capture attention and lead users to read the description section. In the description section, the advertisement writer provides a clear product description along with ordering guidelines, from selecting variants and product quantities to making payments.

Implementing digital literacy in understanding *Shopee* advertisements requires the involvement of both sellers and buyers to enhance public knowledge in placing orders. Being mindful of digital literacy can help adapt to the technological era that has penetrated all fields, including buying and selling activities.

Conclusions

In the current digital era, people need to adapt to the modern environment. In business activities, the use of e-commerce platforms such as *Shopee* has become an integral part of people's lives, behind the ease of online shopping several challenges need to be faced, public understanding is one of the challenges that need to be faced with digital advertising. Digital literacy is one way that can be done so that each individual can pay close attention to existing

digital advertisements. The wide market reach on the *Shopee* platform does not rule out the possibility that people must be aware of product authenticity and avoid mistakes in using the *Shopee* application for shopping. Increased understanding can be achieved by building self-awareness so as not to be indifferent to technology. In addition, sellers can carry out strategies that can build literacy to increase people's digital literacy.

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