

THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON PURCHASING CHICKEN MEAT ONLINE (A CASE STUDY OF INDONESIAN CONSUMERS)

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ABSTRACT

Aim: This study analyses the characteristics of consumers who purchased chicken meat through online shopping channels during the COVID-19 pandemic. Respondents were asked how often they purchase chicken meat online, the types of chicken meat they purchased, and the main reason they purchase chicken meat online. **Method:** A total of 108 respondents completed the questionnaire through an online survey from August to September 2020. Non-parametric tests were applied to process the data. **Results:** The results show that in terms of purchasing chicken meat online, the majority of Indonesian consumers have shifted to online purchasing due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Young people, people with adequate income, the level of education, and gender have an impact on the frequency of purchasing chicken meat online. **Conclusions:** Most consumers shifted to purchasing chicken meat online during the COVID-19 pandemic, and in terms of sociodemographic factors, male consumers and young people are more concerned about the delivery procedure. The research provides evidence that Indonesian consumers shifted to the online purchasing of chicken meat during the COVID-19 pandemic, which means consumers adapted to the new situation.

Key words: chicken meat, consumer behaviour, COVID-19, Indonesia, online purchasing

JEL codes: M310, Q1

INTRODUCTION

The spread of the COVID-19 virus affects nearly all aspects of life worldwide, including consumer consumption behaviour. Guney and Sangun [2021] confirmed some differences in consumer eating habits during and before the COVID-19 pandemic. At the moment, food safety seems to be a matter of greater concern to many consumers. As they mainly buy food from discount stores, consumers now eat fresh veg-

etables and animal products from farms. They also become more aware of food safety access, and these habits lead to changes in shopping behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic, including shifts in food access and food preferences. In India, the practice of consumer safety during the COVID-19 pandemic was initiated with physical distance. Furthermore, during the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers consider safety measures, hygienic practices, packing, convenience and traits of shopkeepers [Sehgal et al. 2021]. Those

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factors influence their shopping decision and, in addition, there are different shopping habits in different countries as well.

Currently, consumers prefer to purchase food online. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic drives Thai consumers to utilise food delivery applications [Chotigo and Kadono 2021, Muangmee et al. 2021]. Similar to Thailand, the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in Indonesia also affects consumer food purchasing. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesians also prefer to avoid physical meetings regarding food-purchasing behaviour. More health-conscious consumers are more willing to pay more and use online shopping [Hartono et al. 2021]. Technology adoption has become a trend among Indonesian consumers. Nearly all activities, including shopping, use the internet. The Government regulation of the *Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar* or PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restriction) has also boosted online food purchasing. Thus, people change their lifestyles from in-person activities to online activities [Khoa 2020]. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesian consumers buy their daily needs mostly online; for instance, they choose to buy food using an app and use an e-wallet to avoid physical money [Widayat and Arifin 2020]. There are several previous studies regarding consumer purchasing of food products during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, only a few researchers were paying attention to specific groceries, like chicken meat. Chicken meat is an ordinary meat sold at traditional markets or supermarkets before the pandemic. The outbreak of COVID-19 leads sellers to migrate to the online market. This finding is considered noteworthy as chicken meat is one of the Indonesian consumers' primary protein needs. In addition, the livestock supply chain is disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so there is an accumulation of production for producers. It has an impact at the consumer level; demand decreases, and the price also decreases; however, in other areas with stable demand, there are lower prices and lower purchasing due to the impact of many worker layoffs [Surni et al. 2020]. Sociodemographic factors also have a key role in chicken meat purchasing during the COVID-19 pandemic. This article discusses the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the online purchase of chicken meat.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

To answer the main research questions, we carried out an online questionnaire addressed to 318 respondents. The study was conducted in August and October 2020. There were 318 online questionnaires distributed to target respondents who buy chicken meat, but only 108 respondents returned their feedback. The rate of return for respondents that filled out the complete questionnaire was 34%. This study focused on JABODETABEK (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi) as these regions are part of a metropolitan city. At the beginning of the questionnaire, the respondent must provide information regarding location. In this questionnaire, this research did filter the data, as a respondent who came from outside JABODETABEK was removed from the list of respondents. In addition, JABODETABEK is categorised as a red zone area. A red zone is defined as an area where COVID-19 cases have a high occurrence. Indonesia's red areas include Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and the city of Bekasi.

The total number of indicators required for the sample is at least fivefold in the study. The sampling technique implemented is non-probability sampling. The research questions in this study are as follows:

- Q1: What is a consumer behaviour change in chicken meat purchasing during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Q2: What are the factors affecting purchasing chicken meat online during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia?
- Q3: What sociodemographic factors affect purchasing chicken meat online during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia?

The measurement scale in the questionnaire was a Likert scale of 1 to 5. The result was further analysed with a descriptive analysis to measure the characteristics of respondents and consumer behaviour for online purchases of chicken meat. The sociodemographic factors cover gender, age, level of education, monthly income, and family members.

In this study, non-parametric tests were used mainly because of both nominal and ordinal measurements. In particular, the Mann-Whitney U test was used for dichotomous categorical variables as

independent variables (e.g., gender, Female = 1 or Male = 0), and the Kruskal–Wallis test was used for multi-choice responses as independent variables (e.g., occupation). The non-parametric χ^2 Pearson test was used to examine the statistical significance of the differences. In addition, statistical significance was set at a p -value of 0.05 and a very significant p -value of 0.01.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The characteristics of the respondents consist of gender, age, education, income, and family members. Table 1 below presents the demographic characteristics of the 108 respondents.

Based on Table 1, the respondents were mainly male (58%), and the male (58%) to female (42%) ratio was relatively balanced. The majority are young, aged between 26 and 35 (70%). Most graduated with a diploma or a bachelor's degree (65%). On the basis of income level, the majority of respondents have a monthly income of IDR 2,500,001 – IDR 5,000,000 (48%). This number shows that the biggest group of respondents have sufficient income. There is no difference in tendency across all ranges based on family size. In general, the majority of respondents have between three and five family members.

Consumer Behaviour on Purchasing Chicken Meat Online During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The variables observed in analysing the consumer behaviour of purchasing chicken meat are namely; (1) the total amount of chicken meat purchased in a week, (2) the type of chicken meat purchased, (3) the place of purchasing chicken meat. Part of this study also observes consumer behaviour regarding weekly chicken meat purchasing frequency. There are four categories in this parameter, i.e., (1) Never, (2) 1–2 times in a week, (3) 3–4 times in a week (4) more than five times in a week. Table 2 shows the descriptive results of chicken meat purchasing frequency.

According to Table 2, a little more than half of the respondents often buy chicken meat. They buy chicken meat once up to two times a week (59%). This

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Total (N = 108)	Percent of N
Gender		
Female	45	42
Male	63	58
Age		
17–25	26	24
26–35	76	70
36–45	6	6
>45	0	0
Level of Education		
High School	24	22
Diploma/Bachelor's Degree	70	65
Undergraduate	14	13
Monthly Income (IDR)		
<1,000,000	3	3
1,000,000–2,500,000	12	11
2,500,001–5,000,000	52	48
5,000,001–10,000,000	31	29
> 10,000,000	10	9
Family Members		
1	0	0
2	22	20
3	29	27
4	28	26
5	29	27

Source: Author's own research

Table 2. Chicken Meat Purchasing in a Week

Chicken Meat Purchasing in a Week	Frequency	Percentage
Never	6	6
1–2 times	64	59
3–4 times	36	33
>5 times	2	2
Total	108	100

Source: Author's own research

finding aligns with Ismoyowati's [2015] research, where Indonesian consumers eat chicken-based food almost once a week. Setyanovina et al. [2021] also identified an increase in the number of purchases of chicken meat during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesian families with 1–2 members, 3–4 members and greater than or equal to 5 members. The presence of many family members probably causes the increase as a large number of family members will increase food requirements, especially protein needs. The result of χ^2 shows there are significant differences in chicken meat purchasing in a week (p -value < 0.05).

The other facts revealed by Umaroh and Vinantia [2018] state that most Indonesian people fulfil their animal-based protein needs from fish and chicken. In the Indonesian market, there are different types of chicken meat. Fresh chicken meat is typically sold in traditional markets, while frozen chicken meat is often sold in modern markets. Most of the marketplace offers ready-to-serve chicken meals in relation to online purchasing.

The most popular types of chicken meat purchased during the COVID-19 pandemic are shown in Figure 1. During the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers prefer to buy ready-meal processed chicken meat online (46%), followed by fresh chicken meat (22%), frozen chicken meat (21%), ready-meal frozen chicken meat (7%), and frozen chicken meat (3%). There is limited di-

rect access to the sellers of chicken meat due to the regulation of the Indonesian Government; thus, most Indonesian consumers purchase chicken meat online. On the other hand, most restaurants are restricted by the Government's regulations of customers eating-in. As a result, restaurants also offer delivery services and sell food online. The online ordering system offers consumers an easy way to buy chicken meat for ready-meal chicken meat. Muzayyanah et al. [2021] also stated that consumers prefer to buy fresh products such as fresh chicken meat online.

Concerning the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation has changed in the purchase of chicken meat [Setyanovina et al. 2021]. Chicken meat is usually sold in both conventional markets and modern markets. Nevertheless, after the COVID-19 outbreak, most butchers prefer selling their chicken meat online, either through online food delivery or via a short message. Many marketplaces in Indonesia also provide food delivery services, such as GoFood by Gojek Indonesia, GrabFood and GoShop by Grab, Sayurbox, and TaniHub. Also, various marketplaces sell food and non-food products, i.e., Tokopedia, Blibli, and Shopee. This study shows that most respondents prefer to sell food through delivery apps such as Grab, GoFood, and GoShop. People also buy chicken meat from sellers directly via WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. Chicken meat from a butcher shop is also available via online services. These findings correspond to Xinjie Shi's and Yehong

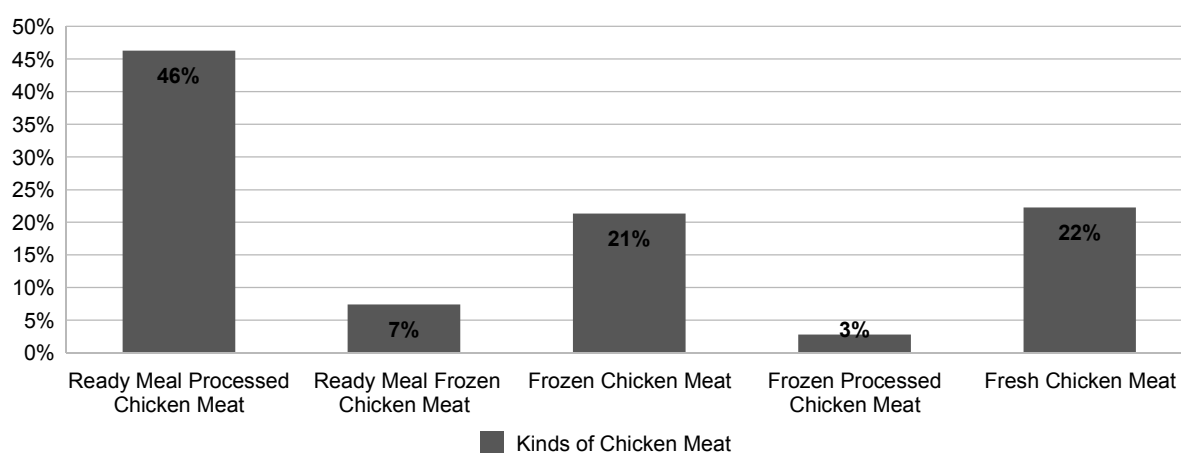


Fig. 1. Types of chicken meat in red zones (Jakarta City, Bogor City, Depok City, Tangerang City, Bekasi City)
Source: Author's own research.

Liu's [2020] claim that the outbreak of COVID-19 has increased consumers purchasing food online, and the majority are young people in large cities. These results reveal that Indonesian consumers will likely continue purchasing chicken meat to meet their dietary needs. In terms of the pandemic, the majority of Indonesian consumers shifted to using online food delivery orders. The COVID-19 pandemic situation promotes the rapid recognition of Indonesian consumers' use of technology.

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic Towards Purchasing Chicken Meat Online

Consumers buy chicken meat online for many reasons, such as product quality, affordable price, good service, order process, payment process, shipping process, promotions, product information, and production information. Product information describes the characteristics of the chicken meat product (price, halal certification, etc.), whereas production information describes how chickens are processed for meat.

Figure 2 shows that the consumer's primary consideration in buying chicken meat online during the COVID-19 pandemic is product quality (97%), affordable price (93%) and promotions (80%). Based on the χ^2 results, there are significant differences between

the main reasons of a consumer in purchasing chicken meat online ($p < 0.05$).

Through online applications, consumers perceive a high risk of food safety when purchasing chicken meat as perishable food items. The primary drive is that the COVID-19 outbreak has raised consumer awareness of food safety. Furthermore, price consideration still plays an essential role in the sales of chicken meat online, as the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the economy quite dearly. Due to unstable economic conditions, many people have lost their jobs too; thus, one of the consumers' considerations in online shopping is the affordable price of chicken meat. An online application is supposed to increase the number of sellers that offer big promotions for consumers in this uncertain economy.

In addition, other factors such as Order Process (56%), Payment Process (52%), Good service (47%), and Product Information (47%) also have a vital role in purchasing chicken meat online. Consumers are more aware of modern technology that makes it easier for them to buy online. An easy order process and payment process will make the consumer more comfortable.

This study also shows the change in the amount of chicken meat purchased online during COVID-19.

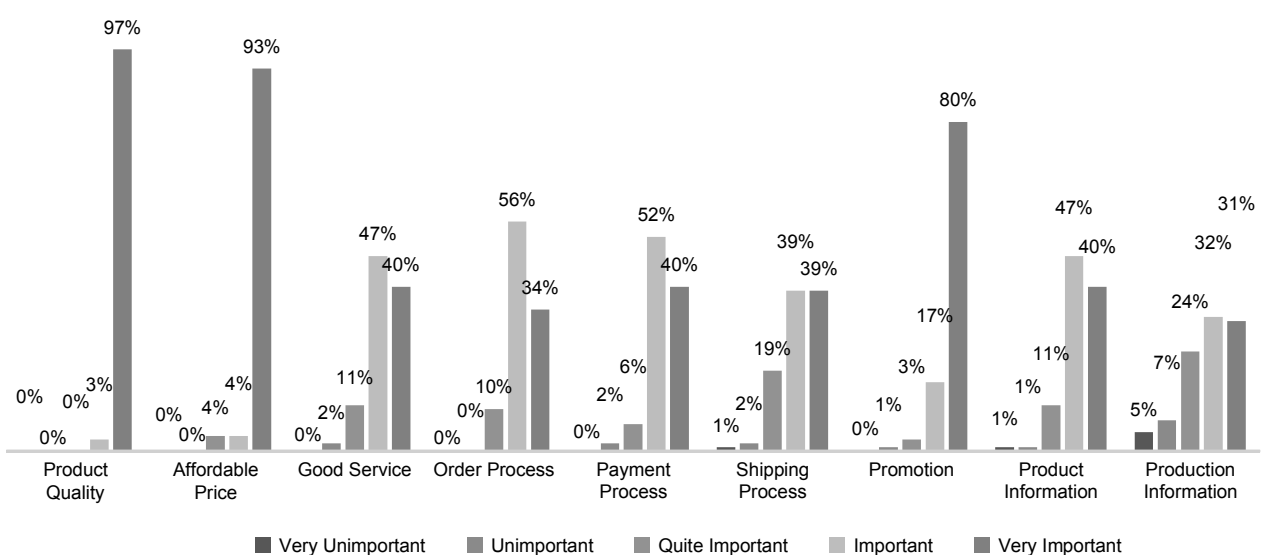


Fig. 2. The main reasons for consumers purchasing chicken meat online

Source: Author's own research.

There are five types of chicken meat available in the food delivery services applications, i.e., fresh chicken meat, processed chicken meat, ready-to-cook chicken meat, and chicken meat dishes (e.g., fried chicken, roasted chicken). This result is associated with the consumption of chicken meat during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 3 shows an increase in the number of purchased products, specifically chicken meat dishes, e.g. fried chicken or roasted chicken (77%), ready-to-eat chicken meat (73%), and ready-to-cook chicken meat (56%). These results show that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, most people prefer to purchase chicken meat from restaurants or cafés rather than cooking

chicken at home. One interesting fact is that the online purchase of fresh chicken meat remained constant during the COVID-19 pandemic, and no shifts were found during the COVID-19 pandemic in the purchase of fresh chicken meat products. Consumers still decide to buy fresh chicken meat from the butcher directly or from a traditional market.

Pandemic circumstances also affect consumers when shopping online [Sumarliah al. 2021]. The COVID-19 pandemic contributes to a change in consumer behaviour, in which people are encouraged to move from buying groceries in-store to online [Ali et al. 2021, Al Hawari et al. 2021]. In particular, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, most red zone consum-

Table 3. Change in Purchase Amount

Change in Purchase Amount	Total [%]				
	Fresh Chicken Meat	Processed chicken Meat	Ready-to-cook chicken meat	Ready-to-eat chicken meat	Chicken meat dishes (fried chicken, roast chicken)
Increase	25	32	56	73	77
Constant	57	47	34	18	12
Decline	18	20	10	9	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Author's own research

Table 4. The percentage of purchases online, even when the pandemic is over

Purchases online, even when the pandemic is over	Percentage
Very likely	37
Likely	47
Neutral	11
Unlikely	5
Very unlikely	0
Do not know	0
Total	100

Source: Author's own research.

ers are moving their purchase of chicken meat online. Furthermore, Table 4 shows consumers' intent on buying chicken meat online after the COVID-19 pandemic ends.

In this study, 37% of consumers said they would buy chicken meat online, and 47% were likely to purchase it online. This data is followed by 11% neutral, and 5% of consumers were unlikely to buy chicken meat online. The majority of respondents intend to buy chicken meat online. These results indicate consumer adaptability and convenience, especially concerning the online purchase of chicken meat. There are several reasons why people are encouraged to purchase chicken online. Demographics for consumers seem to play an essential role in online shopping.

Sociodemographic Effects on Purchasing Chicken Meat Online during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia

During the COVID-19 pandemic, sociodemographic factors have also had an impact on food consumption [Hassen et al. 2020, Chotigo and Kadono 2021]. Self-quarantine or lockdown policy has led to a shift in food consumption [Marinkovic and Lazarevic 2021].

Surni et al. [2020] revealed that socioeconomic effects affected the supply of chicken meat in the Indonesian market during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the internet was able to increase the market for chicken meat. The Mann-Whitney U test results showed that gender aspects significantly affected several behaviours and habits according to respondents' reasons for shopping online

(Table 5). A very significant difference between male and female respondents in the aspects of the delivery process ($U = 3030.5, p < 0.01$) and product information ($U = 3115, p < 0.05$) are apparent. Most male respondents prefer to get chicken meat online through online delivery orders than in shops or restaurants. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people avoid physical interaction and crowds. Office workers also prefer to place orders online and wait for food to come instead of eating-in at restaurants [Chai and Yat 2019, Sukumaran 2020]. In addition, product information is also one of the consumer reasons to shop online, particularly for male consumers. Chicken meat sold online should provide clear information as consumers do not feel the product experience physically.

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test demonstrated that the age of the respondent has a major influence

Table 5. Impacts of sociodemographic factors towards purchasing chicken meat online during the COVID-19 pandemic

Household Behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic	Gender	Age	Level of Education	Monthly Income (IDR)	Number of Family Members
	Mann-Whitney U				
The main reason for shopping online					
Product quality	3420.00	4.95	0.57	4.73	1.19
Cheaper price	3465.50	6.32*	5.55	2.58	3.05
Good Service	3185.00	3.18	2.84	3.26	13.31*
Order process	3252.00	3.71	0.01	3.45	5.47
Payment Process	3172.50	3.37	3.42	6.25	5.25
Delivery process	3030.50**	9.34**	1.51	9.98*	18.45**
Promotions	3375.50	6.66*	7.85*	2.61	4.43
Product Information	3115.00*	10.89**	1.03	7.47	4.68
Changes in the number of online purchases since March 2020					
Raw chicken	3529.00	3.55	0.43	3.67	3.74
Processed chicken	3562.00	4.62	2.43	3.09	8.14*
Ready-to-cook chicken	3395.00	3.52	1.29	6.33	10.11*
Ready-to-eat chicken	3456.00	0.05	6.49*	1.83	7.02
Chicken dish	3582.50	1.10	1.85	4.28	2.25

* p -value < 0.05 , ** p -value < 0.01

Source: Author's own research

on behaviour and habits in online shopping. Many aspects of delivery, promotion, cheaper product prices, and production information has substantial differences based on their age range. Young people (between 26 and 35 years) are primarily concerned about these. Male respondents prefer to purchase chicken meat online because it is easier than going to restaurants themselves. In addition, online food and the price of chicken meat offered by online sellers is also less expensive as promotions or discounts are the factors consumers consider; thus, the loyalty of young consumers will increase [Amin et al. 2021]. Young consumers also play an essential role in encouraging new consumers to purchase a product. In the online purchase of chicken meat, the product information attribute holds a significant aspect. The product description should be clear and detailed so the consumer's understanding can increase.

The level of education as a variable impacts the behaviour and habits of people when shopping online, as promotional aspects are perceived differently depending on the educational level. As most of the respondents have bachelor's degrees or diplomas, they look for promotional aspects when buying chicken online. High school participants also prefer to purchase chicken meat online when a promotion is offered. The monthly income variable greatly influences behaviour and habits in the drive behind respondents' online shopping. The delivery process differs according to the monthly income range of the respondents. As most people have sufficient income, they consider the safety of food delivery products (e.g., chicken meat). This finding also highlights the number of family members, with families of 3 to 5 members more interested in the delivery process and good service.

Since the pandemic started in March 2020, changes in online transactional behaviour, such as the growing frequency of ready-to-eat chicken meat purchases, have occurred. Thus, education level variables have a significant influence (p -value < 0.05). Some behaviour and habits are also controlled by the number of family members (p -values < 0.05), such as an increase in the purchase frequency of ready-to-eat chicken and processed chicken meat. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of consumers with a diploma or bachelor's degree that frequently buy ready-to-eat chicken meat

online has increased. Consumers with higher education levels are more prone to consume ready-to-eat chicken meat during the COVID-19 pandemic than those with lower education levels. In line with previous research, education level impacts food consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic [Poelman et al. 2021]. Chicken meat is more likely to be consumed and processed by a family of 3 to 5 members.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study reveal that Indonesian consumers shifted to online purchasing during the COVID-19 pandemic. They often purchase chicken meat online during the Large-Scale Social Restriction, around 1–2 times/week. In particular, various types of chicken meat are also sold online, namely ready-meal processed chicken meat, frozen chicken meat, fresh chicken meat, ready-meal frozen chicken meat, and frozen processed chicken meat. There are increasing sales of ready-to-eat chicken, chicken meat dishes, and ready-to-cook chicken meat. Consumers are more aware of food safety issues; thus, they prefer to purchase ready-to-eat chicken meat or ready-to-cook chicken meat. Meanwhile, the sales of fresh chicken meat were still constant during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regarding the sociodemographic factors, male consumers and young people are more concerned about the delivery process when purchasing chicken meat online due to food safety issues. In addition, consumers with adequate income and large families (3–5 members) also have concerns about the delivery process. Another fact is that young people also consider promotions and product information when they purchase chicken meat online. They tend to be more focused on product information when the product is sold online. Not only young people, but male consumers also pay detailed attention to the product information attribute. Large families prefer to buy processed chicken and ready-to-cook chicken during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consumers with a bachelor's degree or diploma prefer to purchase ready-to-eat chicken. For future research, we suggest exploring more about consumer behaviour in purchasing chicken meat online for a normal situation to check whether it results in similar findings.

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WPLYW PANDEMII COVID-19 NA ZAKUPY MIĘSA DROBIEWEGO PRZEZ INTERNET (STUDIUM PRZYPADKU KONSUMENTÓW W INDONEZJI)

STRESZCZENIE

Celem pracy było określenie cech konsumentów, którzy dokonują zakupów mięsa drobiowego za pośrednictwem internetowych kanałów zakupowych w czasie pandemii COVID-19. Respondentów zapytano, jak często kupują mięso z kurczaka przez Internet, jakie rodzaje mięsa z kurczaka kupują i jaki jest główny powód, dla którego kupują mięso z kurczaka przez Internet. **Metoda:** Łącznie 108 respondentów wypełniło kwestionariusz za pomocą ankiety internetowej od sierpnia do września 2020 r. Do analizy danych wykorzystano testy nieparametryczne. **Wyniki:** Wyniki pokazują, że większość indonezyjskich konsumentów przechodzi na zakupy mięsa drobiowego online z powodu wybuchu COVID-19. Wiek, poziom dochodów i wykształcenia oraz płeć mają wpływ na częstotliwość kupowania mięsa drobiowego przez Internet. **Wnioski:** Podczas pandemii COVID-19 większość konsumentów przestawia się na zakupy mięsa drobiowego przez Internet, a pod względem socjodemograficznym konsumenci płci męskiej i młodzi ludzie są bardziej zaniepokojeni procedurą dostawy. **Oryginalność:** badanie dostarcza dowodów w kontekście przechodzenia indonezyjskich konsumentów na zakupy mięsa drobiowego online podczas pandemii COVID-19, która zmusza konsumentów do dostosowania się do nowej sytuacji.

Słowa kluczowe: mięso drobiowe, zachowania konsumentów, COVID-19, Indonezja, zakupy online