

## Consumer Decision Making Process on Electronics Products in the College and Senior High School Students in Indonesia

Elimawaty Rombe

Department of Management, Faculty of Economics, Tadulako University,  
94118 Palu, Indonesia

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to examine the differences that may occur in the consumer decision making process in buying electronics product between the group of college and high school students in Palu (Central Sulawesi Province, Indonesia). This study uses two analysis tools of the independent t-test analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). This study found that the decision-making process of college and high school students in buying electronics product shows diversity and similarity. Respondents have distinctive opinion related to the influence of factors such as friends or relative's opinion, experience of the brand, examination of the products, influence of the salesperson and attitude toward advertising. However, both groups have similar notion in terms of brand loyalty. Therefore, both groups of respondents have the same vulnerability to switch brands. Small sample is one of limitation of this study, so that, the future research should involve large sample.

**Key words:** Consumer decision, consumer loyalty, attitude toward advertising, process, independent, research

### INTRODUCTION

Consumer decision-making is influenced by a variety of factors, both internal factors such as gender, age, marital status (Henthorne *et al.*, 1997; Opoku, 2012; Sidin *et al.*, 2004) as well as external factors such as the environment (Webster and Wind, 1972), advertising (Ko *et al.*, 2007), salespeople. Experience over the brand also gives a strong influence on consumer decision-making process (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Kim and Sullivan, 1998). Even with the top consumer experience utilizing the brand, the company will be able to map the profile of consumers and can predict their behavior in the future (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010).

The company made various efforts to provide stimulant to encourage their prospective buyers to make a purchase. Some common ways are through the creation of a brochure with pictures and specifications of the products, the manufacture of outdoor advertising in the form of a billboard that shows a picture of the product, even with the display a 3-dimensional image on the company's website. The objective is to convince consumers to choose products company. However, all consumers can not be directly affected by the stimulus. Consumers sometimes have to be convinced with a direct view, examine and even try a product before deciding to buy it (Rao and Monroe, 1988). Consumer loyalty is very important element for

integration because it will increase customer loyalty through loyalty programs and relationship marketing strategies (Hallowell, 1996). Loyal consumers can add some benefits to the company, for example, the flow of profits, lower marketing costs, a growing number of customers, increasing brand switching barriers and others (Reichheld and Teal, 1996). Loyalty can be defined as the frequency of re-purchase or re-purchase volume relative to a particular brand (Tellis, 1988).

Messages, packaging and time of ads are important factors for companies to improve their ads campaign. Advertising message associated with the message content or material will be conveyed to the audience regarding the product or brand. Brand message will affect the effectiveness of the ad in the sense of how powerful advertising message will be able to influence the behavior of consumers (Laskey *et al.*, 1995).

Although, the company has designed the ads, the influence of advertising will differ from one individual to another. Similarly, advertising effectiveness will also rely heavily on consumer attitudes toward advertising (MacKenzie *et al.*, 1986; MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989). Positive attitude toward the ad tend to improve the effectiveness of advertising while negative attitudes tend to lead to failure in the delivery of advertising messages. This study is undertaken to understand the different decision making process between college and high school students. Although, different in level of education and the

two groups are promising market for electronic products. Their purchase decision can be influenced by their family member or experience which it can influence the students decision in purchasing electronic products or might influence by internal factors. The students are categorised as agent of change with more critical and idealist in solving the problems (Leeuw *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, they also have strong influence on deciding which their best products or not. for them they can influence their parent to purchase the best products. This influence might be influenced by the marketing activities of the products, social status, demographics and marketing activities (Rudd *et al.*, 2012). Thus, the main objective of this study is to acknowledge the diversity of consumer decision making process in purchasing electronic products between the group of college and senior high school students in Palu.

**Consumer decision:** Consumer decision-making process through several stages, some researchers distinguish between the decision-making process on goods and services products. As the model proposed by Gabbot and Hogg (1994) that the decision-making through three stages: information search, compare alternatives and post-purchase evaluation. Models of consumer decision-making process of other developed states this process starts from the introduction of requirements, followed by information search and consumers make alternative selection, determination or decision of purchase and is followed by post-purchase behavior (Peter and Olson, 2009). Searching information includes the process of obtaining information before a purchase is made (Crozier and McLean, 1997). In addition to this, the process of information retrieval by Mowen is divided into two categories, namely internal search and external search. Internal search includes, among others, explore the memory of the knowledge and experience of a product (Crozier and McLean, 1997). Meanwhile, the external search includes examination of the sources of outside knowledge of individual consumers (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001). This can include sources of media, word of mouth communication or other neutral sources (Crozier and McLean, 1997).

**Opinion:** The opinion of the purchase decision-making process is described as the word-of-mouth (Herr *et al.*, 1991). In the decision process, the consumer will seek information from a variety of sources. Despite the many resources available in various places, among other companies in the form of advertising but it can not be denied that the opinion of others in the form of word-of-mouth is also a valuable resource for consumers

(Lutz and Reilly, 1974). Even more, the last researchers found that information from word-of-mouth has a dominant effect compared to the information obtained through advertisements in purchase decision-making process through a variety of products (Lutz and Reilly, 1974).

In another study noted that in the purchase decision making process of automotive products, consumer tend to rely on word-of-mouth or the opinion before deciding on a purchase (Engel *et al.*, 1969). The information comes from word-of-mouth has a strong influence in the consideration of the product, given the consumer acquired through face to face (Herr *et al.*, 1991). Therefore, this enables us to formulate the next hypothesis.

**Product experience:** Brand experience can be conceptualized as sensations, feelings, cognition and behavioral responses induced by stimuli associated brands that are part of the brand design and identity, packaging, communications and environmental (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). While the experience of the product occurs when the consumer interacts with the product. For example, when consumers search for a product and evaluate it (Hoch, 2002). Direct product experience occurs when consumers make direct contact with the product (Hoch and Ha, 1986) and may occur indirectly through advertising or virtual percentage (Kempf and Smith, 1998). Studies on product experience usually examines the possibility of an association with a diverse product experience thing like product decisions, attitudes, preferences and even repurchase (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). Experience the product (to be more precise prior experience) is the result of cognitive learning and forgetting process in a model of the actual psychology of memory (Langdon *et al.*, 2010). This cognitive process is based on the approach of human information process that includes the functions of attention, short-term memory, working memory, long term memory (Langdon *et al.*, 2010).

**Examination of product:** Examination of the product is a natural thing when before establishing a product purchasing decision, consumers do a physical evaluation of a product. Although, consumers can obtain product information through a variety of means but for some brochures, ads, images, product specifications have not been able to satisfy the curiosity of consumers before the taste or examine directly the product to be bought (Hoch and Ha, 1986). Even in an era where information technology has advanced when consumers can evaluate the products through various means such as the internet,

still can not replace the direct inspection of the products for some consumers (Kempf and Smith, 1998). Therefore, this enables us to formulate the next hypothesis.

**The influence of salesperson:** Salespeople have a duty to persuade consumers to buy a product, the role becomes very important because the decision-making process has not occurred in the store (Karab, 2013). In other words, most of the product purchases made on an ad hoc basis or mall store. Under these conditions, the role of the salesperson is very important, considering the sales force recommendations will have an impact in determining consumer purchasing decisions. Skill or expertise of the sales force is one of the factors that influence consumers to buy the company's products (Woodside and Devenport, 1974). Expertise includes presentation skills, ability to prospect determination, efforts to change the decision and offers a direct (Pennington, 1968). Salespeople must also have a better knowledge of the products or brands which they represent because it would be very difficult for them to convince consumers that the product will be sold.

**Brand loyalty:** Oliver *et al.*, (1997) defines loyalty as a deeply held commitment to consistently repurchase or reuse of products or services desired, thus, causing the purchase of the same brand or product of the same brand over and over, despite situational influences and efforts marketing behaviors that could potentially lead to the transition. Furthermore, Oliver *et al.* (1997) offers a framework of loyalty associated with differences in the structure of the development of consumer attitudes which consists of four stages. The present researchers claim that these stages are cognitive loyalty (cognitive loyalty), affective loyalty (affective loyalty), conative loyalty (conative loyalty) and active loyalty (loyalty Active). In the first stage, it is known as cognitive loyalty when consumers believe that a brand is the best alternative. The confidence is accumulated from prior knowledge or experience is gained from a brand new. In addition, affective loyalty is desire or attitude toward the brand evolve with a satisfying experience accumulated over the brand. However, the tendency to switch to another brand is still very open at this stage. Conative loyalty is the stage where the consumer is filled with positive experiences over the brand. At this stage, it is already implied a deep commitment to repurchase the brand. In the final stages, loyalty is an active when it is characterized by readiness to act to make the purchase again.

**Attitudes toward advertising:** Advertising is one of the tools for companies to deliver information about products

or brands to consumers. Besides advertising also serves to remind that the existence of the product, positioning the product or brand in the consumer's mind, even persuade consumers to buy the company's products. Advertising stimulate consumption and economic activity as well as value orientation (Pollay and Mittal, 1993). However, consumer attitudes toward advertising is very diverse, ranging from entertaining and admiration to cynicism and condemned (Pollay and Mittal, 1993). Attitudes toward advertising also depends on the culture of a nation such as the Bulgarians in general tend to be negative and not like the ads than the Romanian Nation and the attitude of these two nations also tend to be more negative toward advertising than Russia (Petrovici and Marinov, 2007).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research has multiple design include explanatory research and descriptive research design. Explanatory research was conducted to identify and understand which factors impact the consumer's decision among the two groups. Meanwhile, the descriptive research design was used to describe the characteristics of the population or phenomenon in order to answer the hypotheses that have been put forward.

This research was conducted in the Faculty of Economics in Tadulako University and SMU 2 Palu. Total population in this study was 2200 students of Economics Faculty at Tadulako University whereas high school (SMU 2) has 988 students. Samples were determined in this study were stratified sampling where the sample is in accordance with the purpose of the research is to determine the differences among population groups (Istijanto, 2005). This study involved 200 samples which originally consisted of 100 student respondents and 100 respondents high school students. However, there were several responses include incomplete and some of them empty, so that, the remaining sample in this study is 81 high school students. The total sample of students was 106, so, the total amount of the final sample was 187. The proportion of women are higher compare to men with 59 and 41%, respectively in this study. The respondents are divide into two level of education, for example, college students and senior high school. The proportion of women are 63% of college students involve in this study while the proportion of students in senior high school is 54%. In contrast, the proportion of male in senior high school are amounted to 46% respondents where as college students around 37% respondents.

**Research tools:** Survey is the most widely method used in a variety of business research, so that, this method was

Table 1: Level of education and gender

Education	Sex		Percentage		Total	Percentage
	Men	Percentage	Female	Percentage		
Senior high school students	37	46	44	54	81	43
College students	39	37	67	63	106	57
Total	76	41	111	59	187	

employed this method. This method utilized structured questionnaire containing a list of questions to the respondents that were selected as samples. This study answers the the hypothesis by used two alternatives analysis such as the independent t-test analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The independent t-test analysis was used to assess the difference among the two population while ANOVA Model analysis was conducted to analyze the differences between the means of three or more groups. Therefore, the SPSS Version 16 was used to analyze the data (Table 1).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Hypothesis:** The impact of people opinion in the consumer purchase decision process of college students and high school students are significantly different ( $H_1$ ). The impact of brand experience in the consumer purchase decision process of college students and high school students are significantly different ( $H_2$ ). The impact of product inspection in the consumer purchase decision process of college students and high school students are significantly different ( $H_3$ ). The impact of salespeople in the consumer purchase decision process of college students and high school students are significantly different ( $H_4$ ). The consumer brand loyalty among college students and high school students are significantly different ( $H_5$ ). The attitudes toward advertising among college students and high school students are significantly different ( $H_6$ ).

The second consideration is the highest-known of brand products. In this case, there are 19% of respondents stated that the famous brand into consideration in determining the selection of their products. The consumer always has a variety of considerations before deciding to buy the product. There are several items can be considered, for example, the brand product, quality, features and even to the country of origin of a product (Bravo *et al.*, 2012; Esch *et al.*, 2006; Godey *et al.*, 2012; Zolfagharian *et al.*, 2014).

Features of the product is the third-highest consideration by respondents to purchase electronic products. This study found that there are 11% of respondents stated that their main features into consideration in buying the product. In contrast, the

remain consideration of respondents refer to the low price 9%, the design of the product 4% and the country of origin 1%.

The relationship between products and primary consideration of respondents to purchase electronic products are varying. There were 51% of respondents bought smartphone based on its quality. It is related to the proportion of respondents who were choosen product quality as consideration to purchase electronic products 24%. Similarly, there were 56% of respondents claimed that high quality of product is the main consideration to purchase laptop or tablet. It is equivalent to 22% of the total respondents claimed that high quality of products is a major requirement to purchase products.

According to the empirical evidence of this study found that the group of student's respondents have a higher tendency to be influenced by the opinions of others compare to the responden group of students. This fact is reflected in the mean values for both groups of respondents (3.70 for students of college and 3.56 for senior high school).

The influence of brand experience in the consumer purchase decision indicates that the students of college tend to be more influenced by the experience of the brand compare to the students of high school. In other words, consumers will consider their experiences in using a product from a particular brand before decide to buy a new product. This can be seen on their respond in the mean value. The college students are account to 3.37 while senior high school students are amount to 2.83.

Consumers apply several methods to address which products need to be purchased such as searching for information through the product brochure. In this case, some people may feel confident enough just by looking at the brochures then it is foolowed by purchasing act. But the others might not satisfy before seeing a physical product and conduct careful examination. Even though, new customers might confident to purchase a product after the product have been used. In this study, the college students tend to be more involved in the physical examination of the product before deciding to buy or not buy a product compare to senior high school students. The level of product inspection for college students are higher (4.00) compare to senior high school (3.14).

Purchase decision might be influenced by the role of the sales force through their explanations and recommendations. It is not similar to the previous variables where the mean values for each of these variables were higher in the senior high school compare to the college students. The mean value of senior high school consists of 3.34 while college students consist of

Table 2: Current educational status, mean and standard deviation of variables

Variabels/Current educational status	N	Mean	SD	SE Mean
<b>Opinion of friends or families</b>				
Senior high School students	81	3.5586	0.76062	0.08451
College students	106	3.7005	0.65139	0.06327
<b>Experience</b>				
Senior high school students	81	2.8333	0.68807	0.07645
College students	106	3.3750	0.59587	0.05788
<b>Examination</b>				
Senior high school students	81	3.1420	0.46760	0.05196
College students	106	4.0071	0.46606	0.04527
<b>The influence of salesperson</b>				
Senior high school students	81	3.3458	0.56653	0.06295
College students	106	3.0126	0.53437	0.05190
<b>Loyalty</b>				
Senior high school students	81	3.1975	0.57107	0.06345
College students	106	3.1014	0.48646	0.04725
<b>Attitudes toward advertising</b>				
Senior high school students	81	2.9568	0.49374	0.05486
College students	106	3.1525	0.46984	0.04563

3.01. The loyalty identification of the consumers would provide important information for manufacturers of electronic products. The knowledge of both the consumer group loyalty will help the company to have proper strategy with the aim to strengthen the company's brand in the future. In this study, students in high school turns tend to be slightly higher than the level of brand loyalty of college students. The mean of students is 3.19 and the mean of loyalty students is 3.10. It can be seen that brand loyalty is rather difficult to expect in these two groups of respondents. Thus, it can be concluded that both the senior high school students and the college students are in a vulnerable level of loyalty zone. Both groups of respondents tend to move easily and relatively difficult to expect them to buy the same brand for electronics products, especially when they have to pay more expensive. They did not bother to look for a particular brand and prefer to buy brands that they get at the first store they encountered.

In terms of senior high school and college student's attitudes toward advertising, this study found that the senior high school students were less likely to have a positive attitude toward the ads compare to the college students. The data shows that the mean values of theirs toward ads between senior high school and college students are 2.96 and 3.15, respectively. This values shows that the position of the college students supports the ads as a factor to impact their purchase decision. Table 2 Levene's test of homogeneity using the test for equality of variance shows that the F-values varying from 0.58-2.167. The significance level for all variables was above 0.05 with the range from 0.447-0.143. Levene's test requires that the variance of a variable is declared homogeneous if the significance level is >0.05. From the test results shows that all variables have significant value

Table 3: Homogeneity test

Variables	Levene's test for equality of variances	
	F-values	Sig.
<b>Opinion of friends or families</b>		
Equal variances assumed	0.624	0.430
Equal variances not assumed		
<b>Experience</b>		
Equal variances assumed	1.821	0.179
Equal variances not assumed		
<b>Examination</b>		
Equal variances assumed	2.167	0.143
Equal variances not assumed		
<b>The influence of salesperson</b>		
Equal variances assumed	0.959	0.329
Equal variances not assumed		
<b>Loyalty</b>		
Equal variances assumed	1.099	0.296
Equal variances not assumed		
<b>Attitudes toward advertising</b>		
Equal variances assumed	0.580	0.447
Equal variances not assumed		

is >0.05, so that, all variables can be tested using the t-test. The independent test results demonstrate that the t-test of 6 hypotheses proposed four are proven and the other two are not proven (Table 3).

The first hypothesis which states that, the power of other people's opinions influences the consumer buying decision process of students and high school students were significantly different, based on t value of -1.372 with a significance level of 0.172 or  $\alpha > 0.05$  was not proven. In other words, that there is no difference in the strength of consumer opinion of others students and high school students in the decision making process. Both of the college and high school students have similarities in one variable that is suspected to influence their decision making processes to purchase electronic products. Both groups of respondents have strong impact on the opinions of friends or relatives in the purchase decision making process of electronic products.

The second hypothesis states that, the strength of the effect of brand experience in the consumer purchase decision process between students and high school students are significantly different. In other words, there are distinctive opinion between the college students and senior high school students related to the brand experience in their purchase decision for electronics products. The college students tend to be more intense to inspect products carefully and it is not enough to read the brochure or pictures. Meanwhile, senior high school students pay less attention to the physical product quickly and they tend to believe the pictures and brochures. The third hypothesis shows that, the strength of the product inspection effect in the consumer purchase decision process between the college students and senior high school students are also significantly different. In

Table 4: The result of independent t-test

Variabels	t-values	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Hypothesis
Opinion of friends or families	-1.372	185	0.172	-0.14183	Not supported
Experience	-5.759	185	0.000	-0.54167	Supported
Examination	-12.560	185	0.000	-0.86510	Supported
The influence of salesperson	4.117	185	0.000	0.33327	Supported
Loyalty	1.241	185	0.216	0.09612	Not supported
Attitudes toward advertising	-2.760	185	0.006	-0.19565	Supported

In addition, the fourth hypothesis states that the impact of the sales force in the consumer buying decision process among the college students and senior high school students are significantly different. The senior high school students tend to be more rely on the approach of sales force compare to the college students. Furthermore, the fifth hypothesis depicts that the brand loyalty among the college students and high school students are also different. In fact, this study found that the level of significancy of the t-test value is higher (Table 4).

Therefore, this study claims that there is no difference between consumer loyalty in the college students and senior high school students. Both groups are equally relatively less loyal to a brand and they have the same vulnerability to switch brands. Lastly, this study also found that the attitudes toward the ads between the college and senior high school students are different. It can be seen that the level of education impacts their decision makin process in purchasing the electronics products. This study is important for business that focus on selling their electronic product to the college and high school students. The business should understand that there are several different perspectives between college and high school students, so that, the dimensions in this study can be considered in the planning process of theirs marketing strategy.

**CONCLUSION**

This study suggests that general opinion friends or relatives, the experience of the brand, product physical examination and the influence of salespeople have an influence in the decision-making process of purchasing electronics products. Therefore, manufacturers and retailers need to consider the above factors in order to set up an appropriate marketing plan. In addition, word of mouth strategy is a potential strategy to apply through several channels such as social media. Educational level is also an important factor to consider in order to obtain maximum results. The loyalty of consumers to a brand is one key for the successful company, so that, maintaining the customer loyalty is very important. In this case, the

college and senior high school students are potetial consumers for electronic producers. For this reason, companies as well as retailers need to innovate their ads strategies in order to imporve the sales level.

**LIMITATIONS**

This study has limitation in terms of the number of respondents and method of analysis. Explanatory research paradigm might the best alternative method to understand the differenciate between the two groups.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Furthermore, this study consists of one high school and faculty students. Thus, this study needs to examine in large samples with involving the number of schools and faculties with the aim to have generalization of this study.

In this case, the future study might apply structural equation model to understand the relationship between the constructs.

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