THE INFLUENCE OF DIGIMON MOVIE AND FANDOM TOWARDS ACTION FIGURE PURCHASE DECISION

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Abstract: *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna is a Digimon movie series that was aired in 2020. To accommodate Digimon fans in Indonesia, the community created a Facebook group by the name of Digi-In. The research objectives are to identify the influence of motives to watch Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna movie and the intensity of information exchange in the Digi-In Facebook group towards the online purchase decision of Digimon action figures. This research takes a sample of 386 people out of the total of 10.700 people who are in the Digi-In group using the purposive sampling technique. This research is based on the positivism paradigm with a quantitative approach and uses a survey method. The result of this research shows the influence of motives to watch Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna movie is 28.6% and the intensity of information exchange in the Digi-In Facebook group towards online purchase decision of Digimon action figures reaches 31.7%. Simultaneously, there is a 39.7% influence of the two variables. Based on the results, we can conclude that there is certainly an influence of the two independent variables, partially and simultaneously, on the online purchase decision of Digimon action figures. The recommendations from the researchers are that watching movies could be chosen as a medium of self-relaxation to kill the leisure time and that the Digi-In community should maintain their group's cohesiveness and share information responsibly.*
Keywords: action figure, Digi-In Facebook group, Digimon Adventure movie, group communication, purchase decision.

INTRODUCTION

Digimon, which stands for *Digital Monsters*, is a Japanese animation franchise that was created in the form of anime, manga, video games, and card games by the Akiyoshi Hongo group. Starting from virtual pets in the *Tamagotchi* game in 1997, the appearance of *Digimon* began to rise as Toei Animation turned it into an anime series entitled *Digimon Adventure* with 54 episodes in 1999-2000. *Digimon* production also penetrated the cinemas. In Japan, *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* was first released on the 21st February 2020. This film was made to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the *Digimon* franchise and to tell the story of the last adventures of *DigiDestined* (as the chosen child characters were called) with their *Digimons* as they have grown into adults.

In the post-modern era, the fan base communicates face-to-face and also uses social media such as Facebook, which could create team engagement (Stavros et al., 2014), synchronous communication processes (Fensi, 2019), and gain social support (Indian & Grieve, 2014). Facebook is in the 4th position of the most used social media by Indonesian people, after Youtube, Whatsapp, and Instagram in January 2021 (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2021). Virtual communities consist of people who have similarities and are formed through cyberspace and the interactions that occur in them (Prayugo, 2018). On Facebook, communities are formed in groups. Personal communication between community members forms a harmonious social relationship, which is an important aspect of information delivery (Hossin, 2018). Digimon fans in Indonesia have their own Facebook private group called Digi-In (Indonesian Digimon Community). Digi-In was formed as a forum for interaction and information sharing among Digimon fans throughout Indonesia (Digi-In, 2011). This group is managed by 9 administrators and already has more than 10.000 members. Digi-In is currently a Digimon fandom group with the most members and interactivity in Indonesia.

Digimon fans also have an interest in action figures that are sold online or what the (Rippon, 2017) research called merchandising and franchising of images. Data shows that in January 2021, 87% of internet users aged 16 – 64 years purchased products online (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2021). Online shopping was considered more practical and easier (Clemes et al., 2014). A marketplace is a place for sellers to run their business and increase consumer trust in the transaction mechanism (Hong & Cho, 2011).

Episodic memories of *Digimon* are attached to people's minds even to the very details (Tang et al., 2016). Researchers see the communication phenomenon that the purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures through online shopping was influenced by various factors. Previous studies analysed the influence of motivational factors and consumer perceptions on purchase decisions (Saputra & Semuel, 2013), while this study analyses the factors of the motives to watch *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie and the intensity of information exchange in Digi-In Facebook group.

A movie may give a cognitive, affective, and behavioural impact on its audience. This behavioural impact is the highest level of influence because it moves people to take action. In this study, what we want to know is the behavioural impact of watching Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna movie, especially on the purchase decision of Digimon action figures.

Meanwhile, the information exchange in the Digi-In Facebook group also often consists of action figure photos shared among the members. Like a movie, joining a community and exchanging information between members can give them cognitive to behavioural impact. Researchers want to know the influence of the intensity of information exchange on the purchase decision of Digimon action figures.

Based on the background above, the problem formulation in this study is as follows:

1. How much influence does the motive for watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie have towards online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures?
2. How much influence does the intensity of information exchange in Digi-In Facebook group have towards online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures?
3. How much influence do the motive for watching Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna movie and the intensity of information exchange in Digi-In Facebook group have towards the online purchase decision of Digimon action figures?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, the considered function of group communication is social relations and persuasion (Anggawiguna & Destiwati, 2019). The function of social relations was seen in the information exchange activities in the Digi-In Facebook group, while the function of persuasion was the effort that the community members put to influence the purchase of Digimon action figures. The grand theory of this research is the Uses and Gratifications Theory developed by Ha et al. (2015). This theory suggests five typologies of gratification motives of people using mass media: cognitive (sharing knowledge, acquisition of information, and seeking consultation), hedonic (deviation, aesthetic, entertaining, resting or passing time, and joyful experiences), integrative (forming personal identity, strengthening trust, confidence, and status), social interactive (interpersonal communication exchanges and bonding between individuals via a technology-enabled space), and mobile convenience (the ease of effort whilst not being subjected to time and space limitations).

Besides personal interests, people's motives to watch movies also come from their community networks (Imang, 2015). The members of the Digi-In community have different motives when watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna*. These motives include filling spare time, getting entertainment, enjoying time, playing back childhood memories, relaxing from daily activities, etc. This is examined in this study, especially regarding its influence on the members' decision to purchase *Digimon* action figures.

Meanwhile, Group Achievement Theory by Ralph Melvin Stogdill as cited in (Sendjaja et al., 2018), is the scope of the middle theory. This theory talks about efforts to achieve group productivity through member inputs (individual behaviour, interactions, and expectations), mediating variables (the formal structure and role structure of the group, such as group status and goals), and group outputs (the achievement of group goals). Every day, some members would provide information about *Digimon*, either about its anime series, movies, action figure photography, exhibition events, games, or the latest merchandise. From this activity, researchers want to know its influence on the decision of Digi-In community members to purchase *Digimon* action figures.

Information Processing Theory by William James McGuire as the applied theory of this research describes six stages of attitude change: presentation, attention, comprehension, acceptance, retention, and action (Severin & Tankard, 2007). This theory was examined because it is relevant to the focus of the research.

Recently, *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie was released in a digital form and aired through the fansub site. This film featured some characters who have been idolized by fans since the release of the first *Digimon Adventure* movie, only with a different story setting. On the other hand, the Digi-In Facebook group unites fandom interest by using the movie as a topic. The online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures goes through a process of presentation, attention, comprehension, acceptance, retention, and action.

METHODS

This research is based on the positivistic paradigm, which has the characteristics of hypothesis testing in the structure of the hypothetico-deductive methods (Kriyantono, 2009). The research uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. The type of research conducted is explanative, explaining the causality (cause-effect relationship) between two independent variables and one dependant variable. The data collection techniques are divided into two types, namely primary data by distributing questionnaires with closed statements to the research sample and secondary data by reading relevant literature books, information in Digi-In Facebook group, and several journals and official websites. The measurement scale used in compiling the questionnaire is a Likert scale with four alternative answers: "strongly disagree", "disagree", "agree", and "strongly agree".

The population of this study was all administrators and members of the Digi-In Facebook group. The population characteristic in this study was watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie. The population size of this study is 10.700 Facebook accounts in the Digi-In Facebook group, consisting of 9 administrators and 10.691 members. The sampling technique in this study was purposive sampling because the sampling was carried out with certain criteria. The criteria for the research sample were individuals in the Digi-In Facebook group who have watched *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie. The formula for determining sample size follows the Slovin formula (Kriyantono, 2009).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Annotations:
n is a sample size
N is a population size
e is a significance level or error tolerance

Using a significance level of 0.05, the population could be represented by a sample size of 386 Facebook accounts in the Digi-In Facebook group. The questionnaire consists of 53 statements, of which, 21 statements were for the motives of watching the movie, 16 statements for the intensity of information exchange on Facebook, and 16 statements for the action figures purchase decision. Each of the statements is derived from the theoretical basis used in this research.

The motives for watching the movie were measured by 5 dimensions from the Uses and Gratifications Theory: 4 statements of cognitive, 9 statements of hedonic, 2 statements of integrative, 3 statements of social interactive, and 3 statements of mobile convenience. Meanwhile, the intensity of information exchange in the Facebook group was measured by 3 dimensions from the Group Achievement Theory: 5 statements of member inputs, 5 statements of mediating variables, and 6 statements of group outputs. Action figure purchase decisions were measured by 6 dimensions from the Information Processing Theory: 2 statements of presentation, 2 statements of attention, 2 statements of comprehension, 4 statements of acceptance, 4 statements of retention, and 2 statements of action.

The questionnaire has passed the pre-test with the validity result as follows. Six statements of X1 variable dimensions were invalid, all statements of X2 variable dimensions were valid, and one statement of Y variable dimensions was invalid. The invalid statements were deleted from the research questionnaire which was given to all respondents. Besides that, the questionnaire was highly reliable with the result of Cronbach's Alpha test, being above 0,8 for every research variable.

In this research, the data analysis used was correlation analysis, both the simple correlation and the multiple correlations. The formula used to calculate said correlation was Pearson's product-moment. Then proceed to multiple linear regression analysis to predict the state of the dependant variable if two independent variables were manipulated. The multiple linear regression equation was represented by:

$Y' = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e$

Annotations:

Y' is the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figure

a is a constant

b_1 is the regression coefficient of independent variable 1 with the assumption that X_2 is constant

b_2 is the regression coefficient of independent variable 2 with the assumption that X_1 is constant

X_1 is the motives for watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie

X_2 is the intensity of information exchange in Digi-In Facebook group

e is the prediction error

Priyatno (2013) suggests that the analysis of the determination coefficient (R2) is used to determine the percentage of influence of the independent variables on the dependant variable. The hypothesis was examined using a partial test (t-test) and simultaneous test (F-test) through SPSS for Windows version 24.0.

RESULTS

Respondent Demographics Profile

There are 386 members of the Digi-In Facebook group who became the respondents of this study. There are 362 male respondents (93.8%) and 24 female respondents (6.2%). Most of the respondents are within the age range of 26 – 30 years old with a percentage of 49.7%. There are more respondents who work as private employees compared to other occupations, with a percentage of 49.2%. The majority of respondents live in Java and Bali, with a percentage of 64.8%.

The Influence of Motive for Watching Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna Movie Towards Online Purchase Decision of Digimon Action Figures

There was a positive correlation between the variable of motives for watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie (X1) and online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures (Y) of 0.535. This shows that the more motives that people have for watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie, the higher their online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures is, and vice versa. The rate of 0.535 indicated a significant level of correlation. If the motives for watching the movie changed, the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures might also change. The rate of sig. (2-tailed) between the X1 variable and the Y variable of 0.000 < 0.05, then there was a significant relationship between the motives for watching the movie and the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures.

The rate of R Square X1 - Y statistical results of 0.286. This meant that the influence of the X1 variable (the motives for watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie) on the Y variable (the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures) was 28.6%. While the remaining 71.4% were influenced by other factors not examined in this study, such as psychological aspects of having the hobby of collecting action figures and other aspects that encourage the purchase of action figures, such as mobile games.

The rate of calculated t for the X1 variable was 7.126 with a significance of 0.000. The rate of t-table at a significance of 0.05 two-tailed test with dk = 386 – 3 = 383 was 1.960, so

7.126 > 1.960. The conclusion was that Ho was rejected, meaning that there was an influence of the motives for watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie on the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures.

The Influence of Intensity of Information Exchange in Digi-In Facebook Group Towards Online Purchase Decision of Digimon Action Figures

The rate of 0.563 indicated that there was a positive relationship between the variable of the intensity of information exchange in the Digi-In Facebook group (X2) and the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures (Y). The more intensive the exchange of information in the Digi-In Facebook group, the higher the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures, and vice versa. The rate of 0.563 indicated a significant level of correlation. This meant that if the intensity of information exchange in the Digi-In Facebook group changed, the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures might also change. The rate of sig. (2-tailed) between the X2 variable and the Y variable of $0.000 < 0.05$, then there was a significant relationship between the intensity of information exchange in the Digi-In Facebook group and the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures.

Meanwhile, the rate of R Square X2 - Y from the statistical analysis was 0.317, which meant that the influence of the X2 variable (intensity of information exchange in Digi-In Facebook group) on the Y variable (the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures) was 31.7%. The remaining 68.3% were influenced by other factors that were not examined, such as the existence of *Digimon* periodical events and attractive promotions from the marketplace.

The rate of calculated t for the X2 variable was 8.400 with a significance of 0.000. The rate of t-table at a significance of 0.05 two-tailed test with dk = 386 – 3 = 383 was 1.960, thus 8.400 > 1.960. Therefore, Ho was rejected, meaning that there was an influence of the intensity of information exchange in the Digi-In Facebook group on the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures.

The Influence of Motive for Watching Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna Movie and the Intensity of Information Exchange in Digi-In Facebook Group Towards Online Purchase Decision of Digimon Action Figures

The rate of multiple correlation coefficient was indicated by the R notation of 0.630. This rate shows a positive relationship between X1 and X2 variables simultaneously with variable Y. The more motives for watching the *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie and the more intensive the exchange of information in the Digi-In Facebook group, the higher the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures. There was a significant relationship between the two independent variables and the dependant variable. Because the rate of correlation coefficient was more than 0, which means there was an influential relationship.

The multiple linear regression equation was formulated as Y' = 10.330 + 0.284 X1 + 0.432 X2 + e. The regression equation could not be used as a prediction and estimation tool if the significance rate is more than 0.05 (Hartono, 2010). Because the significance rate (sig.) was less than 0.05, the multiple linear regression equation could be used as a predictive tool. The constant of 10.330 implied a constant value of the motives for watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* variable (X1) and the intensity of information exchange in the Digi-In Facebook group variable (X2) affected the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures variable (Y) by 10.330 units. The X1 regression coefficient of 0.284 meant that every 1% addition in the value of the motives for watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* variable (X1) will cause an increase of 0.284 in the rate of the online purchase decision

of *Digimon* action figures variable (Y). The positive coefficient shows that the X1 variable had a direct relationship with the Y variable. This meant that the greater the motives for watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie, the higher the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures.

Simultaneously, the X2 regression coefficient of 0.432 meant that every 1% addition in the rate of information exchange intensity variable in the Digi-In Facebook group (X2) will cause an increase of 0.432 in the rate of the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures variable (Y). In addition, a positive coefficient indicated that the X2 variable had a unidirectional relationship with the Y variable. This meant that the greater the intensity of information exchange in the Digi-In Facebook group, the higher the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures. The X1 regression coefficient of 0.284 was less than the X2 regression coefficient of 0.432, so it could be concluded that the X2 variable had a greater influence than the X1 variable on the Y variable. The significance rate of X1 and X2 variables was $0.000 < 0.05$. This indicated a good influence from the motives for watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* variable (X1) on the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures variable (Y). Likewise, the influence of the intensity of information exchange in the Digi-In Facebook group variable (X2) on the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures variable (Y) was also significant.

The rate of R Square was 0.397. This meant that the motives for watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* variable (X1) and the intensity of information exchange in the Digi-In Facebook group variable (X2) had an effect of 39.7% on the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures (Y). While the remaining 60.3% comes from the influence of other factors not examined in this study, such as product quality and price.

The rate of calculated F was 125.999 with a significance of 0.000. The rate of F-table at a significance of 0.05 with dk in the numerator = 2 and dk in the denominator = $386 - 2 - 1 = 383$ is accounted for 3.02. Since the rate of $125.999 > 3.02$, Ho was rejected. The conclusion was that there was an influence from the motives for watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie and the intensity of information exchange in the Digi-In Facebook group simultaneously on the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures.

Information Processing Theory said that one of the elements of communication is persuasion, which will influence the changes in human attitude. William James McGuire (1968) in Severin & Tankard (2007) stated that persuasive information will change individual attitudes, in terms of cognitive, affective, and behavioural. The presence of persuasive messages from the marketplace and community friends can influence individual attitudes, which then lead to a purchase decision. This study examines the Information Processing Theory to determine the influence of the two independent variables on the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures.

The determination coefficient shows the influence of motives for watching *Digimon Adventure Last Evolution Kizuna* movie and the intensity of information exchange in the Digi-In Facebook group simultaneously on the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures, with a percentage of 39.7%. The tendency of respondents who answered "agree" and "highly agree" on the questionnaires also shows that Information Processing Theory is correct for the variable of online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures.

The *Digimon Adventure Last Evolution Kizuna* movie, as the latest production in 2020, had been awaited eagerly by *Digimon* fans. The existence of the Digi-In Facebook group as a forum for *Digimon* fandom in Indonesia helps the spread of information relating to that movie. besides that, the Digi-In Facebook group is also used as a place to share photos of *Digimon* action figures, until the administrator created a special Facebook group for buying and selling by the name of Digi-In (Marketplace). The combination of these factors influenced

the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures, as seen from the percentage of determination coefficient which was higher than the coefficient value of each variable.

According to the respondents' answers in the research questionnaire, the movie and information exchanged in the Digi-In Facebook group were carefully considered, understood, and selectively remembered for further identification of how those factors instil the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures. The presence of the movie which featured the previous *Digimon* characters and added two new *Digimon* characters as well as the interaction in the Digi-In Facebook group that showed the collection of action figures belonging to the community members from the early 2000s to the latest releases had a significant influence on the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures.

DISCUSSION

There was little influence of the X1 variable (the motives for watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie) on the Y variable (the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures) at 28,6%. It was in line with the results of Fauzan's (2015) research on the influence of motives for watching the "Mata Lensa" programme on ANTV which was also classified as weak on information satisfaction of the Pekanbaru Photography Community. Contrary to the research of Shadel et al. (2012) which showed the significance of the influence of smoking motives in movies on the future smoking risk for middle school students.

Concerning the exchange of information in the Facebook group, the result of this study was in line with Nugroho's (2014) research which examined the provision of reproductive health materials for adolescents. The exchange of information increased the knowledge of members of the Facebook group and lead to the formation of behaviour according to the information obtained. The function of the Facebook group as a medium for information exchange in the anime fandom studied here was in line with the function of the Facebook group as a learning medium, which was studied by Y. C. Chen (2014). Facebook was chosen as the most effective means. Research by J. V. Chen et al. (2016) showed that the higher the quantity of information exchanged on Facebook, the higher the urge for impulsive purchases.

Contrarily, the results of this study were inversely proportional to the research of Saputra & Semuel (2013) which suggested motivational factors as a dominant factor that influences purchase decisions in comparison to perceptions and attitudes. This study shows that the exchange of information, which is a form of behaviour, had a greater effect than motivation.

CONCLUSION

Things that could be concluded from the results of the discussion are as follows:

1. There was an influence of the motives for watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie on the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures in the Digi-In fandom, at 28,6%. The movie did not feature the latest *Digimon* characters and the majority of *Digimon* characters have appeared in the previous seasons. Even though there were new characters, until this research was concluded, the sales of action figures were still open for pre-order.
2. There was an influence of the intensity of information exchange in the Digi-In Facebook group on the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures in the Digi-In fandom, at 31,7%. The variable of the intensity of information exchange in the Digi-In Facebook group had a greater effect than the motives for watching the *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie. This was because the intensity of information exchange in the

Digi-In Facebook group did not only affect the action aspect, but also the cognitive and affective aspects.

3. There was an influence of the motives for watching *Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna* movie and the intensity of information exchange in Digi-In Facebook group simultaneously on the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures in the Digi-In fandom, which was 39,7%. Individual motives for watching the movie and group communication in the Digi-In Facebook group could be said to be quite influential on the online purchase decision of *Digimon* action figures, although there were other influencing factors, such as product quality and price, the hobby of collecting action figures, advertisements and attractive promotions in the marketplace, the existence of periodical events with anime nuances, and so on that need further research.

Based on the results of the study, the researchers provide the following suggestions:

1. For further researchers in the field of communication science, they should be able to explore research topics using a qualitative approach. It is better to look for variables other than the three that have been studied. The research could be carried out on other Japanese animation fan communities in Indonesia, such as quality, price, the physical appearance of the action figures, exposure to attractive advertisements and promotions in the marketplace, brand image, collectors' interests, level of participation in events, anime nuances, decisions to buy video games, card games, or even *Digimon* V-Pet (Virtual Pet). These variables could be determined independently by the researchers.

2. Digi-In fandom should be able to maintain group cohesiveness, both in the Facebook group and in face-to-face meetings. Administrators and members communicate with each other intensively to exchange useful information for the fandom. Publication of information regarding the production of the latest movies, animated series, and action figures should follow the group's rules so that administrators and members could share responsibly.

3. For animators, this research could be used as a reference source in making quality works that have moral values for the audience. Movie animators could collaborate with action figure producers to promote *Digimon* and other animations, including local artworks.

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