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## Online Shopping Preferences and Behaviors of Bajo Fishermen in Popisi Village, Banggai Laut Regency, Indonesia

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to investigate the online shopping behavior of the fishing community in Popisi Village, whose livelihood depends on the sea as their primary source of income. A descriptive qualitative approach was used, employing participant observation, in-depth interviews, field notes, and document review techniques. The research was conducted in Popisi Village, North Banggai District, Banggai Laut Regency, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, during July-August 2024, with 8 informants. The findings revealed that online shopping has become a trend within the fishing community in Popisi Village. They shop for both daily living essentials and items related to their work as fishermen. Internal factors influencing online shopping behavior include lifestyle, community interaction, and social media use. External factors include network availability, infrastructure, social media engagement, and exposure to media and advertising.

#### INTRODUCTION

The internet has changed the pattern of human interaction in many aspects, including how to do business (**Bashir** *et al.*, 2015). In the last two decades, the use of the internet and e-commerce has grown tremendously. People can connect with anyone worldwide in the blink of an eye through the internet. The internet has been used for various reasons, such as searching for product information, evaluating price and quality, choosing services, and payment transfers (**Javadi** *et al.*, 2012).

In relation to business, the internet has become an important medium of communication and online shopping, where people can search for products and information 24 hours a day through the internet, where a wide selection of products are available (Javadi et al., 2012). In addition to the popularity of the internet, the growth of the online shopping business is increasing every year (Ariff et al., 2013). The e-







commerce market includes the retail sales of clothing, electronics, furniture, books, groceries, and cosmetics. This value in the market is known as the "factory gate value". This value refers to the value of goods the manufacturer sells to other entities or customers.

Online shopping is the process of purchasing goods or services over the internet without direct face-to-face interaction between buyers and sellers (**Juniar & Jusrianti**, **2021**). This activity allows consumers to choose products from various sellers online. An online shop is a means or store to offer goods and services via the internet so that online shop visitors can see goods in online stores (**Fakhrurrozi & Alchudri**, **2016**).

According to the Global E-commerce Industry 2023 report (Benchmark, 2023), North America was the largest region in the e-commerce market in 2022, followed by the Asia-Pacific region. Most of the revenue is generated from China, as the Chinese population is highly tech- and mobile-savvy. Chinese e-commerce giants have consistently pushed the market forward and expanded into other markets such as India and Indonesia. The e-commerce development in China is expected to define the market over the next decade, as they have innovated in payment methods, logistics, and other areas of online retail. In 2021, the number of consumers who made at least one online purchase was 74% of the population in the US and 81% of the population in the UK. Brazil is expected to rank first in retail e-commerce development among 20 countries worldwide between 2023 and 2027, with a CAGR of 14.6%. Argentina and Turkey are among the fastest-growing e-commerce markets in the world, with a CAGR of 14% (Benchmark, 2023).

In Indonesia, e-commerce has grown rapidly from year to year. In its development, e-commerce is one of the aspects that support economic growth in Indonesia. According to **Lusa** *et al.* (2024), e-commerce allows small and medium-sized businesses to market their products widely without needing large investments in physical infrastructure. Also, e-commerce increases consumer accessibility to various products and services and increases purchasing power (**PSDI Kemendag, 2024**).

Online shopping is the third most common internet use after using the web and email (Yörük et al., 2011). As in all markets, it is also on the internet that buyers and sellers come together to share products, services, and information. Consumers can purchase products and services anytime from anywhere and thus bypass the limitations of time and place. A number of factors considered to trigger massive online shopping are convenience factors, ease of use, low cost, time savings, various online products and brands, with fast delivery compared to physical shopping (Adnan, 2014).

Talking about online shopping is inseparable from the development of the world today, where most of the world is now digitally connected through the internet. Through the internet, you can easily buy products and services online. In the internet community, online shopping is very popular (**Bourlakis** *et al.*, **2008**). One of the advantages of internet shopping is that it provides consumers with detailed information and many

choices, so they can compare products and prices online. The more options and convenience, the easier it will be to find the desired product or service online (**Butler & Peppard, 1998**). Online shopping provides more satisfaction to modern consumers looking for convenience and speed (**Yu & Wu, 2007**).

The phenomenon of online shopping also occurs in the fishing community, which has limited access and infrastructure. This phenomenon is interesting, considering that the fishing communities that occupy coastal areas and small islands are generally poor people with low levels of education. This condition not only has implications for declining income due to the inability to manage and develop businesses but also affects the productivity level of fishermen (**Arifin**, **2014**).

The lack of research on this phenomenon may be because online shopping itself has been considered a prevalent thing in modern society. What is missing in observation is how the fishing community can adapt and adjust to the conditions and overcome existing limitations, such as the absence of virtual payment tools, limited internet access, etc.

This research is important to find out how the fishing community, which is always placed at the bottom of the structure of society, is also dragged into the current of globalization, not becoming a victim – if it can be called that – but also enjoying the facilities and conveniences offered by globalization. So far, research on fishermen has generally focused on the livelihood and socio-cultural relations of fishermen's lives on the coast or on small islands. **Sallatang (1982)** for example, researched the *pinggawa-sawi* group from the perspective and sociological approach by focusing on small groups, which found that the relationship between *pinggawa* and *sawi* is a relationship of interests that is strengthened by kinship relationships and other kinship relationships appears a lot, especially between large *pinggawa* and small *pinggawa* and between *pinggawa* large with *sawi*.

Another study conducted by Imron (2003) examined poverty in the fishing community and identified several factors contributing to their impoverishment, including limited fishing equipment technology, indebtedness, and restrictions in the marketing of their catch. Next, Salman (2006) researched the shift in industrial relations in the industrial community of boating, beach tourism, and fishing using a sociological approach. His research found that there is still a very significant patron-client relationship among fishermen in South Sulawesi, compared to agricultural or urban communities, hence progress on the production side due to modernization has not been fully followed by the shift from patron-client relations to contractual industrial relations. Kasim (1985) researched fishermen's aspirations for children's education in Cambayya, Ujung Pandang Village (now Makassar). Furthermore, Rizal (2004) looked from the perspective and sociological approach to the behavior of the treatment of women in the sailing community, and Ahimsa Putra (2007) studied the *pinggawa-sawi* relationship through a historical and political approach.

Research related to online shopping behavior in the fishing community is relatively new, therefore this research has great importance. A number of things that are wanted to be revealed from this study are related to the online shopping behavior of the Desa Positional fishing community and the platform used, as well as what internal and external factors affect their preferences in online shopping.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is a type of descriptive qualitative research that describes the economic culture of fishermen in Banggai Laut Regency in terms of consumption through an online shopping mechanism. Qualitative research intended to holistically understand the phenomenon of what the research subject experiences, such as behavior, perception, motivation, and action, by describing in the form of words and language in a special natural context and utilizing various natural methods (**Moleong, 2019**).

This research was conducted in Popisi Village, Banggai Laut Regency, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia. Methodologically, the reason for choosing the location of this study was because this area is a fishing settlement with characteristics of fairly high consumption of goods in Banggai Laut based on media spotlights. The implementation of the research was carried out throughout June-August 2024.

The informants from this study were people who are directly involved in the implementation of the online shopping system in the fishing community. The informants were fishermen, fishermen's wives, online shopping business managers, and parties directly related to fishermen's activities at the research site, with a total of 8 informants. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and a literature review.

### RESULTS

## 1. Online shoopping behavior

Online shopping behavior in Popisi Village has only started during the last 5 years and got higher during COVID-19. This research found that the online shopping behavior of the fishing community in Popisi Village is unique. This is considering the residents of Popisi Village, with most indigenous fishermen of the Bajo tribe, one of the tribes whose lives are closely related to the sea. Many Bajo tribes live on shallow seas, and their livelihood depends on marine products. Data from interviews show that some fishermen shop online at least once a month. MU (23 years old), one of the informants, a housewife, said:

We in Popisi Village are used to shopping online, especially if special needs cannot be obtained in the local market. I most often shop when I have special needs or before Eid to buy clothes. It started to rise when there was covid (Interview with MU, June 24, 2024).

Shopping online has become a practical solution to meet specific needs that may be difficult to find in local markets with significant price differences. For some residents with a very limited income that depends on the uncertain catch in the sea, even the smallest price difference becomes very meaningful. They must manage their finances well so that family finances can remain stable and secondary expenses do not interfere with primary needs, such as daily food and children's education costs.

IR, an informant who works as a fisherman admitted that he only shops online if the goods he buys are unavailable in the local market and can only be bought in the city. He calculates the price difference and transportation costs when shopping directly in the city compared to shopping online. But most often, the consideration is in terms of the availability of goods:

Some fishing equipment is sometimes difficult to buy at local markets, but many are available online. Inevitably, you must shop online, although sometimes it takes a bit longer to deliver, especially if this item is also difficult to obtain in the city market (Interview with IR, June 2024).

Both informants admitted that they initially hesitated to shop online because they didn't know how, but they learned from their school-going children, who had learned it from their peers or social media.

#### 1.1. Frequency and products purchased

Interviews with Popisi Village residents reveal that online shopping habits among the fishing community vary. While some shop rarely, online shopping becomes more frequent around holidays, such as before Eid, when demand for items like new clothes spikes. This behavior reflects adaptation to occasional needs, with online shopping offering access to products unavailable locally or at better prices. Residents purchase a range of goods, from hobby-related items to work necessities. DD (27 years old), an informant who works as a fisherman, said:

Apart from being a fisherman, I also work as a mobile phone repair service, so I often shop online to buy mobile phone repair equipment. Usually, I also shop to buy other necessities (Interview with DD, June 2024).

The implications of buying fishermen's necessities online reflect their preferences. This not only shows adaptation to technology but also reflects changes in consumption behavior and economic priorities. Online shopping provides wider access to quality products at more competitive prices, but it also brings challenges such as decreased social

interaction and potential reduced revenue for local merchants. Therefore, understanding the frequency and type of products purchased helps evaluate the overall impact of online shopping on the economy and social dynamics in the village under investigation.

## 1.2. Platforms and payment methods used

In online shopping, the platforms that are often used are Shopee, Tokopedia, Lazada, Facebook, and TikTok. The selection of the platform is based on various practical considerations, such as the availability of goods, types of goods, and free shipping facilities. Sometimes it is also triggered by considering discounts on the desired goods on certain platforms. PS (21 years old), a fisherman's wife, stated that she often uses the TikTok application for shopping because she is tempted by items that suddenly appear in her TikTok layer. HT (39 years old), another informant, also a housewife, admitted to buying a product in the form of household appliances that she had dreamed of for a long time, which suddenly appeared on her Facebook timeline. He then searched for the product on marketplace applications for the best price.

Sometimes, items for sale appear on Facebook or TikTok but are not immediately bought. You have to look for comparative prices on several applications. Usually, I ask my child to help find the items and make a purchase after feeling that the items are suitable and affordable (Interview with HT, June 24, 2024).

Another challenge initially is the payment system, which requires digital payments through debit or credit cards. However, a direct payment system or cash on delivery (COD) appeared. In addition to helping with payment, they also do not worry about the goods being fake or not coming because payment can only be made after the goods are received on the spot. This method provides convenience because one can provide cash first and pay after checking the condition of the purchased goods. This method is also very helpful in managing daily expenses because fisherman can ensure that the items purchased are in accordance with expectations before making a payment.

## 2. Internal factors affecting online shopping behavior

#### 2.1. Lifestyle

The lifestyle of the fishing community is deeply tied to their work routines, which require specific tools and gear like efficient fishing equipment, waterproof attire, and safety devices. Online shopping is important in meeting these needs, offering access to products that may be hard to find locally and often at more competitive prices. This convenience allows fishermen to shop without disrupting their busy schedules, making balancing work with personal needs easier.

Social interactions further drive these online shopping habits. Positive feedback from fellow fishermen about their purchases encourages others to try online platforms, creating a ripple effect. In these communities, online shopping not only meets practical needs but

also becomes a means to improve social status. Modern equipment is seen as a reflection of success, and owning high-quality gear can elevate one's standing.

The adoption of online shopping varies across the community. Younger fishermen, who are more digitally savvy, tend to embrace it more, while older generations remain cautious, preferring traditional shopping methods they are familiar with. This generational difference shows how digital literacy influences lifestyle choices.

Ultimately, the fishing community's lifestyle is an evolving blend of tradition and adaptation. While maintaining their long-standing values and identity, they incorporate modern tools like online shopping to navigate the changing landscape of technology and consumer behavior. This evolution reflects their ability to adapt to both economic and social shifts while preserving core elements of their culture.

## 2.2. Environmental influence and fishing communities

The fishing community in Popisi Village are characterized by strong social bonds, creating a close-knit and cohesive environment. This unity fosters significant interdependence in everyday life and decision-making, particularly regarding online shopping. Peer influence is crucial in determining whether individuals will explore e-commerce platforms, as personal recommendations from trusted community members play a vital role.

For instance, if a fisherman hears about a friend's successful purchase of high-quality fishing gear at a reasonable price online, it may encourage him to try the same. Such positive experiences instill confidence and a sense of security, as they provide real-life examples of successful transactions.

Conversely, negative experiences can rapidly circulate within this interconnected community and shape perceptions. Accounts of online fraud, products not matching descriptions, or return difficulties can generate widespread distrust in online shopping. When respected community members share these negative experiences, it can reinforce skepticism and deter others from attempting online purchases.

The perception of online shopping risks and benefits within fishing communities is largely shaped by shared experiences communicated verbally. In a socially interactive environment, individual stories reflect broader realities. Negative experiences among community members can lead to the belief that online shopping is risky and should be avoided. Conversely, widespread successful transactions can promote the view that e-commerce is a valuable option.

Strong social networks facilitate collaborative online shopping. Community members might share accounts or make joint purchases to reduce shipping costs. Additionally, those with more online shopping experience can assist others with ordering and payment, enhancing accessibility for less tech-savvy individuals and strengthening community bonds.

These communities also promote the sharing of information regarding reliable sellers. Trust plays a crucial role, and good experiences with specific sellers will likely be communicated, encouraging others to engage with them.

Despite the strong peer influence, challenges persist in adopting online shopping. Limited digital literacy and a lack of understanding of e-commerce platforms pose significant barriers. In this context, advice from more tech-savvy friends becomes crucial, guiding others through shopping.

Concerns about personal data security and fraud risks also hinder many fishermen from embracing online shopping. Such issues are commonly discussed within tight-knit communities, and tales of scams can spread quickly. However, if individuals can navigate these challenges and share positive experiences, it may inspire greater confidence among others to explore e-commerce.

In summary, the fishing community in Popisi Village illustrates how traditional societies are navigating the complexities of technological change. The strong social cohesion can either facilitate or impede the adoption of new technologies, with collective experiences and peer influences playing a pivotal role in shaping perceptions and attitudes toward online shopping.

## 2.3. The influence of social media intensity

In the digital age, social media and the internet have become essential to daily life, even in remote fishing communities like Popisi Village in Banggai Laut Regency. Despite ongoing infrastructure challenges, telecommunications advancements have improved local internet access. Social media platforms, such as TikTok, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, play a crucial role for fishermen, enabling them to communicate and explore new opportunities including online shopping.

For many in Popisi Village, social media serves as a gateway to a broader range of goods and services that were previously unavailable. Through these platforms, fishermen can view product advertisements, read user reviews, and stay updated on the latest trends in fishing gear and daily necessities. This access to various products empowers them to make informed purchasing decisions.

Moreover, social media facilitates direct interaction between buyers and sellers, enhancing trust in online transactions. Fishermen can pose questions to sellers, seek recommendations, or negotiate prices before purchasing. Such interactions are vital for building trust, especially for those new to online shopping. Additionally, viewing seller profiles, including testimonials and ratings, reassures consumers who may be skeptical about online security.

The internet also enables fishermen to engage with a broader online community, where they can share insights and experiences related to online shopping. For instance, in Whatsapp groups, members frequently exchange product links and discuss reliable sellers, enhancing their knowledge and fostering increased participation in online shopping through community support.

However, digital literacy levels vary among fishermen in Popisi Village, leading to different experiences with social media and online shopping. Younger, more tech-savvy generations are generally more active in seeking products and purchasing online, while older generations may feel uncertain or less proficient with these platforms. Social media thus acts as a generational bridge, with younger members often assisting their elders in navigating these technologies.

Despite these advancements, challenges persist, such as unstable internet connectivity and high data costs, which can hinder consistent access to social media. Nevertheless, public Wi-Fi in certain areas and affordable data plans from local telecom providers are helping mitigate these issues, enabling more people to connect and benefit from social media.

Furthermore, social media is reshaping shopping culture within the fishing community. Previously, fishermen relied primarily on local markets and traditional trade networks for their needs. Now, with greater internet access, they can explore a wider market, allowing for more competitive prices and diverse options. This shift is gradually transforming consumption behaviors from traditional methods to digital practices.

On the other hand, social media can also influence consumer behavior through exposure to advertisements and promotions that are often present on the platform. Fishermen who often see advertisements for certain products may be more interested in trying them, even if they have no urgent need for them. This shows how social media is not only a means of communication, but also a medium that can influence preferences and shopping decisions.

Finally, the use of social media and the internet among Popisi Village fishermen reflects how technology can change the way of living and shopping, even in communities that have traditionally relied on conventional methods. With wider access to information and online shopping platforms, fishermen have more options and opportunities to improve their well-being. However, the successful adoption of this technology depends on the community's ability to overcome challenges and effectively capitalize on the opportunities offered by social media and the internet.

## 3. Influencing External Factors

## 3.1. Network and infrastructure availability

Infrastructure is essential for promoting online shopping in remote areas like Popisi Village. Developments such as telecommunication towers and ports connected to sea toll roads significantly enhance the community's access to the digital marketplace. These infrastructure improvements have transformed previously isolated villagers into active participants in online shopping.

Establishing a telecommunications tower in Popisi Village has revolutionized internet access, which was previously limited. With the new tower, the internet signal is now stable and available to nearly all residents, enabling them to communicate and explore e-

commerce platforms, compare prices, read product reviews, and complete transactions more efficiently. The improved connectivity has also enhanced social media usage, which has become a vital source of information for the local fishing community. Social media platforms allow fishermen to stay updated on trends, view product recommendations, and directly engage with sellers. This direct interaction fosters trust among consumers who may have previously hesitated to engage in online transactions.

Moreover, the presence of a port linked to the sea toll road is crucial for facilitating online shopping in Popisi. This infrastructure allows for quicker and more cost-effective distribution of goods from production centers to remote locations. Before the port's establishment, shipping costs were high and delivery times were lengthy, deterring many from shopping online. With the port, goods ordered online can be delivered more efficiently and at lower costs, significantly benefiting fishermen who rely on timely access to necessary equipment.

Additionally, the port connects Popisi Village to broader national and international trade networks. Fishermen can now market their catches through e-commerce platforms, expanding their reach and enhancing their income potential. This dual functionality of the port—facilitating both incoming goods and outgoing local products—creates a more dynamic economic cycle.

Logistics costs have also decreased due to the sea toll road, leading to more competitive prices for goods. Previously high shipping costs made many items unaffordable, but reduced logistics expenses encourage more residents to try online shopping as prices become more reasonable.

Furthermore, improved infrastructure enhances digital literacy among the population. Better internet access familiarizes residents with digital technologies, facilitating their learning of new transaction methods and online financial management. Digital literacy programs from government and non-profit organizations can also be more effective as residents gain access to the necessary technology.

Beyond practical benefits, this infrastructure is shifting cultural and consumer behavior in Popisi Village. Easier internet access and faster distribution lead people to adopt modern shopping habits, transitioning from reliance on traditional markets to the convenience and variety of online shopping.

This infrastructure development also creates new economic opportunities for the people of Popisi Village. With better access to global markets through the internet and sea toll roads, people can start small businesses online. For example, they can sell handicraft products or fish catches online, reaching consumers outside their area. This not only increases income but also strengthens the village's economic resilience in the long term.

However, while there are many benefits, infrastructure also brings new challenges that must be overcome. For example, even though internet access is now better, issues related to connection stability and cost still need to be considered. The government and

telecommunication service providers need to continue to innovate and improve the quality of services to ensure that people can make the most of the internet. Likewise, the sea toll road, which has facilitated the distribution of goods, still needs maintenance and capacity building to accommodate trade volume growth.

In the long term, sustainable infrastructure development will be key in ensuring that the people of Popisi Village can continue to enjoy the benefits of digital technology and online shopping. Governments, the private sector, and communities must work together to overcome challenges and capitalize on the opportunities. Thus, Popisi Village can be an example of how the right infrastructure can transform the lives of rural communities and bring them closer to the increasingly advanced digital era.

Overall, network and port infrastructure are the main pillars supporting economic and social transformation in Popisi Village. Both not only open access to the outside world, but also drive the adoption of new technologies and changes in consumer behavior. By continuing to develop and maintain this infrastructure, Popisi Village can continue to develop and adapt to changing times, ensuring better welfare for all its people.

## 3.2. Media and advertising exposure factors

Media and advertising play a vital role in promoting online shopping among the fishing community in Popisi Village, Banggai Laut. With the rise of social media, television, and the internet, access to various media forms has significantly increased, providing entertainment while also introducing affordable products and services. Advertisements are designed to capture attention with persuasive messages and appealing visuals, and even though many in Popisi still rely on word-of-mouth, the influence of media advertising is becoming increasingly powerful.

These advertisements showcase products and educate consumers on the benefits of online shopping, such as lower prices and a wider variety of goods. For instance, targeted ads aimed at specific groups, like housewives, effectively generate interest in online purchases.

Additionally, media shapes perceptions of online shopping by featuring positive reviews and testimonials, which can build consumer trust. When media emphasizes the ease and advantages of e-commerce, it encourages individuals to explore these platforms. However, negative reports, such as fraud cases, can also instill fear and skepticism.

Community leaders and public figures who endorse products amplify the media's influence, further motivating participation in online shopping. Advertising often taps into consumer emotions, using urgency through limited-time offers to spur immediate purchases. In Popisi Village, even cautious spenders can be tempted by significant promotions and discounts.

Moreover, the media serves as a valuable source of information on new technologies and services that facilitate online shopping, such as digital payment apps and improved delivery options. This information is particularly important for residents who are still adapting to digital technology.

Information from the media about new technologies boosts people's confidence in using digital services and lessens their reliance on traditional payment methods. The media is crucial in educating the public and delivering accurate information. It serves as a source of information and a bridge connecting producers and consumers, especially in remote areas like Popisi Village.

When the media provides relevant and useful information, individuals can make informed decisions regarding online shopping. However, the public needs to approach media content critically, as not all advertisements are trustworthy, and there is a risk of fraud or misrepresented products. Thus, education and media literacy are vital to ensure that people navigate media and advertising wisely.

Ultimately, the role of media and advertising in promoting online shopping in Popisi Village is significant. Persuasive advertising and informative media expose people to various products and services that can enhance their quality of life. Despite existing challenges and risks, strong digital literacy combined with positive media influence enables the fishing community in Popisi Village to leverage online shopping more effectively to meet their needs. Including interview excerpts adds a first-hand perspective, further illustrating how the community interacts with media and advertising and how these elements shape their online shopping choices.

## **CONCLUSION**

Online shopping has become a key habit for the fishing community in Popisi Village, driven by globalization and the conveniences it offers, like real-time interaction and easy access to products. The community selects platforms based on factors such as competitive prices, convenience, and ease of use. Their adoption of online shopping is influenced by socio-cultural factors, including community behavior, social media use, and internet access. Technology adoption theory suggests that convenience and benefits drive this behavior, while Sociocultural Theory emphasizes the role of social interaction in spreading information and influencing collective decisions. Despite challenges like limited digital literacy, online shopping provides a practical way for fishermen to meet their needs, save time, and expand their product choices, with social cohesion further enhancing the process.

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