# INCREASED BUYING INTEREST OF MILLENNIAL GENERATION IN GRESIK REGENCY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC THROUGH THE @KULINERGRESIK ACCOUNT

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# **ABSTRACT**

The Instagram account @kulinergresik experienced an increasing number of followers along with the increase in the number of food orders, during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This study intends to analyze whether there is a relationship between pandemic conditions and as an independent variable with the purchase interest of the millennial generation of Gresik Regency on the account @kulinergresik as the dependent variable. The quantitative research method uses Spearman rank correlation analysis and t-test for the hypothesis. The study population was 144,000 followers of the @kulinergresik account with purposive sampling and data collection through the distribution of google form as a questionnaire to 100 respondents. The results showed that between the two research variables had a correlation coefficient of 0.389, meaning that it indicated a positive relationship. Besides, the results of t-test showed a 5% significance level, and it has a meaning that the hypothesis accepted. In conclusion, during the COVID-19 Pandemic, millennial generation buying interest through the @kulinergresik account has increased.

**Keywords:** Buying Interest, COVID-19, Digital Marketing, Gresik Culinary, The Millenial

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of a new variety communication media shows of the difficulty of stemming the communication technology development. Especially the internet which initially functioned as a new medium, now developing as a platform for the development of various communication application and social media, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, whatsapp, Line, and Youtube (Achmad, 2020a, 2020b; Achmad, Juwito, et al., 2020). One of the characteristics of new media is the joining several communication media into one convergent technology and giving birth to new forms of communication media (Achmad, 2019; Candrasari, 2020). The shift in media is developing towards wide and global area digitalization (Dominick, 2000).

The internet causes a shift in human consumption of media, the number of internet users in Indonesia in 2018 was 171,17 million form the 264,16 million total population

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in Indonesia. Compared to the previous year, there was a growth of 27,9 million internet users in 2018 (inet.detik.com). People tend to obtain information via the internet, due to the use of internet has proven to be very helpful to the needs of its users to obtain information or communicate quickly and accurately. In recent developments, communication applications and social media have become a means of digital marketing communication (Abidin Achmad et al., 2020; Achmad and Sawitri, 2012; Kirchhoff, 2011; Salo et al., 2013; World Bank Group, 2016), health communication (Arviani & Febrianita, 2020), tourism communication (Arviani et al., 2020), television and film content discussion (Kusuma, 2018), to family education (Alamiyah, 2020; Claretta et al., 2018).

The use of new communications technologies is an effective means for activities promotion. Moreover, the new communication media has a global network. It is very ease to give birth to global cultures (Arviani, 2013). Communication also has a role in economic growth. Communication between humans changes rapidly on the internet network. Internet has breaks down the barriers of distance, time, region, culture, and language (Achmad & Ida, 2019). The trend of using social media for various human activities is finding momentum in 2019 (databoks.katadata.co.id).

Condition in Indonesia, based on research results *We Are Sosial Hootsuite in* 2019, more than 150 million or around 52% of the population are social media users. This data highly raised compared to 2018 by only 32% (Databoks.katadata.co.id). One of the most popular social media for Indonesians is Instagram. *We Are Sosial* mentioned that in January 2019 this social media ranks fourth as an application with a total number of users as much as 80% (websindo.com).

While in November 2019 Indonesia was among the fourth largest number of Instagram users in the world. Based on these facts, it can be said that Instagram is the most strategic media for marketers to attract consumers or potential consumers in the future (Santoso, I. Baihaqi dan Satria F.P, 2017). Due to the very fast development of Instagram, proven by its popularity increasing (Abidin Achmad et al., 2020; Arviani etal., 2020; Rubiyati, Muhamad Asrori, 2017; Tranggono et al, 2020). At the beginning of its appearance, Instagram was a personal account, but it becomes a business account.

More and more people use it as a digital marketing medium. Instagram also facilitates this by providing official and business account as a means of promotion in

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buying and selling of products or services. The account owner carries out communication activities to provide information, persuade, and remind the public about the brand or product he/she has. Based on research, the popularity of Instagram is able to boost business opportunities for business account owners (Isa Mulyadi & Zuhri, 2020).

One form of business that gets opportunities for business expansion and financial benefits is the culinary field. Gresik regency as an industrial and tourism area, is known to have many culinary businesses. There are so many types of food in Gresik Regency with various characteristic for tourist asset, they are: processed milkfish, krawu rice, pudak, legen drinks, and fish-snacks (Achmad, Mardliyah, et al., 2020; Pemkab Gresik, 2005; Purwanti, 2016). However, all culinary businesses in Gresik Regency experienced stagnation and decreased turnover to 70% in April and May 2020, during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic (Abidin Achmad et al., 2020).

The theme of culinary business is increasingly becoming the theme of various studies, because culinary is closely related to basic human needs, food. This research specifically observes the business dynamics on @kulinergresik, the Instagram account. This account is an official account that has a category as a business account to promote various foods in Gresik district. The @kulinergresik account does not only promote typical or contemporary food but helps sellers of any form of food in the Gresik Regency that really need promotional means.

The motto of this account is "Ayo Mangan Disek, Ben Bahagia". The target segment of the @kulinergresik account is the millenial generation as digital native (Alidyan Kresnawati & Kusuma, 2019; Nielsen N.V., 2016; Prensky, 2001). This generation that was born between 2000 and 2010 is closely related to the use of the internet and smartphones. Communication technology is part of the life of the millennial generation and uses it for life. Internet, smartphones, email, instant messaging, search engines and social media have become the main necessities for this generation (Stiletto book, 2019). IDN Research Institute mentioning the results of the 2019 Millennial Indonesia report, 79% of millennials open smartphones 1 minute after waking up, the majority of them are included in the heavy user (4-6 hours) and Addicted users (7-13 hours) category in accessing the internet (cdn.idntimes.com, 2019).

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This generation has a character mindset that is open to accepting new things in life. One of the negative habits in this generation is the consumptive age group. One of the markers of the lifestyle of the millennial generation who likes to shop for new culinary delights through social media, especially if the social media display has attractive visuals (kumparan.com). Researchers have the belief that the fact that the decline in turnover of the culinary business in Gresik in the first two months of the COVID-19 pandemic will only last for a moment.

Gradually the culinary sales figures will trend upward, because the majority of culinary buyers through social media are millennials who depend on technology. Compulsion to do *Work From Home* (WFH) and School From Home (SFH) increasingly increasing the intensity of public interaction with the internet and an allonline educational environment (Achmad, Juwito, et al., 2020; Hewi & Asnawaati, 2020). This means that it increasingly opens up opportunities for millennial generations to surf in the virtual world and develop a buying and selling lifestyle through social media. This research aims to prove the hypothesis that there is a relationship between the increase in culinary sales on the @kulinergresik account and the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced millennials to live online.

#### 2. RESEARCH METHOD

Methods used in this research was quantitative. Quantitative methods require reliability in collecting research data (Balley, 1994). The purpose of a quantitative study is to test the correctness of the research hypothesis using data collection instruments from respondents, and perform statistical data analysis then produces conclusions (DiCola, 2006; Erlandson et al., 1993; Foster, 2006). Due to pandemic conditions, the researchers distributed questionnaires through google form as a survey tool for followers of the @kulinergresik account.

Data collection techniques via email and the web are now becoming a new habit and are gaining recognition of their reliability (Schonlau et al., 2002). Based on the problem, this research is categorized as correlation research. Correlation is taken from the word "correlation" means "relationship" or "interconnected" or "reciprocal relationship" (Anas, 2004). Correlation research is a research that emphasizes the analysis of the relationship between variables (Gall, Gall, and Borg, 2003). The results

of this analysis will show the correlation coefficient value and based on this value the researcher could find out the magnitude or extent of the correlation between the research variables.

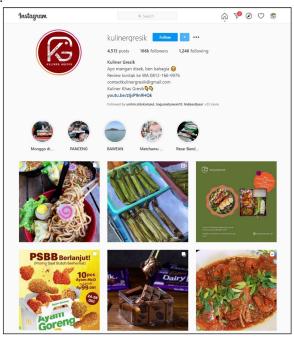


Figure 1: an instagram of @kulinergresik

The populations in this research were followers of the @kulinergresik Instagram account with a total of 166,000 followers. Researchers use purposive sampling to facilitate the acquisition of respondents from the millennial generation. Researchers adopted a way of searching for information from Instagram as well as virtual ethnographic research (Achmad & Ida, 2018). This was done to obtain verification of the authenticity of the followers' accounts that have been selected purposively as respondents.

The sample of this research was the millennial generation who followed the @kulinergresik account, https://www.instagram.com/kulinergresik/ (figure 1). The total number of respondents is 100 follower accounts. This amount represents the population's integrity. The data analysis used Spearman rank correlation coefficient and t-test with a significance level of 5%. The use of the Spearman rank correlation coefficient is to test the relationship between two variables and the data used is in ordinal form (Sugiyono, 2016).

#### 3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The account of instagram @kulinergresik has an attractive visual appearance because the owner uploads good quality photos or videos of culinary in Gresik Regency consistently. In a day, this account uploads at least 2-4 photos. By the process of the researcher did the research on 24 October 2020, the @kulinergresik account had uploaded 4,513 content. Every @kulinergresik uploads a photo or video, it always gets a good response.

It also can be seen from the number of followers who see the broadcast and like the post. As an example of figure 2, in the highlight upload at least 6 minutes after posting, this account has received 108 likes, in 3 hours the video has been played 12,736 views.



**Figure 1**: Krupuk legendaris post on a highlight menu, https://www.instagram.com/stories/highlights/18027051532023501

One of the questions in this research is whether @kulinergresik actively providing information also has an impact on the buying interest of followers from the millennial generation in Gresik Regency? Purchase interest is the tendency of individuals to act or take actions that are relevant to the purchase plan of a product, whether it is seeking additional information, proposing, selecting, or determining their interests before a purchase decision is made (Fredrick 2016). There are four types of indicators of

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purchase interest, they are transactional, referential, preferential and explorative (Ferdinand, 2009).

In the context of the account @kulinergresik, the results of the identification has four types of indicators, among others: (1). Transactional interest: the tendency to buy a product. In this interest, respondents have the willingness to buy after seeing the post @kulinergresik. (2). Referential interest: the desire to reference products to others. Respondents recommended the @kulinergresik account to others. (3). Preferential Interest, the behavior of someone who has a primary preference for the product. This interest underlies the millennial generation to make @kulinergresik as a reference for obtaining all information related to Gresik regency culinary. (4). Explorative Interests: The behavior of a person who always seeking information about the product he is interested in. This leads to respondents' curiosity about product information.

According to the Stimulus-Organism-Response theory, the changes on individual attitudes are part of the effect after being exposed to the contents of mass media messages. The media can directly impact on the communicant as the recipient of the message. Therefore, the effects arise will at least be related to the information conveyed by the mass media (Ardianto, 2004). This theory explains that the reciprocity obtained is created by the stimulus as a form of impact received by the communicant.

Therefore, the reactions produced by these individuals have in common the messages conveyed with reciprocity. The media is able to conclude directed, immediate, and direct effects on the communicant so more or less individuals can predict the response that will be obtained. A person's attitude may change, which is conveyed really hit the communicant more than before, considering the communication process is also related to changes in attitude. The process of changing attitudes lies in the perspective of how, not what and why, it means more on the perspective of how communicators can change the attitude of the communicant.

According to the S-O-R theory, in assessing attitudes, three important elements should be considered, they are: (1). attention, (2). Definition, and (3). Reception. Attitude change depends on the processes which occur in individuals. The stimulus or message conveyed to the communicant may be rejected or accepted, all of this is related to how attention, understanding, and also individual acceptance of the message. Attitude changes will appear after this entire process is carried out (Achmad et al., 2018).

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The purpose of this research was to observe the influence of media exposure (uploading content on the @kulinergresik Instagram account) on the changes in attitude of the millennial generation for buying food during the COVID-19 pandemic. Media exposure is all individual behavior on consuming mass media which includes various activities such as length of time, form of media, types of information, and many other activities that connected between the user and the media, both in terms of messages or the integrity of the media itself (Jalaludin, 2012). The basic assumption of media exposure lies in the amount of information obtained by individuals as long as they consume the media. Exposure to data, news or anything related to new information by this media can stimulate individuals to feel or understand the attributes that have been conveyed.

Awareness of the symbol will trigger consumptive awareness and finally will encourage individuals to actual behavior (Arviani & Febrianita, 2020; Tranggono et al., 2020). The findings of this research support the opinion of Wells, Burnet, and Moriarty (2000) that exposure to Instagram content on the @kulinergresik account can be exchanged through the following aspects: (1). Frequency, the regular activity of followers in consuming Instagram. The frequency rating is based on how often followers visit the @kulinergresik Instagram account which is calculated on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. (2). Duration, it includes for how long a follower uses Instagram and is involved in uploading culinary content on the @kulinergresik account, which is calculated in seconds and minutes.

The impact of mass media information deliver on individual changes in the cognitive, affective and conative aspects (Karlinah, 1999), as well as the process of delivering various information through the @kulinergresik Instagram account. The impact of uploading content on the @kulinergresik account for his followers includes: (1). Cognitive impact, refers to the aspect of information obtained by Instagram account users. Followers can learn many new things they previously did not understand or were not familiar with, can be such information about locations, items, or whatever. This cognitive effect explains that Instagram is able to support the @kulinergresik account owner to learn, understand, and get to know information that is useful in developing the cognitive aspects of followers.

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Simply, this effect adds to the awareness and knowledge of the @kulinergresik account manager. (2). Affective impact, looks at the ability to upload content on the @kulinergresik account to have an impact on the emotions, feelings and opinions of followers. Given, the communication process does not only lie in conveying information, but also involves the feelings of other people in the sense that the @kulinergresik account manager wants every individual who receives his message to feel it too. (3). Conative impact, proving that Instagram is able to create individual behavior and actions, the focus lies on the behavior and intentions of followers.

The affective impact specially on the individual condition of the followers. It is influenced by several factors, they are: (1). Emotional atmosphere; The condition of one's heart or individual feelings more or less determines the reactions of followers to uploaded content on the @kulinergresik account, it may be in the form of *stories*, *feeds*, *igtv*, *highlights*, *or other information*. (2). Cognitive schemes, a condition of readiness and adequacy of the follower's knowledge or thoughts. Schemes affect the mindset, comprehension, andfollowers' note used to comment on uploaded content. (3). The environmental situation around the follower also affects the opinion of the follower when receiving message exposure. For example, when viewing uploaded stories on the @kulinergresik account, which contains hot and smoky meatball videos, will make the follower comment that supports the upload and tries to decide to buy the meatball. (4). Individual predisposition, there is a relationship between followers and the @kulinergresik account manager or having a close personal relationship among followers who comment on content uploads.

Due to exposure to information through culinary content uploads, interest arise by the millennial generation in Gresik Regency in buying the product, they are trying to get and consume the culinary offerings. Purchase interest is related to mood (affective) and thought (cognitive) support (Mujiono, 2009). Purchase interest is an agenda created by individuals who are still related to the fulfillment of interests, both in detail or not, such as the number of goods and the time period (Howard, 1994). This purchase interest is also related to the follower's desire to check various additional information about culinary products that currently attract their attention. In simple terms, buying interest is related to the customer's desire to take action, whether it is seeking additional

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information or determining their interests before making a purchase decision (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004; Faradiba, 2013; Fredrick, 2016).

Several components determine purchase interest are individual moods and emotions (Swastha and Irawan, 2005). Followers who have a positive opinion feel happy or satisfied with the previous purchase will certainly strengthen their tendency to buy. Likewise, followers who have negative views, their dissatisfaction also reduces or even eliminates the desire to buy. Basically the desire on purchasing is depend on individual him/her self. Some of the followers do not know what they want to buy and consume. In this condition, the purchase may not occur considering the follower is not aware of his needs and wants.

The followers often become responders make comparisons by what they have previously consumed and what they need to consume beforehand and what they need for consumption (problem recognition). The followers will then dig further information as clear and detailed as possible about the culinary products that catch their attention. Information is also an attribute that becomes a determining point before a purchase decision is made. Based on the results of data analysis through the rank *Spearman* correlation technique, it is known that the COVID-19 pandemic condition has increases internet use and exposure to Instagram content on the @kulinergresik account has a relationship with the millennial generation purchase interest in Gresik Regency.

It can be seen from the correlation coefficient value of 0.389. In addition, the t-test results also show the same thing, with the t-test value of 4,180 and t-table of 1,984. These results answer the hypothesis that the researcher has determined in the previous chapter, Ha = 0, means that there is indeed relationship between the two variables, and also t test> t table which indicates that Ho is rejected and Ha is accepted. The results also show that the frequency and duration of the millennial generation of seeing the @kulinergresik account upload can stimulate individual's purchase interest.

This is relevant to the S-O-R theory which states that the media have a direct directional effect on the communicants. This model explains that the effects caused are individual specific reactions to stimulation. This shows that communication is a process of reaction as symbols, verbal words, or other non-verbal signs that stimulate individuals to respond in a certain way. S-O-R theory also explains that a person's attitude may change, this change of attitude is the effect of mass media exposure.

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This means that followers may change their attitude if the message delivered really hits the follower's needs. The message sent by the @kulinergresik account was able to change individual attitudes, it can be seen from the data of the questionnaire was obtained the information submitted by @kulinergresik account as well as received by the respondent. The millennial generation of Gresik Regency stated that the information provided by the account was conveyed clearly. This explains why exposure to @kulinergresik's account information was able to generate respondents' purchase interest. Exposure to information from the @kulinergresik Instagram account is able to generate symbolic awareness which later develop into consumptive awareness.

Based on the research results, it is known that the relationship between these two variables is included in a positive relationship. This positive relationship indicates a parallel correlation (Arikunto, 2013), means that the higher the exposure to the @kulinergresik Instagram account during the COVID-19 pandemic, the higher the purchase interest of the millennial generation in Gresik district who follow the @kulinergresik Instagram account. Likewise, the lower the account exposure, the lower the buying interest of the millennial generation in Gresik Regency. The results show a parallel relationship where the exposure the @kulinergresik Instagram account and also the millennial generation's purchase interest is moderate.

Based on the correlation coefficient interpretation table, the relationship between the two research variables is included in the low category. This indicates that the information provided through the @kulinergresik Instagram account can lead to millennial generation's purchase interest. Not all the increase in purchase interest comes from the attack of the @kulinergresik Instagram account. It can be seen from the data collection which states that the frequency of individuals visiting the @kulinergresik account is low.

Some of the respondents admit that they follow four other accounts that offer culinary content from Gresik Regency. In addition, the low relationship indicates that the change in attitude depends on the processes that occur in individuals. In this research, the millennial generation in Gresik Regency is an organism or individual who manages messages. They can receive information on the @kulinergresik Instagram account but may also be rejected, all of this is related to the attention, understanding, and also acceptance of followers of culinary content uploads.

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Most of the respondents (90%) stated that their purchase interest in the culinary offered through the @kulinergresik account was influenced by feelings and emotions. Their purchase interest arises because of the influence of previous experiences. Followers admit on having a positive attitude towards certain culinary products and generate purchase interest because they feel happy and satisfied with their previous purchase experience. Previous purchasing and consumption experiences are factors that strengthen followers' purchase interest in the culinary products offered.

Likewise, dissatisfaction with previous purchases is usually able to eliminate purchase interest in the culinary products offered. This means that the exposure to information provided by the @kulinergresik account is not only able to generate purchase interest in the millennial generation, considering that there are other factors besides information influence it, they are consumer feelings and emotions about the available culinary products. This also supports the explanation of why the relationship between account exposure @kulinergresik and millennial generation purchase interest in Gresik Regency is in the low category. The increase in purchase interest is more influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, which makes millennials stay at home more. The habit of being at home creates a new habit of interacting with the internet for a long time.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis carried out using the *Sperman rank* correlation technique and the t-test, it is known that there is a relationship between the @kulinergresik Instagram account exposure and the millennial generation purchase interest in Gresik Regency. The correlation coefficient value shows that this relationship is a positive relationship, means that the higher the exposure to @kulinergresik account information, the higher the millennial generation's purchase interest, and vice versa. The results of the correlation coefficient also show that the relationship between the two variables is low. The condition of the COVID-19 pandemic has also played a role in increasing the purchase interest of the millennial generation in Gresik Regency for culinary products.

This purchase interest also depends on other factors, the feelings and emotions of the followers. If followers have a positive attitude, they feel happy and satisfied with the

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culinary product of their choice, and this reinforces purchase interest. Likewise, if they are not satisfied with their previous purchase of culinary products, they will discourage their buying interest. Although it has been exposed to various information both internally and externally.

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