The Influence of Marketing Ethics and Consumer Ethics on Consumer Behaviour and Decisions Before and During COVID-19 Pandemic: A Literacy Study

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ABSTRACT

One of the focuses of marketing in a company is how to achieve customer loyalty. That is reflected in how companies maintain brands, consumers, and product-consumer relationships. In some cases, companies focus solely on profit, resulting in the company losing its reputation. There is an opinion that consumers demand ethics and responsibility from companies to stakeholders, in this case, consumers. Consumers in this position can provide feedback regarding the company's marketing ethics. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, consumers are also more vigilant and careful in choosing products. So, with the COVID-19 Pandemic conditions like this, it is necessary to study whether consumer ethics in determining product choices and behavior towards products will be affected and whether a company's marketing ethics also influence product determination and consumer behavior towards products. This article aims to examine whether marketing ethics and consumer ethics influence consumer behavior and decisions to buy a product or interact further with the product, especially in the current era of the COVID 19 Pandemic. And the method used for this article is a systematic literature review. From this research, it is concluded that marketing and consumer ethics have a role in influencing consumers to choose to buy products and the responses given after making a purchase or through transaction experience with a company. And consumer behavior and decisions are very dependent on how ethical the company is in marketing its products both before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Keywords: Marketing Ethics, Consumer Ethics, Consumer Behaviour, Consumer Decision, COVID-19 Pandemic

INTRODUCTION

The company's marketing programs generally focus on how to achieve customer loyalty. That can be reflected in a favorable attitude towards the company regarding brand, consumer, and product evaluation. Its main goal is to increase its competitive advantage in the market. In today's rapidly changing marketing environment, building strong relationships and brand loyalty with consumers is becoming increasingly important for companies. Therefore, it is necessary to apply good marketing ethics in maintaining these relationships. Discussions about marketing ethics are currently very relevant because consumers always complain (Del Rio et al., 2001; Sadeghi & Rad, 2012).

In most cases, companies are too enthusiastic about increasing profits in various ways, including cutting operating costs and causing them to lose their reputation. In business, the pursuit of profit is a natural thing, as long as it does not harm many parties. The interests and rights of others need to be considered. Ethical behavior in business activities is important for the continuity of the business itself (Hasoloan, 2018). Faced with this problem, various marketing tactics are used by companies in an attempt to attract consumers to their brands and products. However, consumers generally consider things such as product features when deciding to make a product purchase. Consumers also demand that companies behave responsibly and ethically towards their stakeholders, including consumers (J. Y. Lee & Jin, 2019). Consumers can also be observed when they experience poor service or find a defective item during a purchase. They show negative emotions, displeasure, and anger. Marketing ethics aims to introduce company ethics in buying and selling products (Kumar & Mokhtar, 2016). However, many businesses have recognized the need to consider the ecological implications and human well-being when adopting sustainable development principles. That is because the increase in ethical consumer behavior has increased drastically, where ethical consumer behavior includes consideration of ecological issues and human welfare. It is not surprising that research related to ethical business practices is also increasing (Sudbury-Riley & Kohlbacher, 2016).

Suppose you look at the current conditions, where the COVID-19 Pandemic affects all humanity in the world. The COVID-19 Pandemic has certainly affected consumer purchasing decisions. Mehta et al. (2020) argue that human behavior can be pushed in different directions by several aspects of behavior in critical situations. The COVID-19 Pandemic is not a normal crisis, and to control the spread of the disease, and various measures are being taken, including lockdowns and restrictions on physical contact. That results in economic instability that changes the dynamics of the market. With an
unstable economy, consumers also experience behavioral changes.

Seeing the phenomenon that occurs that the COVID-19 Pandemic is sweeping the world and there are several changes in consumer behavior in choosing and interacting with products, there are things that want to be reviewed further through a literature review with a systematic literature review method related to marketing ethics and consumer ethics and their influence on consumer behavior and decisions during the COVID-19 Pandemic. So this article aims to examine whether marketing ethics and consumer ethics affect consumer behavior and decisions to buy a product or interact further with the product, especially during the current COVID-19 Pandemic.

Research conducted before COVID 19 related to marketing ethics and consumer ethics that impact consumer behavior and decisions is diverse. It's just how we look at which dimension. Like the research conducted by Kumar & Mokhtar (2016), which examined the dimensions of product safety, pricing, convenience when shopping, and the company's ethical actions in marketing products. In addition, the ethics raised by consumers such as being careful, acting fairly and wanting to get justice from a product, and giving a reaction or response to the product. Then during the COVID-19 Pandemic, there were issues of health, hygiene, and physical contact restrictions that impacted economic instability. Of course, this would trigger a new dimension in reviewing marketing ethics, consumer ethics, and their impact on consumer behavior and decisions. That is what becomes the basis for assessing these conditions and variables during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Entering the 21st century, the company's ability to recognize and address complex business ethical issues is an important priority. In recent times, the publication of scandals related to product fraud has generated public outrage and demands for increased business ethics and greater corporate responsibility (Ferrell et al., 2019). Ethics in business consists of the principles, values, and standards that guide business conduct. Kind of business ethics is very broad, such as human resources, finance, operations, marketing, and consumers.

In various literature, the term "ethics" can be defined as a set of moral norms, principles, values, traits, and basics of morality that guide people's behavior, such as moral judgments, standards, and rules of conduct. The term "ethical" or "unethical" is described as a person's subjective moral judgment about right-right or good-bad. Naturally, moral sentiments can be neutral or associated with positive and negative things (Brunk, 2012).

Marketing Ethics

Marketing is an important function for business and the economy in general. Marketing connects businesses with existing and potential markets and customers (Becker, 2019). Marketing focuses on the boundaries between the firm and its dynamic environment to encourage the exchange of outputs, i.e., products and services, to an environment where consumers are the main constituency. Moreover, marketing is not static as it deals with new emerging phenomena, creates and adapts new concepts, theories and methodologies to develop new insights and influence its activities (Vaaland et al., 2008). Perreault et al. (2010) define marketing as an activity that seeks to achieve organizational goals by preparing contingency plans for consumer needs and directing the flow of satisfactory goods and services from producers to consumers. In addition to satisfying consumer needs, the market situation practically shows the interaction of consumers and organizations to achieve profitability without considering customer satisfaction.

Marketing ethics can occur because of the executive relationship between marketing and organizational members, consumers, competitors, and parties and includes public opinion in the exchange process. Business ethics requires setting minimum rules and standards related to responsibilities and behaviors that companies must follow, in other words, as an accountability system to carry out their roles ethically (Donaldson, 2002). If we look at previous research on business ethics, this research focuses on the relationship between ethical management and ethical activity. In addition, discussions related to community social responsibility are also referred to as ethics (Hur et al., 2014). Consumers not only demand more high-quality products, but they also make social reputation a preference in choosing products even at higher prices when determining the outcome of their choice (Trudel & Cote, 2009). Ethical marketing practices guide companies in dealing with ethical issues, and ethical marketing practices include product-related ethics, pricing-related ethics, place-related ethics, and promotion-related ethics.

There are many aspects of marketing to the consumer aspect, so we will also discuss consumption ethics when discussing marketing ethics. Consumers use their purchasing power to choose products that are more social and environmentally friendly. Another aspect focuses on vulnerable market segments. Children, the elderly, the disabled, and immigrants are examples of this market segment. So this segment tends to concentrate on the "base of the global pyramid" (Martin & Hill, 2015).

Consumer Ethics

There is a striking diversity in definitions of ethical consumer behavior, such as the Fair Trade Concept, which has evolved from a focus on producers to broader issues of social justice (Becchetti & Costantino, 2010). However, from a starting point that assumes ethical purchases are made consciously. They are based on certain ethical or social issues (Ethical Consumers, 2020). Such as environmental concerns (Trudel and Cotte, 2008) involving recycling issues (Auto et al., 2009; Vicente & Reis, 2007), perhaps because recycling household waste has become a daily routine for many people partly because of various recycling policies and programs in many countries. Then, social justice and human rights (Auger et al., 2010; Ethical Consumers, 2020; Trudel and Cotte, 2008). And finally, animal and community welfare issues include organic food for animal welfare or supporting local communities (McEachern et al., 2007).

Consumer ethics is seen as the behavior of a small group of conscientious consumers where consumer ethics can be defined as consumer behavior in allocating personal funds, including consumption and investment. Based on interests related to certain issues, be it human rights, social justice, the environment, or welfare animals (Kibert et al., 2012). Ethical consumer action involves a mode of engagement with the market. It is based on two approaches or orientations: (1) taking action through ethical forms of consumption and citizenship; and (2) abstention, not to consume or reduce the
aggregate level of consumption (Carrington et al., 2020). The new dimension also looks at consumer ethical beliefs but focuses more on positive consumer actions. The first dimension is actively benefiting from illegal activities. It is exemplified by changing the price tags on merchandise while still in the store or not getting a receipt. Here, the consumer must actively and consciously decide to engage in the action in question. The second dimension is passive benefit exemplified by making price changes or product layouts and saying nothing. In this case, the individual consumer is the recipient of the impact of the mistakes of others. The third dimension actively benefits from questionable (but considered legal) actions such as not telling the truth when negotiating the price of goods (Vitell, 2014).

**Consumer Behaviour**

Consumers are individuals or organizations who pay a certain amount of money to consume goods and services offered by companies or producers. Consumers can also be interpreted as end-users of goods and services produced by a company. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBI), consumers are defined as finished goods or service users (consumers and others). Consumers have an important role in the supply and demand chains in the economic system of every country. Producers of goods and services will have no motive or incentive to carry out production activities without a demand for their products and services.

Swastha and Handoko in Adnan (2018) identify consumer behavior as individual activities directly involved in obtaining and using goods and services, including the decision-making process in the preparation and determination of these activities. At the same time, Mowen in Adnan (2018) states that consumer behavior is the study of the unit of purchase and the exchange process involving the acquisition, consumer and disposal, goods, services, experiences, and ideas. Schiffman (2007) suggests that consumer behavior is the behavior that consumers display in searching for, buying, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services they expect to satisfy their needs. While the American Marketing Association (2021) defines consumer behavior as referring to the study of how customers, both individuals, and organizations, satisfy their needs and wants by choosing, buying, using, and spending goods, ideas, and services.

Consumer behavior is very important in marketing management because it can help marketers understand what underlies their consumers to choose and use their products or choose products that match their products. According to Hasan (2013), consumer behavior involves when individuals or groups choose, buy, use, or assist products, ideas, or experiences to satisfy consumer needs and desires. Kotler and Keller (2009) state that consumer behavior studies how individuals, groups, and organizations select, buy, use and how goods, services, ideas, or experiences satisfy their needs and wants. The purchasing decision is a process by which an individual chooses, buys, and behaves in the way that fulfills his desires. This consumer behavior may change from time to time. That is because the needs and desires of consumers are increasingly diverse and follow the times.

According to Kotler & Armstrong (2008), the types of consumer buying behavior based on the level of involvement and the level of difference between brands are (1) Complex Buying Behavior, consumer buying behavior in situations determined by high consumer involvement in purchases, and differences that are considered significant between brands. (2) Dissonance-Reducing Buying Behavior, namely consumer buying behavior in situations with a high involvement character, but there is little perceived difference between brands. (3) Habitual Buying Behavior, consumer purchasing behavior in situations that have the characteristic of low consumer involvement and the perception of slight brand differences. (4) Variety Seeking Buying Behavior is a consumer buying behavior with a low consumer involvement character but with the assumption of significant brand differences.

Several factors influence consumer behavior, Adnan (2018) argues that purchasing decisions made by consumers will not be done by themselves. Every decision taken will go through several stages first. These stages include product introduction, analyzing users' needs, the benefits to be obtained, and various other stages: (1) Cultural factors. Cultural factors have a broad and deep influence on consumer behavior. Marketers must understand the role played by culture, subculture, and social class. (2) Social factors, consumer behavior is also impacted by social factors, such as small groups, families, and consumers' role and social status. (3) Personal factors, buyer decisions are also influenced by personal characteristics such as age and stage of the buyer's life cycle, occupation, economic situation, lifestyle, personality, and self-concept. (4) Psychological factors. A person's purchase choice is influenced by four main psychological factors: motivation, perception, learning, beliefs, and attitudes.

**Consumer Decision**

There is a statement that Kotler has submitted (2005) which more or less reveals that the decisions given by consumers when making purchases are a series of processes from solving consumer problems in the form of needs and desires analysis, making Information, evaluating products purchases. Alternatives, purchase decisions, and behavior. After purchase. Where purchasing decisions made by consumers consist of several factors, namely consumer characteristics, company stimuli which include product, price, place, promotion, and other stimulus conditions such as politics, economy, technology, and culture so that it will produce consumers. Responses to stimuli that will lead to product decisions, brand decisions, dealer decisions, timing, and quantity of purchases. The impact of consumer decisions is to make repeat purchases. That's an indication that consumers have decided to intend to make a purchase. Purchase intention itself is defined as an individual's judgment to purchase another designated service from the same company, considering his current situation and possible circumstances (Hellier et al., 2003).

Decision-making by consumers can be called problem-solving. In the decision-making process, consumers have goals or behaviors that they want to do to achieve these goals. According to Setiadi (2008), the purchasing decision process for a product can be divided into five stages: (1) Recognizing Needs. In this process, consumers feel that things are felt to be lacking and lead to fulfillment. Consumers knew that there is a difference between what they experience and what they expect. (2) Seeking Information to meet their needs in the best way, consumers try to find Information. This information search will vary in level depending on the consumer's...
perception of the risk of the product to be purchased. (3) Evaluating Alternatives, Information obtained from these various sources will be considered for consumers to make decisions. Consumers will consider the benefits, including brand trust and the costs or risks of buying a product. (4) Making a Decision, After going through an evaluation carefully, the consumer will decide. Two factors influence buying decisions and purchase goals, namely the attitude of others and unpredictable (unpredictable) situational factors. (5) Evaluation After Purchase, Consumers will often evaluate after purchasing their decisions and actions. Suppose consumers assess the perceived performance of the product or service as equal to or exceeding what is expected. In that case, the consumer will be satisfied, and vice versa if the performance of the product or service received is less than expected, the consumer will be dissatisfied.

METHODS
The research method of this study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), a literature review method that identifies, assesses and interprets findings on a predetermined topic. SLR is used to identify, review, evaluate, and interpret research with phenomenal topic areas, with certain relevant research questions. The SLR method can be systematically reviewed and identified by journal articles (Aliyah and Mulawarman, 2020).

This research searches for articles related to marketing ethics, consumer ethics, consumer behavior, and decisions which fulfills the following statement,
Q1: Does the journal discuss topics among marketing ethics, consumer ethics, consumer behavior, and consumer decisions?
Q2: Does the journal have any connection between these topics (marketing ethics, consumer ethics, consumer behavior, and consumer decisions)?
Q3: Are the journals used for discussion taken in the period 2015 – 2019 (Before COVID-19) and 2020 – 2021 (During the COVID-19 period)?

To answer this, a search for journals related to the topic to be discussed is carried out, and from a search at https://scholar.google.com/. Furthermore, to prove the journal used fulfills the questions that were prepared previously, the table is compiled as follows:

Table 1: Assessment of Journals as Research Data

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<th>No</th>
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<th>Q2</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Abdulnasir (2015)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Ricci et al. (2016)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Zollo et al. (2018)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Budhathoki et al. (2019)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Ahmed et al. (2020)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Nadeem et al. (2020)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>L. Lee &amp; Charles (2021)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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From the assessment carried out, the journals used as research data can answer the questions to be answered from this research, and the journals are worthy of being used as data to support this research.

The details of the research carried out are as follows: (1) Introduction: Reviewing the background such as the company’s marketing focus, general cases of corporate marketing, the importance of marketing ethics, demands, decisions, and consumer ethics, and the COVID-19 pandemic conditions and changes in the market and consumers. (2) Literature review: Reviewing theories related to marketing ethics, consumer ethics, consumer behavior, and consumer decisions. (3) Method: Review the SLR method and explain the source of the data obtained, namely the search for related articles. (4) Discussion: Studies related to marketing ethics, consumer ethics, consumer behavior, and decisions before and during COVID-19. (5) Conclusion & Suggestion: conclude the results of the discussion and suggest the next research. (6) Abstract: Summary of research.

DISCUSSION
Marketing Ethics and Consumer Ethics on Consumer Behavior and Decisions Before the COVID-19 Pandemic
Several studies have examined the relationship between marketing ethics, consumer ethics, consumer behavior, and consumer decisions. Kumar & Mokhtar (2016) succeeded in revealing that when a product is equipped with adequate safety factors and prevention of all types of fraud, it directly impacts the formation of stronger consumer attitudes. The results of further research related to fair pricing and not practicing unfair pricing positively affect consumer attitudes. Kumar also revealed that consumers are sensitive to companies acting ethically to influence their product selection. This study also describes the ease and convenience of consumers in accessing the products they buy as part of the company’s ethical marketing activities, which impact consumer buying interest. Research also shows that the company’s marketing ethics influence the behavior and decisions of consumers from all segments, in this case in terms of caution, desire for justice, and not hesitate to show reactions to their buying experiences.

Furthermore, Abdulnasir (2015) researched small shops in the area and found that small business firms do not tell the complete truth about a product to consumers, thus causing consumer dissatisfaction. The unethical behavior of the company’s marketing is discriminating treatment to consumers. Deceiving consumers by saying that one of the products is unique to their store or not available in other market areas and sold to them, no returns of high-priced defective products should be fair enough if charged the average price. This practice makes companies more substantial than consumers and narrows the opportunity to buy freely. After analyzing the data obtained, they can conclude that unethical marketing practices are negatively related to consumers’ purchase intentions. However, a low level of awareness about unethical companies can reverse the negative relationship, as shown in the findings.

Ricci et al. (2016) examined ethics as a support for sustainable consumers. They conclude that there is an awareness of both producers and consumers in the era of post-modern society to be responsible for others globally, and they call it ethics. Then marketing and consumer ethics can be considered a bridge between production and consumption, reflecting how
increasing consumer awareness of information asymmetry issues such as consumer rights. The Right to Information, the right to choose, the right to be heard can positively affect the sustainability of consumer behavior. However, the debate about informative asymmetry does not explain the drawbacks of ethical buying behavior. That requires further discussion of the relationship between universal principles of ethical behavior and personal attitudes.

In the study of Zollo et al. (2018), they examine the influence of intuition into consumer ethics that affects purchasing decisions. Data analysis shows that intuition significantly triggers new ecological views, which, in turn, strongly influence the ecologically conscious dimensions of consumer behavior.

Finally, in the study of Budhathoki et al. (2019), This study takes the concept of ethical consumption from the survey literature and identifies the level of consumer understanding of ethical consumption. Furthermore, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the factors that hinder ethical consumption among consumers while providing some theoretical and analytical applications. The literature review conducted on various related studies reflects several factors that hinder the process of ethical consumption. The difference between consumers' attitudes towards ethical products and their actual consumption behavior, known as the ethical gap, is also understood through the review. Various studies have found that consumer attitudes toward ethical consumption and actual behavior differ across countries from differences in terms of psychological, social, economic and other personal factors. In this regard, factors such as product prices, subjective norms, and attitudes were found to be drivers of ethical disparities in several countries. In fact, lack of product information, product unavailability, lack of convenience were found to hinder ethical consumption in some other countries.

Marketing Ethics and Consumer Ethics on Consumer Behavior and Decisions During the COVID-19 Pandemic

In Widayat & Arifin's research (2020), it was found that the behavior that was raised by consumers when faced with the COVID-19 Pandemic was to believe that the virus that originated in China was dangerous, difficult to treat, and influenced consumer behavior in meeting food needs. So that the impact is that consumers care or pay attention to the food products they choose, the country of origin of the food producers they eat, and food ingredients. In addition, because the virus is dangerous and difficult to treat, consumers avoid direct contact with vendors or food providers, so they use payment tools to prevent the spread of the virus by using electronic money or avoiding using paper money. The seller must understand the conditions for this behavior change and must be fulfilled by the seller without cheating on the existing situation.

Kartono & Tjahjadi (2021) researched online food delivery services during COVID-19 and found that the perception of trust positively affected consumer attitudes towards the use of online food delivery services during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Therefore, sellers need to consider marketing to increase safety, reliability, and trust because it is proven to help increase consumer confidence, which can later positively affect their attitude towards use. In addition, consumers feel their work is more manageable, effective, and efficient. In addition, it promotes cost savings, thereby influencing consumer attitudes towards use because the service provides convenience. However, in this study, it was found that if consumers feel that the service is risky, they will not be comfortable using it. Therefore, online food delivery service providers should improve hygiene standards by following the COVID-19 protocol. That is where sellers must enforce the importance of marketing ethics.

In the research of Ahmed et al. (2020), COVID-19 is the strongest variable that affects consumer buying behavior. US citizens tend towards impulsive behavior when buying. Practical implications, especially for government agencies, policymakers, marketers, and other practitioners, are needed to create and institutionalize different strategies to deal with unexpected situations during the COVID-19 phenomenon. Marketers and brand managers can devise new ethical strategies to increase their brand’s market share to achieve a competitive advantage in COVID-19 or similar panic situations in the future.

Nadeem et al. (2020) researched consumer values that affect consumer ethics, which showed that consumers’ ethical perceptions influence their decisions to purchase products and affect the creation of value for consumers and company support. Compliance with ethics (ethical marketing) creates customer satisfaction, commitment, and trust. Then this study reveals that when businesses behave according to values that motivate consumers, such as ethics, consumer participation in joint creative activities increases.

Furthermore, this study reviews the research of L. Lee & Charles (2021), which examines the ethics of online retail and its consumers. The results of their research reveal that ethical issues in the online market are unique. Where the company's image seems blurry, but what distinguishes a company with established ethics or not is how its marketing strategy is. Online retailers should focus on maintaining positive consumer perceptions and implementing relevant promotions to retain consumers.

As part of the discussion, ethics for marketing and consumers, before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic, impact how consumers respond to products and determine their future purchases. Consumer ethics, which includes how consumers demand their rights, must be taken by the company to respond to this by showing ethics in its marketing. Consumer behavior and decisions about what to do next with their products depend on their marketing ethics.

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The conclusion drawn from this research is that consumer behavior and decisions are highly dependent on how ethical the company is in marketing its products and the ethics that consumers have both before and during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Kumar's research (2016) shows that good product features, reasonable prices, convenience affects consumer decisions and development. Then Abdulsnaris (2015) states a negative narrative when marketing ethics is not implemented, consumer disappointment arises. Ricci et al. (2016) also say that marketing and consumer ethics can be considered a bridge between production and consumption. They are reflecting how increasing consumer awareness about information asymmetry issues such as consumer rights. The Right to Information, the right to vote, the right to be heard can influence consumer behavior positively sustainably. Zollo et al.
COVID-19 when buying, so Marketers and brand managers can design new ethical strategies to increase their brand's market share to achieve competitive advantage COVID-19 or similar panic situations in the future. Then, as Nadeem et al. (2020) explain when businesses behave according to values that motivate consumers, such as ethics, consumer participation in joint creative activities increases. And lastly, Lee and Charles (2021) concluded that the online market is unique but related to ethics, consumer behavior, and decisions about what to do next to its product depending on its marketing ethics.

**Suggestion**

This article is a literacy study only. Hope for the future can be proven through direct research on how the relationship between marketing ethics and consumer ethics affects consumer behavior and decisions. The sector used as review material is still general, so it is necessary to provide limitations or focus for specific business fields if continued in research.

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