



Exploring Factors Influencing Online Purchasing Decisions among Generation Z Shopee Users: A Qualitative Study

Awliya Afwa^{1*}, Nia Anggraini², Adella Puspita³

^{1,3}Islamic University of Riau

²Persada Bunda University

Corresponding Author: Awliya Afwa Awliyaafwa@eco.uir.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the factors influencing online purchasing decisions among Generation Z Shopee users. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach involving 12 informants selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The findings reveal that online purchasing decisions are influenced by four interconnected factors: economic factors (price, discounts, and free shipping), technological factors (ease of use and transaction security), social factors (customer reviews, ratings, and recommendations), and psychological factors (trust, perceived value, and risk considerations). This study provides practical insights for e-commerce platforms and online sellers to develop strategies aligned with Generation Z consumer preferences.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology and internet accessibility has significantly transformed consumer behavior, particularly in the way individuals search for information and purchase products (Y. Chen et al., 2022; Saad, 2021). The emergence of e-commerce platforms has shifted conventional shopping activities into online transactions that offer convenience, time efficiency, diverse product choices, and various promotional benefits (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Prabawati et al., 2018; Sanda & Basalamah, 2021). Among the various e-commerce platforms available, Shopee has become one of the most widely used marketplaces due to its attractive features, including discounts, free shipping programs, customer reviews, and user-friendly applications (Ervina et al., 2024; Sofiya et al., 2023; Yastuti & Irawati, 2023; Zhao et al., 2020).

Generation Z represents a consumer segment that has grown alongside digital technology and the internet, making them highly familiar with online shopping activities (Khobibah et al., 2023; Said et al., 2023; Singh, 2024). As digital natives, Generation Z tends to rely on technology in their daily activities, including information searching, product comparison, and purchasing decisions (Handoyo, 2024; Priporas, Stylos, & Fotiadis, 2017; Siregar et al., 2023). Their shopping decisions are not only influenced by economic factors such as price and promotions but are also shaped by social influence, online reviews, trust in sellers, and previous shopping experiences (Bernardus, 2023; Fitria et al., 2024; Lu et al., 2026; Salwanisa & Wikartika, 2023).

Consumer purchasing decisions are a complex process involving several stages, namely need recognition, information searching, alternative evaluation, purchasing decisions, and post-purchase behavior (Fang et al., 2023; Kotler & Keller, 2016; Schneider & Tezza, 2021). In the context of online shopping, consumers face higher uncertainty because they cannot directly examine products before purchasing (Amirtha et al., 2020; Boyetey & Antwi, 2021; Huseynov & Özkan, 2014). And factors such as electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), customer ratings, seller credibility, and perceived trust play important roles in reducing perceived risk and encouraging purchasing decisions (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Pavlou, 2003).

Previous studies on online purchasing decisions have generally adopted a quantitative approach by examining specific variables, such as price, promotion, trust, service quality, and e-WOM (Agrawal, 2022; Ervina et al., 2024; Handoyo, 2024; Insani & Denny, 2024; Ningrum & Muslih, 2024; Saad, 2021). Although these studies have contributed to understanding the relationship between these variables, they have provided limited insights into how consumers interpret and prioritize these factors based on their personal online shopping experiences. Because of that, a qualitative approach is necessary to explore the deeper meanings and considerations behind online purchasing decisions among Generation Z consumers.

This study contributes to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing online purchasing decisions from the perspective of Generation Z Shopee users. Through a qualitative approach, this study explores the experiences, perceptions, and

considerations of consumers in the decision-making process. Therefore, this research aims to explore the factors influencing online purchasing decisions among Generation Z users of the Shopee platform.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Behavior Theory

Consumer behavior refers to the activities and processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use, and evaluate products or services to satisfy their needs and desires (Listianayanti et al., 2023; Murtiasih et al., 2021). Understanding consumer behavior is essential for businesses to identify the factors that influence consumers' decision-making processes (Azis & Ali, 2023; Listianayanti et al., 2023). According to (Kotler & Keller, 2016), consumer behavior involves studying how consumers make purchasing decisions and how personal, social, cultural, and psychological factors influence their choices.

(Kotler & Keller, 2016) Kotler and Keller's framework presents a five-stage model of the consumer buying process, comprising need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behaviour (Giannelloni & Tissier-Desbordes, 2013; Ouskou & Lakhili, 2024) with the stages illustrating that purchasing choices are shaped by more than economic calculations, incorporating perceptions, prior experiences, and environmental influences (Bèzes, 2013; Desku & Sadrija, 2023). Need recognition is triggered when consumers perceive a gap between their current and desired states, prompting consideration of products or brands to address that gap (Zindy et al., 2018). The information search stage involves gathering data from multiple sources to reduce uncertainty and inform evaluation of options (Lunardo et al., 2012; Zouabi & Kammoun, 2018). During evaluation of alternatives, consumers compare options based on criteria and develop beliefs and preferences regarding how well each satisfies their needs and perceived benefits (Cottet et al., 2012; Silva & Saad, 2021).

The purchase decision follows from formed preferences and reflects the intention to buy a specific brand or product among the considered options (Heitz-Spahn, 2014; Nabec, 2016). Post-purchase behavior encompasses satisfaction, evaluation of the purchase, and potential repurchase or loyalty implications, extending the process beyond the initial transaction (Beck, 2022). Across these stages, scholars emphasize that decisions arise from internal motivations and external influences such as marketing activities and social context, not solely from price or economic factors (Balbo & Jeannot, 2014; Ferran, 2010; Handayani et al., 2020; Nizeyimana & Mukanteri, 2023; Zindy et al., 2018).

In the context of online shopping, consumer behavior has undergone significant changes due to digital technology. Consumers are able to access extensive product information, compare alternatives, and consider reviews from other users before making purchasing decisions. Therefore, understanding consumer behavior theory provides a fundamental basis for exploring how Generation Z users evaluate and decide to purchase products through online platforms such as Shopee.

Online Purchasing Decision

Online purchasing decisions are a consumer decision-making process conducted through digital platforms, where consumers evaluate information and alternatives before transacting, a process that differs from conventional purchasing in that online shoppers face greater uncertainty due to the inability to inspect products directly, making information quality, trust, and prior customer experiences pivotal factors (Abarna et al., 2023; Ayala et al., 2024; Barrios et al., 2023; Bocanega & Cardona, 2020; T. Chen, 2022; Cruzado et al., 2022; Franco, 2020; Gonzales et al., 2023; Venegas & Bazan, 2022).

In the online shopping context, trust is a central determinant because consumers face risks related to product quality, seller credibility, and transaction security, and higher trust has been shown to reduce perceived risk and increase the likelihood of completing online transactions (Guo et al., 2017; Mou & Cohen, 2015; Pavlou et al., 2007; Rameez & Kulathunga, 2019; Shao et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2020).

Online consumer decisions are strongly influenced by electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), including customer reviews and ratings on e-commerce platforms, which provide valuable information from prior buyers and shape potential buyers' perceptions and purchase intentions; this core idea aligns with findings that e-WOM acts as a key information source that affects perceived usefulness, trust, credibility, and risk, thereby guiding online decision-making and purchasing behaviour (Al-Masoud, 2020; Beyari & Garamoun, 2024; Daud et al., 2024; Handoyo, 2024; Handranata et al., 2023; Issa, 2021; Kanimozhi & Sengottuvel, 2023; Kumari & Verma, 2018; Pham, 2022; Prahasti et al., 2023; Ranjith et al., 2025; Ranti et al., 2023; Suganya & Venkateshwaran, 2024).

Factors Influencing Online Purchasing Decisions and Conceptual Framework

Various factors may influence consumers' online purchasing decisions. Previous studies have identified several important factors, including price attractiveness, promotional offers, perceived trust, product quality, ease of using digital platforms, transaction security, and social influence (Aggarwal & Rahul, 2018; Anggraini et al., 2023; Beyari & Garamoun, 2024; Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Gusdaputra et al., 2023; Hassan et al., 2020; Indiani & Fahik, 2020; Kotler & Keller, 2016; Kumar & Mokha, 2020; Pavlou, 2003; Plateaux et al., 2018; Sui & Geng, 2021; Yulistiyani et al., 2024).

For Generation Z consumers, who are highly familiar with digital technology, purchasing decisions may also be influenced by their interaction with social media, online communities, and recommendations from other consumers (Andon & Annuar, 2023; Khobibah et al., 2023; Priporas, Stylos, & Fotiadis, 2017; Soni & Vohra, 2022; Tseng et al., 2022). In addition to that, platform-provided features such as discount programs, free shipping, product ratings, and customer reviews emerge as important pre-purchase considerations for Gen Z when evaluating online options, consistent with findings on the role of e-WOM, price promotions, and convenient service features in shaping Gen Z online buying behaviour (Andon & Annuar, 2023;

Khobibah et al., 2023; Paulienė & Sedneva, 2019; Said et al., 2023; Setyaning & Nugroho, 2020; Soni & Vohra, 2022)

Based on the literature review, this study develops a conceptual framework that describes online purchasing decisions among Generation Z users as a phenomenon influenced by multiple interconnected factors, including economic factors (price and promotion), technological factors (platform convenience and security), social factors (reviews and recommendations), and psychological factors (trust and perceived value). However, as a qualitative study, these factors are not treated as fixed variables but as initial concepts that guide the exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives.

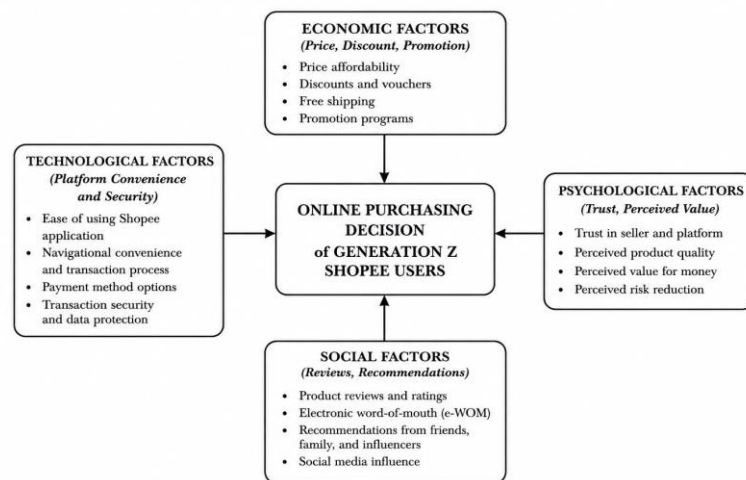


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Factors Influencing Online Purchasing Decisions among Generation Z Shopee Users

The conceptual framework illustrates that online purchasing decisions among Generation Z Shopee users may be influenced by various interconnected factors, including economic factors (price, discounts, and promotions), technological factors (ease of use and transaction security), social factors (online reviews and recommendations), and psychological factors (trust and perceived value). In this qualitative study, these factors serve as preliminary concepts to guide the exploration of participants' experiences and perceptions, and they may develop according to empirical findings obtained during the research process.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the factors influencing online purchasing decisions among Generation Z users of the Shopee platform. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of consumers' experiences, perceptions, and considerations during the online purchasing decision-making process.

The informants in this study are Generation Z individuals who actively use Shopee and have experience purchasing products through the platform.

The informants are selected using a purposive sampling technique based on specific criteria, namely individuals who belong to Generation Z, actively use Shopee, and have made online purchases within the last six months. Data collection is conducted until the information obtained reaches data saturation, where no significant new information emerges from additional interviews.

Data are collected through in-depth interviews and documentation. The interviews are conducted using semi-structured questions that allow informants to share their experiences and perspectives regarding the factors influencing their online purchasing decisions, such as economic considerations, technological convenience, social influence, and psychological perceptions.

The collected data are analyzed using the interactive model proposed by (Miles et al., 2014), which consists of three stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study applies source triangulation by comparing information obtained from different informants.

This methodological approach enables the study to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing online purchasing decisions among Generation Z Shopee users based on their real experiences and perspectives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Informants

This study involved 12 Generation Z informants who actively use the Shopee application and have experience in making online purchases. The informants were selected based on predetermined criteria to obtain diverse perspectives regarding online purchasing decision-making.

Table 1. Characteristics of Informants

Informant	Gender	Age	Occupation	Frequency of Shopping on Shopee
1	Female	18	Student	3-5 times/month
2	Male	21	University Student	1-2 times/month
3	Female	22	University Student	More than 5 times/month
4	Female	20	Student	2-3 times/month
5	Male	23	Employee	1-2 times/month
6	Female	19	Student	3-4 times/month
7	Male	24	Employee	1-2 times/month
8	Female	20	University Student	More than 5 times/month
9	Female	22	Entrepreneur	2-3 times/month
10	Male	21	University Student	1-2 times/month
11	Female	18	Student	3-5 times/month
12	Male	23	Employee	2-3 times/month

The characteristics of informants indicate that Generation Z consumers have diverse backgrounds and shopping frequencies, allowing this study to capture various experiences and considerations in online purchasing decisions.

Theme 1: Economic Factors as the Main Consideration in Online Purchasing Decisions

The findings indicate that economic factors, such as affordable prices, discounts, promotional programs, and free shipping, become important considerations for Generation Z consumers when shopping on Shopee. Many informants stated that they tend to compare prices between sellers and wait for promotional periods before making purchases.

One informant stated:

“I usually compare prices from several stores before buying a product. Discounts and free shipping vouchers often make me decide to purchase immediately.” (Informant I3)

These findings indicate that economic benefits remain a significant attraction in online shopping because consumers seek to maximize value while minimizing expenditure.

Theme 2: Technological Convenience Supports Online Purchasing Decisions

The results show that the ease of using the Shopee application, payment flexibility, and transaction security influence consumers' confidence and convenience during the purchasing process.

An informant explained:

“Shopee is easy to use, and the payment options are complete. The transaction process is also simple and practical.” (Informant I6)

The convenience provided by digital platforms reduces the effort required during the purchasing process and encourages consumers to continue using online shopping applications.

Theme 3: Social Factors and Online Influence on Purchasing Decisions

The study indicates that social factors play a significant role in shaping online purchasing decisions among Generation Z Shopee users. Customer reviews and ratings become important sources of information because they provide insights into product quality, seller reliability, and previous consumers' experiences. Before making a purchase, most informants tend to read customer reviews and evaluate product ratings to reduce uncertainty.

One informant stated:

“I usually read the reviews and look at the ratings before buying a product. If many customers give positive feedback, I feel more confident to make the purchase.” (Informant I8)

In addition to reviews and ratings, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), recommendations from friends and family, and information obtained through social media also influence purchasing decisions. Generation Z consumers frequently interact with digital communities and social networks, making social influence an important factor in their evaluation process.

Another informant explained:

“Sometimes I buy a product because I see recommendations from friends or social media content that shows the product's benefits.” (Informant I10)

These findings demonstrate that social interactions in digital environments contribute to consumers' confidence and shape their perceptions before completing online purchases.

Theme 4: Psychological Factors: Trust, Perceived Value, and Risk Considerations

The results reveal that psychological factors, particularly trust in sellers and the Shopee platform, significantly influence consumers' online purchasing decisions. Since online shopping involves uncertainty due to the inability to physically inspect products, consumers rely on their perceptions of seller credibility, product information accuracy, and transaction security.

One informant stated:

"I prefer to buy from stores with good reputations because I believe the products will match the descriptions provided." (Informant I5)

Additionally, consumers consider whether the benefits obtained from the products are worth the money spent. The perception of obtaining good value encourages consumers to make purchasing decisions. Conversely, concerns about receiving products that do not match expectations may delay or cancel purchases.

An informant stated:

"I do not only look at the price. I also consider the quality and whether the product is worth the money I pay." (Informant I12)

These findings suggest that trust, perceived value, and perceived risk are essential psychological considerations that influence the online purchasing decision-making process among Generation Z Shopee users.

Economic Factors and Online Purchasing Decisions

The findings highlight those economic factors, including price attractiveness, discounts, promotional programs, and free shipping, are among the primary considerations influencing online purchasing decisions among Generation Z Shopee users. These findings support previous studies which found that economic incentives and promotional benefits significantly influence online purchasing behaviour by increasing consumers' perceived value and purchase attractiveness (Anggraini et al., 2023; Gusdaputra et al., 2023; Pauliené & Sedneva, 2019; Said et al., 2023; Setyaning & Nugroho, 2020; Soni & Vohra, 2022).

The results also reinforce evidence that Generation Z consumers are highly responsive to promotional features such as discounts and free shipping when evaluating online shopping alternatives (Andon & Annuar, 2023; Khobibah et al., 2023; Priporas, Stylos, Fotiadis, et al., 2017; Tseng et al., 2022).

These findings are in line with Consumer Behavior Theory proposed by (Kotler & Keller, 2016), which explains that consumers evaluate available alternatives based on perceived benefits before making purchasing decisions. Thus, economic incentives offered by e-commerce platforms serve as important considerations that encourage Generation Z consumers to make online purchases.

Technological Factors and Online Purchasing Decisions

This study found that technological factors, including ease of application use, payment security, and platform convenience, contribute significantly to online purchasing decisions among Generation Z Shopee users. These findings align with earlier studies indicating that identified ease of using digital platforms and transaction security as important determinants of online purchasing behaviour (Aggarwal & Rahul, 2018; Beyari & Garamoun, 2024; Hassan et al., 2020; Pavlou, 2003).

This study confirms previous research demonstrating that a convenient and user-friendly technological environment enhances consumers' shopping experiences, reduces effort during the purchasing process, and increases their willingness to complete transactions online (Indiani & Fahik, 2020; Kumar & Mokha, 2020; Plateaux et al., 2018).

The findings are consistent with studies suggesting that Generation Z consumers place considerable importance on the quality of digital experiences when selecting e-commerce platforms because they are highly familiar with technology and expect seamless, efficient, and secure online interactions (Andon & Annuar, 2023; Priporas, Stylos, Fotiadis, et al., 2017; Tseng et al., 2022). As a result, technological convenience and security serve as critical factors that encourage online purchasing decisions among Generation Z consumers.

Social Factors and Online Purchasing Decisions

The results show that social factors, including customer reviews, ratings, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and recommendations from social networks, influence Generation Z consumers before making online purchasing decisions. The result echo earlier findings that identified e-WOM, online reviews, and social influence as important determinants of online purchasing behaviour (Andon & Annuar, 2023; Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Khobibah et al., 2023; Tseng et al., 2022).

The findings are also consistent with prior research suggesting that customer reviews and ratings help consumers evaluate products, reduce uncertainty, and increase confidence in making purchase decisions (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Soni & Vohra, 2022).

The results align with studies indicating that Generation Z consumers are highly influenced by interactions within social media, online communities, and peer recommendations when assessing online shopping alternatives (Andon & Annuar, 2023; Khobibah et al., 2023; Priporas, Stylos, Fotiadis, et al., 2017). These findings suggest that social influence serves as a significant source of information that shapes online purchasing decisions among Generation Z consumers.

Psychological Factors and Online Purchasing Decisions

The results demonstrate that psychological factors, particularly trust, perceived value, and perceived risk, are fundamental considerations in online

purchasing decisions among Generation Z Shopee users. The finding corroborates previous research suggesting that trust is a critical determinant of online purchasing behaviour because it helps reduce uncertainty and perceived risks associated with electronic transactions (Beyari & Garamoun, 2024; Gusdaputra et al., 2023; Hassan et al., 2020; Pavlou, 2003).

The results also align with prior research suggesting that consumers are more likely to make purchases when they perceive that the benefits obtained from a product are proportional to the costs incurred and when they feel confident about the reliability of the seller and platform (Aggarwal & Rahul, 2018; Indiani & Fahik, 2020; Kumar & Mokha, 2020). Consistent with Consumer Behavior Theory (Kotler & Keller, 2016), consumers evaluate both the expected benefits and potential risks before making purchase decisions. The finding highlights that trust, perceived value, and perceived risk play important roles in shaping online purchasing decisions among Generation Z consumers.

The findings show that online purchasing decisions among Generation Z Shopee users are influenced by a combination of economic, technological, social, and psychological factors. This result supports previous research emphasizing that online consumer behaviour is shaped by various considerations, including promotional benefits, platform convenience, social influence, trust, and perceived value (Andon & Annuar, 2023; Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Khobibah et al., 2023; Pavlou, 2003; Priporas, Stylos, Fotiadis, et al., 2017). These factors contribute to different stages of the consumer decision-making process, ranging from information search and alternative evaluation to the final purchase decision. The study also provides additional insight into Consumer Behavior Theory by illustrating how Generation Z consumers make purchasing decisions within contemporary online shopping environments.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study explores the factors influencing online purchasing decisions among Generation Z Shopee users through a qualitative approach. The findings reveal that online purchasing decisions are shaped by the interaction of economic, technological, social, and psychological factors.

Economic factors, such as competitive prices, discounts, promotional programs, and free shipping, become major considerations because consumers seek maximum value from their purchases. Technological factors, including ease of application use, payment security, and platform convenience, also contribute to creating a positive shopping experience. Social factors, particularly customer reviews, ratings, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), and recommendations from peers and social media, influence consumers by providing additional information and reducing uncertainty. Psychological factors, including trust in sellers, perceived value, and risk perception, also determine consumers' confidence in completing online transactions.

The evidence indicates that Generation Z consumers do not make online purchasing decisions based on a single factor. Instead, they integrate various

economic benefits, technological experiences, social information, and psychological evaluations throughout the decision-making process.

Based on these findings, e-commerce platforms and online sellers should develop comprehensive strategies by offering competitive prices, attractive promotional programs, secure and user-friendly applications, transparent product information, and reliable services to increase consumer trust and satisfaction.

FURTHER STUDY

This study has several limitations. First, this research focuses only on Generation Z users of Shopee, which may limit the generalization of findings to consumers from different generations or users of other e-commerce platforms. Second, this study explores consumer experiences using a qualitative approach with a limited number of informants; therefore, the findings represent in-depth perspectives rather than broad statistical generalizations.

Future studies are recommended to involve different demographic groups, compare users across various e-commerce platforms, or apply quantitative and mixed-method approaches to examine the relationships among factors influencing online purchasing decisions. Further research may also explore emerging digital shopping phenomena, such as live shopping, influencer marketing, and artificial intelligence-based recommendations, which increasingly shape consumer behavior in the digital marketplace.

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