

# **Digital Transformation and E-Commerce Growth: Impact on Consumer Behavior and SMEs**

# Siti Annisa Wahdiniawati<sup>1\*</sup>, Ari Apriani<sup>2</sup> and Arthur Alvin Orlando<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Dian Nusantara, Jakarta, Indonesia, siti.annisa.wahdiniawati@undira.ac.id

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Dian Nusantara, Jakarta, Indonesia, <u>ari.apriani@undira.ac.id</u>

<sup>3</sup> Universitas Dian Nusantara, Jakarta, Indonesia, <u>arthuralvinorlando@gmail.com</u>

\*Corresponding Author: siti.annisa.wahdiniawati@undira.ac.id1

Abstract: This study aims to analyze the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) on online shopping intention on Shopee, with trust as a mediating variable. The research method used is a quantitative approach, with data collected through a survey questionnaire administered to Shopee users. The data obtained were analyzed using path analysis techniques to test the relationships between variables. The results of the study show that e-WOM does not directly influence online shopping intention on Shopee. Although e-WOM is often considered an important factor in shopping decision-making, trust does not mediate the relationship between e-WOM and online shopping intention. Consumers tend to rely more on reviews and experiences available within the Shopee platform itself, as well as security guarantees such as Shopee Guarantee and refund policies. This indicates that consumers prioritize direct reviews from other users on the platform over information from external e-WOM sources. The implications of this study suggest that SMEs on Shopee should focus on building positive reviews within the platform and utilizing the security features provided to enhance consumer trust and shopping intention. The study also recommends that future research explore the influence of specific online reviews, such as video testimonials or social media comments, on consumer trust and shopping intention.

Keywords: behavior, digital, e-commerce, online shopping interest, SMEs

# **INTRODUCTION**

The digital transformation and growth of e-commerce have brought significant changes in consumer behavior, particularly in how they shop and interact with products and services. E-commerce platforms have become a primary choice for consumers due to their convenience, accessibility, and promotional offers. Survey data indicates that the number of businesses using e-commerce grew by 4.46% in 2022/2023 (Kusumatrisna et al., 2023). According to the survey, 78.12% of business owners feel more comfortable conducting transactions offline, 29.94% are not interested in online shopping, 27.83% lack knowledge and skills, and 13.80% cite other reasons (Kusumatrisna et al., 2023). This highlights that many business owners, particularly Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), have not yet utilized digitalization in their marketing processes.

MSMEs are one of the sectors significantly impacted by e-commerce trends (Ayunda et al., 2023). Despite the many opportunities e-commerce offers to MSMEs, not all business owners at this level adopt e-commerce strategies (Siregar et al., 2023). Several factors may influence their decisions, including understanding the preferences of e-commerce users in the purchasing process (Amiruddin et al., 2023). Consumer engagement in the online shopping experience and their preferences for certain elements such as perceived risk, perceived usefulness, e-WOM, and user trust can provide valuable insights for MSME players (Gunawan & Sukresna, 2023). A better understanding of consumer preferences in e-commerce can offer strategic insights for MSMEs to develop and optimize their digital sales through e-commerce platforms (Raharti & Nasution, 2024).

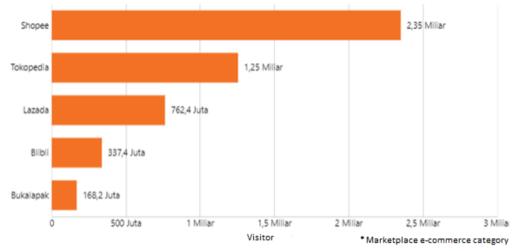


Figure 1. List of the Top 5 E-Commerce Platforms with the Most Visitors in Indonesia (January-December 2023) (Ahdiat, 2024)

Based on Figure 1, it can be seen that the marketplace e-commerce platform with the highest number of visits in Indonesia is Shopee in the first position, followed by Tokopedia, Lazada, Blibli, and Bukalapak (Ahdiat, 2024). Therefore, this study will focus solely on Shopee, as it is the most visited platform and can serve as a reference for MSME players who have not yet utilized digital marketing, particularly e-commerce.

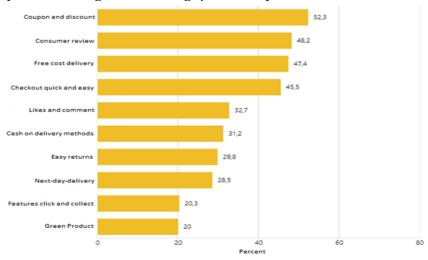


Figure 2. Top 10 Factors Driving Online Shopping in Indonesia (January 2024) (Annur, 2024)

Based on Figure 2, it can be observed that the main reasons consumers engage in online shopping include coupons and discounts, which are the strongest drivers of online shopping desire. Additionally, consumers tend to check reviews after making a purchase, as this contributes to their shopping experience. Other factors encouraging online shopping include free shipping, fast and easy checkout, likes and comments, cash-on-delivery (COD) options, easy returns, next-day delivery, click-and-collect(Annur, 2024) features, and environmentally friendly products (Annur, 2024).

The theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a well-known psychological model used to explain human behavior (Ajzen, 1991, 2020; Armitage & Conner, 2001; Yuriev et al., 2020). TPB is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which was used to predict human behavior. TRA posits that individuals' actions are based solely on their intentions, a concept later criticized for its limitations in explaining human behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Astuti & Prijanto, 2021; Bandura, 1991). To address these limitations, Ajzen (1991) expanded TRA and proposed TPB, incorporating a new concept: perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2020; Astuti & Prijanto, 2021; Bosnjak et al., 2020). TRA asserts that individual behavior, influenced by attitudes and subjective norms, is determined by the individual's intention to perform specific activities (Ajzen, 2020; Bosnjak et al., 2020). TPB is frequently used and recommended for predicting human behavior, asserting that individuals are likely to act based on changes in their attitudes (Ajzen, 2020; Apau & Koranteng, 2019). In both TRA and TPB, individual opinions play a crucial role in shaping the cognitive and affective foundations of behavioral factors, such as attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2020; Bosnjak et al., 2020).

Literature reviews conducted by researchers compare previous studies with the current research. Prior research indicates that purchase decisions are preceded by the buyer's intention to conduct online transactions with trusted sources (Puspitarini & Dewi, 2021). Purchase intention is a process that consumers must undergo to complete a transaction for goods or services, based on various considerations (Ariyanti & Darmanto, 2020).

Trust can act as a mediator between electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and perceived risk concerning online purchase intentions on Shopee. Practical implications suggest that Shopee must ensure reliability in service and features and enhance security during online shopping to foster sustained online purchasing interest (Ilhamalimy & Ali, 2021). Consumer trust is defined as a willingness to accept risks from another party if that party's actions result in potential losses, irrespective of the ability to monitor and control the trusted party's actions (Nur et al., 2020). Previous studies have shown that trust significantly influences attitudes (Suleman et al., 2019). Customers are more likely to make purchases on a specific website when their online shopping experience is pleasant (Ulaan et al., 2016). Other research indicates that trust does not directly affect the intention to buy online among female consumers but indirectly influences it through attitude (Raman, 2019).

Perceived risk is assumed to be a general risk accepted by individuals when using a system application (Ikhsani et al., 2021). According to Soto-Acosta et al (2014), perceived risk can be divided into five categories: financial risk, performance risk, psychological risk, physical/privacy risk, and social risk. Among these, financial risk has the greatest impact on financial and privacy concerns because online transactions are beyond consumers' control (Soto-Acosta et al., 2014). Suleman et al (2019) found that trust and risk factors significantly influence consumers' attitudes and intentions to shop online. They recommend exploring additional variables to further develop consumer attitude constructs in future research. In their study, Suleman et al (2019) included variables such as perceived ease of use, trust, and risk in relation to online shopping attitudes and intentions. Therefore, this research will incorporate other variables that can contribute to forming consumer attitude constructs.

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) refers to the exchange of information occurring between potential, current, or experienced consumers about a product, brand, service, or company, available via the internet (Ismagilova et al., 2017). e-WOM involves information obtained through online media, which can assist consumers in their purchasing behavior. This information, derived from online word-of-mouth, provides various options for consumers to compare the performance of a recommended product or service, influencing their purchase intentions (Aslami et al., 2022; Ilhamalimy & Ali, 2021).

Therefore, this study aims to address the gaps identified in previous research. This study uses a different model to analyse e-commerce user preferences and its direct implications for MSME players adopting e-commerce strategies. The focus is on specific elements such as perceived risks, perceived benefits, e-WOM, and user trust in the context of online consumer preferences.

This research seeks to offer a more comprehensive view of how MSMEs can align their business strategies with the demands and expectations of e-commerce users, thereby improving their competitiveness and business sustainability in the digital era. The urgency of this research lies in the need for MSMEs to adapt to current technological advancements. Today's consumers seek the convenience of purchasing goods easily without incurring transport costs, spending time and effort, or engaging in price negotiations. Many e-commerce platforms, especially in the marketplace category, offer various promotions to attract consumers and encourage online purchase transactions.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

This study focuses on Shopee users who have made online purchases and reside in West Jakarta. Online shopping interest has a significant impact on the growth and sustainability of MSMEs, particularly in terms of revenue. Shopee was selected due to its high number of visitors compared to other e-commerce platforms. The respondents in this study are consumers who have shopped online via the Shopee app at least once in the past three months.

The survey population consists of Shopee consumers living in West Jakarta. The sample is drawn from this population, with the sample size determined based on the characteristics and number of the population. When the population is large and the researcher cannot study the entire population due to constraints such as limited funds, manpower, and time, a sample can be used to represent the population (Azhari et al., 2023). Findings from the sample are generalized to the population. Therefore, the sample should be representative. This study employs convenience sampling, which involves gathering information from members of the population who are willing to provide it (Sekaran & Bougie, 2017). In this study, a sample of 120 respondents was used, based on 24 indicators multiplied by 5.

The instrument used is a questionnaire with a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, reflecting a spectrum from the most negative to the most positive responses. The model used in this study is a causal relationship model. Hypotheses are tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The analysis method combines quantitative and qualitative approaches, known as mixed methods. Validity and reliability tests of the questionnaire and hypothesis testing at a 5% alpha level (0.05) are conducted before performing path analysis.

This research adopts a descriptive approach, aiming to explain the characteristics of a specific group. The study focuses on understanding the relationships between variables and presenting results numerically, using statistical formulas for analysis. The survey data is analyzed statistically to measure and obtain results through the questionnaire.

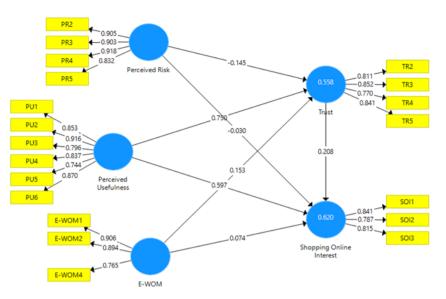
#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

PLS (Partial Least Squares) is an alternative approach that shifts from covariance-based SEM to a variance-based approach. While covariance-based SEM typically tests causality or theory, PLS is more oriented towards predictive modeling (Ghozali & Latan, 2020). This study employs PLS analysis, conducted in two stages: a) The first stage involves evaluating the measurement model to assess the validity and reliability of each construct's indicators; b) The second stage focuses on evaluating the structural model to determine the presence and strength of relationships between variables and constructs, using the t-test within the PLS framework.

For the evaluation of the measurement model, validity testing for formative indicators shows how changes in one indicator affect the construct when other indicators within the same construct are altered or removed. Validity in this study is assessed through convergent validity and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The results of these validity tests are presented below. The factor loadings for each construct exceed the recommended threshold of > 0.7. Convergent validity refers to the factor loading values for latent variables with their respective indicators. The desired value for convergent validity is > 0.7 (Ghozali & Latan, 2020). Based on the data processing results, there are some factor loadings below 0.7, namely for the indicators E-WOM3, E-WOM5, PR1, and TR1. Therefore, these indicators were excluded from the research model, and a re-test of the factor loadings was conducted. After re-testing, all indicators in the research model are now above 0.7. The lowest factor loading is for the PU5 indicator at 0.744, while the highest is for the PR4 indicator at 0.918. Therefore, all indicators in this study are considered valid and meet the criteria for convergent validity.

The second validity test involves examining the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to (Ghozali & Latan, 2020), the AVE value should be greater than 0.5. Based on the AVE data, the convergent validity test criteria are met, as the AVE values for each variable exceed 0.5. Specifically, the AVE values are as follows: Perceived Risk (PR) at 0.792, Perceived Usefulness (PU) at 0.702, E-WOM at 0.735, Shopping Online Interest (SOI) at 0.663, and Trust (TR) at 0.671. Another measurement used to assess reliability is the AVE value, which helps determine the variance of a construct component gathered from its indicators, adjusting for error levels.

Next, discriminant validity is tested, and evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading. Discriminant validity can also be assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion by comparing the square root of the AVE for each construct with the correlations between constructs in the model (Ghozali & Latan, 2020). A construct is considered valid if the square root of its AVE is higher than the correlations with other constructs. The Fornell-Larcker criterion data shows that the square root of the AVE for each construct is higher than the correlations with other constructs. Discriminant validity assesses how well an indicator differentiates among the constructs of the instrument. To test discriminant validity, crossloading is examined, which involves comparing the correlation coefficients of an indicator with its associated construct (loading) against the correlations with other constructs (cross-loading). The correlation coefficient of an indicator should be higher with its associated construct than with other constructs. A higher coefficient indicates that the indicator is more effective in explaining its associated construct compared to other constructs.



**Figure 3. Measurement Model** Source: Data processed with SmartPLS

In addition to validity testing, reliability testing is conducted to measure the consistency of respondents' answers to the questionnaire items or research instruments. Reliability is assessed using two methods: composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha measures the reliability of the indicators used in the research questionnaire (McDaniel & Gates, 2012). According to Ghozali & Latan (2020), the minimum acceptable level for Cronbach's Alpha is 0.70. The results of this study show that all variables have composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.7. This indicates that each research variable meets the criteria for composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. Consequently, the variables are considered reliable and dependable.

Structural model testing involves examining collinearity, testing the significance of path coefficients, evaluating  $R^2$ , assessing  $f^2$ , and testing heterogeneity.

Table 1. R Square				
	R Square	<b>R</b> Square Adjusted		
Shopping online interest	0.620	0.606		
Trust	0.558	0.547		

Source: Data processed with SmartPLS

Table 1 shows that the  $R^2$  value for the variable shopping online interest is 0.620, indicating that SOI is influenced by E-WOM, perceived usefulness, perceived risk, and trust by 62%. The remaining 38% is influenced by other variables not included in the model. An  $R^2$  of 0.620 suggests that the structural model effectively measures the variation in the shopping online interest variable. The  $R^2$  value for the Trust variable is 0.558, meaning that trust is influenced by E-WOM, perceived usefulness, and perceived risk by 55,8%. The remaining 44.2% is influenced by other variables not included in the model. An  $R^2$  of 0.686 indicates that the structural model is effective in measuring the variation in the Trust variable.

Following the evaluation of  $R^2$ , the next step is to test for collinearity by evaluating the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. Multicollinearity testing aims to determine if there is a correlation among the independent variables in the regression model (Ghozali & Latan, 2020). To identify the presence of multicollinearity, one can examine the tolerance values and VIF values. Tolerance measures the variability of a selected independent variable that cannot be

explained by other independent variables. A low tolerance value corresponds to a high VIF value, since VIF=1/Tolerance, indicating high collinearity. The cutoff values used are a tolerance value of 0.10 or a VIF value above 10.

Based on the Inner VIF Values for the structural model, all six variables—E-WOM, perceived usefulness, perceived risk, online shopping interest, and trust—have VIF values below 10. This indicates that there is no collinearity present in the structural model. The results of the outer VIF values show that all indicators for the latent variables have VIF values below 10, indicating that there is no collinearity in the structural model.

Next, the predictive relevance  $(Q^2)$  test was conducted. Predictive relevance  $(Q^2)$  for the structural model measures how well the model predicts observation values. According to Hair et al (2021), a Q<sup>2</sup> value greater than zero for a certain endogenous latent variable indicates that the PLS path model has predictive relevance for that construct.

The results of the predictive relevance  $(Q^2)$  test show that the variable "online shopping interest" has a  $Q^2$  value greater than zero, specifically 0.474, indicating that the endogenous latent variable has good predictive relevance. Similarly, the "trust" variable also has a  $Q^2$  value greater than zero, at 0.453, which suggests that this endogenous latent variable also exhibits good predictive relevance.

Subsequently, the model fit evaluation in this study was performed using two testing methods: the Normal Fit Index (NFI) and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), as well as the Chi-Square test. According to (Ramayah et al., 2017), a higher NFI value, closer to 1, indicates a better fit of the model. Based on Table 14, the study shows a Normal Fit Index (NFI) value of 0.710 or 71%, indicating that the model is considered fit.

Based on the data analysis conducted, hypotheses in this study can be tested using t-values and p-values. A hypothesis is considered accepted if the p-value is less than 0.05 and the t-value is positive. The results of the hypothesis testing in this study are as follows:

Table 2. Path Coefficient				
	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Result
E-WOM -> Shopping Online Interest	0.074	0.978	0.329	Not Supported
E-WOM -> Trust	0.153	1.827	0.068	Not Supported
Perceived Risk -> Shopping Online Interest	-0.030	0.346	0.729	Not Supported
Perceived Risk -> Trust	-0.145	1.707	0.088	Not Supported
Perceived Usefulness -> Shopping Online Interest	0.597	4.358	0.000	Supported
Perceived Usefulness -> Trust	0.750	7.516	0.000	Supported
Trust -> Shopping Online Interest	0.208	2.047	0.041	Supported
E-WOM -> Trust -> Shopping Online Interest	0.032	1.275	0.203	Not Supported

Source: Data processed with SmartPLS

# E-WOM doesn't effect on Shopping Online Interest

The findings of this study state that electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) does not influence online shopping intention on Shopee, which can be viewed from several aspects. Although e-WOM is often considered a strong factor in influencing consumer decisions, in the

context of Shopee, consumers tend to rely more on the direct reviews available within the platform itself. These reviews are considered more relevant because they come from fellow users who have made direct transactions on Shopee.

In addition, the abundance of reviews directly available on Shopee, including detailed information about the products and user experiences, makes consumers feel less inclined to seek additional information from e-WOM outside the platform. Another factor that may also influence this is consumers' tendency to focus on other aspects such as price, promotions, and the convenience of shopping on Shopee, which may be considered more important than recommendations through e-WOM. Therefore, in the context of shopping on a marketplace like Shopee, the influence of e-WOM on online shopping intention becomes insignificant compared to other factors that are more directly related to the user's experience on the platform.

This finding aligns with studies (Prastyo et al., 2018; Saputra, 2020) that indicate e-WOM does not significantly impact online shopping intention. However, it contradicts research (Ahmad et al., 2020; Aslami et al., 2022; Ilhamalimy & Ali, 2021; LY & LE-HOANG, 2020; Napawut et al., 2022) that suggests e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on online shopping intention.

# **E-WOM doesn't effect on Trust**

The findings of this study state that electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) does not influence shopping trust on Shopee, which can be explained through several perspectives related to consumer behavior in e-commerce. Although e-WOM is often considered a valuable source of information in building consumer trust, on platforms like Shopee, other factors seem to have a stronger influence on shaping consumer trust.

Shopee has built an ecosystem that allows consumers to access various forms of direct reviews from users who have transacted, which are considered more authentic and relevant because they come from real experiences. Features such as product ratings, purchase counts, user reviews, and visual evidence (product photos) become tools that consumers trust more to assess the credibility of products and sellers.

In addition, Shopee provides guarantee features, offering protection to consumers in cases where the product received does not match the description or if there are issues with delivery. This feature increases consumer trust in the platform without relying on e-WOM from external sources. Consumers also tend to pay more attention to factors such as the seller's reputation, indicated by badges or labels like "Top Seller" or "Star Seller," which provide clearer indicators of quality compared to recommendations or reviews outside the platform.

In the context of Shopee e-commerce, trust is not only built from others' words or recommendations (e-WOM) but also through systemic guarantees provided by the platform and direct reviews from transacting users. As Shopee enhances its security features and shopping convenience, consumers increasingly rely on their own shopping experiences on the platform. Thus, the influence of e-WOM in shaping consumer trust tends to diminish, as consumers prioritize direct and accessible information from within the platform itself. This explains why e-WOM does not significantly affect shopping trust on Shopee, where internal platform factors play a more dominant role.

These findings align with studies (Syaputra, 2019) which suggests that e-WOM does not affect trust. However, this study contrasts with the research (Aisyah & Engriani, 2019; Aslami et al., 2022; Bulut & Karabulut, 2018; Eneizan et al., 2020; Ilhamalimy & Ali, 2021) that indicate that e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on trust.

#### Perceived Risk doesn't effect on Shopping Online Interest

The findings of this study state that perceived risk does not have a significant influence on online shopping intention on Shopee, which can be explained through several aspects that reflect consumer behavior in online shopping on e-commerce platforms. Although perceived risk is often identified as an important factor that hinders consumers' decisions to shop online, particularly related to risks such as fraud, product quality issues, or delivery problems, this factor seems to have little impact on shopping intention when it comes to Shopee.

There are several reasons that may explain this phenomenon. Shopee has built a robust system to mitigate the risks consumers might perceive. Features like Shopee Guarantee, which holds payments until consumers receive the product and ensures the item matches its description, play an important role in reducing consumer concerns. This creates a sense of security, making perceived risk less relevant in influencing online shopping intention. Additionally, the easy return and refund policies also help alleviate consumer concerns regarding product quality or delivery issues.

The product reviews and ratings available directly on Shopee's platform provide consumers with access to credible information from other users who have transacted. These reviews help reduce uncertainty and strengthen consumer trust in their decision-making process, leading them to perceive lower shopping risks. As a result, the risks they might have perceived previously become less relevant compared to other factors such as price, promotions, and convenience.

Moreover, the large-scale promotions frequently offered by Shopee, such as discount programs, cashback, and free shipping, provide strong incentives for consumers to continue shopping despite potential risks. Consumers tend to focus more on immediate economic benefits rather than possible risks, especially when they feel protected by the platform's security systems and guarantees. Thus, perceived risk does not influence online shopping intention because Shopee has successfully addressed many risk-related concerns through a solid guarantee system, security features, transparent product reviews, and attractive promotional incentives for consumers.

These findings align with some existing literature, which also found no direct effect of perceived risk on online shopping intentions (Aslami et al., 2022; Ventre & Kolbe, 2020). However, they contrast with studies that highlight a relationship between perceived risk and purchase intentions (Ilhamalimy & Ali, 2021; Immanuel & May, 2022). Such discrepancies might stem from different research contexts, methodologies, or evolving online shopping environments. Advances in online security and privacy measures could reduce the perceived risks associated with e-commerce, altering their impact on consumer behavior.

# Perceived Risk doesn't effect on Trust

The findings of this study state that perceived risk does not influence shopping trust on Shopee, which can be explained from several perspectives reflecting changes in consumer behavior in online shopping. Consumers seem to focus more on the protection mechanisms offered directly by the platform, thus reducing their concerns about risks.

Shopee has built an ecosystem that provides a sense of security for its users, one of which is through the Shopee Guarantee feature. With this guarantee, consumers feel protected from potential fraud or dissatisfaction with product quality, making perceived risk less relevant in influencing their level of trust. Additionally, Shopee offers easy return and refund policies, which also play a role in reducing consumers' perceived risks related to product quality or delivery issues.

Another factor that reduces the influence of perceived risk on trust is the easy access to product reviews and seller ratings on the Shopee platform. Consumers can see reviews and direct experiences from other users who have transacted, providing real information about product quality and seller credibility. This transparency in user reviews strengthens consumer trust and reduces concerns about the risks of online shopping, as they have clear and reliable data.

In the context of e-commerce, particularly on Shopee, perceived risk becomes increasingly insignificant in influencing trust due to internal factors such as platform guarantees, security features, transparent reviews, and verified seller reputations. Consumers trust the protection offered by the platform and the direct experiences of other users, making the perceived risks often associated with online shopping less of a factor in building their trust.

This study's findings align with research indicating that perceived risk does not significantly affect consumer trust (Ilhamalimy & Ali, 2021; Nur'Asia & Muzakir, 2023). However, it contrasts with studies suggesting that perceived risk does have a significant effect on trust (Ho et al., 2017) or those showing a negative and significant impact of perceived risk on consumer trust (Farivar et al., 2017; Karnadjaja et al., 2017).

#### Perceived Usefulness has effect Positive and Significant on Shopping Online Interest

The findings of this study state that perceived usefulness has a positive and significant influence on online shopping intention on Shopee. This can be explained from several perspectives that highlight the importance of ease and benefits for consumers when using e-commerce platforms. Perceived usefulness in this context refers to the extent to which consumers believe that using Shopee will make shopping easier and provide more benefits compared to traditional shopping methods or other platforms.

Shopee offers various features that make the shopping process more efficient and convenient, such as easy product searches, structured categories, and the ability to compare prices from multiple sellers within one platform. Consumers find this platform useful because it helps them save time and effort in finding the products they want. Factors such as promotions, cashback, and free shipping also enhance perceived usefulness, as consumers experience direct economic benefits.

The ease of payment processes provided by Shopee, including various payment methods such as digital wallets, bank transfers, and cash on delivery (COD), further increases perceived usefulness. Consumers do not have to deal with complicated transactions, which ultimately boosts their intention to shop online on Shopee.

Another supporting factor is the positive user experience while using Shopee, including the ease of navigating the app and the speed of services. Consumers feel that Shopee helps them get products quickly and securely, making them more likely to use the platform for future purchases.

Thus, perceived usefulness has a positive and significant influence on online shopping intention on Shopee because consumers experience clear benefits in terms of ease, convenience, and transaction security. The advantages offered by Shopee directly enhance the online shopping experience, making it more efficient and effective, ultimately encouraging consumers to continue using the platform to meet their needs.

These findings are consistent with studies (Apriani & Wahdiniawati, 2023a; Immanuel & May, 2022; Nugraha et al., 2021) that indicate a positive and significant influence of perceived usefulness on online shopping interest. However, this study contrasts with research (Apriani & Wahdiniawati, 2023b; Yudiarti & Puspaningrum, 2018) that found perceived usefulness does not significantly affect online shopping interest.

# Perceived Usefulness has effect Positive and Significant on Trust

The findings of this study state that perceived usefulness has a positive and significant influence on shopping trust in Shopee, which can be explained from various aspects that reflect how the tangible benefits of an e-commerce platform can build consumer trust. Perceived usefulness in this context refers to the extent to which consumers feel that Shopee provides ease, convenience, and efficiency in their shopping process, which in turn affects their level of trust in the platform.

Shopee offers various features that facilitate consumers in making online transactions, such as easy product searches, various payment methods, and reliable delivery systems. When consumers feel that the platform simplifies their process of finding and purchasing products, their trust in Shopee increases. This trust is built through a smooth and hassle-free shopping experience, which serves as an indicator that the platform can be relied upon.

The economic benefits offered by Shopee, such as promotions, cashback, and free shipping, also enhance perceived usefulness. Consumers feel that Shopee not only makes the technical aspects of shopping easier but also provides direct financial benefits. When consumers experience clear and consistent advantages, they are more likely to trust the platform as a safe and efficient shopping destination.

In addition, security features like Shopee Guarantee, which ensures that payment is not released to the seller until the buyer receives the product as described, further strengthen consumer trust. The sense of security provided by this platform, related to transaction safety and product quality assurance, makes consumers feel more comfortable shopping on Shopee. The more useful and secure a platform is perceived, the greater the consumer's trust in it.

A positive user experience, from easy navigation to fast services, also strengthens the relationship between perceived usefulness and trust. Consumers who feel that Shopee helps them obtain products quickly, efficiently, and without issues are more likely to trust the platform for future transactions.

Thus, perceived usefulness has a positive and significant influence on shopping trust in Shopee because consumers perceive clear benefits in terms of ease, efficiency, security, and financial advantages. When consumers feel that Shopee adds value to their shopping experience, their trust in the platform grows, ultimately fostering loyalty and continued use of the platform.

These findings align with studies (Faradila & Soesanto, 2016; Havidz et al., 2020; Larasetiati & Ali, 2019; Sawitri & Giantari, 2020) that indicate a positive and significant influence of perceived usefulness on consumer trust. However, this study contrasts with research (Pattikawa & Hasan, 2023) which found a negative impact of perceived usefulness on trust, and another study (Primadasa et al., 2021) that showed no effect of perceived usefulness on trust.

#### **Trust has effect Positive and Significant on Shopping Online Interest**

The findings of this study state that trust has a positive and significant influence on online shopping intention on Shopee, which can be explained through several important aspects that reflect the close relationship between consumer trust and the desire to make transactions on e-commerce platforms. In this context, consumer trust in Shopee includes the belief that the platform is secure, reliable, and able to meet their expectations regarding products, services, and transactions. This trust becomes one of the key factors driving consumers to become more active in online shopping.

Trust is built through Shopee's reputation as a major e-commerce platform that has various consumer protection policies, such as Shopee Guarantee, which ensures that transactions are secure and consumers' money is protected until the product is received. This trust is also fostered by the transparency in product reviews and ratings, allowing consumers to make more informed decisions. With a high sense of security and protection from transaction risks, consumers are more encouraged to increase their shopping intention on Shopee.

Trust in the quality of service plays an important role in enhancing shopping intention. Consumers who are satisfied with the return policy, responsive customer support, and timely delivery tend to have higher trust in the platform. When consumers are confident that Shopee will consistently provide adequate and reliable services, they are more likely to return and make repeat purchases on the platform. Additionally, trust in the sellers on Shopee is a significant factor. Indicators of trust, such as Top Seller or Star Seller labels, provide positive signals to consumers that the sellers on this platform have met certain standards. This reduces consumers' concerns about potential fraud or product discrepancies, thereby increasing their intention to make purchases.

A consistent and reliable shopping experience also plays an important role. Consumers who have transacted on Shopee multiple times and are satisfied tend to build long-term trust in the platform. The trust formed from previous positive experiences encourages them to continue shopping on the platform, while also increasing customer loyalty.

Thus, trust has a positive and significant influence on online shopping intention on Shopee because consumers who feel secure, protected, and satisfied with the services provided are more likely to return and shop again. Strong trust in the e-commerce platform creates a sense of comfort and confidence that transactions will go smoothly and meet expectations, ultimately driving continuous shopping intention.

These findings align with studies (Aslami et al., 2022; Ilhamalimy & Ali, 2021; Le-Hoang, 2020; Marriott & Williams, 2018; Pappas, 2018) that indicate trust has a positive and significant effect on online shopping interest. However, this study contrasts with research Prasetyo & Hasyim (2021) which suggests that trust does not impact online shopping interest.

# Trust hasn't Mediate the effect of Perceived Risk on Shopping Online Interest

The finding that trust does not mediate the effect of perceived risk on online shopping interest is notable as it highlights the complexity of factors influencing consumer behavior in e-commerce contexts. Although it is commonly believed that trust can serve as a mediator that mitigates the impact of perceived risk on online shopping interest, this study suggests that the relationship between these variables may be more intricate than previously assumed.

Further research is needed to understand why trust fails to mediate the influence of perceived risk on online shopping interest. Interviews with small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) owners could provide valuable insights into this phenomenon. Some SMEs might argue that while trust in e-commerce platforms can impact online shopping interest, other factors, such as price, product quality, and user experience, also play significant roles. They may highlight that high trust alone may not be sufficient to alleviate consumers' concerns about perceived risks, especially when these risks are significant or difficult to mitigate.

This analysis underscores the need for a holistic approach to understanding consumer behavior in e-commerce. Although trust is a crucial factor, it is important to recognize that various other elements also influence online shopping interest. Therefore, SMEs should consider these diverse factors in their efforts to enhance consumer engagement and gain a competitive edge in the increasingly competitive e-commerce market.

The findings of this study align with research by Farivar et al (2017), which indicates that perceived risk has a significant negative impact on shopping interest, while trust positively affects shopping interest. This study also highlights that trust can help reduce perceived risk, thereby increasing consumer purchase intention. Similarly, Silva et al (2020) found that trust in online environments is negatively affected by perceived risk, which subsequently influences buying behavior. Ho et al (2017) also supported these findings, showing that perceived risk significantly affects trust levels, which in turn impacts the decision to use a particular platform. Additionally, Pappas (2018) emphasized that perceived risk has a significant negative impact on trust, while trust positively contributes to consumer purchase intention.

# Trust Can Mediate the Effect of Perceived Usefulness on Online Shopping Interest

The findings of this study reveal that trust can mediate the effect of perceived usefulness on online shopping interest. This aligns with the notion that trust acts as a link between the perceived benefits of a platform or service and consumers' interest in using that platform for online shopping. Previous research, such as that by Davis (1989), has demonstrated that perceived usefulness can enhance consumer trust in technology. In this context, when consumers perceive significant benefits from using an online shopping platform, they are more likely to trust the platform. This trust then becomes a key factor influencing online shopping interest, as consumers feel more comfortable and confident making transactions on the platform.

Furthermore, these findings support the view that trust is a crucial aspect in developing online shopping interest. When consumers believe that they can trust a platform—whether regarding security, product quality, or customer service—they are more motivated to make purchases online. The results suggest that to boost online shopping interest, e-commerce platforms must not only deliver perceived benefits but also build strong trust. This indicates that trust serves not only as a result of perceived usefulness but also as a mediator connecting perceived usefulness with online shopping interest. Therefore, e-commerce platforms can enhance online shopping interest by focusing on building consumer trust through reliable services, clear communication, and positive customer interactions. This research is consistent with Yudiarti & Puspaningrum (2018), which indicates that trust effectively mediates the relationship between perceived usefulness and online shopping interest.

# Trust cann't Mediates the Effect of E-WOM on Online Shopping Interest

The findings of this study state that trust cannot mediate the influence of electronic wordof-mouth (e-WOM) on online shopping intention on Shopee. This can be explained through several perspectives related to consumer behavior in the digital era. Although e-WOM is often considered an important factor in influencing purchasing decisions, these findings show that even though e-WOM can increase the available information, consumer trust is not directly formed from e-WOM, and therefore, it cannot mediate its influence on online shopping intention.

This could be due to the fact that consumers on Shopee tend to trust direct reviews on the platform more than recommendations or information from external e-WOM sources such as social media or blogs. Consumers are more likely to trust the reviews they read on Shopee, as they are considered more relevant and based on real experiences from users who have transacted on the platform. Therefore, even though e-WOM can increase consumer knowledge, this information is not strong enough to significantly influence consumer trust, which in turn affects shopping intention.

Many consumers feel that the protections provided by Shopee, such as Shopee Guarantee and refund policies, are far more important in building their trust in the platform. Trust is more often built through direct experience with the platform and interactions with consumer protection features, rather than through e-WOM. This leads to e-WOM not playing a significant role in building trust that leads to increased online shopping intention.

Additionally, information from e-WOM tends to be general and often not specific to the shopping experience on Shopee. Consumers may consider that information from e-WOM is less relevant or less accurate compared to user reviews on the Shopee platform itself. This factor makes e-WOM insufficiently strong to influence trust perceptions toward the platform, meaning that trust cannot act as a mediator between e-WOM and shopping intention.

Consumer trust is often more influenced by consistent shopping experiences and good service from the platform, such as fast delivery, product quality, and responsive customer service. If e-WOM does not reflect or directly provide guarantees regarding these factors, its influence on consumer trust and shopping intention becomes limited.

The results of this study contradict previous research, such as (Ilhamalimy & Ali, 2021), which shows that trust positively mediates the relationship between e-WOM and purchase intention. Bhandari & Rodgers (2019) also found a positive effect of e-WOM on purchase

intention mediated by trust. Similarly, Matute et al (2016) and Cheung & Lee (2012), demonstrated that e-WOM has both a direct and indirect positive effect on purchase intention through trust. This study, however, shows that trust cannot mediate the influence of e-WOM on online shopping intention on Shopee. This is due to consumers' tendency to prioritize reviews and experiences within the Shopee platform itself, as well as the security and convenience guarantees provided by the platform, which play a greater role in building trust and shopping intention compared to information from external e-WOM sources.

# **CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study indicate that trust cannot mediate the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) on online shopping intention on Shopee. Although e-WOM is often considered an important factor in consumer decision-making, in the context of Shopee, consumers rely more on the direct reviews available within the platform. Shopee also provides security guarantees, such as Shopee Guarantee and refund policies, which are more significant in building consumer trust than information from external e-WOM sources. Thus, consumers tend to focus more on their shopping experience within the Shopee platform itself, and trust is built more through direct experience rather than through e-WOM.

Future research can focus more on understanding how online customer reviews within the platform influence consumer trust and shopping intention. E-commerce platforms, including Shopee, need to continuously enhance the credibility of review sources by improving transparency, providing accurate information, and responding effectively to customer reviews. Future studies can also deepen the analysis of specific types of e-WOM, such as video reviews or social media comments, and how various forms of e-WOM interact with in-platform reviews to shape consumer trust and shopping intention.

The results of this study have several important implications for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that want to leverage e-commerce platforms like Shopee to increase their sales. SMEs need to recognize that consumer trust in e-commerce platforms is more influenced by direct customer reviews available on the platform, rather than recommendations from external e-WOM sources. Therefore, SMEs should focus on obtaining positive reviews from their customers on the Shopee platform by providing excellent service and ensuring that the products match their descriptions.

The security guarantees offered by Shopee, such as Shopee Guarantee and refund policies, are key elements in building consumer trust. SMEs can utilize these features to provide a sense of security to customers, for example, by ensuring fast and accurate order processing and delivery. In this way, customers will feel more comfortable and confident to shop again.

SMEs should also be proactive in responding to customer reviews, whether positive or negative. Responding to reviews quickly and appropriately can show potential buyers that the SME cares about customer satisfaction, which in turn can increase consumer trust and shopping interest. Well-managed reviews can also function as a stronger form of e-WOM, especially if the reviews are relevant and provide useful information to other potential customers.

Therefore, SMEs need to take advantage of in-platform reviews, provide a safe and comfortable shopping experience, and actively interact with customers through reviews to build trust and increase online shopping interest.

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