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Online Purchase Decisions Through the Shopee Application in Madiun in Terms of Free Shipping, Trust, and Online Customer Reviews

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Abstract

The rapid growth of e-commerce has intensified market competition, making consumer purchase decisions a critical focal point for digital platforms. This study examines the predictive role of free shipping, trust, and online customer reviews on online purchase decisions among Shopee application users in Madiun, Indonesia. A quantitative associative research design was adopted, and a purposive sampling technique was utilized to select 100 respondents who are active Shopee users. Data were collected using a validated questionnaire featuring a 5-point Likert scale and analyzed using multiple linear regression to test the hypotheses. The results demonstrated that free shipping, trust, and online customer reviews simultaneously predicted online purchase decisions, accounting for 69.4% of the variance, $R^2 = .694$, $F = 75.929$, $p < .001$. Furthermore, partial hypothesis testing revealed that free shipping ($\beta = .182$, $p = .014$), trust ($\beta = .229$, $p = .005$), and online customer reviews ($\beta = .528$, $p < .001$) each emerged as significant independent predictors of purchase decisions. The study concludes that all three variables significantly contribute to driving online purchase decisions among the study participants. The study recommends that e-commerce stakeholders should proactively optimize free shipping promotions, strengthen transactional trust, and maintain credible customer reviews to stimulate consumer purchasing behavior.

Keywords: Free shipping, trust, online customer review, purchase decision, e-commerce

INTRODUCTION

In the current digital era, technology in the field of information and communication is developing very rapidly. With this rapid development, consumers can easily obtain

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information about everything ranging from shopping, ordering food, to booking public transportation simply by using a smartphone. Along with the progress of the digital era, information technology, especially the internet, has experienced rapid growth in Indonesia. This development affects economic stability and drives increased competition in the business sector. Currently in Indonesia, the development of technology and the phenomenon of purchasing through the internet coincide with the increasing number of internet users every year. Internet use is not only limited to accessing information through a single platform, but is also utilized for transactions, creating new markets, and building broad business networks without being bound by location. The presence of the internet simplifies various activities, including enabling the public to purchase various needs online (Khasanah et al., 2024).

The emergence of various marketplaces, which has shifted consumers from purchasing at offline shops to online shops, has caused the e-commerce market to experience a massive increase. In the virtual world, transactions are referred to as e-commerce, where there is a process of exchanging goods and services that generates money. Several marketplaces have spread throughout Indonesia, including Shopee, Tokopedia, Lazada, Bukalapak, and others. The year 2025 has become a stage of fierce competition for Indonesian e-commerce players. Based on the latest survey by the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII) in July 2025, only a few online shopping platforms are able to dominate the attention of the majority of users, and the most accessed platform is Shopee compared to Tokopedia and Lazada.

According to the 2025 survey by the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII), Shopee occupies the first position as the e-commerce platform most frequently accessed by the Indonesian public, with 53.22% of respondents choosing it. This figure demonstrates Shopee's strong dominance amidst the increasingly tight competition among online shopping platforms.

Meanwhile, the monthly number of visits to the majority of Indonesian e-commerce sites has experienced a decline. A contraction in the number of visits to e-commerce sites occurred in April 2025. This decline was observed across four giant e-commerce sites: Shopee, Tokopedia, Lazada, and Blibli (SEMRUSH, 2025). Specifically, Shopee Indonesia achieved 132 million visits in April 2025, a decrease of 10.6% compared to the previous month which reached 147.7 million visits. The same trend occurred for Tokopedia, which fell by 8.9% from 71.3 million in March 2025 to 64.9 million in April 2025. Meanwhile, Lazada recorded a decrease of 23.5% to 42 million visits, and Blibli dropped by 49.6% to 14.1 million visits.

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Shopee is one of the rapidly growing e-commerce platforms in Indonesia. Headquartered in Singapore and owned by Sea Limited, Shopee was founded in 2009 by Forrest Li under the leadership of Chris Feng. Shopee has become a highly popular marketplace in Indonesia, widely used especially by teenagers who love shopping online. It offers a wide variety of products ranging from daily necessities, fashion, skincare, cosmetics, accessories, electronics, home equipment, food, beverages, and more. From the research data, it can be seen that consumers are more interested in using Shopee as an online shopping marketplace because it offers discounts, cashback, flash sales, SPayLater, free shipping across Indonesia, a 100% guarantee, and secure transactions.

There are several factors that influence consumer purchase decisions, one of which is free shipping (gratis ongkos kirim). According to Khasanah et al. (2024), among the various promotions offered by Shopee, the free shipping promotion is the most attractive to consumers. Shopee also offers discounts in the form of nominal price cuts, promo codes, cashback, and discount vouchers, subject to certain terms and conditions. Shopee also presents discounts during twin-date events, Independence Day, Ramadhan sales, payday on the 25th, and Shopee birthday sales. According to Tjiptono (2016), a discount is a price cut offered to customers by the seller for certain actions to attract them. With free shipping, consumers do not need to spend an extra budget to pay for delivery costs to their homes. Free shipping applies under conditions such as minimum purchases, specific geographical locations, or unconditionally. This free shipping promotion becomes a vital consideration for consumers when shopping online to lighten the burden of shipping costs.

The next factor is consumer trust. One of the key considerations for consumers when making purchases online is their trust in the online seller. This trust can be built by providing excellent service, ensuring that the goods displayed in the online store match reality, and guaranteeing that the delivery time of the received goods is as specified. This prevents consumer disappointment and enables the store to receive good ratings and reviews (Mardhiyah & Hariasih, 2024). In online business, trust is one of the most important elements, representing the relationship between the online business organization, the merchants within it, and the customers. Therefore, consumer trust is crucial in determining purchase decisions. If there is no trust between the seller and the buyer, the transaction mechanism through e-commerce will not occur.

In addition, online customer reviews significantly influence purchase decisions. Currently, purchases of products and services on Shopee have increased drastically due to various factors that drive and encourage consumers to make a purchase decision. One of these factors is online customer reviews (OCRs), which serve as a medium that allows consumers to freely and easily write online opinions and reviews regarding various

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products or services. Online customer reviews are a rich source of product information, and online site visitors actively read OCRs when choosing what to buy. The presence of online customer reviews is expected to form initial expectations for prospective consumers before making online purchase transactions (Rahmawati, 2025). These reviews become a fundamental consideration for buyers in any marketplace. The more positive reviews a store receives, the more confident consumers become that purchasing online there will guarantee good service.

Several studies regarding purchase decisions have been conducted by researchers, yielding varying results. Among them, a study by Mardhiyah and Hariasih (2025) found that the free shipping variable has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. On the contrary, research by Sauri and Alfinuri (2023) showed that free shipping does not have a significant impact on purchase decisions. Similarly, for the trust variable, research by Khasanah et al. (2024) stated that trust significantly influences purchase decisions in Indonesia. Meanwhile, research by Faradita and Widjajanti (2023) stated that online customer reviews have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions in the Tokopedia marketplace.

Based on this background and the phenomenon of purchasing through the internet alongside the increasing number of internet users annually, this study was conducted under the title: "Online Purchase Decisions Through the Shopee Application in Madiun Reviewed from Free Shipping, Trust, and Online Customer Reviews".

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Consumer purchase decisions involve a complex process wherein individuals recognize a problem, seek out information, evaluate various alternatives, and ultimately make a definitive choice regarding a product or brand. In the context of e-commerce, this decision-making process is inherently accompanied by perceived risks, such as receiving damaged goods or undelivered items. Consequently, online consumers heavily rely on specific promotional stimuli and informational cues to mitigate these risks and validate their purchasing choices before finalizing a transaction on digital marketplaces.

In evaluating online purchase decisions, three critical dimensions offer a robust theoretical framework: free shipping, trust, and online customer reviews (OCR). Free shipping operates as a powerful financial incentive, defined as a promotional program that absorbs delivery costs for consumers meeting certain criteria, thereby accelerating the purchase decision timeframe by eliminating additional logistical burdens. Trust represents the psychological foundation of online transactions; it is the expectation that the seller or

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platform will deliver positive benefits, act with integrity, and fulfill their obligations. High consumer trust directly correlates with increased purchase intentions, as it compensates for the lack of physical product inspection. Finally, online customer reviews function as electronic word-of-mouth. These voluntary evaluations from previous buyers provide credible, unbiased product information that shapes initial expectations and significantly reduces perceived risks.

Several empirical studies have supported the validity of these variables in predicting online purchase decisions. For instance, Mardhiyah and Hariasih (2024) found that promotional strategies, particularly free shipping, significantly increased purchasing behavior by acting as a primary point of attraction for consumers. Similarly, Khasanah et al. (2024) demonstrated that consumer trust was the most dominant predictor in shaping purchase decisions on the Shopee platform. Furthermore, Rachmawan (2024) and Lestari (2025) highlighted that online customer reviews systematically influence consumer choices; prospective buyers consistently rely on peer evaluations rather than seller descriptions to validate product quality. These studies support the idea that online purchasing behavior is not merely a spontaneous action, but a calculated decision driven by promotional benefits, institutional trust, and peer validation.

The study tested the hypothesis that free shipping, trust, and online customer reviews will significantly predict online purchase decisions among Shopee users in Madiun, Indonesia. Specifically, the study posits the following hypotheses:

H1: Free shipping independently predicts online purchase decisions via the Shopee application.

H2: Trust independently predicts online purchase decisions via the Shopee application.

H3: Online customer reviews independently predict online purchase decisions via the Shopee application.

H4: Free shipping, trust, and online customer reviews simultaneously predict online purchase decisions via the Shopee application.

METHOD

Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative associative research design using validated questionnaires to collect data from the study participants. The independent variables were free shipping, trust, and online customer reviews, while the dependent variable was online purchase decisions. The research was conducted between October 2025 and January 2026.

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Setting and Study Population

The study population comprises the general public residing in Madiun City who actively use the Shopee application. The exact size of this specific population is unknown. This population served as the focus of the study because they are directly involved in online shopping activities and are directly exposed to the e-commerce promotional features, peer reviews, and transactional systems being investigated.

Sampling Technique Procedure

A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents from the target population in Madiun. Because the total population size was unknown, the Lemeshow formula was applied to determine the appropriate sample size, resulting in a total of 100 respondents. Participants were purposively selected based on specific inclusion criteria: they must be male or female residents of Madiun, aged 17 years and older, and have prior experience using the Shopee application.

Instruments

Two validated questionnaires were used for data collection:

Driving Style Questionnaire *E-Commerce Predictors Questionnaire* was used to measure various aspects of consumer stimuli, specifically the influence of free shipping , transactional trust , and online customer reviews. It is a 24-item scale (comprising 8 items per variable) rated on a 5-point Likert's response format ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Sample items include: "I feel that free shipping on a product increases my desire to buy" , "I trust that Shopee takes full responsibility when transaction issues occur" , and "I intentionally seek and read product reviews before making a purchase decision". In the current study, the Cronbach's α values obtained were 0.899 for free shipping, 0.954 for trust, and 0.913 for online customer reviews.

Road Accident History and Consequence Questionnaire *Online Purchase Decision Questionnaire* was used to assess the final stages of the consumer buying process, including information search, evaluation of alternatives, executing the purchase, and post-purchase behavior. It is an 8-item scale rated on a 5-point Likert's format ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Sample items include: "I often search for product information (description, photos, videos) before deciding to buy on Shopee" , and "I decide to buy because of the available vouchers or cashback". In the current study, a Cronbach's α = 0.841 was obtained.

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Data Collection

Potential participants were approached across public areas and communities within Madiun City. They were briefly informed of the purpose of the study and asked for their voluntary consent to participate. Those who agreed to participate were assured of the strict confidentiality of their data and responses. The structured questionnaires were distributed to the participants and completed through direct interaction and structured assistance. A total of 100 completed questionnaires were successfully retrieved and utilized for the final statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

IBM SPSS version 23 was utilized to analyze the collected quantitative data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were computed to evaluate the sample characteristics and research variables. The research instruments were formally evaluated using Pearson product-moment correlation for validity testing and Cronbach's alpha coefficients for reliability evaluation.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the study participants who use the Shopee application in Madiun City.

Table 1: Participants' Demographic Information

Variable	Categories	Frequency	%
Age	17–25 years	43	43.0
	26–32 years	28	28.0
	33–40 years	18	18.0
	> 41 years	11	11.0
Gender	Male	33	33.0
	Female	67	67.0
Occupation	Private Sector Employee	31	31.0

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	Civil Servant (PNS)	3	3.0
	Entrepreneur	28	28.0
	Student / College Student	34	34.0
	Others	4	4.0
Total		**100**	**100.0**

Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of the 100 participants surveyed for this study. Descriptive statistics revealed that the majority of the respondents were female (67%), with a disproportionate concentration of participants falling within the 17–25 years age bracket (43%), representing the millennial and Gen-Z cohorts.

In terms of occupation, the largest group of Shopee users consisted of students (34%), followed closely by private sector employees (31%) and entrepreneurs (28%). Collectively, these descriptive parameters indicate that the dominant customer base of the Shopee e-commerce platform in Madiun is composed of young, female, and academically or professionally active individuals who are highly integrated into digital consumer spaces.

Testing the hypothesis

To determine the predictive capacity of free shipping, trust, and online customer reviews on online purchase decisions among Shopee users in Madiun City, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The results of the model summary, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and regression coefficients are presented in Tables 2a, 2b, and 2c.

Table 2a: Model Summary of E-Commerce Predictors on Online Purchase Decisions

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R2	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.839	0.704	0.694	2.08928	2.371

Note: Predictors: (Constant), Online Customer Review (X3), Free Shipping (X1), Trust (X2). Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision (Y).

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Table 2b: ANOVA (Overall Model Fit)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	994.310	3	331.437	75.929	0.000
Residual	419.050	96	4.365		
Total	1413.360	99			

Note: Predictors: (Constant), Online Customer Review (X3), Free Shipping (X1), Trust (X2). Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision (Y).

Table 2c: Coefficients Predicting Online Purchase Decisions

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	5.426	1.918		2.829	0.006
Free Shipping (X1)	0.181	0.073	0.182	2.490	0.014
Trust (X2)	0.170	0.059	0.229	2.861	0.005
Online Customer Review (X3)	0.466	0.078	0.528	5.933	0.000

Note: Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision (Y).

Regression Interpretation and Hypothesis Evaluation

The multiple linear regression equation derived from Table 2c is formulated as follows:

$$Y = 5.426 + 0.181\ (X1) + 0.170\ (X2) + 0.466\ (X3)$$

Based on the statistical outputs shown in Tables 2a, 2b, and 2c, the hypotheses are evaluated as follows:

1. **Simultaneous Hypothesis Evaluation (H4)** The results of the simultaneous model fit test (F-test) show an F value = 75.929 with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). Since

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the F value of 75.929 is much higher than the F table value of 2.70 and the significance level is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. This confirms that free shipping (X1), trust (X2), and online customer reviews (X3) simultaneously and significantly predict online purchase decisions (Y) among Shopee users in Madiun. This supports the fourth hypothesis (H4). Furthermore, the model summary indicates an Adjusted R2 value = 0.694, indicating that the independent variables collectively explain 69.4% of the variance in online purchase decisions, while the remaining 30.6% is explained by other factors outside the scope of this model.

2. **First Hypothesis Evaluation: Free Shipping (H1)** Based on the partial regression analysis, the variable free shipping (X1) significantly and positively predicts online purchase decisions (Y). This is verified by an unstandardized coefficient B = 0.181, a standardized coefficient Beta = 0.182, a t value = 2.490 (which is greater than the critical t table value of 1.984), and a significance value of 0.014 ($p < 0.05$). This statistical proof confirms that H1 is supported, meaning that higher availability and effectiveness of free shipping directly predict increases in online purchase decisions.
3. **Second Hypothesis Evaluation: Trust (H2)** The partial regression analysis demonstrates that trust (X2) significantly and positively predicts online purchase decisions (Y). This is supported by an unstandardized coefficient B = 0.170, a standardized coefficient Beta = 0.229, a t value = 2.861 (which is greater than the critical t table value of 1.984), and a significance value of 0.005 ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, H2 is supported, demonstrating that improvements in platform and merchant trust significantly increase consumers' likelihood of finalizing their online purchases.
4. **Third Hypothesis Evaluation: Online Customer Review (H3)** The variable online customer reviews (X3) exhibits a highly significant and positive partial influence on online purchase decisions (Y). This is validated by an unstandardized coefficient B = 0.466, a standardized coefficient Beta = 0.528, a t value = 5.933 (which is the highest t value among all predictors, greater than the t table of 1.984), and a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.001$). Thus, H3 is robustly supported, establishing that positive online customer reviews are the strongest individual predictor of online purchase decisions among Shopee users in Madiun.

DISCUSSION

The hypothesis that free shipping, trust, and online customer reviews will significantly and independently predict online purchase decisions among Shopee users in Madiun was fully supported. Collectively, free shipping (X1), trust (X2), and online customer

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reviews (X3) accounted for 69.4% of the variation in online purchase decisions (Y) among the study participants (Adjusted R2 = 0.694, F = 75.929, p < 0.001). This finding is highly consistent with previous research identifying transactional incentives, safety assurances, and consumer feedback as key drivers of online purchasing behavior. For example, this finding corroborates that of Khasanah et al. (2024), who found that free shipping, trust, and online customer reviews significantly and simultaneously predict purchase decisions on the Shopee platform. Collaboratively, these results reinforce the understanding that consumer behavior in digital marketplaces is shaped by a combination of financial motivations, platform-level security, and peer validation.

Among the individual predictors, online customer reviews (X3) emerged as the strongest predictor of purchase decisions (Beta = 0.528, t = 5.933, p < 0.001). This suggests that positive reviews and high visual feedback volumes dramatically increase the likelihood of final checkouts, which strongly supports previous literature. For instance, Lestari (2025) and Faradita and Widjajanti (2023) highlighted that consumers rely much more on independent peer reviews than on commercial product descriptions to minimize purchasing risks. Trust (X2) also significantly predicted purchase decisions (Beta = 0.229, t = 2.861, p = 0.005), supporting the views of Herlina (2024), who argued that platform safety and seller integrity are essential for reducing consumer transactional anxiety. Finally, free shipping (X1) was confirmed as a positive and significant predictor (Beta = 0.182, t = 2.490, p = 0.014), showing that reducing delivery costs successfully encourages consumers to execute purchase decisions, which aligns with the findings of Ananada and Rundupadang (2024) and Rachmawan (2024).

These findings collectively support the e-commerce framework in Madiun, reinforcing the conclusion that promotional tools and trust-building mechanisms play a critical role in shaping purchase decisions. However, some studies, such as that of Sauri and Alfinuri (2023), have argued that free shipping alone does not guarantee purchase decisions unless combined with seamless transaction processes and high consumer trust. This perspective suggests that while promotional incentives are powerful, they must be supported by positive social validation (online reviews) and robust platform security to achieve optimal e-commerce conversion rates.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated free shipping (X1), trust (X2), and online customer reviews (X3) as predictors of online purchase decisions (Y) among Shopee application users in Madiun, East Java, Indonesia. The results confirmed that free shipping, trust, and online customer reviews are robust predictors of online purchase decisions in the study area, with

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online customer reviews acting as the most dominant individual predictor of purchasing behavior.

Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings, the study puts forth the following recommendations:

First, relevant e-commerce administrators, particularly the Shopee platform management and online merchants, should continuously maintain and optimize their free shipping promotions to attract cost-conscious buyers. Shipping subsidies should be designed with highly accessible terms and clear, simplified minimum transaction requirements. In addition, platform developers and merchants should work closely to strengthen consumer trust by continuously securing the online payment gateway, resolving system issues promptly, and expanding protective payment methods like Cash on Delivery (COD) and the "COD Cek Dulu" feature, which minimize fraudulent transactions. Moreover, since online customer reviews are the most critical predictor of buying behavior, sellers should proactively encourage consumers to submit comprehensive feedback including photos and videos by offering attractive shopping points, coins, or future discount vouchers.

Furthermore, consumers are recommended to exercise high diligence and adopt smart shopping habits. Prospective buyers should thoroughly check the seller rating, read customer reviews, and inspect user-uploaded media prior to checkout to verify product quality and prevent fraudulent transactions. Next, consumers should avoid products with abnormally low prices that lack review histories to secure their transactions.

Limitations and suggestions for further study

The study has some limitations worth addressing in further study:

To begin with, the study's use of self-reported questionnaires for data collection may introduce social desirability bias or response subjectivity; therefore, future research could utilize multiple methods of data collection, including web analytics, digital tracking, user transaction logs, and focus group discussions to generate multiple data streams to triangulate self-reported data.

In addition, the focus of this study on only one city (Madiun) limits the geographical generalizability of the findings across the highly diverse Indonesian e-commerce market; therefore, future studies using larger sample sizes spanning multiple cities, provinces, or rural-urban contrasts would significantly enhance the generalizability of the results.

Finally, the study focused only on three predictors (free shipping, trust, and online customer reviews) and did not account for other highly influential digital marketing

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elements; therefore, further studies would benefit from the inclusion of emerging transactional variables such as live stream selling, flash sales, influencer affiliate marketing, platform usability, risk perception, and demographic control factors such as consumer income or generation cohorts.

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