

***COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF E-COMMERCE: TRUST IN E-COMMERCE,
SERVICE QUALITY, ONLINE PROMOTION, AND APPLICATION
CONVENIENCE ON SHOPPING DECISIONS***

**KEUNGGULAN KOMPETITIF DARI E-COMMERCE: KEPERCAYAAN
TERHADAP E-COMMERCE, KUALITAS LAYANAN, PROMOSI ONLINE,
DAN KENYAMANAN APLIKASI TERHADAP KEPUTUSAN BERBELANJA**

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the impact of brand trust, service quality, online promotion, and application ease of use on purchasing decisions in the e-commerce sector. The study uses a descriptive research type with a quantitative approach, involving 115 respondents from Ambon City who have shopped on different e-commerce platforms more than twice. The sampling technique applied is purposive sampling, and the data were analyzed using Partial Least Square (PLS). The results show that all variables—brand trust, service quality, online promotion, and application ease of use—positively and significantly influence purchasing decisions. Among these, service quality has the strongest effect, indicating that factors such as responsiveness, delivery assurance, and seller empathy are crucial in consumer decisions to purchase online. Brand trust, online promotion, and ease of use also play significant roles, supporting consumer confidence and enhancing the shopping experience. The findings suggest that e-commerce platforms should prioritize improving service quality while maintaining strong brand trust, effective promotions, and user-friendly applications to increase consumer purchasing decisions. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of consumer behavior in the e-commerce industry and offers practical implications for improving e-commerce platforms to meet consumer needs.

Keywords : Brand Trust, Service Quality, Online Promotion, Application Ease of Use, Purchasing Decision, E-Commerce.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh kepercayaan merek, kualitas layanan, promosi online, dan kemudahan penggunaan aplikasi terhadap keputusan pembelian di sektor e-commerce. Penelitian ini menggunakan jenis penelitian deskriptif dengan pendekatan kuantitatif, melibatkan 115 responden dari Kota Ambon yang pernah berbelanja di platform e-commerce yang berbeda lebih dari dua kali. Teknik pengambilan sampel yang digunakan adalah purposive sampling, dan data dianalisis dengan menggunakan Partial Least Square (PLS). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa semua variabel-kepercayaan merek, kualitas layanan, promosi online, dan kemudahan penggunaan aplikasi-berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap keputusan pembelian. Di antara variabel-variabel tersebut, kualitas layanan memiliki pengaruh yang paling kuat, yang mengindikasikan bahwa faktor-faktor seperti daya tanggap, jaminan pengiriman, dan empati penjual sangat penting dalam keputusan konsumen untuk membeli secara online. Kepercayaan merek, promosi online, dan kemudahan penggunaan juga memainkan peran penting, mendukung kepercayaan konsumen dan meningkatkan pengalaman berbelanja. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa platform e-commerce harus memprioritaskan peningkatan kualitas layanan dengan tetap mempertahankan kepercayaan merek yang kuat, promosi yang efektif, dan aplikasi yang mudah digunakan untuk meningkatkan keputusan pembelian konsumen. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih dalam tentang perilaku konsumen di industri e-commerce dan menawarkan implikasi praktis untuk meningkatkan platform e-commerce untuk memenuhi kebutuhan konsumen.

Kata Kunci: Kepercayaan Merek, Kualitas Layanan, Promosi Online, Kemudahan Penggunaan Aplikasi, Keputusan Pembelian, E-Commerce.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is projected to be among the top 10 countries with the highest global e-commerce growth in 2024, with

a growth rate of 30.5%, nearly three times the global average of 10.4%, according to ECDB, a German e-commerce research institute. This rapid

growth is driven by factors such as population expansion and technological advancements in the digital era, leading to the rise of social commerce—an integration of social media into e-commerce platforms (Hajli & Sims, 2015). Online shopping has become a popular alternative for purchasing goods and services, with improvements in service efficiency, security, and effectiveness. The rapid evolution of technology and information has broadened the reach of marketers, transforming global commerce through internet-driven innovations.

Trust is a subtle and subjective concept, as it is based on consumer beliefs rather than objective facts (Yannopoulou et al., 2011). Consumers trust brands they perceive as safe, reliable, and acting in their best interests (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003). In e-commerce, brand trust can apply to both product and service brands. In this research, brand trust is measured using three indicators: brand characteristics, company characteristics, and consumer-brand characteristics, as suggested by Lau & Lee (1999).

H1: proposes that brand trust significantly influences purchasing decisions.

Service quality has become a crucial factor for many companies as it can positively impact purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. This topic has been widely studied, with numerous researchers highlighting its significance (Vera & Trujillo, 2013). Service quality is assessed by comparing consumer expectations with the actual experience across various dimensions. In this research, four indicators are used to evaluate service quality: responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility, based on the work of James A. Fitzsimmon (2019).

H2: posits that service quality significantly influences purchasing decisions.

Online promotion is a common topic in marketing research. To achieve success in online promotions, companies must carefully select products connected to past consumer behavior (Tsao, 2013), as this can influence marketing strategies and increase online purchases. Large-scale online promotions can lead to higher consumption, as reflected by the total spending during promotional events (Liu et al., 2020). The indicators for measuring online promotion, adopted from Kotler & Keller (2009), include promotion reach, quantity, quality, and timing.

H3: suggests that online promotion has a significant effect on purchasing decisions.

Ease of use, especially in the efficient exchange of information between parties, is a key reason why information technology is so popular (Fakhrudin, 2022). In e-commerce, the ease of making transactions is a vital factor influencing purchasing decisions. This has been a subject of interest in research, particularly on user acceptance of technology, as studied by Chen & Zhou (2016), Rachmawati et al. (2020), and Ramadhan et al. (2021). The usability indicators, adapted from Venkatesh and Davis (2000), include ease of learning, controllability, flexibility, and ease of use, which are widely used in research to assess app usability leading to purchase decisions (Li et al., 2020).

H4 proposes that Ease of Use significantly influences purchasing decisions.

While online shopping has become a popular alternative for purchasing goods and services, driven by advancements in technology and the rise of social commerce integrating social

media with e-commerce platforms (Hajli & Sims, 2015), several factors influencing purchasing decisions remain underexplored. Previous research highlights the role of social media in shaping consumer behavior (Verina et al., 2024), the importance of trust in e-commerce (Utami et al., 2023; Rybak, 2018; Rabiah et al., 2020), and the critical impact of service quality on customer satisfaction and loyalty (Lee et al., 2022; Johan et al., 2020). Moreover, online promotions significantly affect purchasing behavior (Liu et al., 2020), while app usability has been studied to understand consumer preferences (Li et al., 2020; Wardhana et al., 2021). However, the integration of these variables—brand trust, service quality, online promotions, and app usability—in a comprehensive model that explains consumer purchase decisions in the context of evolving social commerce remains a research gap that needs further investigation.

The aim of this study is to investigate the influence of brand trust, service quality, online promotions, and app usability on consumer purchasing decisions within the context of e-commerce. Specifically, the research seeks to understand how these factors collectively contribute to shaping consumer behavior in the rapidly evolving digital marketplace, particularly with the rise of social commerce. By examining the relationships between these variables, the study aims to provide insights into how e-commerce platforms can enhance their competitive advantage and improve customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The following is the framework of this research:

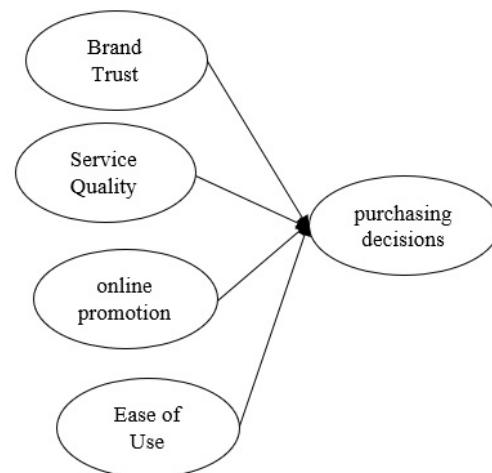


Figure 1. Framework

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a descriptive research design with a quantitative approach, focusing on residents of Ambon City who have shopped online. The sample consists of 115 respondents, both men and women aged 17-60, who are capable of providing informed feedback and have made purchases on at least two different e-commerce platforms more than twice. The sampling method used is non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling. The data analysis is conducted using Partial Least Square (PLS), a multivariate statistical technique for examining the relationships between multiple dependent and independent variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The descriptive statistics for this study reveal key insights into respondent demographics and their perceptions of the variables under investigation. Of the 115 respondents, 73.9% were women, and 26.1% were men, with the majority (80%) aged between 17-24 years. The remaining respondents were predominantly aged 25-32 (18.3%), with a small fraction between 33-40 years old (1.7%). These respondents had all engaged in online shopping on at least two different e-commerce platforms,

indicating their familiarity with the online marketplace. The descriptive statistics of the study variables show that respondents rated brand trust (mean = 4.253), service quality (mean = 4.375), online promotions (mean = 4.315), and app usability (mean = 4.260) as high, indicating positive consumer perceptions of these factors. The average purchasing decision score of 4.355 further emphasizes the strong influence of these variables on consumer behavior.

The convergent validity results show that each latent variable—brand trust, service quality, online promotions, app usability, and purchasing decisions—had strong standardized loadings and critical ratios (CR), indicating the validity of the measurement model. For brand trust, all manifest variables (BT1, BT2, BT3) had high standardized loadings (ranging from 0.844 to 0.914) with critical ratios above 13, showing strong reliability. Similarly, service quality indicators (KP1-KP4) had standardized loadings between 0.727 and 0.841, and online promotions (PO1-PO4) ranged from 0.758 to 0.869, further confirming the constructs' reliability. App usability also demonstrated high reliability, with standardized loadings for its indicators (KA1-KA4) between 0.848 and 0.904, while purchasing decision indicators (KPem1-KPem4) exhibited strong loadings, particularly KPem2 and KPem4, with loadings above 0.880.

The structural model evaluation, as seen through the R-squared value (R^2) for purchasing decisions, is 0.978, indicating that 97.8% of the variance in purchasing decisions can be explained by the combined influence of brand trust, service quality, online promotions, and app usability. This high R^2 value suggests that these independent variables have a substantial impact on the dependent variable (purchasing

decision), further reinforcing the significance of these factors in shaping consumer behavior in the e-commerce context.

The following are the results of this study:

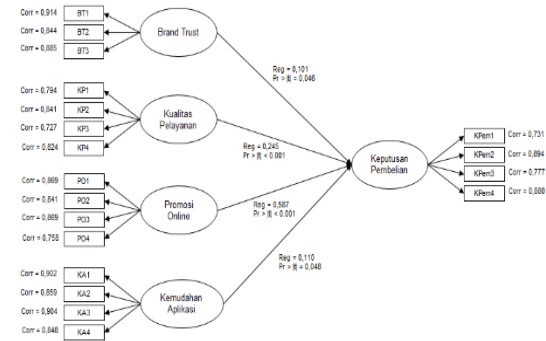


Figure 2. Full Model

The following are the results of the study presented in tabular form:

Table 1. Results of Inner Weights (Brand Trust)

Latent Variable	Value	T	Pr > t	Hypothesis
Brand Trust	0,101	2,048	0,046	Accepted

The first hypothesis (H1) suggests that brand trust has a positive effect on purchasing decisions. This relationship is confirmed by the findings, as shown in the data, where brand trust positively influences purchasing decisions with a path coefficient of 0.101 and a significance level of 0.046 (t-value of $2.048 > 1.658$). This indicates that as consumers develop greater trust in a brand, they are more likely to make a purchasing decision, supporting prior research that highlights the importance of trust in consumer behavior. According to Delgado-Ballester et al. (2003), brand trust is built when consumers perceive a brand as reliable and acting in their best interest. This trust, in turn, leads to greater confidence in purchasing decisions. The positive and significant effect of brand trust aligns with studies by Utami et al. (2023) and Rabiah et al. (2020), who found that trust in e-commerce platforms significantly influences consumer purchasing behavior, particularly in online contexts

where face-to-face interaction is absent, and trust becomes a crucial factor in decision-making.

Moreover, Yannopoulou et al. (2011) emphasize that brand trust is subjective and built on consumer beliefs rather than concrete facts, meaning that even perceived reliability can significantly impact consumer decisions. In the context of e-commerce, where consumers are often concerned with issues like privacy, security, and product authenticity, building and maintaining trust is essential for encouraging purchases. As such, e-commerce platforms that successfully establish brand trust are likely to see an increase in consumer engagement and purchasing decisions. These findings underscore the need for companies to focus on strengthening brand trust as a strategic asset in their marketing and customer relationship management efforts to drive positive purchasing outcomes (Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003; Lau & Lee, 1999).

Table 2. Results of Inner Weights (Service Quality)

Latent Variable	Value	T	Pr > t	Hypothesis
Service Quality	0,5718	5,828	0,000	Accepted

The second hypothesis (H2) posits that service quality positively influences purchasing decisions, and the findings support this claim. As indicated in the data, the impact of service quality on purchasing decisions is positive, with a path coefficient of 0.245 and a significance level of 0.000 (t-value of $2.786 > 1.658$). This suggests that higher perceived service quality leads to a greater likelihood of consumers making a purchase. Service quality plays a critical role in consumer decision-making, as it reflects the overall satisfaction with the purchasing experience. Previous studies, such as those by Vera and Trujillo (2013), have emphasized that service quality is a key

factor in increasing customer satisfaction and brand loyalty, directly impacting purchasing behavior.

In the of e-commerce, where consumers may have concerns about the reliability of online transactions, excellent service quality, including responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangible elements, becomes even more crucial (Fitzsimmons, 2019). When consumers perceive that an e-commerce platform provides high-quality service—through timely responses, secure transactions, and personalized attention—they are more likely to trust the platform and proceed with a purchase. This is in line with research by Lee et al. (2022), which found that service quality significantly contributes to customer satisfaction and decision-making in e-commerce. Similarly, Johan et al. (2020) argue that improving service quality creates a positive customer experience, leading to repeat purchases and customer loyalty.

Therefore, the positive and significant relationship between service quality and purchasing decisions underscores the importance for e-commerce platforms to continuously enhance their service quality. By doing so, they not only improve customer satisfaction but also increase the likelihood of positive purchasing decisions, thereby gaining a competitive edge in the market (Vera & Trujillo, 2013; Fitzsimmons, 2019).

Table 3. Results of Inner Weights (Online Promotion)

Latent Variable	Value	T	Pr > t	Hypothesis
Online Promotion	0,587	10,638	0,000	Accepted

The third hypothesis (H3) suggests that online promotion has a positive effect on purchasing decisions, and the findings strongly support this. The data indicate that the influence of online promotion on purchasing decisions is

positive, with a path coefficient of 0.587 and a significance level of 0.000 (t-value of $10.638 > 1.658$). This implies that well-executed online promotions significantly increase the likelihood of consumers making purchases. Online promotions have become a vital component of e-commerce strategies, as they directly attract consumers' attention and create a sense of urgency to buy. According to Tsao (2013), effective online promotions, which are tailored to consumer preferences based on their previous behaviors, can enhance marketing outcomes by encouraging higher levels of consumer spending.

Liu et al. (2020) highlight that massive promotional activities, such as discounts, coupons, and limited-time offers, can increase total consumer spending during online shopping events. When these promotions are well-targeted and relevant to consumer interests, they significantly boost online purchasing decisions. Moreover, Kotler & Keller (2009) emphasize that the reach, quality, and timing of online promotions are critical elements that influence their effectiveness. For instance, promotions that are well-timed, extensive, and offer high value to the consumer are more likely to generate immediate purchase decisions.

The significant impact of online promotions on purchasing decisions, as evidenced by the findings, aligns with prior research by Chan et al. (2011), which shows that businesses can tailor their promotional efforts to different consumer segments, thereby maximizing their effectiveness. The positive relationship between online promotions and purchasing decisions underscores the importance for e-commerce platforms to design targeted and appealing promotional strategies to drive consumer engagement and sales. Thus, online promotions serve as a powerful

tool to stimulate consumer demand and enhance the overall shopping experience (Liu et al., 2020; Kotler & Keller, 2009).

Table 4. Results of Inner Weights (Ease of Use)

Latent Variable	Value	T	Pr > t	Hypothesis
Ease of Use	0,5718	5,828	0,000	Accepted

The fourth hypothesis (H4) asserts that application ease of use has a positive effect on purchasing decisions, a relationship supported by the data. The influence of application ease of use on purchasing decisions is positive, with a path coefficient of 0.245 and a significance level of 0.000 (t-value of $2.786 > 1.658$). This indicates that the more user-friendly an e-commerce application is, the more likely consumers are to make a purchase. The ease of use of an application plays a crucial role in shaping the customer experience, as consumers seek convenience, efficiency, and simplicity when navigating through an online platform. Venkatesh and Davis (2000) highlight that applications that are easy to learn, flexible, and controllable lead to greater consumer satisfaction, encouraging users to proceed with purchases.

Research by Chen & Zhou (2016) and Rachmawati et al. (2020) also confirms that ease of use significantly impacts user acceptance and the decision to purchase on e-commerce platforms. When consumers find an application intuitive and straightforward, they are more likely to have a smooth shopping experience, reducing any hesitation they may have in completing a transaction. Li et al. (2020) add that reducing the complexity of using e-commerce platforms by making them more user-friendly leads to an increase in consumer purchasing decisions, as it lowers the barriers to entry for consumers of various technological competencies.

This positive and significant relationship between ease of use and

purchasing decisions reinforces the need for e-commerce platforms to prioritize the user interface and overall usability of their applications. By simplifying processes like product search, payment, and order tracking, e-commerce platforms can enhance the consumer experience and ultimately increase conversion rates. Thus, application ease of use becomes a critical factor in driving online shopping behavior (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Chen & Zhou, 2016; Li et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The research findings reveal that all variables—service quality, brand trust, online promotion, and application ease of use—have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, with service quality having the most substantial impact. This suggests that consumers view the quality of e-commerce services as a critical factor when deciding to use a platform and make a purchase. Service quality includes responsiveness from the online store, reliability of delivery, and seller empathy, which play crucial roles in shaping customer satisfaction and trust. These aspects reassure consumers that their purchases will be handled efficiently, making them more likely to complete transactions. Following service quality, brand trust, online promotions, and ease of use also significantly influence purchasing decisions. High brand trust instills confidence in consumers that the platform or seller will act in their best interests, which fosters loyalty and encourages repeat purchases. Effective online promotions further entice customers by offering compelling deals and discounts that trigger immediate buying decisions. Finally, ease of use ensures that the application is user-friendly, which facilitates smoother transactions and reduces friction in the

shopping process. Together, these factors highlight that the consumer decision-making process in e-commerce is multifaceted, with service quality leading the way, but supported by trust, promotions, and usability. For e-commerce platforms aiming to boost sales, focusing on enhancing these areas is essential to create a seamless and reliable shopping experience that encourages higher conversion rates. These findings align with previous research, emphasizing the importance of improving service and user experience to influence online purchasing behavior positively (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Li et al., 2020). Therefore, these factors collectively form a comprehensive framework for understanding consumer purchasing decisions in the e-commerce landscape.

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