Navigating e-commerce hyper-competition: Unveiling the drivers of purchase intention on Lazada Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Lazada is one of Indonesia's leading e-commerce platforms, operating under a business-to-consumer (B2C) model and offering various features to enhance the consumer shopping experience. However, intensifying industry competition, including the integration of TikTok and Tokopedia, has contributed to a changing competitive landscape and declining market share for Lazada, highlighting the importance of understanding the factors influencing purchase intention. This study aims to identify and analyze the factors shaping Lazada customers' purchase intention. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, using in-depth interviews, observations of application use, and documentation involving Gold-status customers who had actively conducted transactions during the preceding three months. The data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns in customers' experiences. The findings reveal five main factors shaping purchase intention: platform features, including live streaming, customer reviews, and PayLater; price sensitivity and promotional offers; marketing strategies; trust; and customer loyalty. These findings highlight the importance of developing interactive platform features, implementing competitive pricing strategies, and strengthening after-sales services to enhance purchase intention and customer retention. This study offers practical implications for refining e-commerce strategies in an increasingly dynamic competitive environment.

Keywords: *Purchase Intention; Customer Trust; Customer Loyalty; E-Commerce; Lazada; Qualitative Research*

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INTRODUCTION

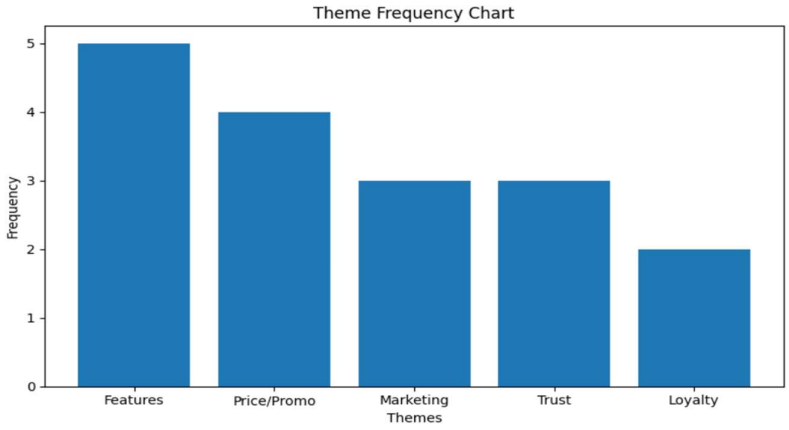
The development of digital technology has significantly transformed global consumption patterns and purchasing behavior (Verhoef et al., 2021). Buying and selling activities that were previously conducted face-to-face have now shifted to e-commerce platforms, allowing consumers to make transactions without space and time limitations (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). In Indonesia, e-commerce adoption has experienced rapid growth in line with increasing internet penetration and digital device usage, making online shopping a part of everyday consumption practices (Karlina et al., 2020; Katadata, 2021). This transformation has encouraged companies to compete not only on product aspects, but also on user experience, platform technology, and digital marketing strategies.

As one of the major e-commerce platforms in Indonesia, Lazada implements a Business-to-Consumer (B2C) model that allows the company to control product quality, distribution systems, and after-sales services. This model provides a competitive advantage in building customer trust and convenience (Luh et al., 2021). In addition, Lazada continues to develop various features such as live streaming commerce, user review systems, and flexible payment services (PayLater) to increase consumer engagement. Previous studies have shown that interactive features and visual experiences in e-commerce play an important role in increasing consumer interest and trust (Fei et al., 2021; Felix & Rembulan, 2023a).

However, the dynamics of the Indonesian e-commerce industry show an increasingly intense level of competition (Google et al., 2024). The integration of TikTok and Tokopedia in 2024 strengthens the position of Lazada's main competitors and puts significant pressure on Lazada's market share. Large investments and aggressive system integration make Tokopedia more adaptive to content-based consumer behavior and social commerce (Rah, 2024). This situation confirms that the sustainability of e-commerce platforms is no longer determined solely by the number of users, but by the ability to deeply understand the factors that shape customer purchase interest and loyalty.

In addition to competitive pressure, changing consumer expectations also pose a significant challenge for e-commerce platforms. Consumers are now increasingly sensitive to prices, promotions, and economic value offered, and demand a safe, fast, and responsive shopping experience. Previous studies have identified that price, promotions, digital marketing strategies, and trust have a significant influence on the purchase intention of e-commerce consumers (Sekarini et al., 2022; Sari, 2020; Rustam, 2024). However, most of these studies use a quantitative approach and have not explored in depth the subjective experiences of users in the context of current e-commerce competition.

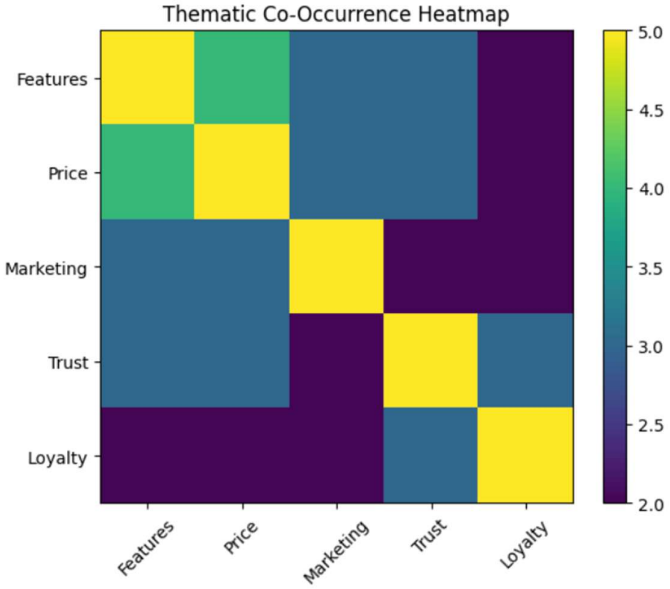
To understand the factors that shape purchase interest more comprehensively, a qualitative approach is needed to capture the perceptions, experiences, and meanings constructed by users when interacting with e-commerce platforms. In this study, the experiences of Lazada users were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify the main thematic patterns that emerged from in-depth interviews and observations of application usage (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Figure 1 shows the frequency of occurrence of the main themes that influence Lazada customers' purchasing interest, indicating that platform features and price/promotions are the most dominant themes, followed by marketing, trust, and loyalty.



Source: Researcher's Processing, 2024

Figure 1
Theme Frequency Chart of Factors Influencing Lazada Customers' Purchase Intention

Furthermore, the relationships between factors are not standalone; rather, they are interconnected in shaping a holistic shopping experience. The interaction between features, price, marketing, trust, and loyalty can be seen in Figure 2, which illustrates the thematic interconnections based on their simultaneous emergence in the informants' narratives.



Source: Researcher's elaboration, 2024

Figure 2
Thematic Co-Occurrence Heatmap of Factors Influencing Purchase Intention

Preliminary findings indicate that factors such as platform features and pricing/promotions emerge as dominant themes, followed by marketing, trust, and customer loyalty, as illustrated in Figure 1. Furthermore, the interconnection among these factors shapes a reinforcing shopping experience, as shown in Figure 2, which depicts the thematic relationships among the determinants of purchase intention.

To thrive in the competitive e-commerce landscape, brands must harmonize traditional drivers like price and quality with the rising influence of electronic word-of-mouth and sustainability to foster genuine consumer trust and loyalty (Felix et al., 2025). Based on this exposition, this research becomes significant to fill the research gap by qualitatively exploring the factors influencing Lazada customers' purchase intention amid the dynamics of e-commerce competition in Indonesia.

Specifically, this study aims to explicitly identify, explore, and analyze the multidimensional factors—comprising interactive platform features, price sensitivity and promotional dynamics, digital marketing mechanisms, consumer trust, and customer loyalty—that shape customer purchase intention on Lazada Indonesia, thereby uncovering how these interrelated dimensions operate collectively to sustain customer retention within an increasingly hyper-competitive e-commerce ecosystem.

The research findings are expected to provide empirical and practical contributions to the development of e-commerce platform strategies, particularly in strengthening features, pricing strategies, digital marketing, as well as building trust and customer loyalty.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purchase Intention in the Context of E-Commerce

Purchase intention refers to the psychological tendency of consumers to make a purchase of a product or service after undergoing an evaluation process of information and previous experiences (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Spears & Singh, 2004). In the context of e-commerce, buying interest is influenced not only by functional needs but also by perceived risks, trust in the platform, and user experience during the digital interaction process (Sofiyatuzzahro, 2021). Unlike conventional transactions, online purchasing decisions heavily depend on visual representation, product information, and the credibility of the system presented by the platform.

Previous research shows that purchase intention on e-commerce platforms is multidimensional and is formed through the interaction between technological, economic, and psychological factors. These factors do not work separately, but rather influence one another in shaping consumer evaluations of the value offered by the platform (Sekarini et al., 2022). Therefore, understanding purchase intention requires an approach that can capture the complexity of user experiences holistically.

Platform Features and Live Streaming Commerce

The development of interactive features has become one of the main characteristics of modern e-commerce. Live streaming commerce allows consumers to see products in real-time, directly interact with sellers or hosts, and obtain additional information that is not available in static product descriptions (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). The study by Fei et al. (2021) shows that visual elements and social cues in live streaming significantly enhance consumer trust and purchase intention.

In the context of Lazada, features such as live streaming, user review systems, and PayLater payment options are designed to reduce uncertainty and enhance transaction convenience. Research by Firdaus (2022) and Ramadhayanti (2023) found that live

streaming serves not only as a promotional medium but also as a means to build trust and create a more personal shopping experience. Thus, the platform's features act as experiential drivers that mediate the relationship between product information and purchasing decisions.

Price, Promotion, and Consumer Sensitivity

Price remains a primary determinant in e-commerce consumer purchasing decisions, especially in developing markets like Indonesia. Online consumers tend to compare prices across platforms and are highly responsive to promotions, discounts, and double date programs (Sumarsid, 2022). Sekarini et al. (2022) emphasize that perceptions of fair and competitive pricing contribute directly to increased purchase intentions.

In addition to nominal price, the perception of economic value is also influenced by shipping costs, delivery speed, and additional benefits obtained by consumers. In this context, promotion is not only understood as a short-term incentive but also as a strategy to build value perception and encourage repeat purchases (Ratna, 2022). Therefore, price sensitivity should be understood as a perceptual construct, not merely a rational calculation.

Digital Marketing on E-Commerce Platforms

Digital marketing on e-commerce platforms encompasses various activities, ranging from digital advertisements, promotional banners, app notifications, to integration with social media content. Musyawarah and Idayanti (2022) emphasize that the effectiveness of digital marketing depends on message relevance, timing of delivery, and alignment with consumer needs.

In the context of Lazada, digital marketing is often combined with live streaming and event-based promotions, creating a time-sensitive shopping experience. Mursid (2022) found that exposure to advertisements and the attractiveness of marketing communication have a significant impact on purchase intention, especially when combined with price promotions. This indicates that digital marketing acts as a trigger that accelerates the consumer decision-making process.

Trust in Online Transactions

Trust is a crucial factor in e-commerce transactions because consumers cannot physically verify products before purchase (Gefen et al., 2003; McKnight et al., 2002). Trust in the platform includes perceptions of system security, seller reliability, and the platform's ability to handle complaints and transaction issues (Sari, 2020). A high level of trust can reduce the perception of risk and increase consumer purchase intention.

Citra's research (2023) shows that trust has a close relationship with customer satisfaction, which in turn influences purchasing decisions and repeat purchases. In the context of Lazada, responsive customer service and consumer protection systems play a crucial role in building a sense of security. Thus, trust can be understood as a psychological foundation that allows other factors such as price and features to function effectively.

Customer Loyalty in E-Commerce

Customer loyalty refers to the tendency of consumers to make repeat purchases and maintain the use of a platform in the long term. Felix and Rembulan (2023b) define loyalty as a result of the accumulation of consistent positive experiences with the

products, services, and value offered by the company. In e-commerce, loyalty is influenced not only by satisfaction but also by ease of use, trust, and perceived value.

Rustam (2024) emphasizes that customer loyalty to Lazada is influenced by the platform's ability to handle complaints and maintain service quality. Loyalty then serves as a mechanism that strengthens purchase intention, as loyal consumers tend to reduce the search for alternatives and make purchasing decisions more quickly.

Literature Synthesis and Research Gap

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that purchase intention in e-commerce is influenced by a combination of factors such as platform features, pricing and promotions, digital marketing, trust, and customer loyalty. Although the relationships among these factors have been extensively studied quantitatively, there is still limited research exploring how these factors are interpreted and experienced by users in the context of dynamic e-commerce competition.

Therefore, this research positions itself to fill that gap through a qualitative approach with thematic analysis, in order to gain a deeper understanding of how Lazada user experiences shape purchase intention amidst the changing landscape of e-commerce in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design grounded in an interpretivist paradigm (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), aiming to explore how users subjectively experience and interpret factors influencing purchase intention on the Lazada e-commerce platform. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the study does not seek to test causal relationships or measure variable strength statistically, but rather to understand meanings, perceptions, and experiential processes underlying consumer decision-making in a competitive e-commerce context (Andriyani et al., 2022).

Qualitative inquiry enables the capture of nuanced user experiences related to platform features, pricing strategies, marketing communication, trust, and loyalty factors that are often oversimplified when examined solely through quantitative models (Minarto et al., 2021). This approach aligns with the research objective of identifying thematic patterns that shape purchase intention from the users' perspectives.

The research was conducted in Jakarta, Indonesia, one of the largest and most active e-commerce markets in the country. Jakarta was selected due to its high internet penetration rate, dense concentration of e-commerce users, and exposure to multiple competing platforms, making it a relevant context for exploring consumer purchase intention in a highly competitive digital environment (Karlina et al., 2020). Data collection was carried out between February and March 2024, a period that included promotional campaigns and routine platform usage, allowing participants to reflect on both habitual and promotional shopping experiences.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique commonly employed in qualitative research to ensure that informants possess direct and relevant experience with the phenomenon under investigation (Muhammad et al., 2022). The inclusion criteria were as follows:

1. Registered Lazada users with Gold membership status
2. Active purchasers who had made at least one transaction within the last three months
3. Experience using key Lazada features such as live streaming, product reviews, or PayLater

Two participants met these criteria and agreed to participate in in-depth interviews. While the number of participants is limited, the study prioritizes depth of information and meaning saturation at the thematic level, rather than statistical representativeness. In exploratory qualitative research, a small number of information-rich cases is acceptable when the focus is on identifying recurring patterns and experiential themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Data were collected using multiple qualitative techniques to enhance credibility through methodological triangulation (Denzin, 2012; Patton, 2015):

1. In-depth semi-structured interviews
   Interviews were conducted to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and decision-making processes when shopping on Lazada. An interview guide was used to ensure consistency while allowing flexibility for probing emerging issues related to features, pricing, promotions, trust, and loyalty.
2. Non-participant observation
   Observations were conducted to examine how participants interacted with the Lazada application, particularly during browsing, live streaming sessions, and checkout processes. This helped contextualize interview responses within actual platform usage behavior.
3. Documentation
   Supporting documents such as screenshots of application interfaces, promotional banners, and transaction histories (where permitted) were used to corroborate interview findings and enrich contextual understanding.

Data analysis followed the six-phase thematic analysis framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006):

1. Familiarization with the data through repeated reading of interview transcripts and observation notes
2. Generation of initial codes representing meaningful units of information
3. Identification of potential themes by grouping related codes
4. Review and refinement of themes to ensure internal coherence and distinction
5. Definition and naming of final themes
6. Integration of themes into a coherent narrative linked to existing literature

The analysis resulted in five main themes: platform features, price and promotion, marketing communication, trust, and customer loyalty. These themes formed the basis for data visualization and interpretive discussion in the subsequent sections.

To ensure research rigor, this study applied qualitative trustworthiness criteria as follows (Lincoln & Guba, 1985):

a. Credibility was enhanced through triangulation of interviews, observation, and documentation.
b. Dependability was supported by transparent documentation of the data collection and analysis procedures.
c. Confirmability was addressed by grounding interpretations in direct participant statements and observational evidence.
d. Transferability was supported by providing a clear description of research context and participant characteristics, allowing readers to assess relevance to similar settings.

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided consent prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was maintained by using pseudonyms and removing identifiable information. Data were used solely for academic purposes and stored securely to protect participant confidentiality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis of interview, observation, and documentation data resulted in five dominant themes influencing purchase intention on the Lazada platform:

1) Platform Features,
2) Price and Promotion Sensitivity,
3) Marketing Communication,
4) Trust, and
5) Customer loyalty.

The relative prominence of these themes is illustrated in Figure 1 (Theme Frequency Chart), which shows that platform features and price/promotion emerged most frequently in participants' narratives, followed by marketing communication, trust, and loyalty. This distribution suggests that purchase intention is primarily driven by functional–economic considerations, which are subsequently reinforced by psychological and relational factors.

Participants consistently highlighted interactive platform features particularly live streaming, product reviews, and PayLater as critical in shaping their purchase intention. Live streaming was perceived as enabling real-time product evaluation and increasing confidence in product authenticity, while reviews functioned as social validation mechanisms. PayLater was valued for providing financial flexibility and reducing immediate purchase barriers. As illustrated by Informant 1 (Gold Member, Female, 27): "The live streaming feature is very helpful because I can see the real product appearance and size directly before checkout. In addition, buyer reviews that include photos and videos make me confident that the product is authentic and matches the description, while the PayLater feature provides flexibility when there are urgent needs at the end of the month."

These findings align with prior studies indicating that interactive and visual features in e-commerce enhance perceived transparency and reduce uncertainty, thereby increasing purchase intention (Fei et al., 2021; Firdaus, 2022). From an experiential perspective, platform features function not merely as technological tools but as experience mediators that bridge information asymmetry between sellers and buyers. The prominence of this theme in Figure 1 reinforces the argument that feature design plays a foundational role in shaping consumer decisions in digital commerce environments.

Price emerged as a dominant determinant of purchase intention, particularly when combined with promotional events such as double-date campaigns (e.g., 9.9, 11.11, 12.12). Participants actively compared prices across platforms and perceived Lazada as offering more attractive price advantages during promotional periods. As expressed by Informant 2 (Gold Member, Male, 31): "I always compare prices across several applications before buying. On Lazada, during double-date events like 11.11 or 12.12, the combination of store discount vouchers, surprise bonuses, and free shipping with no minimum spend makes the total price much cheaper compared to other platforms. It is this promotional price factor that most quickly triggers me to complete the transaction immediately."

This finding corroborates existing literature emphasizing the high price sensitivity of Indonesian e-commerce consumers (Sekarini et al., 2022; Sumarsid, 2022). Importantly, participants did not interpret low prices in isolation; rather, purchase intention was influenced by the perceived value trade-off between price, delivery speed, and promotional incentives. As shown in Figure 2 (Thematic Co-Occurrence Heatmap), price frequently co-occurred with platform features and marketing communication, indicating that economic incentives are most effective when embedded within engaging platform experiences.

Marketing communication particularly push notifications, in-app banners, and live-stream-exclusive promotions acted as a trigger mechanism that accelerated purchase decisions. Participants reported that time-limited offers and event-based promotions created a sense of urgency, prompting immediate purchasing behavior. This was corroborated by Informant 1: "Mobile notifications reminding me of a midnight flash sale or limited vouchers often prompt me to open the application immediately. Once I see the exclusive discount banner in the live streaming with a countdown timer, there is a spontaneous urge to check out right away before the promotion ends."

Consistent with Ratna (2022) and Ramadhayanti (2023), this study confirms that digital marketing effectiveness depends on contextual relevance and timing rather than message volume alone. Marketing communication did not independently generate purchase intention; instead, it amplified the effects of price and platform features. This interdependence is visible in Figure 2, where marketing shows strong thematic overlap with both price and features, suggesting that marketing functions as a catalyst rather than a primary driver.

Trust emerged as a crucial psychological factor underpinning purchase intention. Participants associated trust with transaction security, seller reliability, and, most notably, the responsiveness of Lazada's customer service in handling complaints. These findings are consistent with prior research demonstrating that trust reduces perceived risk in online transactions and positively influences purchase intention (Sari, 2020; Citra, 2023). In this study, trust did not emerge as the most frequently mentioned theme; however, its role was foundational. As illustrated in Figure 2, trust co-occurred strongly with loyalty and platform features, indicating its integrative function within the purchase decision process. Thus, trust operates as an enabling condition that allows economic and experiential factors to exert their influence effectively. Informant 2 emphasized: "For me, a sense of security is the top priority. I prefer shopping at official LazMall stores because there is a 100% original guarantee. Once, the item I received was the wrong size, and the refund process through customer service was very responsive and easy. That experience made me highly confident to continue making high-value transactions on Lazada."

Customer loyalty was reflected in participants' expressed preference to continue using Lazada due to consistent service quality, reliable delivery, and familiarity with the platform interface. Loyal behavior reduced the need for extensive platform comparison, thereby shortening the decision-making process. This finding aligns with Felix and Rembulan (2023b), who argue that loyalty in e-commerce is an outcome of accumulated positive experiences rather than a single transaction. Rustam (2024) similarly emphasizes the role of complaint handling and service consistency in maintaining customer loyalty. As shown in Figure 2, loyalty is closely linked to trust and platform features, suggesting that loyalty is constructed relationally through repeated positive interactions rather than driven by price alone. As noted by Informant 1: "Having shopped on Lazada for years and achieved Gold status, I am very accustomed to the application interface and the track record of consistently on-time deliveries. I do not need to bother

comparing other applications for routine necessities because I am already comfortable and confident in their service."

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that purchase intention on Lazada is shaped by a configurational interaction of factors rather than isolated determinants. Platform features and price constitute the primary entry points into the purchase decision, while marketing communication accelerates action, and trust and loyalty sustain long-term engagement. The thematic co-occurrence patterns visualized in Figure 2 support this interpretation by illustrating how these factors reinforce one another within users' experiential narratives. This integrative perspective extends prior quantitative findings by revealing how and why these factors matter from the user's point of view.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study explores the factors shaping purchase intention on the Lazada e-commerce platform through a qualitative, thematic analysis of user experiences. The findings demonstrate that purchase intention is not driven by a single determinant, but rather by the interplay of experiential, economic, and psychological factors. Platform features particularly live streaming, product reviews, and flexible payment options along with price and promotional strategies, emerged as the most salient drivers of purchase intention. These factors function as initial entry points that attract consumer attention and motivate transactional decisions.

Marketing communication was found to act as an accelerative mechanism, strengthening the impact of platform features and pricing by creating urgency and contextual relevance. Meanwhile, trust and customer loyalty played a foundational role in sustaining purchase intention over time. Trust reduced perceived risk and enabled consumers to engage more confidently with platform offerings, while loyalty emerged as an outcome of accumulated positive experiences, shortening future decision-making processes. Collectively, these findings highlight that purchase intention in e-commerce is configurational and experiential, rather than linear or purely rational.

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest several strategic directions for e-commerce platforms, particularly Lazada. First, platform feature development should prioritize experiential value rather than functional novelty alone. Live streaming commerce, interactive reviews, and flexible payment systems should be continuously refined to enhance transparency, authenticity, and ease of decision-making, as these elements directly shape users' perceived value and confidence in purchasing (Fei et al., 2021; Felix & Rembulan, 2023a).

Second, pricing and promotional strategies should be designed as integrated value propositions, not isolated discount mechanisms. Promotional campaigns are most effective when aligned with engaging platform features and supported by clear economic benefits such as reduced shipping costs or bundled incentives. This approach responds to the high price sensitivity of Indonesian e-commerce consumers while avoiding over-reliance on price wars (Sekarini et al., 2022; Ratna, 2022).

Third, marketing communication should function as a contextual trigger rather than constant exposure. Time-bound promotions, live-stream-exclusive offers, and personalized notifications are more effective when they amplify existing value perceptions instead of overwhelming users with repetitive messages (Ramadhayanti, 2023).

Finally, trust-building mechanisms must be treated as long-term strategic assets. Responsive customer service, transparent dispute resolution, and consistent service

quality are essential for maintaining user confidence and fostering loyalty, which in turn stabilizes purchase intention amid intense market competition (Sari, 2020; Rustam, 2024).

Academically, this study contributes to the e-commerce literature in several ways. First, it extends existing research on purchase intention by providing qualitative, experience-based insights into how consumers interpret and integrate multiple factors in their decision-making processes. While prior studies have largely relied on quantitative models to test variable relationships, this study demonstrates how platform features, price, marketing, trust, and loyalty operate relationally within users' lived experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Second, the findings support a configurational understanding of purchase intention, suggesting that determinants should not be examined in isolation. This perspective complements and enriches dominant variable-based frameworks by revealing the experiential mechanisms underlying consumer behavior in competitive e-commerce environments.

Third, methodologically, the study illustrates the value of thematic analysis and qualitative visualization (e.g., thematic frequency and co-occurrence) in strengthening analytical rigor within small-sample exploratory research. This approach offers an alternative pathway for future studies seeking depth rather than breadth, particularly in rapidly evolving digital contexts.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. The small number of participants and the focus on a single geographic context limit the transferability of findings. Future research is encouraged to expand participant diversity, incorporate longitudinal designs, or adopt mixed-method approaches to triangulate qualitative insights with quantitative evidence. Comparative studies across different e-commerce platforms may also provide a richer understanding of how platform-specific strategies shape purchase intention. Specifically, subsequent research should incorporate measurable variables such as Perceived Service Quality, Digital Financial Literacy regarding PayLater utilization, Customer Satisfaction as a mediating construct, and Algorithmic Recommendation Accuracy. Investigating these specific variables is essential because evolving social-commerce integrations and micro-credit payment mechanisms introduce nuanced cognitive risks and structural dependencies that qualitative exploration alone cannot fully quantify across broader consumer demographics.

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