EXPLORING CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS OF E-WALLET USAGE IN SHOPPING PRACTICES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY IN INDONESIA

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Abstract: This study explores consumer perceptions of e-wallet usage in shopping practices within the Indonesian context, where digital financial services are rapidly reshaping payment behavior. Using a qualitative design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus groups with 30 participants representing diverse ages, income levels, and geographic locations. Thematic analysis revealed three key findings. First, convenience, transaction speed, promotional incentives, and integration with other digital services emerged as the primary benefits driving adoption, particularly among younger and tech-savvy consumers. Second, concerns over data security, fraud, hidden fees, and technical glitches remained significant barriers, limiting broader trust and acceptance. Third, demographic factors, especially age and digital literacy, strongly shaped adoption patterns, with younger generations showing higher enthusiasm compared to older users. The study also highlights the influence of social dynamics, as peer recommendations and family norms played a critical role in shaping attitudes toward e-wallets. These findings extend the literature by emphasizing the interplay between convenience, security, social influence, and demographic diversity in consumer adoption of digital payment systems in emerging markets. The research contributes theoretical and practical insights for e-wallet providers and policymakers seeking to foster inclusive digital financial ecosystems and enhance consumer trust in the rapidly expanding digital economy.
Keywords: e-wallets, consumer perceptions, digital payments, financial inclusion, Indonesia.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi persepsi konsumen terhadap penggunaan dompet digital (e-wallet) dalam praktik belanja di Indonesia, di mana layanan keuangan digital semakin mengubah perilaku pembayaran masyarakat. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dan diskusi kelompok (focus group) yang melibatkan 30 partisipan dengan latar belakang usia, pendapatan, dan lokasi geografis yang beragam. Analisis tematik menghasilkan tiga temuan utama. Pertama, kenyamanan, kecepatan transaksi, insentif promosi, serta integrasi dengan layanan digital lainnya menjadi faktor utama yang mendorong adopsi, khususnya di kalangan konsumen muda yang melek teknologi. Kedua, kekhawatiran terkait keamanan data, potensi penipuan, biaya tersembunyi, serta gangguan teknis tetap menjadi hambatan signifikan yang membatasi tingkat kepercayaan dan penerimaan. Ketiga, faktor demografis, terutama usia dan literasi digital, sangat memengaruhi pola adopsi, di mana generasi muda menunjukkan antusiasme lebih tinggi dibandingkan generasi yang lebih tua. Studi ini juga menyoroti peran dinamika sosial, seperti rekomendasi teman sebaya dan norma keluarga, yang terbukti berpengaruh dalam membentuk sikap terhadap e-wallet. Temuan ini memperluas literatur dengan menekankan interaksi antara kenyamanan, keamanan, pengaruh sosial, dan keragaman demografis dalam adopsi sistem pembayaran digital di pasar negara berkembang. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi teoritis dan praktis bagi penyedia layanan dan pembuat kebijakan untuk memperkuat ekosistem keuangan digital yang inklusif serta meningkatkan kepercayaan konsumen dalam ekonomi digital yang berkembang pesat.
Kata Kunci: dompet digital, persepsi konsumen, pembayaran digital, inklusi keuangan, Indonesia.

Introduction
The rapid growth of digital financial services has transformed consumer payment behavior in Indonesia, with e-wallets emerging as one of the most widely adopted innovations. By 2025, the number of e-wallet users is projected to reach 96 million, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 26.6% since 2021 (Statista, 2021)[1]. This surge is driven by increasing smartphone penetration, improved internet access, and a growing preference for cashless transactions. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated adoption as consumers shifted toward contactless payment options to reduce physical interaction (Kumar & Gupta, 2020)[2].

Popular platforms such as GoPay, OVO, and DANA have become integral to daily transactions, ranging from online shopping and in-store purchases to bill payments and peer-to-peer transfers. Younger consumers, particularly those aged 18–34, demonstrate a strong preference for e-wallets due to their convenience, speed, and ability to track expenditures (Alamsyah et al., 2022)[3]. Despite these advantages, concerns over data security, privacy, and long-term trust remain significant barriers to widespread adoption (Rachmawati et al., 2020)[4].

Understanding consumer perceptions of e-wallets is therefore essential for multiple stakeholders. From a business perspective, insights into consumer expectations can inform product development and marketing strategies, such as personalized promotions that enhance user engagement (PwC, 2021)[5]. From a regulatory standpoint, comprehending consumer concerns helps policymakers design frameworks that balance innovation with consumer protection. Moreover, cultural and demographic dimensions—such as age, income, and education—shape technology adoption patterns, underscoring the need for nuanced analysis (Venkatesh et al., 2012)[6].

Against this backdrop, this study aims to explore consumer perceptions of e-wallet usage in shopping practices within the Indonesian context. Specifically, it investigates the factors influencing consumer acceptance, perceived benefits and drawbacks, and the role of demographic variables in shaping consumer attitudes. By employing a qualitative approach, the study seeks to capture rich insights into consumer experiences, thereby filling a gap in the literature where most existing studies focus on advanced economies rather than emerging markets.
The research is guided by four key questions:

1. What factors influence consumer perceptions of e-wallet usage in shopping practices in Indonesia?
2. How do demographic variables (age, income, education) shape consumer attitudes toward e-wallets?
3. What benefits and drawbacks do consumers perceive in e-wallet usage?
4. How do cultural and social contexts affect consumer acceptance of e-wallets?

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[1]   Statista. (2021). Number of e-wallet users in Indonesia from 2017 to 2025. Statista. https://www.statista.com/statistics/1111232/indonesia-e-wallet-users

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By addressing these questions, the study contributes to both academic discourse and practical insights, offering implications for businesses, regulators, and researchers in the evolving landscape of digital payments.

Literature Review

E-wallets are digital applications that enable users to store, transfer, and spend money electronically by linking to bank accounts or credit cards. Beyond facilitating secure transactions, they increasingly serve as financial management tools with features such as transaction histories, loyalty programs, and budgeting (Kumar et al., 2021; Sari et al., 2022)[7]. In Indonesia, platforms like GoPay and OVO exemplify this multifunctionality, covering transportation, retail, and bill payments.

Globally, e-wallet adoption has accelerated, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic when contactless payments became essential. In Southeast Asia, digital payment usage rose by 11% in 2020, with Indonesia among the fastest-growing markets (McKinsey & Company, 2021; Statista, 2023)[8]. Young consumers dominate this trend: over 70% of Indonesians aged 18–34 prefer e-wallets for daily transactions (Bank Indonesia, 2022)[9].

Consumer adoption is shaped by perceived ease of use, security, and peer influence. Consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), user-friendly design and perceived usefulness strongly predict adoption (Davis, 1989; Rahman et al., 2022)[10]. Social influence, particularly among millennials and Gen Z, also accelerates usage (Hadi & Rahmawati, 2023)[11]. The main benefits—convenience, speed, and incentives such as cashback—are countered by challenges including cybersecurity risks and unequal access in rural areas due to infrastructure gaps (Wang et al., 2021; Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, 2023)[12].

Theoretical perspectives further illuminate adoption dynamics. TAM emphasizes usability and benefits, while Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations theory highlights how marketing and promotions drive early adoption, with sustained use depending on satisfaction (Rogers, 2003; Setiawan, 2023; Susanto et al., 2022)[13]. Similarly, the consumer decision-making model, shows that adoption often begins with the desire for faster transactions, followed by evaluations of fees, security, and brand reputation. Positive post-purchase experiences reinforce long-term loyalty (Halim & Junaidi, 2022)[14].

In summary, e-wallet adoption in Indonesia reflects a balance of technological functionality, consumer attitudes, and socio-economic disparities. While rapid growth signals a digital payment shift, persistent challenges highlight the need for deeper exploration of consumer perceptions.

Methods

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This study employed a qualitative design to explore consumer perceptions of e-wallet usage in Indonesia. A qualitative approach was chosen as it allows for deeper insights into motivations, barriers, and cultural influences on payment preferences (Creswell, 2020; Yulianto, 2021)[15]. With e-wallet adoption projected to reach 96 million users by 2025 (Statista, 2021)[16], understanding these dynamics is crucial.

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling to ensure diversity in age, gender, socio-economic status, and frequency of e-wallet use (Palinkas et al., 2015)[17]. Such variation enabled the study to capture generational differences and the role of financial literacy and technology access in adoption (Huang & Benyoucef, 2020)[18].

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Interviews provided in-depth individual perspectives, while focus groups encouraged shared discussions and collective insights (Kitzinger, 2020)[19].

Thematic analysis guided the data examination (Braun & Clarke, 2006)[20]. The process involved coding transcripts, identifying patterns, and grouping them into broader themes (Saldaña, 2021)[21]. To enhance rigor, member checking allowed participants to validate findings (Birt et al., 2016)[22], and triangulation across data sources strengthened credibility.

This methodological framework ensured context-rich insights, contributing to both theoretical understanding and practical implications for e-wallet adoption in Indonesia.

Results and Discussion
This study engaged 30 participants aged 18–55, representing diverse socio-economic, educational, and geographical backgrounds across urban centers such as Jakarta and Surabaya, and rural regions of East and Central Java. Approximately 60% were female, reflecting their significant role in household purchasing decisions. Participants' monthly incomes ranged from USD 200 to USD 1,000, ensuring the inclusion of both lower- and middle-income perspectives. This diversity is critical for capturing the multifaceted nature of e-wallet adoption in Indonesia, a country where internet penetration has reached 73.7% (Indonesian Bureau of Statistics, 2021)[23].

Perceived Benefits
Participants emphasized convenience, promotional incentives, enhanced security, and multifunctionality as key benefits of e-wallets. The ability to complete fast, cashless transactions was repeatedly highlighted as transformative in shopping practices. Cashback and discounts were noted as powerful motivators, consistent with prior reports indicating that nearly 70% of

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Indonesian consumers adopt e-wallets for promotions (Statista, 2023)[24]. Security features, such as authentication and encryption, provided reassurance, while the integration with services like ride-hailing and food delivery increased user satisfaction and loyalty.

Concerns and Barriers
Despite these advantages, barriers remain. Security risks—particularly fraud and phishing—were cited as major concerns. Limited digital literacy, especially among older and less-educated individuals, constrained broader adoption. Participants also expressed apprehension about hidden fees, underscoring the importance of transparency. Furthermore, rural users reported unstable internet connectivity and poor access to digital infrastructure, reinforcing the digital divide between urban and rural populations.

Consumer Experiences
Testimonials illustrated both positive and negative experiences. Many participants valued the speed, ease, and rewards associated with e-wallets, noting that digital payments often enhanced shopping satisfaction and even encouraged impulsive buying. However, technical glitches such as application crashes undermined trust. Social influence also played a crucial role, as peer recommendations frequently shaped adoption decisions, confirming the importance of social proof in technology acceptance.

Interpretation and Implications
The findings align with prior literature identifying convenience, security, and promotions as central to e-wallet adoption (López-Nicolás & Molina-Castillo, 2021; Sharma & Singh, 2022)[25]. At the same time, this study contributes new insights by emphasizing the importance of technology reliability and the persistence of rural–urban disparities in digital infrastructure.
For e-wallet providers, the implications are threefold:

1. Strengthen consumer trust through enhanced fraud protection and transparent communication of fees.
2. Support digital literacy initiatives, particularly for older users and those in rural communities.
3. Collaborate with telecommunications stakeholders to improve infrastructure in underserved areas.

These strategies can help ensure inclusive and sustainable adoption of digital payments across Indonesia.

Limitations and Future Research
As a qualitative study with a limited sample, findings cannot be generalized to the entire population. Future research should adopt mixed-method approaches, combining large-scale surveys and longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of e-wallet adoption on consumer behavior and financial management.

Contribution
This study extends the literature by offering a nuanced understanding of Indonesian consumers' perceptions of e-wallets in shopping practices. By addressing both the benefits and barriers within a diverse socio-economic and geographical context, it provides actionable insights for providers and policymakers seeking to expand digital financial inclusion in emerging markets.

Conclusion
This study explored consumer perceptions of e-wallet usage in Indonesia, revealing that convenience is the strongest adoption driver, while security concerns remain a major barrier. Social influence, particularly from peers and family, also shapes adoption, while younger

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consumers embrace e-wallets more readily than older generations. Promotional incentives, such as cashback and rewards, further strengthen loyalty.

These findings extend consumer behavior research by showing how convenience, security, social dynamics, generational differences, and financial incentives jointly influence digital payment adoption. The Indonesian case also underscores the role of cultural and socio-economic contexts, highlighting opportunities for providers and policymakers to strengthen trust, inclusion, and engagement.

The study's qualitative design limits generalizability, as responses may be biased and largely urban-centered. Given the fast-changing digital landscape, results are also time-sensitive. Future research should involve larger and more diverse samples, include rural perspectives, and examine the influence of regulatory initiatives. Comparative and longitudinal studies could further clarify adoption dynamics in Indonesia and beyond.

In sum, sustainable e-wallet adoption requires providers to address security gaps, bridge generational divides, and leverage tailored incentives while policymakers ensure enabling and trustworthy ecosystems.

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