

WHY CUSTOMERS ABANDON ONLINE SHOPPING CART: A STUDY OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR ON SHOPEE



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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the behavioral and perceptual factors that influence shopping cart abandonment among Shopee users in Indonesia, with a focus on price sensitivity, price fairness, price comparison, and perceived value. This phenomenon is a strategic issue in e-commerce because it indicates a gap between purchase intention and actual transactions. The study used a mixed-methods approach, collecting quantitative data through an online survey of 234 active Shopee users and qualitative data from open-ended questions and a literature review. The analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, multiple linear regression, and thematic analysis. The results show that price fairness and price comparison significantly influence shopping cart abandonment, while price sensitivity and perceived value do not have a direct effect. These findings indicate that consumers are more responsive to relative price comparisons and perceived fairness of the final price than to absolute prices or general value judgments. This study confirms that cart abandonment is the result of rational evaluations based on relative prices and transparency, and provides strategic implications for Shopee in improving price fairness and transaction conversion rates.

Keywords: Cart Abandonment, Price Sensitivity, Perceived Value, Price Fairness, Shopee

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of e-commerce has fundamentally transformed global shopping habits by allowing consumers to discover and evaluate products through digital devices. This shift is largely driven by the widespread adoption of gadgets and improved internet access, which provide a more practical and flexible alternative to traditional retail. As a primary channel for contemporary transactions, e-commerce continues to evolve to meet the complex needs of a digital-first society (Yang et al., 2022). Furthermore, businesses have gained innovative ways to reach customers directly, although they must now compete more intensely for attention. Shopping behavior has thus undergone a significant transformation, necessitating a deeper understanding of how consumers interact with digital storefronts (Gupta et al., 2020).

Indonesia's digital economy is heavily dominated by the e-commerce sector, with transaction values estimated to reach IDR 471.01 trillion by 2025. Data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS) indicates that the domestic market accounts for 52 percent of the total ASEAN market share, showing a massive scale of consumer interest. This significant growth allows businesses to reach customers directly while enabling consumers to shop from almost anywhere at any time (Huda et al., 2025). The estimated transaction value for the year 2025 represents a 0.51 percent increase year-on-year, reflecting steady economic expansion. Such a dominant market position highlights the importance of Indonesia as a regional expansion target for global e-commerce players.

Despite the high transaction volume, e-commerce platforms face a persistent challenge known as shopping cart abandonment where consumers fail to proceed to the payment stage. Research from the Baymard Institute (2025) reveals that the average abandonment rate remains critically high at 70.22 percent. This phenomenon creates a substantial gap between initial consumer interest and the actual completion of a purchase, resulting in significant lost revenue (Wu et al., 2024). Abandonment can be defined as a specific behavior in which consumers add items to their carts but do not finalize the order. Understanding the causes of this gap is a relevant strategic issue for both academic study and practical retail management.

Shopee has emerged as the market leader in Indonesia, capturing over 53 percent of internet users according to data from the Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia (2025). While the platform has successfully integrated payment and logistics systems, it still struggles with a high number of unfulfilled transactions. This suggests that even the most dominant platforms are vulnerable to shifting consumer behaviors and decision-making delays (Curry, 2025). Since its launch in 2015, Shopee has transformed from a C2C platform into a major B2C player through strong localization. Its rapid growth in GMV and active users demonstrates its ability to shape online shopping norms across the nation.

The core business issue lies in the increasingly rational and cost-sensitive nature of consumers who use the shopping cart as a tool for price comparison. Many users add items to their carts not to buy immediately, but to monitor total costs including shipping and potential discounts (Chopra et al., 2024). This strategic behavior reduces overall conversion efficiency and impacts the predictability of revenue for the platform and its sellers. Consumers often possess high information literacy, allowing them to wait for the right time to buy based on available offers. Consequently, high traffic on e-commerce platforms does

not necessarily translate into successful transaction conversions due to these active comparisons.

This issue carries a high level of urgency because abandoned carts represent billions of dollars in lost orders for small and medium enterprises. According to Huang et al. (2018), shopping cart abandonment demonstrates a vulnerability to various situational and psychological factors that emerge in the final stages. If left unaddressed, inconsistent pricing perceptions can slowly erode customer loyalty and encourage users to switch to competing platforms. Decision fatigue also becomes a factor when consumers are constantly exposed to competing offers from multiple sellers. Minimizing the lack of connection between purchase intent and the final transaction is crucial for long-term business sustainability.

The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on behavioral economics and price sensitivity rather than general website usability or trust issues. While many studies look at technical errors, this research examines how the conscious need to confirm price superiority leads to purchase delays. It investigates the dynamic relationship between a consumer's information literacy and their willingness to finalize a transaction. Most previous literature focuses on platform security, but this study addresses the psychological dimension of price fairness and discount options. This approach provides a unique perspective on how modern consumers navigate the trade-offs between immediate gratification and financial savings.

This study focuses specifically on the Shopee platform in Indonesia due to its high adoption rates and its role in shaping local digital shopping norms. The analysis centers on consumer perceptions of price fairness and value in a market where flash sales and vouchers are constantly available. By narrowing the scope to these dimensions, the research provides a deeper look into the behavioral causes of transaction cancellations. The study utilizes external data and consumer self-reports to overcome the limitation of limited access to internal company data. This focused exploration helps in understanding how integrated services like ShopeePay and Shopee Express influence the final checkout decision.

The primary objective is to identify and analyze the specific behavioral factors that contribute to shopping cart abandonment among Indonesian Shopee users. The research aims to clarify how price attributes and perceived value directly influence the decision to postpone or cancel a payment. It seeks to bridge the empirical gap between the act of browsing and the psychological commitment to a purchase. By examining these relationships, the study will highlight the critical moments where consumers decide to stay or leave the platform. Ultimately, these findings will determine the specific triggers that define the success of digital transaction flows.

Finally, the study intends to provide strategic recommendations that Shopee can implement to mitigate the negative impacts of price sensitivity. These strategies will focus on improving price communication and transparency to increase the final payment completion rate across the platform. The research aims to help Shopee improve its competitive positioning and conversion rates among price-sensitive demographics. Enhanced pricing strategies can foster a stronger sense of value-based loyalty among users who currently prioritize comparisons. Through these objectives, the research seeks to enhance both business performance and the overall consumer shopping experience.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

E-commerce serves as a practical shopping instrument that facilitates seamless transactions without face-to-face interaction through the integration of digital payment systems and supply chain management. According to Raji et al. (2023), this development marks a significant transformation in the retail industry by replacing conventional methods with platform-based product catalogs. Consumers can now easily browse product options and delivery methods through their digital devices without any geographical or time constraints. Scheinbaum (2012) emphasizes that this ecosystem involves data-driven marketing that is heavily influenced by the rapid dynamics of information technology. Consequently, e-commerce is not just a simple buying and selling transaction but an interactive space that dynamically shapes customer preferences and expectations.

The phenomenon of shopping cart abandonment emerges as a critical challenge where consumers add products to their online carts but fail to complete the payment transaction. Wang et al. (2023) define this behavior as a specific gap between the initial purchase intention and the actual completion of the transaction. This evaluation process reflects non-linear decision-making dynamics influenced by psychological, economic, and situational factors within the online environment (Chopra et al., 2024). Huang et al. (2018) explain that such occurrences reflect a purchasing decision-making process where consumers perform a final evaluation before a transaction is finalized. This behavior serves as an essential indicator for businesses to assess the effectiveness of their digital purchasing flows and the quality of the user experience.

Digital purchasing decisions are shaped by perceived value and various complex social, cultural, and personal factors. Armstrong et al. (2020) state that these decisions involve how individuals select and use products to satisfy their specific needs and desires. Before reaching the final transaction stage, consumers typically pass through a dynamic browsing and alternative evaluation phase (Jiang et al., 2021). Price sensitivity and the perception of price fairness play a key role in triggering the cancellation of online shopping carts. Erdmann et al. (2023) define price sensitivity as a consumer's assessment to seek the best benefits, which often leads them to prioritize cost over brand loyalty. When consumers perceive that the prices offered are unfair or inconsistent with market standards, their intention to proceed with the payment drops significantly.

Price comparison behavior and perceived value often serve as the basis for consumers to delay or switch transactions to competing platforms. Carter and Curry (2010) suggest that information accessibility allows customers to perform efficient evaluations regarding discounts and additional fees. Hinterhuber (2015) views this behavior as a rational step to ensure the feasibility of an offer before any financial commitment is made. In line with this, equity theory explains that customer satisfaction increases if the perceived benefits received are greater than the sacrifices made. If a mismatch occurs between the price and the perceived benefits, consumers will likely re-evaluate their purchase decision and abandon their carts.

The Value Proposition Canvas framework and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory are utilized to analyze consumer reactions toward marketing stimuli. Osterwalder et al. (2014) explain that this tool helps businesses systematically map customer problems and their expected gains. In the digital context, stimuli such as price information and promotions are processed internally by the organism through cognitive and emotional

evaluation. The final response of this process determines whether the consumer will continue the transaction or abandon their shopping cart. By understanding this value alignment, companies can design more targeted strategies to mitigate the impact of price sensitivity and increase conversion rates.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods research design that integrates quantitative surveys and qualitative exploration to provide a comprehensive understanding of shopping cart abandonment on the Shopee platform. By combining measurable statistical data with in-depth narrative analysis, this approach ensures that findings regarding price attributes and consumer perceptions are mutually supportive and contextually rich (Cameron & Golenko, 2023). Primary data was collected from 234 respondents surpassing the minimum requirement of 96 determined by the Cochran formula using a purposive and snowball sampling technique to capture the experiences of active Shopee users (Heckathorn & Cameron, 2017). The quantitative phase utilizes descriptive and regression analysis to examine the influence of price sensitivity, fairness, comparison, and perceived value, while the qualitative phase applies thematic coding to open-ended responses to uncover underlying motivations and frustrations. Ultimately, these integrated findings are mapped onto the Value Proposition Canvas to formulate strategic business solutions that align Shopee's offerings with identified customer needs and behavioral patterns.

Research Hypothesis

This study aims to analyze the factors contributing to shopping cart abandonment on the Shopee e-commerce platform by examining price attributes and behavioral economics. Based on the literature review and the identified research gaps, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

H1: Price sensitivity has a positive and significant effect on increasing shopping cart abandonment among Shopee users.

H2: Price comparison behavior has a positive and significant effect on increasing shopping cart abandonment among Shopee users.

H3: Price fairness has a negative and significant effect on shopping cart abandonment among Shopee users.

H4: Perceived value has a negative and significant effect on shopping cart abandonment among Shopee users.

Research Model

This research model describes the relationship between the independent variables (price sensitivity, price fairness, price comparison, and perceived value) and the dependent variable (shopping cart abandonment). This model can be illustrated as follows:

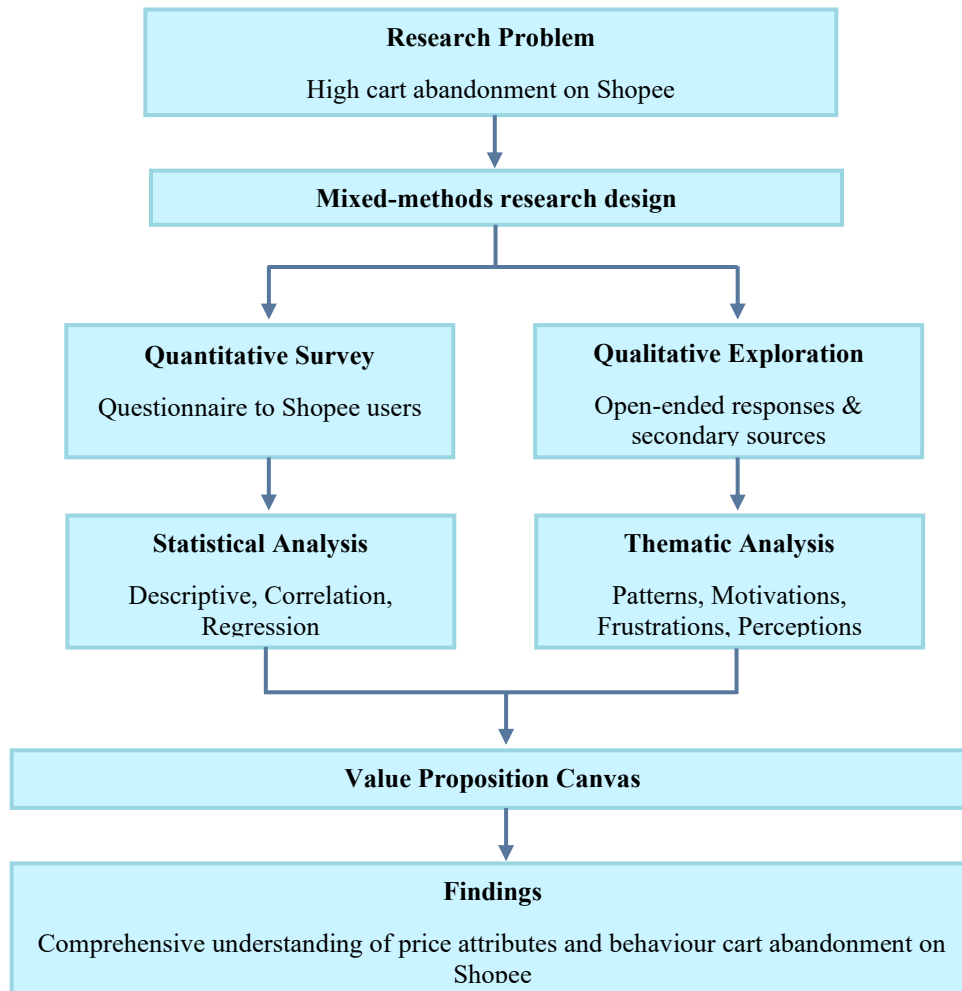


Figure 1. Research Design
Source: Author (2025)

This study employs a mixed-methods research design that integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of shopping cart abandonment among Shopee users in Indonesia. By combining statistical data with exploratory experiential narratives, the research examines how price attributes—specifically price sensitivity, fairness, and comparison—alongside perceived value influence transaction completion, ensuring that findings are mutually supportive and contextually deep (Cameron & Golenko, 2023). Furthermore, the integrated results are mapped onto a Value Proposition Canvas to identify strategic business solutions that align Shopee’s services with the specific motivations and frustrations uncovered in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Analysis

The subjects in this study were Shopee users who had made transactions and experienced cart abandonment, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1.
Demographic Analysis

No.	Attribute	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender			
1.	Female	130	55.56%
2.	Male	104	44.44%
Age			
1.	18-24 years old	58	24.79%
2.	25-34 years old	122	52.14%
3.	35-44 years old	54	23.08%

Source: Author (2025)

Based on Table 1, explains that the majority of respondents involved in this study were female respondents and also respondents in the 25-34 year age group.

Behavioral Analysis

Table 2.
Transaction Behaviour Analysis

No.	Attribute	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Shopping Frequency			
1.	1–2 times	68	29.1%
2.	3–5 times	72	32.5%
3.	6–10 times	71	30.1%
4.	More than 10 times	19	8.1%
Purchase Frequency			
1.	Less than 1 time	41	17.5%
2.	1–3 times	92	39.3%
3.	4–8 times	71	30.3%
4.	More than 8 times	30	12.8%
Payment Preference			
1.	ShopeePay	137	58.5%
2.	Bank Transfer / Virtual Account	148	63.2%
4.	Debit / Credit Card	86	36.8%
5.	Shopee PayLater	72	30.8%
6.	Cash on Delivery (COD)	49	20.9%
7.	Other e-wallets / QRIS	38	16.2%
Product Category Preference			
1.	Fashion	164	70.1%
2.	Beauty / Personal Care	149	63.7%

No.	Attribute	Frequency	Percentage (%)
3.	Groceries / Household Needs	113	48.3%
4.	Electronics	109	46.6%
5.	Home & living	101	43.2%
6.	Mobile Accessories	87	37.2%
7.	Others (hobbies, automotive parts, pet supplies, outdoor gear)	22	9.4%

Source: Author (2025)

Shopee's transaction behavior reveals a significant conversion gap, characterized by high browsing intensity with most users active 3 to 10 times that does not fully translate into monthly purchases. This disparity suggests that high traffic is frequently hindered by consumer indecision and rigorous price comparisons, while the dominance of conventional payment methods over Shopee's internal digital ecosystem indicates persistent trust issues or perceived costs. Furthermore, since transactions are heavily concentrated in low-margin categories like fashion and beauty, Shopee faces the strategic challenge of diversifying into high-value sectors to ensure that high user engagement effectively drives sustainable long-term revenue growth.

Table 3.
Shopping Cart Abandonment Behavior Analysis

No.	Attribute	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Cart Addition Frequency			
1.	1–2 times	78	33.3%
2.	3–5 times	72	30.8%
3.	More than 5 times	74	31.6%
4.	Rarely / Never	10	4.3%
Checkout Drop-Off Stage			
1.	After seeing the final total cost	98	41.9%
2.	After viewing the cart	79	33.8%
3.	During checkout form (address/payment)	38	16.2%
4.	At payment selection	19	8.1%
Abandonment Reasons			
1.	Want to compare first	162	69.2%
2.	Price not worth it	148	63.2%
3.	Shipping cost too high	136	58.1%
4.	Changed my mind	109	46.6%
5.	Doubts about product authenticity	82	35%
6.	Delivery time too long	77	32.9%
7.	Extra fees unclear	61	26.1%

No.	Attribute	Frequency	Percentage (%)
8.	Checkout/payment issues	44	18.8%
Abandonment Recency			
1.	Within 7 days	109	46.6%
2.	8–30 days	63	26.9%
3.	1–3 months	39	16.7%
4.	More than 3 months	23	9.8%
Promotion Waiting Behavior			
1.	Always	79	33.8%
2.	Often	67	28.6%
3.	Sometimes	63	26.9%
4.	Rarely	18	7.7%
5.	Never	7	3%
Price Comparison Frequency			
1.	Always	92	39.3%
2.	Often	74	31.6%
3.	Sometimes	52	22.2%
4.	Rarely	11	4.7%
5.	Never	5	2.1%

Source: Author (2025)

Shopee users exhibit a highly rational and price-sensitive pattern of behavior, frequently using the digital shopping cart as a bookmarking or comparison tool rather than a final step for purchase. The research identifies "price shock" as a critical conversion barrier, with 41.9% of respondents abandoning their carts only after seeing the final total cost, often due to unexpected shipping fees or service charges. This behavior is intensified by a strong tendency toward price comparison (69.2%) and a growing dependence on promotions, where users intentionally delay fresh purchase intentions to wait for discounts or free shipping. Ultimately, Shopee faces a structural challenge where low value differentiation and a lack of early cost transparency allow users to easily switch platforms or postpone transactions, limiting the platform's ability to lock in final purchase decisions despite high initial engagement.

Shopping Cart Abandonment Factor Analysis

The analysis of consumer behavior on Shopee reveals that shopping cart abandonment (Y) is a highly prevalent and rational pattern (mean: 4.0413), primarily driven by a "trust-over-price" dynamic where doubts about product authenticity (Y.2, mean: 4.0983) outweigh initial promotional interest. This behavior is fueled by intense price sensitivity (X1, mean: 3.9761), where users experience "price shock" and disappointment when final checkout totals including unexpected shipping fees diverge from initial expectations (X1.4, mean: 4.1368). Furthermore, a lack of price fairness (X2, mean: 4.0421) due to non-transparent fee structures and perceived discount manipulation often leads users to switch to platforms they consider more honest. Consequently, the shopping cart has transitioned into a temporary price exploration and bookmarking tool (X3.5, mean: 4.0726) rather than a commitment to purchase, as users frequently exit the platform to validate "best deals"

elsewhere. Ultimately, the research indicates that until Shopee addresses the structural trust gap between its payment ecosystem and individual seller credibility (X4), consumers will continue to utilize abandonment as a risk-reduction strategy, prioritizing price certainty and authenticity over immediate transaction completion.

Shopping Cart Abandonment Effect Analysis

Table 4.
Normality Test

		Unstandardized Residual	
N		234	
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000	
	Std. Deviation	1.45094208	
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.038	
	Positive	.038	
	Negative	-.038	
Test Statistic		.038	
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c		.200 ^d	
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) ^e	Sig.	.546	
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	.533
		Upper Bound	.559

Source: Author (2025)

Based on Table 4 above, the normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov analysis, the significance value shows a value of 0.200. It can be concluded that the significance value of 0.200 is greater than 0.05, thus indicating that the data is normally distributed and can be directly performed on regression analysis.

Table 5.
Regression Test

		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.076	1.051		2.925	.004
	Price sensitivity	.050	.040	.083	1.245	.214
	Price fairness	.100	.039	.174	2.549	.011
	Price comparison	.236	.040	.404	5.930	<.001
	Perceived value	-.026	.047	-.033	-.564	.574

a. Dependent Variable: Shopping cart abandonment

Source: Author (2025)

The regression test results reveal that shopping cart abandonment on Shopee is primarily influenced by relative price perceptions rather than absolute prices or general value judgments. Among the four variables tested, only price fairness and price comparison showed significant effects, while price sensitivity and perceived value did not. This indicates that consumers do not abandon purchases simply because prices are high, but rather when they perceive unfair or inconsistent pricing such as hidden fees or fluctuating discounts. Moreover, price comparison behavior strongly drives abandonment, as consumers use the cart as a tool for evaluating options and searching for better deals across sellers and platforms. Overall, Shopee's main challenge lies in maintaining transparent and fair pricing to prevent consumers from postponing or canceling purchases.

Stimulus-Organism-Response Analysis

In this study, the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model provides a comprehensive framework to explain how external environmental factors drive shopping cart abandonment on Shopee. The Stimulus phase is characterized by price-related triggers, such as discount displays and shipping costs, alongside the platform's inherent ease of price comparison which encourages cross-platform browsing. These stimuli are processed by the Organism, where consumers engage in complex internal evaluations of price fairness, trust, and perceived value; notably, when "price shocks" occur at checkout, they trigger cognitive disappointment and a shift in the shopping cart's function from a purchase tool to a temporary bookmark. The final Response is the act of abandonment, which regression analysis proves is specifically driven by perceived unfairness and comparison behavior rather than absolute price sensitivity. This behavioral output represents a rational, strategic delay by critical digital consumers aiming to optimize their value and wait for fairer promotional incentives.

Value Proposition Canvas Analysis

The Value Proposition Canvas (VPC) analysis identifies that shopping cart abandonment on Shopee predominantly among women aged 25–34 is a rational strategy where the cart acts as a strategic bookmarking tool for price research and decision management. While Shopee provides a robust ecosystem of varied products and payment flexibility, a critical "transparency gap" exists; consumers experience significant pain through "price shocks" (unexpected final costs) and decision fatigue from continuous price comparisons across platforms. To mitigate this, Shopee must evolve its value map by moving beyond simple promotional hooks to becoming a trust-centric transactional endpoint. This requires enhancing pain relievers through absolute cost transparency and verified authenticity, alongside gain creators that offer price-match certainty, effectively reducing the consumer's perceived need to delay or abandon transactions in search of a "fairer" deal.

Discussion

The research findings demonstrate that shopping cart abandonment on Shopee is not an indicator of weak intent, but rather a rational, iterative evaluation process where consumers utilize the cart as a strategic workspace to maximize value and minimize risk (Patharia & Jain, 2024). In the information-rich Indonesian e-commerce landscape, price sensitivity is latent and primarily triggered by "price shock" or hidden shipping costs at the final checkout stage, which undermines cost consistency and forces a re-evaluation of the transaction (Baynard Institute, 2025). This behavior is heavily mediated by perceived price fairness; when consumers encounter inconsistent surcharges or manipulated discounts, their

trust in the platform decreases, directly prompting them to abandon the purchase regardless of their initial interest.

Furthermore, the prevalence of price comparison behavior acts as a dominant cognitive mechanism that transforms the shopping cart into a temporary exploration tool rather than a final destination for purchase. While aggressive promotional strategies like flash sales and free shipping drive initial traffic, they often backfire by creating a strategic dependency where consumers delay transactions until specific incentives are met (Sundjaja et al., 2024). To mitigate this, Shopee must shift toward a value-based approach that prioritizes transparent price communication and cost certainty, as Indonesian consumers exhibit a strong value orientation that favors long-term price consistency over fleeting, unpredictable discounts.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that shopping cart abandonment among Shopee users in Indonesia is a rational, evaluative response primarily driven by perceived price unfairness and active price comparison rather than absolute price sensitivity or general perceived value. The study highlights that consumers utilize the shopping cart as a temporary "bookmarking" and validation tool, frequently abandoning transactions when faced with "price shocks" from non-transparent fees or better deals on competing platforms. To mitigate this, it is recommended that Shopee enhances early cost transparency, simplifies promotional structures, and shifts toward a value-based strategy that emphasizes product authenticity and service quality. Furthermore, Shopee should consider integrating gamification elements into the checkout process to increase engagement and provide "best deal assurance," effectively reducing the consumer's perceived need for external comparisons and converting fresh purchase intent into finalized sales.

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