



Scroll and Shop: Exploring Online Shopping Culture in the Digital Media Era

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to describe the phenomenon of widespread use of online shopping platforms, which is framed as consumption behavior in media culture. The phenomenological method was used in this study, which involved four informants who were interviewed in-depth about their experiences with online shopping platforms. According to the studies, even though informants could use online shopping applications, some still saw it as an alternative to traditional shopping practices. In contrast, others indicated that online shopping had become their daily behavior. Additionally, the study highlights that although informants recognize the benefits and convenience of online shopping, they are also aware of its drawbacks. This awareness underscores the need for consumers to be cognizant of the risks associated with online shopping activities. As online shopping becomes increasingly popular, it remains essential to carefully consider its advantages and disadvantages to avoid potential problems. Overall, the study provides insights into how online shopping is perceived and utilized, emphasizing the importance of balancing its benefits with the awareness of its inherent risks.

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INTRODUCTION

The advancement of information and communication technology has reached a point where it not only facilitates communication but also influences how people live. Today's technology has evolved into a life support system (Kellner, 2010). Advances in information and communication technology have not only given rise to various forms of online media but also led to new patterns in everyday life, including consumer behavior.

Based on advances in information technology, e-commerce and e-marketing have become fundamental concepts, making online shopping very popular, and online impulse buying is becoming increasingly popular (Turkyilmaz, Erdem, & Uslu, 2015)

Online shopping has grown significantly in Indonesia in the last few years as a global phenomenon, with many Indonesian consumers turning to online platforms to purchase a wide range of products and services. Several factors can be identified as having contributed to the growth of online shopping in Indonesia. One of the most important factors is the growing availability and affordability of high-speed internet and mobile devices, which makes it easier for consumers to access online platforms. Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic played a role in driving the growth of online shopping because many consumers turned to online channels to avoid direct shopping to reduce the risk of transmission (Hanifah & Rahadi, 2020).

Clothing, electronics, home appliances, and groceries are among the many products and services that can be purchased online in Indonesia. Many Indonesian consumers value the convenience and ease of shopping online, as well as the ability to easily compare prices and products from multiple sellers.

Many people are reducing their activities of leaving the house to shop to meet their needs

by using online stores, Online shopping has become an alternative solution. (A. Putri, Pebriani, Rumi, & Siregar, 2021).

Theoretically, consuming can be understood as a simple economic action to meet life's necessities. However, as described by economic activity, it becomes more complicated as it develops because, in a consumer society, consumption is more than just an effort to meet daily needs in the form of goods and services; it can also be symbolic or sign. In information and communication technology, this consumption phenomenon has become more prevalent.

According to Baudrillard, a consumer society emphasizes individuals' needs and desires for goods and services that are considered useful or enjoyable. Shopping is one of the main activities in the consumption society, and possession of goods is regarded as a symbol of social status. A consumer society is formed by economic developments that enable the mass production of goods and services, making them more affordable and accessible to the general public. Marketing and advertising are also important in promoting products and increasing people's willingness to purchase. Advertising is related to the relationship between intent, action, and meaning contained in the advertisement (Mutahir, 2019).

On the one hand, the presence of the consumer society has many advantages, such as raising living standards and creating new jobs. However, excessive consumption can lead to issues such as waste, unsustainable use of natural resources, and out-of-balance spending. As a result, it is critical for society to consider what is needed wisely and to resist the pressure to always consume new goods.

According to Baudrillard (2011), every act of consumption is essentially an effort to



fulfill not only physical needs but also symbolic ones. This theory refers to symbolic needs as phenomena in which a person obtains a certain status through consumption. A person will obtain a sign of value from digital platform consumption practices, namely by marking himself as a member of modern society.

Baudrillard emphasized that the act of consumption in the consumer society system has changed dramatically because people now buy goods to fulfill desires rather than needs. They are one of the participatory actions in digital culture in the context of online shopping activities, as they not only consume the benefits of goods or services contained in a commodity (Baudrillard, 2011).

Advertising and marketing strategies should help to understand consumers better and see the best ways to engage and empower audiences and consumers to get what they want (A. V. Putri & Irwansyah, 2020).

The open nature of digital platforms allows anyone to have access to all types of commodities because they are no longer measured by their social strata but by their ability to carry out consumption actions. The emergence of these various digital platforms reinforces what Baudrillard means about contemporary society's consumption behavior concerning the phenomenon of globalization. In other words, globalization as identified by people's behavior that is increasingly "similar" is becoming more easily understood in the context of media culture.

In a broader sense, studies on the use of digital platforms as part of media culture have been conducted from various perspectives. Some of these studies, for example, look at the use of digital platforms for religious purposes, such as through mobile and smartphone technology-based applications (see e.g. Alia et al, 2021; Fakhruroji & Nurhasanah, 2022; Fakhruroji, 2019; Safitri, 2020), the use of

digital platforms in a political context, such as the Golkar Party on Twitter (Fakhruroji & Muchtar, 2018; Juditha & Darmawan, 2018), and digital platforms as new business opportunities (Fantini & Tamba, 2020).

Meanwhile, several specific studies on the use of digital platforms in economic practices include consumer behavior in deciding to purchase online during the Covid-19 pandemic (Hanifah & Rahadi, 2020) and online shopping practices as part of millennials' digital culture (Sazali & Rozi, 2020). Hanifah & Rahadi (2020) discovered that the Covid-19 pandemic has increased online shopping behavior as a result of emergencies that prevent direct interaction. Meanwhile, Sazali & Rozi (2020) argue that online shopping is a trap for millennials to become more consumptive.

Regarding the two specific studies above, this paper has several similarities with the study conducted by Sazali & Rozi (2020), especially regarding the context of digital culture and the theory of consumption society. However, this paper reveals more about knowledge and experience in using digital platforms for consumption activities as part of media culture without seeing it as something negative. Therefore, this paper focuses on the dominance of people's consumption behavior in media culture which is marked by the widespread use of various digital platforms for consumption activities. In particular, this paper reveals the understanding and experience of several informants in using online shopping platforms or online shopping through several popular marketplace platforms.

METHODOLOGY

To accomplish the objective, this paper employs the phenomenological method, which is a method that examines individual experiences and how people perceive the world around them. As a result, phenomenological studies rely heavily on data collection



techniques such as in-depth interviews, which are also used as the primary data collection technique in this study. As a result, the informants chosen for this study are those who have been identified as active consumers of online shopping through digital platforms.

The informants were four adults from various social backgrounds who met the criteria and were selected purposefully. The names of the informants in this study are pseudonyms to ensure that the research does not violate the code of ethics. The interview data were analyzed using a media culture theory approach and verified through source triangulation to ensure that the information obtained had been appropriately interpreted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Online Shopping as a Media Culture

As a form of information and communication technology development, the internet has spawned a variety of digital activities, one of which is e-commerce, a commercial activity facilitated by various types of digital platforms. Everyone can get the goods or services they require more easily through this platform. One of the characteristics of digital platforms, as with new media in general, is that they are interactive, allowing anyone to interact with online outlets to carry out consumption activities.

Digital platforms are also global in the sense that each individual can buy certain goods without being constrained by a specific location; they are also not constrained by time, allowing them to engage in consumption activities at any time. In this context, one can purchase an item from a store or outlet in a different city or even a different country without having to travel there. In other words, this online shop platform has aided in the birth of a new type of consumer culture, one that is not only a consumption culture but also a part of the media culture described by Kellner as a high-tech culture.

Kellner (2010) defines media culture as a phenomenon characterized by the media's increasing role in the production of everyday life, dominating leisure time, shaping political views and social attitudes, and providing material for constructing identity. Indeed, media culture shapes people's worldviews and values, and it can even define what is considered positive or negative.

As a result, new media has altered communication habits, as well as other habits (Arvanitakis, in Fakhruroji, 2021). As a result, media culture is frequently described as a type of technoculture that integrates cultural and technological practices into new configurations and produces a new type of society governed by technological principles (Piliang, 2012).

In a simple sense, culture is often seen as the habits of a group of people that are passed down from generation to generation and have certain values (Ibrahim & Akhmad, 2014; Koentjaraningrat, 1990). However, in a broader sense, culture itself is defined as a participatory activity in which people build identities that can develop individual potential and capacity for interaction, action, and creativity.

In a simple sense, media culture can be defined as the phenomenon of how people spend a significant amount of time listening to the radio, watching television, going to the movies, listening to music, shopping, reading magazines and newspapers, and engaging in various other forms of media culture (Fakhruroji, 2021b). Thus, media culture is defined as a phenomenon in which the media is always present in the background, and frequently as a foreground that seduces our attention, as well as activities that are thought to undermine human potential and creativity (Kellner, 2010).

Thus, media culture is related not only to how the media dominates everyday life through the connectedness of individuals to specific media but also to how the media creates more specific behaviors. For example, most of us are now accustomed to making purchases online. Individuals no longer go to a shop or restaurant



for lunch or dinner; instead, they use an app on their smartphones. This behavior is, of course, only possible due to the role of new media in our daily lives.

In this situation, media culture has emerged as the dominant culture, influencing many people's cultural perspectives (Kellner, 2010). Participation in media culture, on the other hand, is a process that begins with various forms of new literacy. To engage in online shopping, for example, one must understand the mechanism and meet certain conditions, as well as have an understanding of the implications of new media devices and these practices.

Individual participation in culture, on the other hand, is characterized by media culture, which is characterized by the use of digital platforms for various cultural activities. In other words, someone's participation in online shopping activities is one way for them to demonstrate their presence in digital culture, as well as media culture.

Online vs. Offline Shopping

One of the daily activities is to meet one's financial needs. In the traditional context, we would need to interact physically with other parties, in this case, producers or shops that provide the goods and services we require. As a result, in an industrial society, shopping malls are one of the places where people interact to meet these needs. This pattern of interaction, however, changed when several online shopping platforms appeared, made possible by the advancement of information and communication technology. Some people no longer interact physically by going to shops or markets. They even use online shopping platforms just to eat fried rice at night. This change has not only made it easier for consumers, but it has also increased business opportunities for businesses because they no longer need a special place to market their products.

Online shopping platforms have offered a diverse range of services, including fashion, home appliances, vehicle accessories, transportation, food and beverages, and other goods and services. Aside from that, the consumption behavior discussed in this paper is more focused on the consumption of goods rather than services. This is done to narrow down the problem to be studied so that it can be studied more thoroughly. In-depth interviews with five informants yielded some information about their knowledge and experience with online shopping, particularly when compared to in-person or offline shopping.

The number of platforms used and their intensity in carrying out online shopping activities were obtained during the interview. The following is an excerpt from the informant's interview,

“So far, I've used two platforms for online shopping, Shopee, and TikTok, because these two apps offer a lot of discounts, especially during certain events.” (Interview with Wawan, December 2022).

Wawan admits to using two different online shopping platforms, each of which is tailored to the discounts that are typically available. Wawan mentioned Tiktok, a platform that is now also used as a social media platform, in his confession. This application is not classified as an online shopping platform, but because one of its features allows users to conduct buying and selling activities, it has become popular for online shopping.

Online shopping is part of social media's corporate capitalization, which continues to grow with increasingly widespread exposure across state and national borders, entering the lives of various generations, socio-economic strata, educational levels, and educational backgrounds and experiences (Sutarso, 2020).

Other informants were impressed by Tiktok's popularity as an online shopping platform. This is stated in the interview below.,

“I have many online shopping apps, but I only use two of them the most, Shopee



and Tiktok, because they both offer very low prices.” (Interview with Risky, December 2022).

The above-mentioned informant admitted to having numerous applications or online shopping platforms. Nonetheless, he prefers to use only two platforms because the goods sold on these two platforms are less expensive than those offered on other similar platforms. These two descriptions not only describe the growing popularity of online shopping platforms but also the knowledge of users in using these platforms.

However, it is important to note that the informants’ experience of using these platforms varies greatly, especially when viewed from the aspect of the intensity and frequency of shopping through online platforms. This is as illustrated in the following interview,

“I don’t do much online shopping; usually, when I’m looking for items that are difficult to find in offline stores, I try to find them on online platforms.” (Interview with Anwar, December 2022).

The informant above stated that he still views online shopping as an alternative to traditional shopping activities, implying that he still does traditional shopping. Other informants stated the same expression, as shown below,

“Not always (do online shopping - author), usually based on my needs or because the items I’m looking for are difficult to find in offline stores.” (Interview with Mila, December 2022).

This informant had a similar experience to the previous informant in that he did not do much online shopping. These two informants were impressed that their consumption behavior was still based on traditional practices, saying that they only used online shopping platforms when they were unable to obtain certain goods in the offline market around them. In contrast to the previous two informants, other informants admitted to

frequently conducting online shopping. This is demonstrated in the following interview:

“I shop online quite often. At least in one week, I will shop online through one of the online platforms that I have” (Interview with Interview, December 2022).

This informant admitted that he often orders certain items through online shopping platforms so for him, online shopping has become a normal activity. Other informants even revealed that they are even more intense in their online shopping activities, as can be seen in the following interview.

“I shop online frequently, perhaps even every day, but not only for large items; there are also small items like accessories and the like.” (Interview with Risky, December 2022).

This informant stated that he frequently shopped online. She explained that she mostly purchases small items like accessories, knick-knacks, and the like. This indicates that online shopping has become a daily experience for Risky, and has even become the dominant activity when compared to traditional shopping activities in stores or markets. The same informant also emphasized the following on another occasion,

“Thank God, I’ve never had financial problems as a result of frequently doing online shopping because I’ve shifted my shopping habits to online stores.” (Interview with Risky, December 2022).

As is widely known, one of the features offered by several online shopping platforms is live shopping or interactive shopping with sellers who offer it directly through the platform. In contrast to traditional markets or shops, live shopping can be done at any time and from any location as long as the user has internet access, so he is not limited by time or operating hours as shops or markets are.

Regarding media use, customers feel more comfortable using mobile applications for online shopping than online sites regarding



ease of search, comfort of access, and service recovery (Almarashdeh et al., 2019).

In live shopping activities, users interact directly by bidding and ordering goods offered in real-time. In theory, this is a phenomenon of one of the characteristics of new media, namely interactivity. From the user side, this, of course, provides a new sensation and experience in shopping. Related to this, several informants showed different experiences in utilizing the live shopping feature on several online shopping platforms. Several informants said the following:

“Yes, several online shopping platforms do offer live shopping features through these platforms, but I have never shopped online live on a digital platform” (Interview with Anwar, December 2022).

“So far, I have never done online shopping through the live shopping feature because I’m still not used to it” (Interview with Mila, December 2022).

The two informants above admitted that, despite knowing how live shopping works, they have never tried it because they did not have time to explain why. However, because this live shopping feature has no time limit, it can be assumed that they don’t do live shopping due to time constraints.

However, other informants had different experiences where they expressed more experience in utilizing the live shopping feature to get cheaper prices than usual. This can be seen in the following interview:

“Live shopping (feature—author) is quite fun and I’ve done it several times. One of the advantages of live shopping is that there are many offers for goods at lower prices, but usually in a limited time” (Interview with Interview, December 2022).

“I rarely shop in person. People often shop online through live stores because they usually offer cheaper prices than usual (Interview with Risky, December 2022).

The two informants above admitted that they shopped several times through the live shopping feature because the price was lower. One informant even emphasized that he rarely shopped directly at stores and shopped more online, including taking advantage of the live shopping feature to get the items needed at lower prices.

The informants also mentioned above admitted that they used the live shopping feature several times because the price was lower. One informant stated that he rarely shops in stores and prefers to shop online, including using the live shopping feature to get needed items at lower prices.

The main drivers of customer impulse buying in social commerce can be identified as positive emotions, negative emotions, social commerce attractiveness, and discount prices as the main factors of impulse buying (Lee & Kim, 2012).

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According to the diverse experiences of all informants, online shopping activities as part of media culture can be viewed as both an alternative and a dominant behavior. Both of these behaviors are based on different arguments, with informants who see it as an alternative still believing that physical activity is more important than online activity, whereas informants who actively use online shopping platforms are motivated by economic considerations.

However, this does not mean that online shopping is more enjoyable or vice versa; offline shopping is more meaningful. Both of these activities need to be understood rationally as an expression of society’s acceptance of technological innovation in the context of media culture. This is illustrated by the narrative of one of the following informants:



“For me, both online and offline shopping have their sensations. Therefore, I prefer both, because going to the store in person is also fun to refresh my brain” (Interview with Wawan, December 2022).

This informant acknowledged that each of these shopping activities has different values and both have their own sensations. Therefore, both online and offline shopping can be done by anyone according to their interests and needs, it's the same as when choosing goods in shopping, everything is related to taste.

Online Shopping: Advantages and Disadvantages

As a relatively new culture, even one born of the latest technological developments, online shopping activities also have advantages and disadvantages. Related to this, several interviews were directed at the experiences of informants in shopping activities through the online shopping platform they were on. The advantages of online shopping based on the experience of informants are as illustrated in the following expression:

“Online shopping is very convenient because we only have to use smartphones, which gives us what we bother to leave our places” (Interview with Mila, December 2022).

“Online shopping is easy and very convenient. One of the conveniences is that, as consumers, we don't have to go to the store or market. Just click, pay, and wait” (Interview with Anwar, December 2022).

These two informants revealed the advantages of online shopping from an efficiency aspect, where online shopping activities do not require them to leave their homes and visit outlets or shops. Even though they still have to spend some money on shipping costs, they are still seen as efficient because they can use their time to do other things. It is this convenience that makes online shopping an efficient activity.

The advantages of online shopping also result in a substantially increased sense of freedom and control compared to offline shopping (Wolfinbarger & Gilly, 2021)

In addition, the advantages of online shopping are also related to effectiveness in terms of meeting the needs of a particular item.

Hedonic value drives online impulse buying tendencies. Three dimensions of hedonic shopping motivation positively influence online impulse buying, namely, adventure, relaxation, and weight (Ozen & Engizek, 2014)

Because online shopping platforms offer thousands of online outlets with millions of commodities spread across the country and even abroad, users still have the opportunity to get the items they need. This is illustrated in the following excerpt:

“Online shopping is very fun and makes it easier for us as consumers because all the goods we want are available, even in different cities” (Interview with Wawan, December 2022).

“One of the reasons I often shop online is because all the things we need are there. Apart from that, the items in online stores are also unique and interesting” (Interview with Risky, December 2022).

As explained by the two informants above, the very varied availability of goods is one of the reasons why they carry out shopping activities online. This variety of goods is also related to several items that may be rare and rarely found in the consumer's environment, so this is one of the advantages of online shopping.

Social commerce application developers focus on scarcity and serendipity to stimulate consumers to have hedonic shopping values so that they have the urge to buy impulsively (N. C. H. S. H. Lee, 2017)

However, it is important to note that this does not mean that online shopping is always profitable. Several cases show the weaknesses of online shopping activities; for example,



every consumer does not have the opportunity to ascertain whether the goods he ordered have the expected quality. In addition, other problems that are often faced by consumers in online shopping activities are usually related to delivery and non-conformance of the goods ordered. This is illustrated in the following interview:

“One of the problems I’ve experienced when shopping online is that the items I ordered don’t match the items that arrive. Not only that, sometimes the goods I buy also arrive late” (Interview with Anwar, December 2022).

“Some of the problems in online shopping that I experienced were usually related to late arrivals of the purchased items, and sometimes the items don’t match the order” (Interview with Mila, December 2022).

Shopping online is not always satisfying. At least, that’s the impression obtained from the interview above. The two informants above admitted that they had experienced losses because the goods they ordered were not as expected. This product discrepancy is caused by a situation where the consumer does not have the opportunity to ensure the quality of the item, or it can also be caused by a dishonest seller.

In addition, another problem is the delay in delivery, even though the items ordered are urgently needed. This kind of problem can be caused by external factors such as shipping or management on the part of the seller. However, these two types of problems are problems that are commonly encountered in online shopping activities, and these must be accepted as consequences and risks in online shopping activities. Therefore, other informants sharing their experiences to avoid these problems, as illustrated in the following interview.

“The unpleasant experience when shopping online seems to be all the same, that is, the goods arrive late or the goods do not match the order. But lately, I have tips to make it satisfying when shopping

at online stores; for example, we have to shop at official stores for products with certain brands, have relatively many sales, have reviews, and have positive comments from consumers.” (Interview with Wawan, December 2022).

This informant admitted that he had experienced the same problem, so he made sure of several things before buying goods online. For certain products, consumers must ensure that they shop at official online stores to guarantee product authenticity. In addition, consumers must also check the reputation of the online store in question through comments and reviews from other consumers on the quality and service of the online store. This can minimize the problems that consumers may encounter.

Thus, online shopping activities must be viewed as activities that also require caution, which, in a theoretical context, is referred to as literacy. Literacy referred to in this case is technical knowledge and the risks that can arise in these activities. Among all, it must be admitted that, despite some drawbacks, online shopping has become a popular choice for many people because of the convenience and benefits it offers. However, it is also a good idea to consider the advantages and disadvantages of online shopping before deciding to purchase products online to avoid any mistakes that might occur.

CONCLUSION

As a culture that is relatively new and emerged due to developments in information and communication technology, online shopping can be considered a media culture because it has the characteristics of using digital platforms for consumption activities as a form of individual participation. In other words, participation in online shopping activities is a form of expression of media culture.

Based on the acknowledgments and descriptions of several informants, their experience in online shopping activities is



marked by their ability to use many online shopping applications. Some of the informants acknowledged that online shopping is still an alternative to in-person shopping practices, while others showed a high frequency of online shopping activities so it became their daily behavior. However, it must be acknowledged that each of these shopping activities has its own sensation.

Given the advantages and disadvantages, online shopping activities should be seen as activities that require adequate literacy, namely technical knowledge and the risks of these activities. However, online shopping is increasingly being recognized as a popular activity because of the convenience and benefits it offers. However, users still need to consider the advantages and disadvantages of online shopping activities before involving in online shopping.

CREDIT AUTHORSHIP

CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Khoiruddin Muchtar: Writing-Conceptual Draft, Methodology, Data curation; **Nunung Nurhasanah:** writing, data curation, draft compilation, investigation, methodology; **Moch Fakhruroji:** data curation, supervision, reviewing, and editing.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

We certify that there is no conflict of interest with any financial, personal, or other relationships with other people or organizations related to the material discussed in the manuscript.

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