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THE SHIFT IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS A CASHLESS SOCIETY IN THE DIGITAL ECONOMY ERA

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Abstract
The digital economic transformation in Indonesia has driven a fundamental change in how people transact, marked by the widespread use of e-wallets and the Quick Response Code Indonesian Standard (QRIS) as everyday non-cash payment instruments. This phenomenon does not merely replace physical currency with electronic media; it also reshapes decision-making patterns, spending habits, and public perceptions of risk and data security. This article aims to map and synthesize prior research findings on the shift of consumer behavior toward a cashless society, focusing on three main aspects: the drivers of digital payment adoption, its effect on impulsive spending patterns, and the accompanying challenges of financial literacy and data security. The study adopts a qualitative approach through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, referring to the PRISMA flow, covering nationally and internationally indexed journal articles published between 2021 and 2026. The selection process yielded a set of relevant articles, which were then thematically analyzed using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) framework and the concept of the cashless effect. The synthesis indicates that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness consistently emerge as the primary determinants of intention to use QRIS and e-wallets, while trust plays a comparatively weaker role. Meanwhile, the convenience of non-cash transactions has been shown to accelerate purchasing decisions and is associated with a heightened tendency toward impulsive buying, partly due to a reduced "pain of paying" typically associated with cash transactions. The reviewed studies also consistently highlight a gap between the pace of payment-technology adoption and the level of financial-digital literacy in society, which contributes to greater vulnerability to online fraud, data theft, and uncontrolled consumptive behavior. The practical implications of this study underscore the need for synergy among payment service providers, regulators, and educational institutions in designing digital literacy programs targeted at the most vulnerable segments of society, while also encouraging the integration of self-control nudges into digital payment applications so that the shift toward a cashless society proceeds in step with users' financial well-being.

Keywords: *cashless society, consumer behavior, digital wallet, QRIS, Technology Acceptance Model, digital financial literacy*

Abstract
Transformasi ekonomi digital di Indonesia telah mendorong perubahan mendasar dalam cara masyarakat bertransaksi, ditandai dengan meluasnya penggunaan dompet digital (e-wallet) dan Quick Response Code Indonesian Standard (QRIS) sebagai instrumen pembayaran non-tunai sehari-hari. Fenomena ini tidak sekadar menggantikan uang fisik dengan media elektronik, melainkan turut mengubah pola pengambilan keputusan, kebiasaan belanja, hingga cara masyarakat memandang risiko dan keamanan data pribadi. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk memetakan dan mensintesiskan temuan-temuan penelitian terdahulu mengenai pergeseran perilaku konsumen menuju cashless society, dengan menitikberatkan pada tiga aspek utama, yaitu faktor pendorong adopsi pembayaran digital, dampaknya terhadap pola belanja impulsif, serta tantangan literasi keuangan dan keamanan data yang menyertainya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui metode Systematic Literature Review (SLR) dengan merujuk pada alur

PRISMA, mencakup artikel jurnal terindeks nasional dan internasional yang terbit pada rentang tahun 2021–2026. Proses seleksi menghasilkan sejumlah artikel yang relevan, yang kemudian dianalisis secara tematik berdasarkan kerangka Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) dan konsep cashless effect. Hasil sintesis menunjukkan bahwa persepsi kemudahan penggunaan (perceived ease of use) dan persepsi manfaat (perceived usefulness) secara konsisten menjadi determinan utama niat menggunakan QRIS dan dompet digital, sementara kepercayaan (trust) berperan lebih lemah dibandingkan kedua faktor tersebut. Di sisi lain, kemudahan bertransaksi non-tunai terbukti mempercepat pengambilan keputusan belanja dan berasosiasi dengan meningkatnya kecenderungan pembelian impulsif, sebagian akibat berkurangnya pain of paying yang biasanya menyertai transaksi tunai. Studi-studi yang dikaji juga secara konsisten menyoroti kesenjangan antara laju adopsi teknologi pembayaran dan tingkat literasi keuangan-digital masyarakat, yang berimplikasi pada meningkatnya kerentanan terhadap penipuan daring, pencurian data, dan perilaku konsumtif yang tidak terkendali. Implikasi praktis dari kajian ini menegaskan perlunya sinergi antara penyedia layanan pembayaran, regulator, dan lembaga pendidikan dalam merancang edukasi literasi digital yang menyasar segmen masyarakat paling rentan, sekaligus mendorong penerapan fitur pengendalian diri (self-control nudges) pada aplikasi pembayaran digital agar transformasi menuju masyarakat nontunai tetap berjalan seiring dengan kesejahteraan finansial penggunanya.

***Keywords**: cashless society, perilaku konsumen, dompet digital, QRIS, Technology Acceptance Model, literasi keuangan digital*

1. Introduction

The digital economy has significantly transformed the landscape of financial transactions in Indonesia in recent years. The presence of digital wallets such as GoPay, OVO, DANA, and ShopeePay, which was subsequently reinforced by Bank Indonesia's launch of QRIS as the national QR code standard, has shifted public transaction habits from relying on cash to fast, practical electronic payment methods. Recent industry surveys even indicate that the majority of urban Indonesians now place digital wallets as their primary payment method for daily shopping activities, a shift that has occurred relatively quickly compared to the transition toward cashless payment systems in many other countries.

This shift cannot be understood merely as a technical matter of replacing a medium of exchange. The convenience of transacting without physical money carries more complex psychological and behavioral consequences. A number of studies show that non-cash payment methods tend to reduce the "pain of paying," which is the psychological discomfort typically felt when parting with physical cash, thereby encouraging faster and less planned shopping decisions (Fitriyani & Afrizal, 2024; Doan et al., 2024). Widely known in the literature as the "cashless effect," this phenomenon is, in turn, associated with an increased tendency toward impulse buying, particularly among the younger generation who are active users of digital wallets and online shopping platforms.

On the other hand, the adoption rate of QRIS and digital wallets in Indonesia is uneven across regions and social groups. Several studies on the micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) segment show that the penetration rate of QRIS remains relatively low compared to the potential number of existing business players, despite the significant cost efficiency and market expansion benefits it offers (see, for example, Saputri, 2024, in a study on QRIS adoption among Greater Jakarta MSMEs). This gap indicates that technology acceptance factors not just infrastructure availability are crucial determinants of the pace of transition toward a cashless society.

Another issue accompanying this shift is the readiness of the public's financial and digital literacy. Several studies demonstrate that digital wallet usage unbacked by adequate financial management understanding contributes to excessive consumerist behavior (Efriyanto et al., 2025; Aulia & Yanti, 2025), while a lack of vigilance regarding phishing practices, fake OTP requests, and other digital fraud schemes increases the risk of financial loss for users (Kartika et al., 2025). Thus, the transformation toward a cashless society presents two sides: offering efficiency, financial inclusion, and transaction convenience on one hand, while giving rise to new risks of uncontrolled consumerism and vulnerability to cybercrime on the other.

Based on this background, this study is formulated to answer three main questions. First, what factors drive the acceptance and adoption of non-cash payments (digital wallets and QRIS) among Indonesian consumers based on the Technology Acceptance Model framework? Second, how does the ease of digital transactions affect consumer shopping patterns, specifically the tendency toward impulse buying? Third, what challenges arise regarding financial literacy and data security within the non-cash payment ecosystem, and how can these challenges be mitigated? To answer these three questions, this article adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach based on academic publications from the 2021–2026 period covering digital payment adoption, consumer behavior in the cashless era, and digital literacy-security issues, with a primary focus on the Indonesian context while referencing relevant international studies as benchmarks. Through this thematic synthesis, the study aims to provide a more holistic picture of the dynamics of changing consumer behavior in the digital economy era, while formulating practical implications for regulators, payment service providers, and business operators.

2. Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method by referring to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. This approach was chosen because the objective of the study is conceptual-synthetic, namely to map and summarize the patterns of previous research findings regarding the shift in consumer behavior toward a cashless society, rather than generating new primary data.

a. Research Question Formulation

As set forth in the introduction section, this study is structured to answer three research questions (RQ):

1) RQ1 : What factors drive the acceptance and adoption of non-cash payments (digital wallets and QRIS) based on the Technology Acceptance Model framework?
2) RQ2 : How does the ease of digital transactions affect consumer shopping patterns, specifically the tendency toward impulse buying?
3) RQ3 : What challenges arise regarding financial literacy and data security within the non-cash payment ecosystem?

b. Literature Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted through academic databases such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, Taylor & Francis (Cogent), MDPI, SSRN, as well as SINTA-accredited national journal repositories. The search keywords used included combinations such as: "cashless society", "digital payment adoption", "QRIS", "e-wallet consumer behavior", "Technology Acceptance Model", "impulsive buying digital

payment", "cashless effect", and "digital financial literacy". The Boolean strings used included: ("cashless society" OR "digital payment") AND ("consumer behavior" OR "impulsive buying") AND ("Indonesia" OR "QRIS" OR "e-wallet").

c. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria include: (1) peer-reviewed scientific journal articles published within the 2021–2026 timeframe; (2) articles that explicitly address non-cash payment adoption, consumer behavior in the digital era, or digital financial literacy/security issues; (3) written in Indonesian or English; and (4) available in full text. Exclusion criteria include: (1) publications prior to 2021; (2) popular, opinion, or non-academic articles; (3) articles discussing payment technology in general without a connection to consumer behavior; and (4) duplicate articles across more than one database.

Table 1. Summary of Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Year of publication	2021–2026	Prior to 2021
Language	Indonesian and English	Other than these two
Document type	Peer-reviewed journal articles	Opinion pieces, popular news, non-academic books
Topic	Adoption of non-cash payments, digital consumer behavior, digital financial literacy/ security	Payment technology without connection to consumer behavior
Accessibility	Full text available	Abstract only
Duplication	Unique article	Duplicate articles across databases

d. Selection Procedure (PRISMA Flow)

The selection process was conducted in four stages: identification (initial search using predefined keywords across all databases), screening (removal of duplicates and screening based on title and abstract), eligibility assessment (full-text review against inclusion-exclusion criteria), and inclusion (selection of final articles analyzed in thematic synthesis). The initial search retrieved a total of relevant documents, which were then systematically screened to yield a core set of articles that directly address the three research questions.

e. Data Extraction and Analysis

Data extracted from each selected article included the authors' names, publication year, research focus, methodology, and key findings, which were subsequently categorized into three major themes corresponding to the research questions: (1) factors influencing the adoption of non-cash payment technologies, (2) the impact of digital

transaction convenience on impulsive buying behavior, and (3) challenges regarding financial literacy and data security. The analysis was conducted using thematic content analysis, emphasizing the identification of common patterns and disparities across studies, including a close examination of contrasting findings to gain a more balanced understanding of the phenomenon under study.

3. Literature Review

a. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as a Payment Technology Acceptance Framework

The Technology Acceptance Model developed by Davis (1989) explains that an individual's intention to use a technology is strongly determined by two main constructs, namely perceived usefulness (perceived usefulness) and perceived ease of use (perceived ease of use). In its development, this model has been continuously updated to respond to the characteristics of contemporary financial technology (Dwivedi, Rana, & Jeyaraj, 2020), including being integrated with other technology acceptance theories such as Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to capture social dimensions and behavioral controls that are not fully explained by classic TAM.

The application of TAM in the context of QRIS in Indonesia shows a relatively consistent pattern. A study on MSME players in Medan, for instance, found that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use both have a positive effect on attitudes and intentions to use QRIS, although the strength of the influence of each variable varies across studies. Another study comparing QRIS users in Indonesia and Malaysia by integrating TAM and UTAUT as well as cultural intelligence (cultural intelligence) variables found that perceived ease and usefulness remain the dominant determinants of usage intention, while the trust (trust) factor plays a significantly weaker role (Purwatiningsih, Fitria, Indriani, & Kuriawan, 2025). A similar pattern was also observed in a study on MSME batik artisans in Surakarta, which showed that perceived benefits and convenience are the main considerations in QRIS adoption decisions, whereas perceived risk actually provides no significant effect.

At the end-consumer level, the TAM approach is also used to explain the acceptance of digital payments in general. A number of studies add trust and perceived security variables as strengtheners of the relationship between attitude and behavioral intention, given that digital financial transactions involve higher financial risk compared to general technology adoption. A synthesis of literature on the adoption of digital payment systems globally also emphasizes that the combination of ease of use, economic benefits, and trust in the security ecosystem is a prerequisite for the sustainability of payment technology usage (Dwivedi, Ismagilova, & Hughes, 2022).

b. The Cashless Effect Phenomenon and Changes in Shopping Patterns

The concept of the *cashless effect* refers to the tendency of consumers to spend more, faster, and with less consideration when transacting using electronic money compared to cash. The underlying psychological mechanism relates to the reduction of the *pain of paying*: non-cash payments make the process of spending money feel less physically and emotionally "painful," thereby lowering self-control over expenditures (Doan, Rahman, & Vo, 2024).

A number of empirical studies reinforce this argument. Research on non-cash payment users in the e-commerce realm found that the convenience of digital

transactions accelerates the shopping decision-making process, thus encouraging impulse buying done without thorough planning (Fitriyani & Afrizal, 2024). This finding aligns with studies in the context of urban youth showing that the ease and accessibility of non-cash transactions significantly influence the tendency toward impulse buying, particularly among Generation Z, who are active users of digital wallets and buy-now-pay-later platforms. This more frequent and less planned consumption pattern, in turn, contributes to an overall increase in consumerist behavior, as shown by studies on active users of digital payment platforms which found that non-cash payment adoption and digital financial behavior significantly increase consumerist tendencies, while financial self-control acts as a balancing factor that suppresses such tendencies.

Nevertheless, not all literature views the *cashless effect* as an entirely negative phenomenon. Several studies highlight that the impact of non-cash payments on consumption behavior is conditional, depending on the consumer's level of self-awareness (mindfulness) as well as the presence or absence of control mechanisms provided by service providers, such as balance reminder features, daily transaction limits, or spending notifications (Doan et al., 2024). In other words, the ease of digital transactions has the potential to be a double-edged sword: supporting efficiency and financial inclusion on one hand, while risking excessive consumerism if not balanced by adequate literacy and control tools on the other.

c. Digital Financial Literacy and Data Security Risks

The third dimension that cannot be separated from the shift toward a cashless society is the readiness of users' financial literacy and digital literacy. Digital financial literacy encompasses an individual's ability to understand technology-based financial products, manage electronic transaction risks, and make rational financial decisions amidst the easy access offered by digital platforms (Choung, Chatterjee, & Pak, 2023). Various studies emphasize that low levels of this literacy correlate with uncontrolled consumerist behavior as well as a lack of vigilance regarding online fraud practices.

A study on e-wallet users in Indonesia, for instance, found that digital wallet usage and financial literacy levels both have a significant effect on consumerist behavior, a finding that indicates financial literacy alone does not automatically serve as an antidote to consumerism if not accompanied by adequate behavioral awareness. Meanwhile, from a security standpoint, a systematic review on digital payment technology shows that cyber threats such as phishing, illegal OTP requests, and personal data leaks are the main challenges accompanying the expansion of the digital payment ecosystem, particularly among segments of society with still-low levels of digital security literacy (Khando, Islam, & Gao, 2022). A study in the context of digital wallet-based financial inclusion in Indonesia also emphasizes that limited literacy and access disparities in non-urban areas have the potential to widen vulnerability to cyber risks, so digital security education needs to reach all layers of society, not just urban groups who are already more familiar with financial technology.

The three pilar categories of the literature review above TAM as a technology acceptance framework, the cashless effect as an explanation for changes in shopping patterns, and financial-digital literacy as a sustainability issue will be used as an analytical lens in synthesizing the findings in the results and discussion section.

4. Results and Discussion

a. Factors Driving Non-Cash Payment Adoption (Answer to RQ1)

The synthesis of the reviewed literature demonstrates that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness consistently serve as the two primary determinants of public intention to use QRIS and digital wallets, aligning with the foundational propositions of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989). In the MSME segment, for instance, a study on business actors in Medan revealed that the four core TAM constructs perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude toward using, and behavioral intention generally exert a positive influence on QRIS adoption, although one construct was found to be statistically non-significant. Cross-country research examining QRIS users in Indonesia and Malaysia further reinforces this pattern, with the additional finding that trust plays a substantially weaker role compared to perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness (Purwatiningsih et al., 2025).

This inter-study consensus indicates that the successful expansion of Indonesia's non-cash payment ecosystem is largely driven by the extent to which the technology is perceived as practical and directly advantageous by users whether through transaction time efficiency or reduced administrative costs rather than solely relying on trust in system security. This finding carries critical implications: payment service providers must continuously simplify interfaces and transaction flows (strengthening perceived ease of use) while explicitly communicating the concrete benefits of QRIS/e-wallet usage to cash-reliant segments, rather than relying exclusively on abstract security campaigns.

Nevertheless, variations in emphasis emerge across several studies. Research investigating QRIS adoption among MSMEs that integrates TAM with the Theory of Planned Behavior reveals that subjective norms and perceived behavioral control also play significant roles. This suggests that within the micro-enterprise segment, social pressure from peers or regulatory recommendations influences adoption decisions—a dimension not fully captured by classic TAM framework. These variations underscore that adoption drivers are highly contextual: for individual consumers, personal convenience and direct utility tend to dominate, whereas for small business owners, social and institutional dynamics play a non-negligible role.

b. Impact of Digital Transaction Convenience on Impulsive Buying Behavior (Answer to RQ2)

Findings under the second theme consistently confirm the existence of the cashless effect within the context of Indonesian consumer behavior. Research on e-commerce consumers reveals that the convenience of non-cash payments accelerates the purchasing decision-making process, thereby encouraging spontaneous and unplanned purchases (Fitriyani & Afrizal, 2024). This pattern is further reinforced by findings among university students and young adults, demonstrating that e-wallet usage correlates with higher impulsive buying behavior a dynamic partially explained by the combination of transaction seamlessness and aggressive promotions or incentives offered through digital wallet platforms.

The psychological mechanism driving this phenomenon is closely linked to the reduction in the pain of paying electronic payments make monetary expenditure feel less physically "real" compared to handing over physical banknotes, thereby lowering the psychological barrier to spending (Doan et al., 2024). Studies across the broader

digital consumption landscape also demonstrate that the adoption of non-cash payments and digital financial behaviors statistically increases consumerist tendencies, whereas financial self-control serves as a significant balancing variable that suppresses such inclinations. This indicates that the impact of the cashless effect on consumerism is not deterministic; rather, it can be moderated by an individual's self-regulation capacity and product design features that foster financial awareness.

Discrepancies across studies primarily emerge regarding the age demographics most vulnerable to the cashless effect. Several studies highlight urban youth as the most affected cohort, aligning with their intensive usage of online shopping platforms and Buy-Now-Pay-Later (BNPL) schemes. Conversely, other research indicates that this phenomenon is expanding into broader working-age demographics as digital wallet penetration deepens beyond digital natives. Rather than representing a contradiction, these divergent findings suggest that the cashless effect is a cross-generational phenomenon whose intensity varies according to the frequency of exposure to the digital transaction ecosystem, rather than being a mere function of age.

c. Challenges in Financial Literacy and Data Security (Answer to RQ3)

The third theme reveals a striking gap between the rapid adoption rate of payment technology and the public's readiness in digital financial literacy. A study on e-wallet users in Indonesia found that both digital wallet usage and financial literacy levels significantly influence consumerist behavior. This finding implicitly demonstrates that conventional financial literacy alone is insufficient to curb consumerist impulses triggered by technological convenience, thereby highlighting the necessity for digital literacy specifically tailored to payment application mechanisms.

From a security perspective, a systematic review of digital payment technology globally identified cyber threats such as phishing, social engineering to obtain OTP codes, and personal data breaches as structural challenges accompanying the expansion of the digital payment ecosystem (Khando, Islam, & Gao, 2022). Studies within the Indonesian context further confirm that payment application security significantly impacts user trust, while also revealing that low digital security literacy in non-urban areas heightens the risk of individuals falling victim to social engineering scams. This aligns with findings from urban community education programs, which show that while residents actively use digital services, they possess limited understanding of fundamental security practices, such as OTP/ PIN protection and two-factor authentication.

This literacy-security gap carries dual implications. On one hand, it amplifies individual financial losses due to digital fraud; on the other hand, it threatens aggregate public trust in the non-cash payment ecosystem if fraud cases are left inadequately addressed ultimately slowing the pace of digital financial inclusion itself. Consequently, the sustainability of the transition toward a cashless society heavily depends on the extent to which digital financial literacy programs and cybersecurity infrastructure can keep pace with technology adoption, rather than lagging behind as separate, secondary agendas.

d. Integrated Discussion

The three themes are intrinsically linked within a single transformational process. The perceived ease and benefits driving non-cash payment adoption (Theme 1) operate through the exact same mechanism that accelerates purchase decision-

making and triggers impulsive spending behaviors (Theme 2). Meanwhile, the gap between the speed of technology adoption and the readiness of digital financial literacy (Theme 3) determines whether the outcomes of this shift ultimately enhance or undermine consumers' overall financial well-being. In other words, a cashless society is not an end goal that automatically guarantees progress; rather, it represents a transformational trajectory whose ultimate outcome inclusive and prosperous, or hyper-consumerist and vulnerable is heavily defined by the quality of governance, user education, and product design that accompany its growth.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that the shift in consumer behavior toward a cashless society in Indonesia is primarily driven by perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, as articulated by the Technology Acceptance Model, with trust playing a relatively weaker role (answering RQ1). The convenience of non-cash transactions is proven to accelerate purchasing decision-making and is associated with increased impulsive buying tendencies through the mechanism of reduced pain of paying, although this effect can be moderated by individual financial self-control (answering RQ2). Simultaneously, the rapid pace of payment technology adoption has not been fully matched by public readiness in digital financial literacy and cybersecurity awareness, giving rise to risks of excessive consumerism and vulnerability to digital fraud (answering RQ3).

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the relevance of TAM as an explanatory framework for financial technology adoption in developing economies, while also underscoring the necessity of expanding the model to incorporate self-control dimensions and digital literacy as variables that moderate the relationship between technological convenience and user financial well-being rather than merely viewing them as standalone additions.

Practically, this study recommends several steps. For regulators (Bank Indonesia and the Financial Services Authority / OJK), strengthening digital financial literacy programs targeting non-urban populations and vulnerable age groups is necessary, along with establishing minimum security standards for all digital wallet and QRIS providers. For payment service providers (industry), it is recommended to integrate self-control nudges such as spending notifications, user-configurable daily transaction limits, and periodic spending summaries into payment applications to balance transaction convenience with financial awareness. For business actors, particularly MSMEs, the expansion of QRIS adoption needs to be supported by education emphasizing concrete benefits and peer success stories, given that social norms play a significant role in this segment. For educational institutions and communities, participatory community-based digital financial literacy programs have proven effective in reaching groups that have been less exposed to formal financial education.

This study has limitations as it is conceptual and relies on the synthesis of secondary literature, meaning it cannot yet generalize findings quantitatively to a specific population. Future research is recommended to conduct direct empirical testing both through large-scale surveys and behavioral experiments to measure more precisely the strength of the relationship between digital transaction convenience, financial self-control, and the level of vulnerability to cybersecurity risks across various demographic segments in Indonesia.

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