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## **The Effect of Perceived Relative Advantage and E-Commerce Knowledge on The Behavior of Doing Online Business Among Undergraduate Students in Indonesia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Online business endeavors have already become popular due to technological advancements. Many young people engage in online business due to its flexible nature and their technological proficiency. This study investigates the influencing elements in decision-making among young individuals engaging in online business. The results of the study serve as a valuable reference for understanding the crucial factors that drive online business activities among the younger generation. This quantitative study utilizes distributed surveys via Google Forms with 102 respondents. The sampling approach used in this study is non-probability, utilizing a purposive sampling technique to gather samples that match the criteria outlined in the research objectives. The data analysis method is partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that perceived relative advantage (Pra) significantly influences e-commerce knowledge (Know), which in turn positively influences actual action in doing online business (Action). Additionally, e-commerce knowledge (Know) mediates the relationship between perceived relative advantage (PRA) and actual action in doing online business (Action).

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## **Introduction**

Advancements in technology and increased internet accessibility have significantly altered business behavior, particularly among younger individuals (Paramita & Hidayat, 2023). This evolution established a new basis for the emergence of online business as a compelling option for exploring innovative concepts, promoting products, and attaining financial prosperity (Slyke et al., 2010). This movement in the business world represents a fundamental change, where the physical aspect is being replaced by digital presence. The younger generation, raised in the digital age, is impacted by technology that saturates many aspects of daily life via cell phones and internet access, which are considered crucial components (Meghisan-Toma et al., 2021). This situation motivates participation in the digital ecosystem mainly because younger individuals perceive notable benefits, such as increased earning potential, flexible schedules, and business prospects without geographical limitations (Deventer et al., 2018). Engaging in online business offers a realistic avenue for the younger generation to unleash their creativity and cultivate their entrepreneurial skills without the constraints of physical limitations. Online businesses offer financial success and growth potential from multiple locations, making them appealing and introducing new dynamics to the global company landscape.

Research conducted by Wulandari, Keni, and Ping in 2023 indicated that the younger generation's capacity to adjust to technological advancements quickly establishes a solid basis for effectively employing several elements of online business, such as e-commerce platforms, digital marketing tools, and data analysis. The younger generation can use advanced technology to fill knowledge gaps and create novel tactics for

successful online business management. The younger generation's advantages include proficiency in technology and the capacity to adapt promptly to market fluctuations, providing them with a competitive edge for effective online business growth (Permana & Astuti, 2023). Extensive knowledge of E-commerce is crucial as it influences the younger generation's understanding of the benefits of online business and serves as a foundation for practical decision-making (Mawarni et al., 2023). The younger generation can utilize their skills to navigate the complexity of the e-commerce sector and uncover untapped business opportunities in the future. They are influential figures in the digital world, serving not just as consumers but also as originators of inventive solutions. As such, the younger generation is the primary catalyst for transformation in the continuously expanding online business environment.

Understanding the numerous facets of complicated enterprises, such as sophisticated e-commerce or integrated digital services, is crucial for attaining success, according to Wang in 2022. The younger generation must understand critical features such as risk management, advanced digital marketing tactics, and system integration to succeed in competitive environments. E-commerce knowledge is not just a supplementary aspect but an essential component for the success of online firms among the younger generation (Smith et al., 2008). A thorough comprehension of e-commerce platforms, digital marketing tactics, and online business management is crucial for dealing with intense competition in the digital business sector (Mende et al., 2015). The younger generation may optimize their company potential and react to market changes by recognizing these dynamics and complexities. Proficiency in e-commerce platforms provides a competitive advantage in seizing opportunities and handling intricate difficulties more efficiently. The younger generation must possess a comprehensive viewpoint and profound understanding of executing sustainable and competitive strategies in sophisticated and integrated enterprises.

More than merely possessing a relative advantage and expertise in e-commerce is required. The younger generation must apply this knowledge and profits by taking concrete actions in the online business (Waring et al., 2023). They need to develop successful marketing strategies, establish client relationships, and efficiently handle the logistical parts of the firm (Meidawati et al., 2022). Understanding e-commerce serves as a strategic blueprint for successful implementation. This entails a profound comprehension of e-commerce platforms, proficiency in enhancing digital marketing methods, and adeptly handling the logistical side of the firm. The younger generation needs to employ this information as a solid basis for building strategies that are effective and competitive in facing more tough competition in the internet market (Agag & El-Masry, 2016). Converting comparative benefits into tangible actions requires establishing and sustaining robust customer connections (Sina et al., 2016). According to Zain, Jusoh, & Ros Intan Safinaz Munir (2020), personal interaction, excellent customer service, and attentiveness to customer feedback are crucial in developing a reputation and fostering trust with online consumers. Technological advancements like artificial intelligence and data analysis enable the younger generation to enhance business operations, improve efficiency, and enhance customer experience (Al-Tit, 2020). Converting knowledge and comparative advantage into tangible actions is a crucial step for young individuals aiming to succeed and stay pertinent in the dynamic realm of online commerce. Engaging in this action is both a duty and a chance to benefit in a rapidly evolving digital business environment. This task necessitates possessing a well-defined corporate vision and robust execution skills. This essay will examine how knowledge of e-commerce influences relative advantages and actively motivates the younger generation to manage online firms in the expanding digital age.

This article will explore the intricacies of internet commercial activities conducted by the younger generation. The paper will examine how the perceived advantages and understanding of e-commerce motivate young individuals to establish a career in online business. Therefore, a deeper understanding can be gained regarding the impact of relative advantages and e-commerce expertise on influencing the younger generation's practical decisions and business achievements in the digital realm.

## **Theoretical Framework and Literature Review**

Incorporating e-commerce into modern companies has reshaped the commerce model, focusing more on the benefits of participating in online business operations. This literature review examines the vital connection between Perceived Relative Advantage (PRA) and E-commerce Knowledge (KNOW), analyzing previous research and theoretical frameworks that emphasize perceived relative advantage's beneficial and substantial influence on e-commerce knowledge. Perceived Relative Advantage (PRA) is derived from the diffusion of innovation theory developed by Rogers in 1962. It represents individuals' subjective evaluation of the benefits of embracing new developments, specifically participating in e-commerce. Perceived benefits of online business activity under PRA include enhanced efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and competitive

advantage. Multiple research studies have explored the relationship between PRA and e-commerce knowledge (KNOW) among individuals engaged in online business. Davis (1989) conducted a study on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which emphasized that the perceived usefulness of technology, a concept akin to PRA, dramatically impacts an individual's inclination to utilize it. Perceived relative advantage is essential in influencing individuals' understanding of e-commerce platforms, tactics, and management practices in the e-commerce industry.

Venkatesh and Davis (2000) enhanced the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by proposing the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). They highlighted the importance of performance expectations, a concept akin to perceived relative advantage, in influencing user intents and behavior. This theoretical framework suggests that individuals are more likely to seek knowledge about e-commerce as they evaluate its advantages. Empirical research also validates the direct correlation between PRA and E-commerce Knowledge. Al-Tit (2020) discovered that the perceived relative advantage had a beneficial impact on users' intent to use e-commerce applications. Li and Karahanna's (2015) research indicates that those who believe there are comparative benefits in e-commerce are more inclined to seek information to comprehend and utilize the associated technologies. In internet business, rapid development occurs in the landscape, where knowledge plays a crucial role in shaping actions and behaviors. Subject to rising scholarly attention, E-commerce Knowledge (KNOW) is a multidimensional construct that includes understanding and competency in numerous aspects of online business, such as e-commerce platforms, digital marketing techniques, logistical operations, and overall management (Iriani & Andjarwati, 2020). Acquiring and using knowledge is vital in navigating the dynamic arena of internet business and competition.

Several studies have examined the favorable influence of E-commerce knowledge on real-world actions in the online business scenario. A study by Song, X., Huang, F., and Li, X (2017) discovered a direct relationship between users' understanding of e-commerce platforms and their participation in online commercial endeavors. This implies that possessing more information is linked to an increased probability of implementing tangible actions in the Internet business sector. Lee & Hsieh (2019) emphasized the significance of E-commerce Knowledge in influencing strategic decision-making in online firms. As per the report, individuals with a profound comprehension of e-commerce principles are more inclined to execute successful digital marketing tactics and participate in strategic business planning. Framework theories like the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) provide insights into the relationship between knowledge and behavior. Triandewo and Sagy (2021) state that perception convenience use and perception uses significantly impact individuals' intentions and actions in adopting technology through components of knowledge. In online business, the ease of using e-commerce and individuals' understanding and perception of its potential will influence their actions.

Perceived Relative Advantage (PRA) is the subjective judgment by an individual of the benefits or advantages connected with engaging in e-commerce activities. Perceptual categorization research has shown that individual decisions to adopt and use e-commerce technology are influenced by various factors (Ellitan & Prayogo, 2022). E-commerce Knowledge (KNOW) refers to individuals' comprehensive understanding and expertise in several aspects of online enterprises, including e-commerce platforms, digital marketing techniques, and operational logistics (Hossain et al., 2022). Acquiring and applying knowledge is crucial for effectively engaging in the dynamic terrain of online business and competition. Research has demonstrated that Perceived Relative Advantage (PRA) positively influences individuals' intentions and attitudes toward e-commerce (Li & Huang, 2017). However, the significance of E-commerce expertise as an internal mediator is significant. This has garnered attention by focusing on the connection between cognitive processes, perception, and action. Figure 1 displays the relationship between factors and the subsequent hypothesis.

H1: Perceived relative advantage positively influences actual action in doing online business.

H2: Perceived relative advantage has a positive impact on e-commerce knowledge.

H3: E-commerce knowledge positively influences real action in action in doing online business.

H4: E-commerce knowledge mediates influence of perceived relative advantage on action in doing online business.

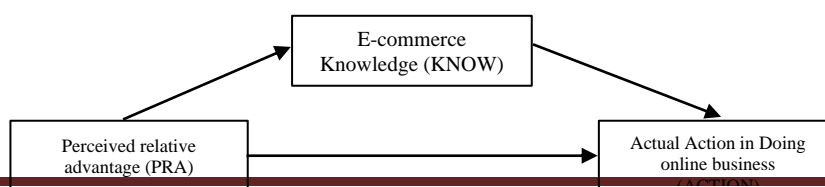


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

### Research Method

This quantitative study uses a non-probability sampling strategy, namely purposive sampling, to select research subjects who match the requirements and provide relevant data. One hundred twenty respondents were selected for this research based on being 16 to 30 years old, active students in the Jabodetabek area, and familiar with e-commerce platforms in Indonesia. The data collection approach was conducted by disseminating questionnaires online through Google Forms in January 2024. The questionnaire utilized questions derived from pertinent prior studies, as detailed by Hair et al. (2022) and Sarstedt et al. (2022). The questions were presented as statements on a 5-point Likert scale to investigate respondents' perceptions of the research variables. Table 1 summarizes respondents' characteristics such as gender, place of residence, frequency of selling goods in e-commerce per month, and e-commerce platform used. The sample strategy and questionnaire design in this research were prepared to guarantee the validity and relevance of the collected data.

This study utilizes the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method to model causal relationships between dependent and latent variables (Hair et al., 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2022). The PLS-SEM analytic method was selected due to its ability to identify several study variables concurrently, making it practical for complicated modeling and situations with small sample sizes (Hair et al., 2022). This approach is deemed pertinent and suitable for implementation in this study framework due to various factors. This research is experimental, utilizing PLS-SEM to uncover patterns of correlations between variables without rigid structural constraints. Secondly, the acquired data is anticipated to deviate from a normal distribution, and PLS-SEM is proficient in managing non-normal data distributions effectively. Thirdly, PLS-SEM is suitable for assessing variables that are challenging to measure while considering potential measurement errors during data collection (Sarstedt et al., 2022). PLS-SEM is a logical choice for data processing in this research because of its ability to handle complex and non-normally distributed data. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) offers the flexibility required to address the complexities of exploratory research, aiming to establish an initial comprehension of the connections between variables. Choosing PLS-SEM as an analytical method establishes a solid basis for gaining a deeper comprehension of the factors in this research and connecting intricate elements.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
<b>Gender:</b>		
Male	65	65%
Female	35	35%
<b>Residence:</b>		
DKI Jakarta	50	50%
Bekasi	23	23%
Tangerang	10	10%
Bogor	8	8%
Depok	9	9%
<b>Monthly frequency of items sold on e-commerce</b>		
10 times or less	14	14%
11 - 20 times	23	23%
21 - 30 times	28	28%
31 - 40 times	18	18%
41 - 50 times	7	7%
More than 50 times	10	10%
<b>E-commerce that is in use or has been utilized</b>		
Tokopedia	27	27%
Blibli	31	31%
Lazada	9	9%
Shopee	33	33%

Source: Author's calculation based on primary data (2023).

Profile respondents exhibit sufficient diversity in both category type and gender, with 65% being male and 35% being female. The majority of participants were from DKI Jakarta (50%), with Bekasi (23%), Tangerang (10%), Bogor (8%), and Depok (9%) following in descending order. The distribution of respondents in terms of the frequency of selling goods in E-commerce per month is varied, with the majority (28%) conducting transactions 21 to 30 times. Respondents cited different E-commerce platforms, with Shopee being the most popular at 33%, Blibli at 31%, Tokopedia at 27%, and Lazada at 9%. This data offers a detailed overview of the respondents' attributes, which can be used to assess their behavior and preferences in online commerce.

## Results and Discussion

As defined by Hair et al. (2019), outer loading is utilized in research to assess the reliability of individual indicators. An indicator is considered dependable if its value exceeds 0.708, suggesting that the construct accounts for over 50% of the indicator's variance. The construct reliability test is assessed by composite reliability and Cronbach alpha. Hair et al. (2019) said a Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.70 indicates a credible construct. A higher composite reliability signifies a greater level of reliability. The composite reliability must exceed 0.70 to be considered reliable. Table 2 displays the reliability indicators and construct reliability findings.

Table 2. Reliability Indicators and Construct Reliability

Constructs	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived relative advantage (PRA)	PRA1	0.628
	PRA2	
	PRA3	
	PRA4	
	PRA5	
E-commerce Knowledge (KNOW)	KNOW1	0.727
	KNOW2	
	KNOW3	
Actual Action in Doing online business (ACTION)	ACTION1	0.848
	ACTION2	
	ACTION3	
	ACTION4	
	ACTION5	
E-commerce Knowledge (KNOW) mediates the influence of Perceived relative advantage (PRA) on Actual Action in Doing Online Business (ACTION)	PRE*KNO W	1,000

Source: Author's calculation based on primary data (2023).

It is also demonstrated in Table 2 that the Cronbach alpha of every variable that was utilized in this investigation is satisfactory. Because every variable in the research has a Cronbach alpha more significant than 0.6, it may be concluded that every variable is dependable enough to be utilized in this research model. According to Hair et al.'s 2019 research, the effect size (D) was utilized to evaluate the relative impact of the predictor construct on the endogenous construct during the study.  $f^2$  has a value of 0.02, indicating that the influence's magnitude is relatively minor;  $f^2$  is equal to 0.15, which indicates that the effect is moderate; and  $f^2$  is equal to 0.35, which indicates that the effect is substantial.

Table 3. Effect Size

Constructs	$f^2$	Effect Size
PRA -> ACTION	0.016	No effect
PRA -> KNOW	0.861	Big Effect
KNOW -> ACTION	0.426	Big effect
KNOW mediates PRA -> ACTION	0.067	Small effect

Source: Author's calculation based on primary data (2023).

Because the data processing procedure has been carried out, these findings can be utilized to respond to the hypothesis that was conducted in this research. Analysis of the T-Statistics values and the P-Values values is the method utilized in the hypothesis testing process. Suppose the direction of the route coefficient demonstrates results that agree with the initial hypothesis and the T-statistics is higher than the T-table value of 1.645. In that case, the research hypothesis can be considered to be approved. On the other hand, the significance of the evidence that the null hypothesis must be rejected increases in proportion to the decrease in the P-Values. P-values with a value lower than 0.05 are regarded as statistically significant. Since there is less than 5% probability that the null hypothesis is correct, this constitutes strong evidence against the null hypothesis. The following statements are the outcomes of testing hypotheses acquired through the use of the inner model in this research.

Table 4. Hypotheses Test Results

Hypotheses	Path Direction	Coefficients	T-statistics	P-Values	Results
H1	PRA -> ACTION	0.105	1,197	0.232	Hypothesis Rejected
H2	PRA -> KNOW	0.680	9,519	0,000	Hypothesis Accepted
H3	KNOW -> ACTION	0.582	6,407	0,000	Hypothesis Accepted
H4	PRA -> KNOW -> ACTION	0.396	5,470	0,000	Hypothesis Accepted

Source: Author's calculation based on primary data (2023).

Table 4 displays the path coefficient values that depict the link between exogenous latent variables (PRA, KNOW) and endogenous latent variables (KNOW, ACTION) in this study. The results indicate that H1, proposing that Perceived relative advantage (PRA) positively affects Actual Action in Doing online business (ACTION), needs to be supported. The issue arises from the t-value being less than the critical t-value ( $1.197 < 1.660$ ) at a significance level of  $\alpha = 5\%$ . The hypothesis is rejected due to insufficient statistical support, suggesting that Perceived Relative Advantage has no positive influence on actual activities in online commerce. While Perceived Relative Advantage should theoretically motivate action in online business, the results of this study show that this connection is not statistically significant in this group. This analysis of the hypothesis rejection suggests the necessity for extra comprehensive research to comprehend the variability and other aspects that could impact the correlation between Perceived Relative Advantage and Actual Action in Online Business.

Perceived relative advantage (PRA) positively influences E-commerce Knowledge (KNOW) significantly, with a t-value of 9.519, surpassing the critical t-value ( $\alpha: 5\%$ ). The correlation coefficient between Perceived Relative Advantage (PRA) and E-commerce Knowledge is 0.680, suggesting that those with a more excellent perception of relative advantage tend to have higher knowledge of e-commerce. Hence, H2 is approved. In this context, the favorable results suggest that perceptions of the benefits of conducting business online can significantly enhance understanding of e-commerce. The results support the idea that perceptions of relative advantage can motivate individuals to pursue additional information about e-commerce. Perceived Relative Advantage (PRA) plays a crucial function in shaping a favorable comprehension and awareness of E-commerce Knowledge. PRA stands for an individual's impression of how a technology or concept is better than current options. When people believe that using an e-commerce platform or participating in online business offers substantial benefits compared to other options, they are more inclined to seek further information.

PRA can stimulate interest in e-commerce concepts. People who recognize that e-commerce offers more advantages than traditional company models often seek more knowledge to comprehend how e-commerce may enhance efficiency, expand market reach, and boost competitiveness. PRA can catalyze active learning and the acquisition of E-commerce knowledge. Individuals are more inclined to invest time and resources in understanding e-commerce, including digital marketing strategy, data analysis, and technological innovation, when they believe it will give them a competitive edge in a business setting. Additionally, PRA can enhance engagement in training and courses centered on E-commerce Knowledge. Recognizing the benefits of having a thorough understanding of e-commerce might motivate individuals to pursue training or courses to improve their abilities and expertise in online business.

According to H3, E-commerce Knowledge (KNOW) positively influences Actual Action in Doing online business (ACTION) as the t-value (6.407) surpasses the t-table value ( $\alpha$ : 5%) and has a positive impact of 0.582 on Actual Action in Doing online business (ACTION). A profound comprehension of E-commerce Knowledge (KNOW) dramatically influences the practical aspects of operating an online business. Businesses can enhance their performance by comprehending e-commerce platform capabilities, digital marketing methods, security and privacy considerations, and utilizing data analysis tools like Google Analytics to make informed judgments. Utilizing efficient client Relationship Management (CRM) and fostering innovation is crucial for maintaining strong client relationships, improving retention rates, and competing effectively. Therefore, having a thorough and regularly updated understanding of E-commerce is essential for taking practical actions in establishing and overseeing online firms in the current digital age.

Ultimately, H4 is supported, indicating that E-commerce Knowledge (KNOW) acts as a mediator in the relationship between Perceived Relative Advantage (PRA) and Perceived Relative Advantage (PRA). The results indicate that the impact of KNOW on the PRA - ACTION relationship is statistically significant, as the t-value (5.470) surpasses the critical t-table value ( $\alpha$ : 5%). The effect is positive at 0.396, suggesting that a higher level of KNOW weakens the relationship between Perceived Relative Advantage (PRA) and Perceived Relative Advantage (PRA). E-commerce Knowledge (KNOW) is crucial in bridging the gap between Perceived Relative Advantage (PRA) and Actual Action in online business. A PRA focusing on how individuals perceive superiority in e-commerce might inspire enthusiasm to learn about many facets of online business. Positive perceptions of potential benefits gained from e-commerce experiences motivate individuals to seek a deeper understanding of technology. This sentence is incomplete. E-commerce Knowledge (KNOW) is an intermediary that transforms positive perceptions into tangible actions. A solid comprehension of e-commerce enables individuals to create and implement online company strategies more effectively. E-commerce Knowledge covers topics such as e-commerce platforms, digital marketing techniques, data analysis, and other critical factors to provide a solid basis for optimal advantages. Having e-commerce knowledge can motivate individuals to overcome constraints or hurdles when operating an online business. Individuals with a firm grasp of the potential benefits of their E-commerce knowledge can boost their confidence when facing challenges and maximize current chances.

Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) quantifies the total effect size and amount of variance accounted for in the endogenous constructs of the structural model, serving as an indicator of the model's predictive precision. The standard values for  $R^2$  are as follows:  $R^2 = 0.75$  (substantial),  $R^2 = 0.50$  (moderate), and  $R^2 = 0.26$  (weak). Table 5 displays the  $R^2$  value, indicating that hypotheses H1, H3, and H4 account for 63.5% of the variation in the variable ACTION. The results show that the three distinct constructs account for 63.5% of the variability in ACTION. It implies that around 63% of the fluctuations in Actual Action in Doing Online Business (ACTION) are influenced by the three latent constructs in the model, resulting in a medium-level  $R^2$ . The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for the relationship between  $R^2$  and H2 is 0.463, which accounts for 46.3% of the variability in E-commerce Knowledge (KNOW) and falls within the medium range.

Table 5.  $Q^2$  and  $R^2$

Constructs	$R^2$	$Q^2$
Action	0.635	0.376
Know	0.463	0.286

The  $Q^2$  statistic assesses the quality of the PLS path model. Criterion  $Q^2$  suggests that the conceptual model can forecast internal hidden constructs. In structural equation modeling (SEM), the  $Q^2$  value must be higher than zero for a specific endogenous latent component. The  $Q^2$  values for H1, H3, and H4 in explaining ACTION are 0.376, while the  $Q^2$  value for H2 in E-commerce Knowledge (KNOW) is 0.286. Both values exceed 0.00, indicating that the structural model evaluated demonstrates consistency and enough predictive relevance.

## Conclusion

Due to technological advancements, the online business industry has become highly popular, especially among the younger population. The flexibility online businesses provide, and the technological proficiency of the younger generation create a solid foundation for the growth of online commercial activities. This study aims to investigate the influencing variables on decision-making among young individuals in online businesses. The results provide significant insights for understanding the key elements driving online business activities among

the younger generation. The study's results indicate that perceived relative advantage (PRA) influences e-commerce knowledge (KNOW) favorably. Based on this finding, one can argue that perceiving online companies as superior increases knowledge about e-commerce. E-commerce knowledge has a favorable influence on taking action in online business. A strong understanding of e-commerce can motivate young people to engage actively in operating online businesses.

E-commerce Knowledge mediates between Perceived Relative Advantage and Actual Action in online business. This demonstrates that knowing e-commerce is vital in shifting perceptions positively towards superiority and translating them into tangible actions in online companies. Thus, this research contributes significantly to understanding the motivating reasons for online business activity among the younger age. Implications derived from the study's findings This can serve as a foundational strategy for establishing educational programs and providing practical training, as well as supportive policies for expanding the online business ecosystem in the digital era.

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