Assessment of User Experience in E-Commerce Mobile Applications among Gen Z

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ABSTRACT

Rapid growth in mobile e-commerce has made platforms like Shopee, Lazada, and TikTok Shop daily essentials for Generation Z, a demographic that demands speed, visual engagement, and seamless navigation. However, existing applications frequently introduce cognitive friction through intrusive ads, cluttered interfaces, and complex checkout flows. This study evaluates user experience (UX) and Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) principles across major e-commerce platforms among Gen Z consumers in the Philippines. Using a quantitative-descriptive design, data were gathered from 54 participants—including students, Gen Z users, and IT professionals—via purposive sampling and a structured 5-point Likert scale survey across six core UX dimensions. Results revealed a high Grand Overall UX Score of 4.34 (Very Good), led by Functionality & Performance (4.38), though usability (4.29) and content quality (4.30) lagged. Notably, a methodological tension emerged: while the quantitative Likert scores exhibited a high-score ceiling effect (clustering uniformly between 4.29 and 4.38), qualitative findings sharply highlighted major user friction points, such as aggressive pop-ups, misleading promotions, and complex navigation. In response, a high-fidelity mobile prototype was designed in Figma incorporating core HCI heuristics—such as Fitts's Law, Recognition over Recall, Visibility of System Status, and Error Prevention—to reduce cognitive load and visual clutter. However, the study remains constrained by a small sample size (N = 54), sample heterogeneity (mixing typical Gen Z consumers with technical IT professionals who apply distinct evaluation heuristics), potential survey response bias, and the absence of empirical usability testing or A/B validation to measure actual cognitive load reduction. Nevertheless, its practical frameworks carry strong applied value for e-commerce developers and UX researchers alike.

Keywords: User Experience (UX), Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), Mobile E-Commerce, Generation Z, Figma Prototype, Cognitive Load.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid changes within mobile application technology have changed how people shop online; it has altered to the point where we use E-Commerce apps so much that it's become a staple in our daily lives. Apps such as Shopee, Lazada & TikTok's Shop continue to offer easy-to-use access to products and services through the modifications of features that are designed to boost efficiency, accessibility & personalization. As long as competition among these platforms continues, they will likely strive for a better user experience (UX) to attract & retain customers. Among the users on these platforms is Generation Z; they are digital natives who value intuitive, fast, performance-oriented navigation and appealing visuals that soothe their eyes. Understanding how this demographic perceives the user experience will provide essential data to improve customer satisfaction and encourage continued platform use.

Previous studies have explored shopping applications on their usability & customer satisfaction; however, there is still a demand for more information regarding the overall assessments of user experience within these platforms amongst the demographic of Generation Z. This particular study aims to evaluate the key aspects of user experience, usability, efficiency, interface design, ease of use, and the user's satisfaction to identify which factors influence the interactions of users within the platform. The results could provide valuable insights for

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application developers and businesses in designing more user-oriented applications, while contributing to the growing body of research on user experience in mobile e-commerce.

This research was conducted to provide insight into how certain aspects of user interface & experience affect the behaviors of Generation Z on emerging e-commerce platforms. Although this generation has ample purchasing power and strong digital literacy, their platform loyalty depends entirely on user satisfaction and the application's usability. Understanding how Generation Z evaluates the logic behind their decisions in mobile e-commerce is valuable for both designers and retailers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gen Z E-Commerce Adoption & Behavioral Intention

S. Puiu et al. establish that Generation Z demonstrates a strong preference for mobile commerce when searching for products and completing online purchases [3]. A. A. Vărzaru et al. further support this adoption, showing that perceived usefulness, ease of use, and overall customer satisfaction significantly drive mobile commerce adoption and behavioral intention [2]. Furthermore, S. Puiu et al. confirm that constant connectivity continues to shape Gen Z's purchasing habits [1]. Beyond basic digital accessibility, A. Afwa et al. highlight that Gen Z's purchasing choices stem from a complex interaction of economic, technological, social, and psychological drivers [5].

Consequently, their decision journeys often span multiple platforms: A. V. Tran and B. T. Khoa explain that Gen Z relies heavily on social commerce and influencer content for product discovery but ultimately shifts to established e-marketplaces to complete purchases due to concerns about trust, perceived risk, and logistics reliability [4].

UX Dimensions, Usability & User Satisfaction

Core technical attributes shape user experience in mobile e-commerce platforms; W. Koh et al. show that visual layout, modern technology, communication setup, and privacy measures shape user experience [8]. To address execution flaws, V. N. V. Akwukwuma et al. show that high application usability is essential to prevent transaction abandonment caused by confusing navigation and cumbersome checkout flows [6]. In line with this, A. D. Saputra et al. identify clarity, speed, and functional dependability as the primary UX metrics driving satisfaction, noting that younger shoppers prioritize seamless operation over superficial novelty [9]. Deficiencies in interface design directly damage consumer relationships; A. R. Arinder reveals that poor digital interfaces, complex menus, and excessive ads cause 81% of young adults to lose trust and abandon brands [7].

Conversely, G. B. R. L. Tobing et al. demonstrate that visually appealing interfaces, intuitive navigation, and easily accessible promotions foster strong repurchase intentions [12] [11]. D. Perlman further reinforces this, noting that user interface quality directly governs online consumer shopping actions in mobile apps [10]. Furthermore, studies by J. P. Gercolea et al. [13] and D. E. Moreno et al. [11] emphasize that visual congruence, personalization, security, and privacy enhance user satisfaction and total spending, with online trust serving as a critical mediator between user experience and consumer behavior.

E-Service Quality, Customer Experience & Loyalty

M. Zakri et al. explain that Generation Z evaluates e-service quality through a holistic lens that encompasses functional security alongside emotional and social engagement [16]. M. A. Lihah and R. Nurrohman show that superior e-service quality and user experience directly boost customer satisfaction, which in turn reinforces long-term app loyalty [14].

Broadening this perspective, P. B. Pires et al. establish a comprehensive framework connecting 11 key operational factors—with overall customer experience at the center—to map online shopping behavior [17]. Y.-T. Jou et al. further confirm that interface quality, information credibility, brand equity, and system security

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directly elevate perceived service quality and customer satisfaction, establishing trust as a foundational requirement for sustained platform usage [15].

E-Service Quality, Customer Experience & Loyalty

Integrating artificial intelligence introduces powerful mechanisms for shaping the online shopping experience. H. Chandrakumar [19], P. K. Tan, and C. M. Lim [21] note that AI implementations such as conversational chatbots and virtual try-ons enhance user satisfaction when systems prioritize system quality, information quality, and perceived usefulness. S. Hasim and A. Nur corroborate that AI-driven personalization, when paired with mobile app design and branding, significantly boosts Gen Z purchase intentions [18]. However, these interactive elements can also create persuasive environments; D. Bisht et al. illustrate how algorithmic recommendations and influencer marketing create an "E-Commerce Experience Trap" that leads consumers to yield to persuasive techniques [22]. This becomes ethically concerning when interfaces intentionally manipulate users; M. K. Singh outlines a taxonomy of deceptive UI/UX "dark patterns" that exploit cognitive biases to drive impulse buying and hinder informed decision-making [20].

E-Service Quality, Customer Experience & Loyalty

Evaluating user experience requires diverse methodologies that capture the multifaceted nature of human–computer interaction. A. P. O. S. Vermeeren et al. outline a wide spectrum of UX evaluation methods developed across academic and industry domains [26]. Standard user-centered frameworks—such as usability testing, Design Thinking, and User-Centered Design, as detailed by J. R. Lewis and J. Sauro—provide foundational structures for identifying system flaws and iteratively incorporating user feedback [23]. As digital systems evolve, S. Ntoa emphasizes the necessity of specialized evaluation models to assess usability within intelligent, adaptive, and ubiquitous environments [25].

Finally, J. Hussain et al. demonstrate the value of mixed-method triangulation, combining observational data and physiological sensors with traditional assessment tools on a multimodal UX platform to objectively measure temporal user experience [24].

Research Gap

Although there's extensive research on UX design and e-commerce models, a major gap remains in understanding how these designs align with how Generation Z uses mobile shopping. Current studies often overlook Gen Z's specific needs, such as personalized experiences and seamless integration of social shopping features. Traditional UX metrics don't capture the emotional and value-based shopping experiences that matter most to digital natives, which results in a limited view of their involvement and loyalty. To address this gap, the current study introduces a UX evaluation framework focused on mobile users, especially Generation Z.

METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach to evaluate how Generation Z experiences e-commerce apps on mobile devices. This method allows for a clear, fair evaluation of usability, features, appearance, user satisfaction, and other important aspects through structured survey questions. The gathered data will be analyzed using statistical methods to identify what works well and where the user experience can be improved in the chosen e-commerce mobile apps.

B. Respondents

This study uses numbers and measurements to examine how Generation Z uses e-commerce apps on their phones. This approach lets you assess usability, features, appearance, user satisfaction, and other key factors clearly and fairly using well-organized survey questions. Additionally, we gathered responses from IT experts and IT professionals alongside Gen Z users. While this inclusion provides auxiliary technical perspectives, it

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introduces sample heterogeneity; IT professionals often evaluate interfaces through strict technical heuristics rather than standard consumer shopping behaviors, which must be considered when interpreting overall ratings. We will analyze the collected information using statistical techniques to determine what is effective and where the user experience can be improved in the selected e-commerce mobile apps.

C. Sampling Design

The study uses purposive sampling, a non-probability technique in which respondents are selected based on specific criteria: they must be Generation Z and have used e-commerce mobile applications for at least three months. This method ensures participants have the relevant experience and knowledge to provide accurate, meaningful feedback on the applications' user experience, resulting in reliable and appropriate data for the assessment.

D. Research Instrument

The main instrument used is a structured survey questionnaire based on standard UX evaluation frameworks that measures five criteria—functionality, usability, accessibility, content, and performance—using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Very Poor to Excellent to ensure consistent responses and straightforward statistical analysis. Using this survey, respondents evaluated representative interface screens from Shopee, Lazada, and TikTok Shop to establish current market standards and identify usability issues (see Figure 3.1), alongside a custom high-fidelity Figma prototype (see Figures 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4) demonstrated to show how core Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) principles directly address and resolve those design challenges.



Figure 3.1: Benchmark E-Commerce Interfaces: (a) Shopee, (b) Lazada, and (c) TikTok Shop.

Figure 3.1 shows the first step of the user journey, where Gen Z shoppers browse popular shopping apps (Shopee, Lazada, and TikTok Shop). These sample product lists, item pages, and checkout screens show the starting user experience. It highlights everyday design issues—like annoying pop-ups, messy layouts, and hidden menus—that helped us design our custom prototype.



Figure 3.2: Prototype Home & Navigation

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Figure 3.2 shows the user opening the app and landing on the main feed. The user can easily navigate using the top search bar, shopping cart icon, notification bell, sale banner, and quick shortcuts for the Credits Wallet, Vouchers, and Daily Deals. Placing these important shortcuts right on the home screen uses Recognition over Recall, while putting the Main Menu and Profile in a fixed bottom navigation bar uses Fitts's Law for easy one-handed thumb use.

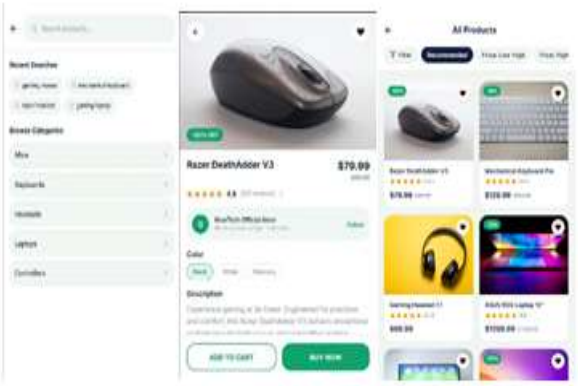


Figure 3.3: Prototype Catalog, Search & Details

Figure 3.3 follows the user searching for specific gaming items. The user filters products using category buttons, sorts by Price: Low to High, and taps the heart icon to save items to Favorites. Tapping a product card opens the item page, where switching color options gives instant visual updates. The user can also check real buyer star reviews before adding the item to the cart.

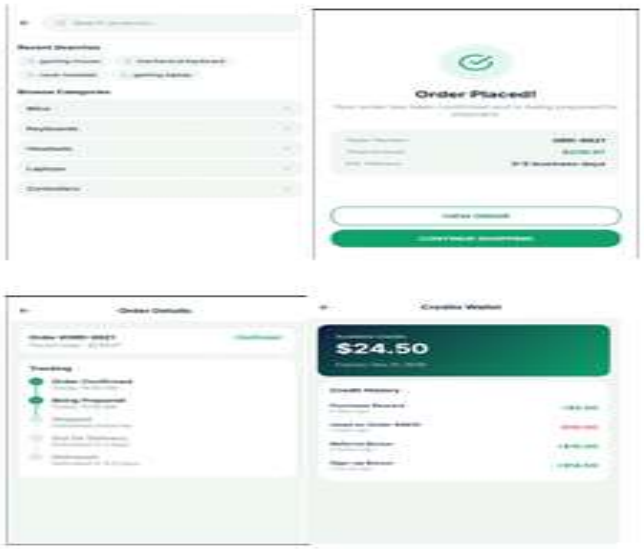


Figure 3.4: Prototype Cart, Checkout & Tracking

Figure 3.4 finishes the user journey through cart changes and order completion. The user changes item quantities using + / - buttons or removes items using the trash icon, then moves through checkout with saved address and payment details. After placing the order, a step-by-step progress timeline removes shipping worries, while green promo buttons keep the screen clean and simple.

E. Data Gathering

The survey questionnaire was designed using Google Forms and distributed to the selected respondents through social media and messaging platforms such as Messenger. Upon collection, the responses were compiled and analyzed to generate conclusions. The gathered data were collated and analyzed to generate conclusions about the user experience.

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F. Statistical Treatment of Data

To analyze the data, statistical techniques will be used to determine respondents' perceptions and preferences regarding the user experience of e-commerce mobile applications among Gen Z. The following statistical tools will be used: percentage, weighted mean, and Likert scale analysis.

Percentage - will be utilized to determine the distribution of responses for each item in the survey questionnaire. This will help understand the frequency of specific ratings given by Gen Z respondents, showing how common certain opinions or experiences are with e-commerce mobile applications.

$$Percentage = \left(\frac{f}{n}\right) \times 100$$

Where:

f = frequency of responses

n = total number of respondents

Weighted mean - will be used to calculate the average rating for each user experience aspect, such as usability, functionality, visual design, and satisfaction. This will help determine the overall level of agreement or satisfaction, showing which features are rated highest and which need improvement.

$$WM = \frac{\sum fx}{n}$$

Where:

WM = weighted mean

f = frequency per response

x = weight assigned to each response option

∑fx = sum of frequency multiplied by weight

n = total number of respondents

Likert Scale - will be utilized to interpret the computed weighted means into clear descriptions. This will help interpret the numerical scores as Excellent, Very Good, Good, Poor, or Very Poor, providing an overview of Gen Z's overall experience with e-commerce mobile applications.

Table 3.1: Likert Rating Scale

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.50 - 5.00	Excellent
4	3.50 - 4.49	Very Good
3	2.50 - 3.49	Good
2	1.50 - 2.49	Poor
1	1.00 - 1.49	Very Poor

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the survey findings on how Generation Z and IT professionals evaluate mobile e-commerce user experience. Using percentages, weighted means, and thematic analysis, the data analyzes key dimensions—usability, functionality, interface design, content quality, and trust—to highlight platform strengths and areas for improvement.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Figure 3.5 presents the demographic profile of the 54 participants, as shown below. Most of the participants were male, comprising about 51.9%. Moreover, most were between 14 and 25 years old, representing Generation Z, the target audience for this study. Students formed the largest group at 64.8%, with Shopee (42.6%) and TikTok Shop (48.1%) as their most frequently used platforms, indicating consistent engagement with the primary e-commerce applications evaluated.



Figure 3.5: Respondents' Demographic Profile (n=54)

Quantitative Findings: Likert-Scale Results

Table 3.2 presents the results across the six sub-variables. The overall weighted mean of 4.34 (Very Good) indicates that respondents generally have a positive perception of e-commerce mobile applications.

A critical observation within these quantitative results is a pronounced ceiling effect: all six UX dimensions clustered tightly between 4.29 and 4.38 on the 5-point scale. This uniformly high baseline creates a logical contrast with the qualitative feedback, where users actively critiqued aggressive pop-ups, deceptive promotions, and complex navigation. This discrepancy suggests that while global platform satisfaction remains high due to utility and habituation, general Likert evaluations may mask granular, task-specific friction points that are better captured through open-ended responses.

Table 3.2 Final Summary Of All Ux Dimensions

No.	Criteria	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1	Usability & Ease of Use	4.29	Very Good
2	Functionality & Performance	4.33	Very Good
3	Interface & Visual Design	4.38	Very Good
4	Content & Information Quality	4.30	Very Good
5	Accessibility, Trust & Security	4.36	Very Good
6	Overall Satisfaction & Loyalty	4.36	Very Good
	Grand Overall Ux Score	4.34	Very Good

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Functionality & Performance received the highest rating (WM = 4.38, Very Good), reflecting broad agreement that apps load quickly, run smoothly, and remain consistently reliable. Accessibility, Trust & Security and Overall Satisfaction & Loyalty followed jointly at 4.36 (Very Good) — affirming that users feel secure navigating the platforms and satisfied enough with their experience to remain active users.

Interface & Visual Design is ranked fourth (WM = 4.30, Very Good), demonstrating that layout clarity, visual appeal, and consistent design presentation are well established. Usability & Ease of Use recorded 4.29 (Very Good), while Content & Information Quality obtained the lowest sub-variable mean at 4.30 (Very Good) — still positive, though items concerning accurate product descriptions, truthful promotional claims, and transparent pricing scored relatively lower. This suggests that information clarity and integrity remain the primary areas for improvement.

Dimension-Level Interpretation

All six dimensions fell within the Very Good range. Functionality & Performance (4.38) ranked highest, confirming the system's responsiveness and dependable operation. Accessibility, Trust & Security (4.36) and Overall Satisfaction & Loyalty (4.36) followed suit, reflecting strong user confidence, perceived safety, and positive intent to continue and recommend the platforms. Interface & Visual Design (4.30), Content & Information Quality (4.30), and Usability & Ease of Use (4.29) complete the profile — it is all positive, with information accuracy and transparency emerging as the key areas needing enhancement.

Qualitative Findings: Open-Ended Responses

Figure 3.6 presents the theme-based analysis of the open-ended answers, supporting and adding to the quantitative results. Blue bars show where things are strong; gray bars show where there is room to grow.

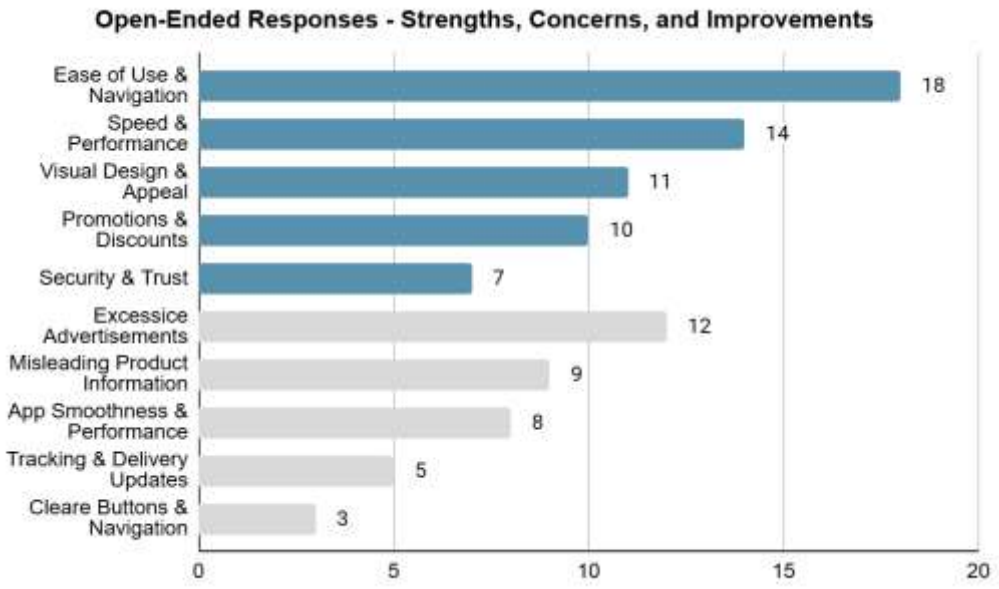


Figure 3.6: Open-Ended Response Themes—Strengths, Concerns, and Improvements

The most frequently identified strengths included ease of use, simplicity, speed, convenience, design, and promotional offers, which can be supported by the Likert-scale results, as Functionality & Performance, Accessibility, Trust & Security, and Overall Satisfaction & Loyalty received the highest marks, meaning that users value products' ease of use and their reliability, functional design, and access to customer support. On the other hand, the least common strengths were related to advertisements, false information, issues with products' performance, delivery tracking, and simplicity of use. Some users reported being misled by ads and felt like leaving the platform because of marketers' manipulation, showing how these issues directly erode trust and affect overall user retention.

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DISCUSSION

The findings show that e-commerce applications operate effectively across all measured categories. The overall score is 4.34, confirming that users consistently have positive interactions. Functionality & Performance received a rating of 4.38; this score indicates that the software's speed and lack of technical errors provide a necessary foundation for user satisfaction. In addition, the scores for Accessibility, Trust & Security are 4.36 plus the scores for Overall Satisfaction & Loyalty are also 4.36 - those numbers show that users feel protected and content when applications work on different devices but also keep private data safe. As applications meet users' requirements, those users intend to recommend the platform to others.

The ratings for Content & Information Quality are 4.30, and the ratings for Usability & Ease of Use are 4.29—those lower numbers highlight that technical stability does not ensure that users are completely satisfied, but even if an application is fast as well as secure, users still care about the correctness of product descriptions and the clarity of prices or discounts. To improve, developers must recognize that accuracy and honest communication maintain the trust of users. Developers need to verify sellers more strictly to punish those who create false product listings. By reducing sudden ad appearances and simplifying package tracking, companies can keep users on the platform. Under these conditions, user loyalty increases over time.

Limitations and Future Research

The results are drawn from a small sample size of 54 respondents, compounded by participant heterogeneity that combined everyday Gen Z consumers with IT professionals, whose technical evaluation criteria differ from typical shopper behavior. This sample size and demographic distribution limit the generalizability of the findings across wider populations and commercial contexts. Methodologically, the uniform high scoring across dimensions indicates a ceiling effect that contrasts with qualitative user complaints, pointing to a limitation in standard Likert instruments when assessing complex digital habits. Furthermore, the study lacks empirical usability testing, task-completion metrics, or formal A/B comparative evaluations of the Figma prototype to scientifically prove that the low-friction design successfully reduces cognitive load compared to existing market applications.

Future studies should expand sample sizes, isolate consumer cohorts from technical experts, incorporate longitudinal tracking, and execute empirical usability testing (such as task-time tracking and A/B interface trials) to validate design interventions.

CONCLUSION

This study evaluated user experience (UX) and Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) principles across major e-commerce platforms—Shopee, Lazada, and TikTok Shop—to identify the main usability challenges Gen Z online shoppers face. The overall UX score of 4.34 (Very Good) indicates a highly positive standard perception of existing mobile commerce platforms; however, user satisfaction remains strongly conditional on design clarity. By examining participant feedback across functionality, usability, accessibility, content, and performance, the research highlighted key daily pain points in current e-commerce apps, particularly regarding messy screens, confusing navigation paths, misleading product information, and delayed updates.

In response, a custom e-commerce prototype was designed in Figma and presented to respondents to demonstrate how core HCI principles—such as Fitts's Law, Recognition over Recall, and Visibility of System Status—can make the shopping journey smoother. The prototype visual evidence underscores how reducing on-page clutter and establishing clear visual hierarchies elevate user speed, ease of use, and overall satisfaction. Addressing the observed gap between high quantitative baseline scores and qualitative pain points, future iterations must validate these design solutions through empirical usability testing and A/B performance metrics. Nonetheless, this study offers a practical, HCI-driven design guide for developers and UX designers seeking to mitigate mobile e-commerce friction.

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