THE MODERATING ROLE OF SELF-CONTROL IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHARIA FINANCIAL LITERACY AND PAYLATERUSAGE DECISIONS (A CASE STUDY OF UNIGA STUDENTS)

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services has transformed student consumption patterns but raised risks of consumer debt and usury, often leading to an intention-behavior gap where high religious knowledge fails to curb digital debt behavior. This study aims to investigate the influence of Sharia Financial Literacy on Paylater Usage Decisions among Accounting and Management students at Garut University, with Self-Control serving as a moderating variable. Employing a quantitative associative approach with a cross-sectional survey method, data were collected via digital questionnaires alongside qualitative micro-focus group discussions for instrument validation. The sample consisted of 100 active students selected through purposive sampling, and the data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The structural model evaluation shows that Sharia Financial Literacy does not have a significant influence on students' Paylater Usage Decisions ($p = 0.129$), indicating that theological understanding is often secondary to practical considerations. Conversely, Self-Control has a positive and significant direct effect on usage decisions ($p = 0.000$), showing that students with strong Self-Control do not avoid paylater but utilize it in a planned, measured, and responsible manner to manage short-term cash flow. Furthermore, Self-Control does not act as a moderating variable in the relationship between Sharia Financial Literacy and Paylater Usage Decisions ($p = 0.413$), as both factors operate independently. In conclusion, individual financial decisions in the fintech ecosystem are heavily driven by psychological behavioral discipline rather than normative religious literacy or its interactive combination.

Keywords: Sharia Financial Literacy; Self-Control; Paylater Usage Decisions.

ABSTRAK

Pesatnya pertumbuhan layanan Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) telah mengubah pola konsumsi mahasiswa namun meningkatkan risiko utang konsumen dan riba, yang sering kali memicu fenomena *intention-behavior gap* di mana pengetahuan agama yang tinggi gagal menekan perilaku utang digital. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji pengaruh Literasi Keuangan Syariah terhadap Keputusan Penggunaan Paylater pada mahasiswa Akuntansi dan Manajemen di Universitas Garut, dengan Kontrol Diri sebagai variabel moderasi. Menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif asosiatif dengan metode survei *cross-*

sectional, data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner digital di samping pelaksanaan diskusi kelompok terfokus (FGD) mikro kualitatif untuk validasi instrumen. Sampel penelitian terdiri dari 100 mahasiswa aktif yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling, dan data dianalisis menggunakan Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares Versi 4 (SEM-PLS). Hasil evaluasi model struktural menunjukkan bahwa Literasi Keuangan Syariah tidak berpengaruh signifikan terhadap keputusan penggunaan paylatermahasiswa (p = 0,129), mengindikasikan bahwa pemahaman teologis sering kali dikesampingkan oleh pertimbangan praktis. Sebaliknya, Kontrol Diri memiliki pengaruh langsung yang positif dan signifikan terhadap keputusan penggunaan (p = 0,000), menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa dengan kontrol diri kuat tidak menghindari paylatermelainkan memanfaatkannya secara terencana, terukur, dan bertanggung jawab untuk mengelola arus kas jangka pendek. Lebih lanjut, Kontrol Diri tidak bertindak sebagai variabel moderasi dalam hubungan antara Literasi Keuangan Syariah dan keputusan penggunaan paylater (p = 0,413) karena kedua faktor tersebut beroperasi secara mandiri. Kesimpulannya, keputusan keuangan individu dalam ekosistem digital lebih kuat didorong oleh disiplin perilaku psikologis daripada literasi keagamaan yang normatif maupun kombinasi interaktif keduanya.

Kata Kunci: Literasi Keuangan Syariah; Kontrol Diri; Penggunaan Paylater.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) services has transformed students' consumption patterns into a more convenient model; however, it has also raised the risk of consumer debt and ethical dilemmas related to usury in conventional business models. Theoretically, this behavior can be examined from two perspectives. The state-of-the-art literature from the past decade indicates that the cognitive-normative dimensions under the Theory of Planned Behavior suggest that Islamic financial literacy can serve as an individual's spiritual safeguard (Jaiswal, 2025). Meanwhile, from the psychological-behavioral dimension, Self-Regulation Theory confirms that self-control serves as an internal anchor to curb instant gratification (Alsheibami & Aldhyani, 2022; Osman eit al., 2024). Although both domains have been extensively studied, a theoretical gap (research gap) persists, as most previous studies have only examined them partially as separate independent variables. This approach often fails to explain the Intention-Behavior Gap phenomenona condition where students with high levels of Islamic financial literacy still choose to use paylater services. This is where the novelty and uniqueness of this study lie, as it explicitly positions Self-Control as a moderating variable to demonstrate that the effectiveness of Sharia literacy in curbing digital debt decisions is conditional. The significance of this research is further strengthened by its focus on Accounting and Management students at Garut University as a knowledgeable population to determine whether paylater issues stem from a lack of normative knowledge or weak behavioral control.

Empirical studies over the past decade have consistently shown that individuals' digital economic decisions are driven by a combination of cognitive-normative and psychological-behavioral factors (Anon et al., 2026; Chein, 2025). On the one hand, the literature on Islamic finance emphasizes that Sharia financial literacy plays a crucial role in guiding consumers to choose Sharia-compliant products and avoid practices involving riba (Ahmad Syaichoni & Amalia Nuril Hidayati, 2024). However, contemporary research often finds theoretical ambiguities, where a high level of religious understanding does not always correlate linearly with actual behavior in the field an anomaly known as the

Intention-Behavior Gap(Wijaya et al., 2024). On the other hand, various studies in financial psychology over the past decade confirm that self-control serves as a very strong internal anchor for curbing impulsive online spending and mitigating the use of instant debt instruments such as paylater (Fauziah eit al., 2023). Unfortunately, most of the prior literature has still tested these two domains partially and separately as standalone independent variables, thereby failing to capture the dynamics of interaction between the theological (literacy) and psychological (Self-Control) defenses within the digital ecosystem. Thus, the theoretical thinking of librarians needs to be reconstructed to test the moderating effect between Self-Control and Islamic Financial Literacy on the intention/behavior of using paylater.

Based on the integration of the Theory of Planned Behavior and Self-Regulation Theory, this study presents a novel argument that the effectiveness of Islamic financial literacy in curbing the decision to use paylater services is conditional. Cognitive knowledge regarding Sharia aspects will only translate into wise financial decisions if individuals possess strong Self-Control to execute that knowledge amidst the onslaught of aggressive fintech stimuli (Ahmad Syaichoni & Amalia Nuril Hidayati, 2024). By positioning self-control as a synergistic activator (moderating variable), this study provides a holistic theoretical contribution to the development of Behavioral Islamic Finance, while offering a key distinction (originality) from previous studies that tend to overlook behavioral discipline aspects in knowledgeable populations(Deivi eit al., 2023; Fauziah eit al., 2023).

Specifically, the gap analysis in this study stems from the fact that much of the existing literature on Islamic finance tends to view Sharia Literacy and Self-Control as separate, independent pathways (Agustin & Hakim, 2022; Ahmad Syaichoni & Amalia Nuril Hidayati, 2024; Amadi et al., 2023; Risna Yunia Rahma & Siti Zulaikha, 2022). This conventional linear approach has proven to be insufficiently adaptive in unraveling the complexity of decision-making within the modern fintech ecosystem, thereby triggering an empirical inconsistency known as the Intention-Behavior Gap where high religious knowledge fails to curb digital debt behavior. Therefore, the novelty and originality of this study lie in the reconstruction of a conceptual model that positions self-control not as a direct predictor, but as a moderating variable that simultaneously interacts with cognitive-normative aspects and psychological control.

The uniqueness of this interaction model offers a new perspective: that a theological understanding of the prohibition against usury will only effectively transform students' actual behavior if supported by strong self-regulation as its synergistic catalyst. Furthermore, the significance of this study encompasses two highly crucial strategic contributions. Theoretically, this study enriches the body of knowledge in Behavioral Islamic Finance and Behavioral Accounting by providing empirical evidence that the effectiveness of religious literacy in digital economic decision-making is conditional. Practically and in terms of application, this research on Accounting and Management students at Garut University makes an important contribution to higher education institutions in formulating curriculum blueprints. The results of this study can serve as a foundation for educational policies that not only focus on the transfer of normative knowledge (Sharia Literacy) but are also integrated with training to strengthen psychological character (Self-Control) in order to shape the financial behavior of the younger generation to be responsible, sound, and in accordance with Sharia guidance.

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative associative approach using a cross-sectional survey method. This method is used to collect data from respondents at a specific point in time to determine the relationships among the variables under study. Through a cross-sectional survey, researchers can obtain insights into digital financial behavior more quickly and efficiently (Creisweill, 2018).

The study was conducted at the Faculty of Economics, Garut University, Garut Regency, West Java. This location was chosen because it aligns with the characteristics of the respondents required for the study.

The data sources used in this study consist entirely of primary data. The data were obtained directly from the research subjects, namely students of the Faculty of Economics at Garut University, who served as the primary respondents.

Quantitative data collection was conducted digitally using a structured questionnaire distributed online via Google Forms. The questionnaire was designed using a 1 to 5 Likert scale to measure the respondents' attitudes (Seikaran, 2016). Interestingly, before the final questionnaire was distributed, the researchers first conducted sequential micro-focus group discussions (FGDs) with seven students who are active users of Shopee PayLater. The inclusion of focus group discussions (FGDs) at the outset was deliberately chosen as a quality control measure to assess face validity (Krueigeir, n.d.). This step is crucial to ensure that the fintech technical terms and Sharia literacy instruments in the questionnaire align with the students' everyday language, thereby avoiding interpretive bias or misunderstandings when the main survey is conducted (Willis, 2012).

The population for this study consists of all active students in the Accounting and Management Program at the Faculty of Economics, Garut University. Respondents selected for the study must meet two criteria: (1) they have taken or are currently taking a course in Islamic Economics, and (2) they have used or are currently using the paylater payment feature.

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which involves selecting respondents based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives. Using this technique, the sample size for this study was 100 respondents.

This study employs three categories of latent variables derived from the theoretical constructs of the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Self-Regulation Theory: Here is the English version of the summary table, tailored specifically to your research context and ready for your paper or thesis proposal:

Table 1. Operationalization of Variables

Latent Variable	Specific Indicators (Paylater Context)	Main References
1. Sharia Financial Literacy (X)	1. Knowledge of *Riba* (usury), interest rates, and paylater late penalties. 2. Understanding of digital sharia contracts (*Akad*: *Ijarah*, *Murabahah*, *Qardh*). Awareness of Islamic perspectives on consumptive debt.	(Hidajat & Hamdani, 2017) DSN-MUI Fatwa No. 117/2018 (Information Technology-Based Financing Services Based on Sharia Principles)
2. Self-Control (Z)	1. Impulse Control: Ability to resist spontaneous buying triggers (promos, discounts, flash sales). 2. Delayed Gratification: Choosing to	(Strömbäck eit al., 2017)

	save up rather than using immediate paylater limits. 3. Budgeting Discipline: Sticking to the student monthly allowance without overspending.	
3. Paylater Usage Decisions (Y)	1. Usage Intensity: Frequency of usage and the amount of credit limit spent. 2. Feature Selection: The choice between using sharia-compliant paylater vs. conventional options. 3. Rational Consideration: Motives behind usage (urgent academic needs vs. lifestyle/prestige).	(Ajzein, n.d., 1991)

Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

The data analysis in this study employed the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) technique using the statistical software SmartPLS 4.

To ensure that the analyzed data are valid and reliable, data validity is assessed through an evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) in SEM-PLS, which includes:

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis and Respondent Profile

The primary data collection process, conducted through the distribution of a digital questionnaire, successfully yielded a valid sample of 100 respondents who met all the study's inclusion criteria. These criteria included being an active student, having taken or currently taking a course in Islamic Economics, and being an active user of pay-later services. The distribution of respondents by major, as compiled, is shown in Table 2 below: Convergent Validity, Internal Consistency Reliability, and Discriminant Validity.

Table 2 Respondent Profile by Program of Study

No.	Program of Study	Number of Respondents	Presentase (%)
1	Accounting	75	75,2
2	Management	25	24,8
Total			100

Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

Referring to Table 2, most respondents were students from the Accounting Program, totaling 75 students (75.0%), while the remaining 25 students (25.0%) were from the Management Program. Methodologically, this proportional distribution is considered representative to accommodate two complementary academic perspectives within the field of economics. Accounting students are assumed to possess a cognitive advantage in the analytical acuity of financial statements and cost implications, while Management students focus on financial decision-making behavior and individual risk management. Given that all respondents from these two programs had completed courses in Islamic Economics, they were considered a knowledgeable population possessing a comparable foundational understanding of the normative principles of muamalah law and the prohibition of usury before the questionnaire was distributed.

Characteristics of Paylater Feature Usage Based on Interview Results

To gain insight into the patterns of paylater usage among college students, the researchers conducted interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with several informants. The results revealed three main themes regarding the use of Shopee Paylater: frequency of use, transaction amounts, and the purpose of the funds.

Characteristics of Paylater Usage (Qualitative Thematic Analysis)

A qualitative exploration through in-depth interviews with student informants was conducted to identify actual behavioral patterns in the use of Shopee Paylater. The results of the thematic analysis summarize three main characteristics:

1. Use of this feature is no longer incidental but has become a routine monthly payment tool when pocket money starts to run low in the middle or end of the month. Informant P1 stated: "Almost every month, I'm sure there's a purchase made using Paylater when my monthly allowance is running low."
2. The allocation of credit is consciously limited to a range of Rp100,000 to Rp400,000 per transaction. This restriction is intentionally implemented as a form of self-control to ensure the next month's bill remains within the scope of their remaining allowance (Informant P6).
3. The use of paylater is no longer dominated by hedonistic-consumerist behavior but has expanded to support urgent academic and basic needs, such as the purchase of textbooks, internet data, and electricity tokens (Informants P2 & P7).
4. Interestingly, a unique pattern of paylater usage has emerged, shifting toward a productive use for microbusinesses. Students take advantage of special discounts available exclusively to paylater users to purchase goods below market price, then resell them for cash to make a net profit. Informant 3 explained:

   "I intentionally check out using paylater when there's a big discount promotion that's only valid for that payment method, because the final price is much cheaper than the regular price. As soon as the item arrives, I immediately resell it to someone else at the standard price. It's a good way to turn over capital without using my own money upfront and make a net profit."

To understand patterns of paylater usage among college students, researchers conducted interviews and focus group discussions. The results identified three main themes: frequency of use, transaction amounts, and the purpose of the funds.

Table 3 Demographic Characteristics of Instrument Validation FGD Participants

Participant Code	Study Program	Semester	Gender	Primary PayLater Platform
P1	Accounting	VI	Female	*Shopee PayLater*
P2	Accounting	VI	Female	*Shopee PayLater*
P3	Accounting	VI	Female	*Shopee PayLater*
P4	Management	VI	Female	*Shopee PayLater*
P5	Management	VI	Female	*Shopee PayLater*
P6	Management	VI	Male	*Shopee PayLater*
P7	Management	VI	Male	*Shopee PayLater*

Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

The results of the FGD indicated that some terms in the instrument were unfamiliar to the students. Therefore, the researchers revised the wording of several indicators to make them easier to understand and more in line with the language commonly used by the respondents. A summary of the changes to the instrument is presented in Table 3.

Table 4 Contextual Adjustments to Instrument Indicators Based on FGD Results

Variable	Indicator	FGD Results	Key Jargon Adopted
Islamic Financial Literacy	Understanding the legal consequences of additional fees due to delayed fulfillment of financial obligations.	I am aware that the due date penalty system in paylater services contains elements of riba (usury).	Due date penalty
Self-Control	Capable of controlling short-term psychological impulses to defer consumption for future financial stability.	I can restrain myself from immediately checking out shopping items when receiving credit limit balance promotions.	Checkout & Credit limit
Usage Decision	Executing goods purchase transactions using digital financing facilities.	I frequently use the "checkout now, pay upon delivery/next month" feature in my daily shopping activities.	Buy now, pay later (Checkout now, pay later)

Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

Results of the Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) Analysis

To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments prior to hypothesis testing, an outer model evaluation was conducted using SmartPLS 4 software. This data quality assurance phase integrates three key analyses: convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability.

Testing the Convergent Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure data quality, indicators were verified through ideal outer loading and AVE ranges, alongside Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability for construct stability. The respective statistical outputs are mapped across Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 5 Outer Loadings

Indicator	Sharia Financial Literacy (X_1)	Paylater Usage Decision (Y)	Self-Control (Z)	Self-Control (Z) × Sharia Financial Literacy (X_1)
PUD1		0,943		
PUD2		0,943		
PUD3		0,777		
PUD4		0,735		
SFL1	0,764			
SFL3	0,706			
SFL4	0,792			
SC1			0,823	
SC4			0,813	

SC5	0,840	
SC7	0,821	
Self-Control (Z) × Sharia Financial Literacy (X_1)		1,000

Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

Based on the test results in Table 5, all indicators have outer loadings above 0.70, thus meeting the criteria for convergent validity (Hair eit al., 2019; Hamid, 2019). For the Paylater Usage Decision variable (Y), the loading values range from 0.735 to 0.943; for the Sharia Financial Literacy variable (X), they range from 0.706 to 0.792; and for the Self-Control variable (Z), they range from 0.813 to 0.840. Additionally, the interaction construct (moderation) has a loading value of 1.000, indicating that this indicator is suitable for use in the model. All constructs also have an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value above 0.50 (Hair eit al., 2019; Hamid, 2019). Thus, the measurement model has met the criteria for convergent validity and can proceed to the testing of discriminant validity and construct reliability.

Table 6 Results of the AVE, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability Tests

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Sharia Financial Literacy (X_1)	0,624	0,631	0,799	0,570
Paylater Usage Decision (Y)	0,874	0,904	0,915	0,731
Self-Control (Z)	0,844	0,854	0,895	0,680

Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

Based on the results in Table 6, all research variables have a Cronbach's Alpha value > 0.60, Composite Reliability > 0.70, and AVE > 0.50 (Hair eit al., 2019). These results indicate that each construct meets the criteria for reliability and convergent validity. Thus, the measurement model (outer model) is deemed valid, and the analysis can proceed to the structural model evaluation stage (inner model).

Table 6 Discriminant Validity

Variable	Sharia Financial Literacy (X_1)	Paylater Usage Decision (Y)	Self-Control (Z)	Self-Control (Z) × Sharia Financial Literacy (X_1)
Sharia Financial Literacy (X_1)				
Paylater Usage Decision (Y)	0,249			
Self-Control (Z)	0,172	0,571		

Self-Control (Z) × Sharia Financial Literacy (X_1)	0,398	0,113	0,393	

***Source**: Processed Primary Data (2026)*

Table 7 shows that all HTMT values in the table fall below the strict threshold of 0.85 (or the loose threshold of 0.90) (Hair eit al., 2019), demonstrating that each variable in the model is truly distinct and different from one another.

Table 9 R-square

Variabel	R-square	R-square adjusted
Paylater Usage Decision (Y)	0,285	0,263

Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

Based on the results of the structural model evaluation in Table 7, an R^2 value of 0.285 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.263 were obtained. This indicates that the variables Islamic Financial Literacy, Self-Control, and their interaction account for 26.3% of the variation in Paylater Usage Decision. The remaining 73.7% is influenced by other factors not included in the research model.

Table 10 F-square

	F-square
Sharia Financial Literacy (X_1) -> Paylater Usage Decision (Y)	0,016
Self-Control -> Paylater Usage Decision (Y)	0,320
Self-Control x Sharia Financial Literacy (X_1) -> Paylater Usage Decision (Y)	0,006

Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

The f^2 statistics indicate that fluctuations in paylater decisions are predominantly determined by self-control as a direct predictor (f^2= 0.320), whereas Islamic financial education was found to have no significant explanatory power (f^2 = 0.016). The lack of interaction (f^2= 0.006) in this model leads to the conclusion that personal mindset factors are far more influential on respondents' behavior than their cognitive understanding.

The results of the structural model testing using SEM-PLS are shown in Figure 1. The figure displays the outer loadings for each indicator, the relationships among latent variables, and the R^2 values, which indicate the ability of the exogenous variables to explain the endogenous variables.

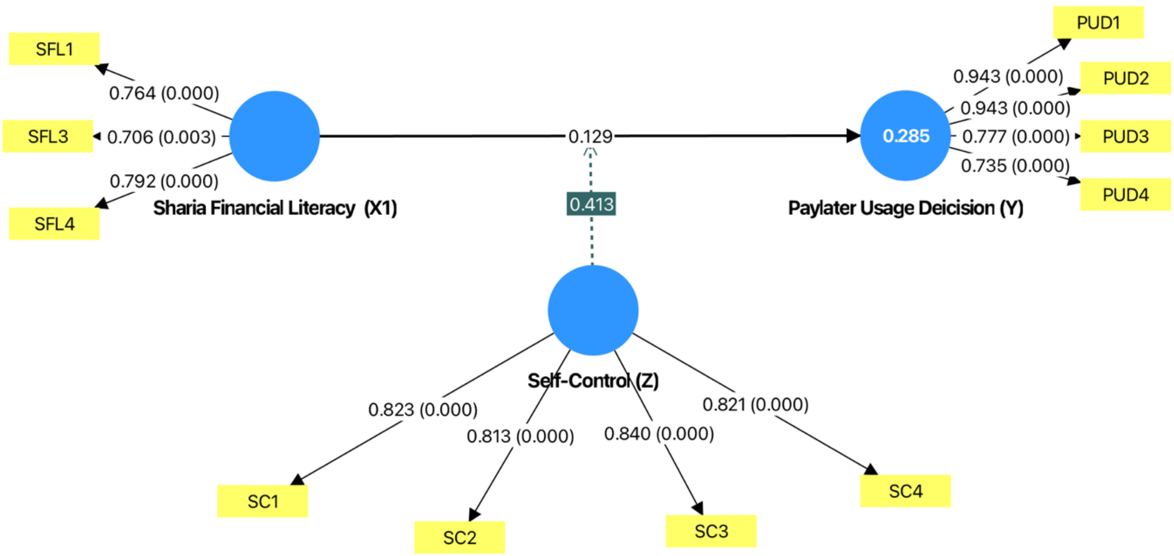

Figure 1. Structural Model Estimation Results
Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

The next step in SEM-PLS analysis is to test the structural model to examine the relationships among the variables under study. This testing is conducted by analyzing path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values to determine the significance of each variable's influence. The results of the structural model testing are presented in Table 11.

Table 11 Results of the Path Coefficients Test

Variable Relationships	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Sharia Financial Literacy (X_1) -> Paylater Usage Decision (Y)	-0,116	-0,142	0,077	1.518	0,129
Self-Control (Z) -> Paylater Usage Decision (Y)	0,528	0,529	0,078	6.066	0,000
Self-Control (Z) x Sharia Financial Literacy (X_1) -> Paylater Usage Decision (Y)	-0,07	-0,083	0,118	0,819	0,413

Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

Discussion

The Impact of Sharia Financial Literacy on Decisions to Use Paylater Services

Based on the results of the statistical analysis, the effect of Sharia Financial Literacy (X_1) on the decision to use paylater (Y) yielded a path coefficient (original sample) of -0.116, a t-value of 1.518, and a p-value of 0.129. Since the t-statistic is < 1.96 and the p-value is > 0.05, Hypothesis 1 is rejected. Thus, Sharia Financial Literacy does not have a significant influence on students' decisions to use the Paylater service.

Although the direction of the relationship is negative, the influence is not statistically strong enough to explain the decision to use paylater.

These quantitative results align with the qualitative findings obtained from interviews with 7 informants and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). In general, the informants demonstrated a good understanding of Islamic finance principles, including the prohibition of usury and the importance of conducting transactions in accordance with Sharia regulations. However, in practice, this understanding does not always serve as the primary basis for decisions regarding the use of paylater services. Some informants revealed that ease of access, payment flexibility, urgent needs, and limited funds often outweigh Sharia considerations.

This finding indicates a gap between knowledge and behavior. Although students understand the concept of Sharia finance theoretically, this understanding has not been fully reflected in their daily financial behavior. In other words, a higher level of Sharia financial literacy does not automatically reduce the tendency to use paylater services.

These research results align with various previous studies showing that the use of digital financial services is influenced not only by knowledge but also by factors such as convenience, need, habit, and perceived benefits. In the context of this study, these factors appear to play a greater role in influencing students' decisions to use paylater services than their level of Sharia financial literacy (Aminnuddin & Amin, 2026; Suheirman eit al., 2024).

This phenomenon provides clear evidence that normative aspects (Islamic Financial Literacy) do not play a greater role in students' financial decisions than psychological and behavioral factors, based on the results of interviews with informants, including the following. research findings based on in-depth interviews indicate that most informants have a good understanding of the laws regarding usury and gharar. However, this understanding of normative aspects faces significant challenges when confronted with aggressive promotional campaigns, such as the 9.9 flash sale or other "double day" events. At this point, students experience conflicting internal cognitive conflicts, including: 1) remaining faithful to religious principles with the consequence of missing out on discount opportunities, or 2) taking short-term financial advantage to obtain their dream items even if it means violating Sharia principles.

In this dilemma, the economic drive to pursue low prices often clouds their rational judgment. This situation confirms the Hyperbolic Discounting theory (Bawalle et al., 2024), in which individuals tend to overestimate the utility or instant gratification obtained today, while underestimating future non-financial consequences and spiritual values.

The second factor widening this gap is the ease of access offered by financial technology. All seven informants acknowledged that the seamless integration of paylater features into e-commerce apps particularly the one-click checkout feature allows these morally dilemmatic purchasing decisions to be made in a matter of seconds. Based on Dual-Process Theory (Kahneman, 2011), the intense digital stimuli from flash sale promotions instantly activate System 1 (fast, emotional, and impulsive thinking). As a result of this extremely rapid transaction acceleration, theological knowledge regarding the risks of usury and gharar stored within System 2 (slow, logical, and analytical thinking) does not have time to intervene or curb students' impulsive actions during transactions.

Interestingly, the interview results show that the use of paylater is influenced not only by the convenience of digital technology but also by the family environment. Three informants revealed that they activated the paylater feature with their parents' knowledge. In fact, they began using the service while still in their junior year of high school, before entering college. Due to age restrictions on digital financial services, the informants used their parents' ID cards to activate their accounts. This finding suggests that family support or tolerance plays a role in shaping the perception that using paylater is normal. Consequently, students have become familiar with and used digital credit facilities since their school days, even though moral and religious principles should serve as the foundation for financial decision-making.

The Effect of Self-Control on Decisions to Use Paylater

Based on the results of statistical testing, the effect of Self-Control (Z) on the Decision to Use Paylater (Y) shows a path coefficient (original sample) of 0.528, a t-statistic of 6.066, and a p-value of 0.000. Since the t-statistic is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05, Hypothesis 2 is accepted. These results indicate that Self-Control has a positive and significant effect on students' decisions to use paylater services.

These quantitative results are supported by qualitative findings obtained through interviews with 7 informants and focus group discussions. Most informants explained that they did not use paylater services spontaneously or without careful consideration, but rather after careful planning. They generally considered their ability to pay the bill in the following billing cycle, adjusted their use of paylater services to their financial circumstances, and limited their transactions so as not to exceed their payment capacity.

These findings suggest that students with good Self-Control do not necessarily avoid using paylater services. On the contrary, they tend to use these services in a more planned and responsible manner. The informants view paylater as a tool for managing short-term cash flow, especially when there are urgent needs that must be met before their available funds can be accessed. Additionally, they also take advantage of various promotions and discounts offered through the paylater feature to gain greater economic benefits.

These findings also build upon previous research indicating that the use of digital financial services is not always synonymous with spendthrift behavior (Heigawan eit al., 2023; Poweill eit al., 2023). Among students with high Self-Control, paylater services can serve as a financial management tool that helps address short-term needs without compromising personal financial stability (Juita eit al., 2023; Poweill eit al., 2023). Thus, self-control is a key factor influencing how students use paylater services in a measured and responsible manner.

Empirical studies in several countries have shown that financial self-control can improve budget awareness, financial planning, and debt management in BNPL users, thus encouraging decisions to use BNPL responsibly and responsibly (Juita et al., 2023; Schomburgk & Hoffmann, 2023).

The Role of Self-Control as a Moderating Variable in the Relationship Between Islamic Financial Literacy and Paylater Usage Decisions

Based on the results of statistical testing, the interaction effect between Self-Control and Sharia Financial Literacy on the Decision to Use Paylatery ielded a coefficient of -0.070, a t-statistic of 0.819, and a p-value of 0.413. Since the t-statistic is < 1.96 and the p-value is > 0.05, Hypothesis 3 is rejected. These results indicate that Self-Control does not act as a moderating variable in the relationship between Sharia Financial Literacy and the Decision to Use Paylater (Sari & Pramiana, 2026).

These quantitative findings are supported by the results of in-depth interviews with seven informants and focus group discussions (FGDs). According to the informants, the decision to use paylater services is generally based on practical reasons that align with immediate needs, such as urgent needs, ease of access to the service, payment flexibility, and various attractive promotions offered by the platform. On the other hand, understanding of Islamic finance and Self-Control tend to operate separately in the financial decision-making process. Students with a good knowledge of Islamic finance do not necessarily make that knowledge a primary consideration for avoiding the use of paylater. Similarly, students with a high level of Self-Control do not always link disciplined financial behavior to adherence to the principles of muamalah in Islam.

Consistent with previous research, these findings indicate that psychological factors and knowledge-related factors do not always interact in influencing the use of digital financial services. In the context of college students who use paylater services, the decision to use such services is influenced more by considerations of daily financial needs and management than by a combination of Islamic Financial Literacy and Self-Control (Norailis Ab. Wahab et al., 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing, this study shows that self-control is a factor that has a positive and significant influence on the decision to use paylater services among students at Garut University. These findings indicate that students with good Self-Control tend to use paylater services in a planned manner and in accordance with their financial capabilities. Conversely, Islamic financial literacy was not found to have a significant influence on the decision to use paylater services. These results suggest that an understanding of Islamic financial principles does not necessarily translate into students' financial behavior. Furthermore, self-control was not found to moderate the relationship between Islamic financial literacy and the decision to use paylater services. For future research, it is recommended to include additional variables such as perceived ease of use, social influence, and platform promotions, as well as to involve respondents from various universities to ensure the study's findings have broader generalizability.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to express gratitude to all parties who have provided support, assistance, and contributions to the conduct of this study. Special thanks are extended to the Dean of the Faculty of Economics at Garut University, the Head of the UPPM at Garut University, and all students who agreed to serve as respondents and informants in this study. May all the kindness shown be rewarded by Allah SWT. The author hopes that this research will contribute to the advancement of knowledge and educational practices at Garut University.

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