

## The Effect of Flash Sale on Impulsive Buying with Positive Emotion as Mediating Variable among Shopee Users in Malang City

Doni Hermawan<sup>1\*</sup>, Ainur Rofiq<sup>2</sup>

Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Universitas Brawijaya

**Corresponding Author:** Doni Hermawan [doni.hrmawan@gmail.com](mailto:doni.hrmawan@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

The expansion of the internet has revolutionized how businesses engage with global customers, significantly altering commerce and daily life in Indonesia. This digital transformation has led to the rapid growth of e-commerce, fostering innovation in digital business practices and the emergence of new marketplaces. This study investigates the influence of flash sales on impulsive purchasing behavior, considering the mediating role of positive emotions among Shopee users in Malang City. Employing a quantitative, explanatory descriptive methodology, data were gathered from 300 respondents using purposive sampling. The results indicate that: 1) Flash sales have a positive and significant effect on impulsive buying behavior, 2) Positive emotions also positively and significantly affect impulsive buying behavior, and 3) Positive emotions significantly mediate the relationship between flash sales and impulsive buying behavior on Shopee.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In the rapidly evolving digital era, the internet has dramatically changed the way businesses operate, allowing them to reach a global audience with ease. According to a report from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), there were approximately 215.63 million internet users in Indonesia during the period of 2022–2023, which accounts for 78.19% of the country's population. This significant increase in internet penetration has revolutionized various aspects of life, including commerce, by shifting traditional trade methods towards e-commerce. E-commerce has catalyzed innovation in digital business, paving the way for online marketplaces such as Shopee. As of December 2023, Shopee has emerged as the leading marketplace in Indonesia, boasting an impressive average of 170.4 million monthly visits, as reported by SimilarWeb (2023).

One of the crucial marketing strategies employed by Shopee to maintain its competitive edge is the implementation of flash sales. These flash sales offer substantial discounts for a limited period, effectively enticing consumers to make impulsive purchases. Previous research by Taufik (2020) and Herlina et al. (2021) has highlighted the effectiveness of flash sales in driving impulsive buying behavior among consumers. The concept behind flash sales is to create a sense of urgency, prompting consumers to make quick purchasing decisions without thorough deliberation. Flash sales have been shown to enhance consumer purchasing power. Various studies have corroborated the positive relationship between flash sales and impulsive buying. For instance, Nagadeepa & Tamil Selvi (2015), Liu et al. (2020), Vannisa et al. (2020), and Lamis et al. (2022) all found that flash sales significantly influence consumers' tendency to make impulsive purchases. Consumers often experience positive emotions, such as pleasure and satisfaction, when they perceive they are getting a good deal during flash sales. This emotional response can drive them to make unplanned purchases, as noted by Lu et al. (2020) and Dsilva & N Elangovan (2021).

However, the relationship between flash sales and impulsive buying is not universally accepted. Some studies have found no significant impact of flash sales on impulsive buying behavior. Research conducted by Purwaningsih & Nurhadi (2021), Panwar & Khan (2021), and Martaleni et al. (2022) suggest that not all consumers are equally influenced by flash sales. Factors such as personal traits, shopping habits, and the nature of the products on sale can moderate the effectiveness of flash sales. Furthermore, while flash sales can evoke positive emotions leading to impulsive buying, they can also trigger negative emotions among consumers. Panwar & Khan (2021) noted that some consumers might feel dissatisfaction or anger if they perceive the discounts as deceptive or if they miss out on a deal due to high demand and limited stock. This dual emotional response indicates a complex interplay between flash sales and consumer emotions, suggesting the need for further research to understand these dynamics better.

This study aims to delve deeper into the impact of flash sales on impulsive buying behavior, particularly focusing on the role of positive emotions as a mediating variable. The research will target Shopee users in Malang City, employing a quantitative, explanatory descriptive method to gather and analyze data. A sample size of 300 respondents will be selected through purposive sampling to ensure that the sample accurately represents the target population. The study will utilize descriptive statistics to provide an overview of the data and employ Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to test the proposed relationships between variables. Mediation tests will be conducted to examine the mediating effect of positive emotions on the relationship between flash sales and impulsive buying. By exploring these relationships comprehensively, the study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on consumer behavior in the context of e-commerce.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **Flash Sale**

Flash sales are promotional events where businesses offer products at significantly reduced prices for a limited duration, primarily in online settings. These sales are designed to create a sense of urgency and scarcity, encouraging consumers to make swift purchasing decisions. Research by Taufik (2020) and Herlina et al. (2021) demonstrates that flash sales can effectively generate consumer interest and stimulate online shopping activity. Their studies suggest that the limited-time nature of flash sales captures consumers' attention and compels them to make purchases quickly, often leading to increased sales and engagement on e-commerce platforms.

However, the impact of flash sales on impulsive buying is not universally agreed upon. Studies by Purwaningsih & Nurhadi (2021) and Panwar & Khan (2021) indicate that the effectiveness of flash sales in driving impulsive buying behavior varies among different consumer groups and contexts. While some consumers are strongly influenced by the urgency and discounts offered during flash sales, others may not experience the same level of impulsive buying. These studies suggest that factors such as individual consumer characteristics, previous shopping experiences, and the nature of the products on sale can moderate the impact of flash sales on purchasing behavior.

### **Impulsive Buying**

Impulsive buying is characterized by spontaneous and unplanned purchasing behaviors driven by immediate desires or emotions, often without thorough consideration of the consequences. This type of buying behavior is typically triggered by external stimuli, such as attractive discounts, limited-time offers, or visually appealing product displays. Research by Vannisa et al. (2020) and Lamis et al. (2022) underscores the impact of online product sales, particularly during flash sales, on increasing impulsive buying tendencies. Their findings suggest that the urgent nature of flash sales, combined with significant discounts, can heighten consumers' impulsivity, leading them to make quick, unplanned purchases. The excitement and perceived opportunity to secure a

good deal often drive consumers to buy items they had not initially intended to purchase.

Conversely, the study by Panwar & Khan (2021) presents a more nuanced view, suggesting that impulsive buying is not always significantly influenced by sales promotions like flash sales. Their research indicates that while some consumers may be swayed by the urgency and discounts, others may not exhibit the same level of impulsive behavior. Additionally, Panwar & Khan (2021) highlight that impulsive buying induced by flash sales can sometimes result in negative emotions, such as dissatisfaction or regret. This can occur if consumers feel they were pressured into making a purchase or if the product fails to meet their expectations. These mixed findings suggest that the relationship between flash sales and impulsive buying is complex and influenced by various factors, including individual consumer traits, the context of the sale, and the nature of the products offered. While flash sales can be a powerful tool to boost sales and engage consumers, businesses should be mindful of the potential for negative emotional outcomes and aim to create a balanced promotional strategy that caters to diverse consumer responses. Further research is necessary to explore these dynamics in greater detail and to develop strategies that maximize the positive impacts of flash sales while mitigating potential downsides.

### **Positive Emotion**

Positive emotion encompasses feelings of happiness, excitement, or pleasure experienced by individuals. These emotions play a critical role in consumer behavior, particularly in the context of impulsive buying. Studies by Lu et al. (2020) and Dsilva & N Elangovan (2021) provide compelling evidence that positive emotions significantly drive impulsive buying behavior, especially during sales promotions like flash sales. The thrill of obtaining a good deal, the excitement of limited-time offers, and the pleasure derived from the shopping experience itself can make consumers more susceptible to making spontaneous purchases. Lu et al. (2020) found that the emotional appeal of flash sales often enhances the attractiveness of the offers, making consumers more likely to engage in impulsive buying. The sense of urgency combined with the joy of securing a bargain can trigger immediate purchasing decisions. Similarly, Dsilva & N Elangovan (2021) highlighted that positive emotions such as happiness and excitement can amplify the perceived value of the deals, further increasing the likelihood of impulsive purchases.

However, the relationship between flash sales and emotions is not always straightforward. Panwar & Khan (2021) caution that flash sales do not invariably evoke positive emotions. While many consumers experience excitement and pleasure during these promotions, others may feel negative emotions such as disappointment or anger. This can happen if the product fails to meet their expectations, if they feel pressured into buying, or if they miss out on a deal due to high demand and limited stock. Such negative emotions can lead to dissatisfaction and regret, detracting from the overall shopping experience. Therefore, while positive emotions are a significant driver of impulsive buying behavior in response to flash sales, it is essential to recognize that these promotions can also evoke negative feelings. Businesses should be aware of this

dual potential and strive to create flash sales that maximize positive emotional responses while minimizing the risk of negative outcomes. By carefully designing their promotional strategies, businesses can enhance the effectiveness of flash sales and foster a more positive and satisfying shopping experience for consumers.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology adopted in this research is grounded in a quantitative approach, characterized by an explanatory descriptive type. This approach is selected to provide a detailed and systematic explanation of the phenomena under study. To determine the appropriate sample size, the research adheres to the sample calculation guidelines outlined by Malhotra (2020), which are particularly useful when the population size is unknown or not easily definable. Given the context of this study, which falls under the category of test-marketing studies, a sample size of 300 respondents was deemed sufficient to achieve reliable and valid results. Prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, the researchers conducted thorough validity and reliability tests to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the measurement instruments. Validity tests are essential to ascertain that the questionnaire effectively captures the constructs it is intended to measure, while reliability tests check the consistency of the responses over time. The data analysis in this research is multifaceted and includes several stages to comprehensively examine the data. Firstly, descriptive analysis is employed to summarize and describe the main features of the data collected, providing an overall picture of the sample characteristics and preliminary insights into the research variables.

Following this, Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) is utilized. SEM-PLS is a robust statistical technique that allows for the simultaneous analysis of multiple variables and their relationships. It is particularly suited for exploratory research and complex models that involve multiple constructs and indicators. The use of SEM-PLS helps in understanding the direct and indirect relationships between the variables, providing a deeper insight into the underlying patterns and causal relationships. Additionally, a mediation test is performed to explore the role of mediating variables in the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. In this study, the mediation test is crucial to investigate whether positive emotions act as a mediator in the relationship between flash sales and impulsive buying behavior. This analysis helps in uncovering the mechanisms through which flash sales influence consumer behavior.

For data processing, the study employs SmartPLS version 3.2.9, a sophisticated software tool specifically designed for SEM-PLS analysis. SmartPLS provides a user-friendly interface and advanced statistical capabilities, making it an ideal choice for conducting complex data analyses required in this research.

## RESULTS

### Description Characteristics Respondents

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents

Respondent Characteristics		Frequency (person)	Percentage (%)
1. Gender	a. Man	147	49
	b. Woman	153	51
	Amount	300	100
2. Age	a. 18-25	158	52.7
	b. 26-39	129	43
	c. >39	13	4.3
	Amount	300	100
3. Job profession	a. Private employees	76	25.3
	b. Government employees	27	9
	c. Businessman	5	5
	d. Student/Students	161	53.7
	e. Other	13	10.3
	Amount	300	100

According to the data presented in the table, a significant portion of the respondents falls within the age range of 18-25 years, comprising 52.7% of the total sample. This indicates that the majority of the study's participants are young adults. Regarding gender distribution, the respondents are predominantly female, accounting for 51% or 153 individuals. This gender composition highlights a slight female majority among the participants. When considering the occupational profession of the respondents, it is evident that a substantial majority are students, representing 53.7% of the total sample. This demographic characteristic suggests that the respondents are largely engaged in academic pursuits, which may influence their purchasing behaviors and responses to marketing strategies such as flash sales.

The demographic profile of the respondents, encompassing age, gender, and occupational profession, suggests that the participants possess an adequate level of understanding and familiarity with the concepts addressed in the research. Given their age group and educational background, these respondents are likely to have sufficient knowledge and insight to provide meaningful and accurate responses to the research instrument. Consequently, the data obtained from these respondents is expected to be reliable and pertinent, aligning well with the research objectives. This demographic alignment ensures that the insights derived from the study are reflective of the target population's characteristics, thereby enhancing the validity and applicability of the research findings. The respondents' profiles indicate that they are well-suited to contribute valuable information that can help achieve the research goals, particularly in understanding the effects of flash sales on impulsive buying behavior among young adults in an e-commerce context.

### **Inner Structural Model**

The results from the hypothesis testing, as presented in Table 6, offer valuable insights into the relationships within the internal structure model. Firstly, the significance test indicates that the flash sale variable (FS) significantly influences impulsive buying (IB) with a p-value of  $0.050 < 0.05$ , supported by a statistical t value of  $1.968 > 1.96$ , affirming a positive and significant effect. Secondly, the impact of flash sales (FS) on positive emotions (PE) is also statistically significant, with a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  and a robust statistical t value of  $67.607 > 1.96$ , indicating a substantial positive influence. Additionally, the positive emotion variable (PE) significantly affects impulsive buying (IB) with a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  and a statistical t value of  $3.820 > 1.96$ , confirming its significant positive effect. Moreover, the SmartPLS output demonstrates that flash sales (FS) exert a positive and significant influence on impulsive buying (IB) through the mediating variable of positive emotions (PE), with a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  and a statistical t value of  $3.848 > 1.96$ . This indicates a noteworthy indirect effect of flash sales on impulsive buying via positive emotions. These findings collectively underscore the intricate dynamics between flash sales, positive emotions, fear of missing out, and impulsive buying behavior, providing valuable insights for both theory and practice in the context of e-commerce and consumer behavior.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **The Effect of Flash Sales on Positive Emotion**

Flash sales are a type of sales promotion characterized by limited stock and a brief offering period (Zhang et al., 2018). Various promotional tools, such as coupons, contests, discounts, and premiums, are designed to capture customer attention and boost sales by offering incentives. Although the effects of such promotions are generally short-lived and less effective than advertising or personal selling for building long-term customer relationships and brand preference, flash sales can be an exception. Sellers use these promotions to encourage new product purchases or sustain long-term customer relationships.

The findings of this study indicate that flash sales positively and significantly impact consumers' positive emotions when purchasing on the Shopee marketplace in Malang City. Well-executed flash sales can induce positive emotions in Shopee users, supporting Kotler & Armstrong's (2008) theory that sales promotions provide short-term incentives to drive product and service purchases. Previous research by Rahmania et al. (2023) and Al Fajri et al. (2023) also shows that flash sales affect consumers' positive emotions on Shopee, creating pleasant feelings and good moods for consumers. However, some studies indicate that not all consumers enjoy flash sales, possibly due to the short duration or mismatched product offerings.

### **The Influence of Positive Emotion on Impulsive Buying**

The effect of mood on consumer decisions is driven by emotions, which are categorized into positive and negative. Positive emotions, such as happiness and excitement, can enhance impulsive buying. This supports the theory that positive emotions influence mood and significantly impact consumer decision-making power (Watson & Tellegen, 1985). According to the test results, flash sales have a positive and significant impact on impulsive buying. Research by Lu et al. (2020) indicates that positive moods make individuals more open to new experiences and more willing to take risks, including making unnecessary purchases. Happy consumers are more likely to be swayed by attractive offers and less likely to consider the consequences of their purchases. A positive mood while shopping on Shopee can thus trigger impulse purchases. Additionally, research by Dsilva & N Elangovan (2021) shows that higher levels of positive emotions increase the likelihood of impulsive purchases. Effective supply chain management also positively and significantly influences company performance. In Malang City, Shopee users with better positive emotions are more likely to make impulse purchases. Marketing strategies that evoke positive emotions, such as advertisements featuring happy images and upbeat music, along with attractive visual displays, can further increase impulse purchases.

### **The Effect of Flash Sales on Impulsive Buying**

Flash sales are a form of sales promotion characterized by limited stock and a brief availability period (Zhang et al., 2018). Various sales promotions, such as coupons, contests, discounts, and premiums, each have unique features designed to capture customer attention. While the effects of these promotions are typically short-lived and less effective than advertising or personal selling in building long-term customer relationships and brand preference, flash sales can have a more lasting impact. Sales promotions are used by salespeople to encourage the purchase of new products or to maintain customer relationships. This research shows that flash sales significantly and positively influence impulsive purchases. Well-executed flash sales increase the likelihood of Shopee users in Malang City making impulse purchases. These findings align with Kotler & Armstrong's (2008) theory that sales promotions act as short-term incentives to encourage purchases. Research by Agrawal & Sareen (2016) and Nigam et al. (2020) also concluded that flash sales are effective promotional tools that utilize countdown timers, influencing consumer psychology through significant discounts available for a limited time. This creates a desire to own the discounted items, prompting consumers to make purchases by the specified deadline.



### **The Role of Positive Emotion in the Effect of Flash Sales on Impulsive Buying**

Positive emotions play a crucial role in enhancing impulsive buying during flash sales. This marketing strategy leverages consumers' excitement, enthusiasm, satisfaction, sense of urgency, and increased self-esteem to prompt purchases without prior deliberation. The test results reveal that positive emotions have a significant and positive impact on impulsive buying. When consumers shop on the Shopee marketplace with positive feelings, they are more likely to make impulsive purchases. This indicates that the stronger the positive emotions, the higher the likelihood of impulsive buying on Shopee in Malang City. The research also demonstrates that positive feelings can amplify impulsive purchases during flash sales. This supports the theory that "consumer mood, particularly positive feelings, influences decision-making" (Watson & Tellegen, 1985). Additional studies by Lu et al. (2020) and Dsilva & N Elangovan (2021) also suggest that sales promotions like flash sales can trigger impulsive purchases when consumers feel happy or excited about the offer.

These findings align with field observations about the role of positive emotions in the relationship between flash sales and impulsive buying. Consumers who feel happy and excited upon encountering a flash sale are more inclined to make impulsive purchases. This is due to the positive impact of these emotions, which can increase motivation and lower the barriers to purchasing. Based on research findings and field observations, it can be concluded that positive emotions significantly influence impulsive purchases triggered by flash sales. Consumers experiencing emotions such as joy, enthusiasm, satisfaction, and pride are more likely to engage in impulsive buying.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The research indicates that the more effectively a flash sale promotion is executed, the greater the likelihood of Shopee users engaging in impulsive purchases within Malang City. This suggests that well-designed and strategically implemented flash sales can significantly drive impulsive buying behavior among consumers. The limited-time nature of these promotions creates a sense of urgency, prompting consumers to make quick purchasing decisions without thorough consideration. The study highlights that the immediacy and attractiveness of flash sale offers capture consumer attention and trigger spontaneous buying impulses. By capitalizing on these elements, Shopee can enhance its sales and consumer engagement, particularly in regions like Malang City where online shopping trends are rapidly growing. Additionally, the research emphasizes the role of positive emotions in influencing impulsive buying behaviors. As individuals experience higher levels of positive emotions, their propensity to make impulsive purchases increases correspondingly. Emotions such as joy, excitement, and satisfaction, often elicited by the prospect of obtaining a good deal during flash sales, create an environment conducive to spontaneous purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, the study underscores that positive emotions serve a critical mediating role in the relationship between flash sales and impulsive buying on the Shopee platform. These positive emotions not only enhance the attractiveness of the flash sale offers but also foster a psychological state that encourages consumers to act on their buying impulses. This phenomenon is particularly evident among Shopee users in Malang City, where the emotional uplift associated with flash sales significantly enhances the likelihood of impulsive buying. The research highlights that the emotional state of consumers, characterized by heightened positive feelings, significantly contributes to their decision to make unplanned purchases during flash sales. This finding aligns with the theoretical framework suggesting that consumer mood, particularly positive emotions, plays a pivotal role in shaping purchasing decisions. By understanding and leveraging the impact of positive emotions, businesses can design more effective promotional strategies that not only drive sales but also enhance consumer satisfaction and loyalty. In conclusion, the interplay between well-executed flash sales and the resultant positive emotions creates a potent combination that significantly influences impulsive buying behavior, offering valuable insights for e-commerce platforms like Shopee.

#### **FURTHER STUDY**

For future research, scholars could explore various demographic factors within Malang City, such as age, gender, income, and education levels, to understand how these variables influence the relationship between flash sales, impulsive buying behaviors, and positive emotions. Longitudinal studies tracking consumer behavior over time would provide valuable insights into how attitudes toward flash sales and impulsive buying evolve, considering seasonal variations and the long-term effects of marketing strategies. Additionally, comparing the effectiveness of flash sales with other promotional techniques, such as discounts or loyalty programs, could identify which strategies most effectively drive impulsive purchases. Cross-cultural studies in different regions would shed light on how cultural differences impact consumer responses to flash sales and impulsive buying triggers. Combining qualitative research methods with quantitative analysis would offer a deeper understanding of the motivations and emotions behind impulsive buying behavior, enhancing our comprehension of consumer behavior in digital marketplaces like Shopee.

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