

## **BEYOND THE BARGAIN: EXTENDING THE UNDERSTANDING OF IMPULSE BUYING AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS**

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### **Abstract**

Online shopping through marketplaces has become a popular alternative among students, especially with the convenience and comfort it offers. Shopee is one of the marketplaces that offers many flash sale promotions and free shipping opportunities, which encourages students to make impulsive purchases. The aim of this research is to provide new insights into the factors that influence impulse buying behavior, increase awareness of good financial management, and make an important contribution to the development of policies that can protect consumers, especially students, from unwanted financial risks. The method used in this research is a

descriptive qualitative method, focusing on online questionnaires distributed through various platforms as a data collection tool that was then processed through three stages: data tabulation, description and analysis, and discussion. The research concludes that flash sales and free shipping vouchers have a significant impact in motivating students to shop on Shopee and can be important factors in influencing consumer purchasing decisions.

**Keywords:** *Marketplace, Shopee, Flash Sale, Free Shipping, Impulse Buying.*

### **Abstrak**

Belanja online melalui marketplace menjadi salah satu alternatif yang populer di kalangan mahasiswa, terutama dengan kemudahan dan kenyamanan yang ditawarkannya. Shopee merupakan salah satu marketplace yang banyak menawarkan kesempatan promo flash sale dan gratis ongkir yang menarik sehingga mendorong mahasiswa untuk melakukan pembelian impulsif. Tujuan dari penelitian ini yaitu untuk memberikan wawasan baru tentang faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi perilaku impulse buying dan meningkatkan kesadaran mengenai manajemen keuangan yang baik serta memberikan kontribusi penting dalam pengembangan kebijakan yang dapat melindungi konsumen, terutama mahasiswa dari risiko keuangan yang tidak diinginkan di kalangan mahasiswa. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan fokus pada kuesioner yang disebar secara online melalui beberapa platform sebagai alat pengumpulan data yang kemudian diolah melalui tiga tahap yaitu tabulasi data, deskripsi dan analisis, serta pembahasan. Dari penelitian dapat disimpulkan bahwa flash sale dan voucher gratis ongkir memiliki dampak yang signifikan dalam memotivasi mahasiswa untuk berbelanja di Shopee dan dapat menjadi faktor penting dalam memengaruhi keputusan pembelian konsumen

**Katakunci:** *Marketplace, Shopee, Flash Sale, Gratis Ongkir, Impulse Buying*

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed people's shopping habits, making them more inclined to shop online. Pratama (Saebah & Layaman, 2020) revealed that the increase in demand for daily necessities has encouraged marketplaces to hold various discount events, such as flash sales and free shipping promotions. (ongkir). This has created a phenomenon of impulse buying among consumers. According to Harahap & Amanah (2019), impulse buying or impulsive purchasing is a shopping action carried out without rational consideration, but driven by a strong desire to make a purchase without considering the consequences that may arise in the present or in the future. Many consumers make impulse purchases due to flash sale programs and free shipping offers. Consumers, including students who were initially not interested in buying a product, can be tempted to purchase it during a flash sale and after learning that the product comes with free shipping. This phenomenon aligns with the economic theory that human needs are unlimited. The problems faced by humans arise from unlimited needs. Even

after fulfilling their needs and desires, various new desires will emerge. (Sukirno, 2021). Online shopping has also become one of the popular alternatives among students, especially with the ease and convenience offered by marketplaces. Shopee is one of the marketplaces that offers many opportunities for free shipping and flash sales. Therefore, analyzing the influence of free shipping and flash sales on the impulse buying behavior of Shopee users among students becomes important to conduct. In this paper, we will discuss the results of the analysis regarding this phenomenon and the implications that arise to enhance awareness of good financial management as well as to make an important contribution to the development of policies that can protect consumers from unwanted financial risks among students..

**Tabel 1 The Highest Number of Marketplace Visits in Indonesia (Kuartal IV 2022)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Shopee</b>	<b>Tokopedia</b>	<b>Lazada</b>	<b>Blibli</b>	<b>Bukalapak</b>
10/1/2022	179,000,000	139,100,000	67,800,000	30,200,000	20,300,000
11/1/2022	173,600,000	129,700,000	73,700,000	33,900,000	20,300,001
12/1/2022	191,600,000	136,700,000	83,200,000	37,400,000	19,700,000

Source: (Ahdiat, 2023)

Data from SimilarWeb shows that during the fourth quarter of 2022, Shopee was the marketplace with the highest website visits in Indonesia. In October of the previous year, the Shopee site received 179 million visits, which then increased to 191 million visits in December. This shows that Shopee is able to occupy that position due to several promotions offered. Shopee is one of the marketplaces that frequently offers flash sale promotions and free shipping throughout Indonesia.

The attractive offers available cause people who initially just stop by to eventually decide to make a purchase. Rusni & Solihin (2022) state that generally, consumers follow a purchasing decision pattern that includes stages such as problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior when buying products or services. However, not all consumers go through these stages, and there is a possibility that some consumers choose to make impulsive purchases or buy without prior planning.

Utami (in Rusni & Solihin, 2022) states that impulsive buying occurs when consumers suddenly feel a strong desire to purchase something immediately. The emergence of information about various products on the marketplace app's homepage, such as product recommendations, reminders for repeat purchases, discounts, and advertisement taglines, can lead to impulsive buying decisions when consumers visit the marketplace.

Shopee holds flash sale programs using short time tactics (perceived perishability) and restrictions on the quantity of items purchased (perceived

scarcity) to create an exclusive impression. According to Renita & Astuti (2022), time restrictions on promotions can accelerate consumers' purchasing decisions for the product. Apart from perceived perishability and scarcity, consumers' decisions to make impulsive purchases can be influenced by hedonistic behavior. Yulianto & Sisko (in Renita & Astuti, 2022) revealed that the value of hedonic shopping can influence consumer behavior during flash sales and encourage impulsive buying behavior. This is because the motivation for hedonic shopping is based on personal pleasure and satisfaction.

Although previous studies have explored the influence of flash sales and free shipping on impulse buying behavior, this article will focus on the impact of flash sales and free shipping on impulse buying behavior on Shopee, closely related to the desires and needs of students. Previous research has only discussed the general influence of flash sales and free shipping on impulse buying behavior, but this study examines how the desires and needs of students affect impulse buying behavior. This research will focus on students as the target of the study. This is because students often have different needs and desires compared to other consumer groups. With a focus on the desires and needs of students, this research can provide an in-depth understanding of the factors influencing impulse buying behavior. This study will offer a unique and novel contribution to the understanding of impulse buying behavior during flash sales and free shipping on Shopee.

## B. METHOD

### Desain

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with a focus on questionnaires as a data collection tool regarding students' shopping behavior in the aspects of flash sales and free shipping..

### Research Subjects

The research subjects were conducted on 105 students from March 10-17, 2023, filled out online via Google Form to respondents using specific criteria from the age range of 17 and above, gender, semester level, and various income levels who actively use the Shopee application from various universities on the islands of Java and Bali.

**Tabel 2 Respondent Criteria**

Level	Gender		User Status
	Male	Female	
Semester 2	18	68	Active Shopee user
Semester 4	3	5	Active Shopee user
Semester 6	-	7	Active Shopee user
Semester 8	-	4	Active Shopee user

From the criteria data obtained by the researcher, there is an imbalance in the number of male and female respondents, with the number of females being greater than that of males, and the researcher did not find any male respondents at the 6th and 8th semester levels. This is in line with social role theory, which states that women tend to have a greater shopping motivation. (Eagly & Wood, 2012).

**Data Collection**

The researchers used a questionnaire distributed through WhatsApp and Instagram platforms with open-ended responses to gather data and explore information related to the implications that could represent a student's shopping attitude towards flash sale promotions and free shipping. The collected data was then processed in the following stages. The research process begins with data tabulation, where the respondents' answers are reviewed and categorized based on the similarity of ideas expressed. Once categorized, the data is described and analyzed to interpret the meaning behind each response thoroughly. Finally, the findings from the tabulation, description, and analysis are discussed comprehensively, providing a detailed and holistic overview of the research outcomes.

**C. RESULT AND DISCUSION**

**Result**

Based on the questionnaire filled out by 105 respondents, the respondents' answers were categorized according to the criteria of idea similarity presented in the following data tabulation table:

**Tabel 3 Tabulation of Flash Sale and Free Shipping Category Data**

No	Question	Categori	F	%
1.	Do flash sales and the free shipping tagline remind you of the Shopee marketplace?	Remind	96	91,4%
		No Remind	9	8,6%
2.	In your opinion, does Shopee offer interesting items during flash sales and free shipping?	Interesting	74	70,5%
		Sometimes Interesting	14	13,3%
		Not Interesting	17	16,2%
3.	In your opinion, does Shopee often hold large-scale flash sales and free shipping on certain predetermined dates each month? (contohnya 3.3, 12.12).	Frequently Organizing	101	96,2%
		Sometimes Holding	4	3,8%
4.	What type of products do you expect during the flash sale?	Cosmetics	41	39%
		Fashion	31	29,5%
		Electronics	19	18,1%
		Accessories	7	6,7%
		Stationery	7	6,7%

5.	In your opinion, are the products offered during the flash sale in line with your expectations?	According to Desire	35	33,3%
		Sometimes According to Desire	47	44,8%
		Not According to Desire	23	21,9%
6.	Do you expect free shipping vouchers every time you want to shop?	Hoping	105	100%

From the data we obtained, it shows that the intensity of flash sales and free shipping influences students' purchasing decisions. Students tend to remember Shopee as a marketplace that offers flash sales and free shipping on interesting dates as part of its promotional media, such as 11.11 and other interesting dates. This is in line with the brand association theory proposed by Keller (in Hudaya, 2020) that positive associations can enhance consumer trust in the brand, make the brand easier to remember and identify, and ultimately increase consumer loyalty to the brand.

Most respondents answered that cosmetics or beauty products are the most anticipated products, which is in line with the composition of our respondents, most of whom are women. Followed by fashion products, electronics, accessories, and stationery.

However, the purchase transactions do not always go smoothly; more than half of the respondents stated that the items bought during flash sales and free shipping promotions sometimes meet their expectations and sometimes do not. Thus, many students feel disappointed with their purchases and perceive them as futile and merely a waste of money. This is in accordance with the customer satisfaction theory proposed by Oliver (in Abadi & Sofian, 2013) that customer satisfaction refers to the state where a company or organization can meet consumer needs for a product and service.

**Tabel 4 Tabulation of Impulse Buying Category Data**

No	Question	Categori	F	%
1.	How often do you check the flash sale periods and free shipping vouchers before buying items on Shopee?	Often Check	47	44,8%
		Sometimes Check	58	55,2%
2.	How often do you buy products during flash sales and with free shipping?	Often	37	35,2%
		Sometimes	68	64,8%
3.	How strong is your shopping motivation when there is a flash sale and you receive a free shipping voucher on Shopee?	Big	60	57,1%
		Medium	37	35,2%
		Small	8	7,6%
4.	Do you think flash sales and free shipping make your life easier?	Very Helpful	80	76,2%
		Quite Helpful	18	17,1%
		Not Helpful	7	6,7%

5.	How are your expenses after shopping using the flash sale and free shipping program on Shopee?	Economical	57	54,3%
		Quite Wasteful	20	19%
		Very Wasteful	28	26,7%
6.	How do you feel after making a spontaneous purchase during the flash sale and free shipping?	Happy	64	61%
		Just Okay	19	18%
		Regretful	22	21%

From the data we obtained, it shows that students tend to have a strong motivation to shop when there are flash sale promotions and free shipping, which could be due to the factor of opportunity. Students who tend to strive to save money will certainly take the opportunity to shop with discounts because it is considered to reduce expenses, so students are likely to often check first if there are flash sale promotions or free shipping before shopping on Shopee. It is not uncommon for students to feel disappointed if the purchased items do not meet their expectations. Most respondents expressed that they were pleased with the flash sale and free shipping promotions, while others felt the opposite. Some respondents admitted that they often make impulsive purchases because the buying process on Shopee is easy and quick. Free shipping promotions and flash sales can help consumers, especially students, obtain the products they want at more affordable prices. However, good financial management and control are needed to avoid impulse buying behavior. Flash sales and free shipping will be very helpful if students, as consumers, can sort out their needs before making a purchase. Once their needs are met, fulfilling desires is not wrong as long as it remains within reasonable limits.

## Discussion

The results of the research on student impulse buying during flash sales and free shipping on Shopee show that students often find the items they desire, such as cosmetics, fashion, electronics, accessories, and stationery, during the flash sale and free shipping promotions. The large number of students making spontaneous purchases indicates that students tend to follow their desires without thinking first when making a purchase. This contradicts previous research which stated that the free shipping variable does not significantly affect impulse buying behavior (Rusni & Solihin, 2022), whereas the flash sale variable aligns with previous research that indicated flash sales significantly influence impulse buying behavior. (Simanjuntak, 2022).

Shopee is widely used among students because it is considered to make it easier for them to meet their needs. Shopee has successfully attracted them with promotional patterns using special dates and products offered with flash sale promotions and free shipping. The students believe that the intensity of flash sales and free shipping influences their purchasing decisions. This is in line with the Incentive Theory, which states that consumers will be more motivated to take action or purchase a product if

there are incentives or rewards provided. (Campbell, 1995). Nevertheless, other factors could also be the reason for students to shop. Urgent needs are one of the factors that drive students to make spontaneous purchases. Flash sales and free shipping are quite helpful in this situation, but it is not uncommon for students to feel disappointed if the purchased items do not meet their expectations. Flash sale and free shipping promotions can provide assistance to consumers, especially students, in buying items at more affordable prices through free shipping and flash sale promotions. However, it is important to manage finances well and control unexpected shopping desires. Careful selection before purchasing items is necessary so that students do not fall into impulse buying behavior. If needs have been met, there is nothing wrong with fulfilling desires as long as it is within reasonable limits.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

From the research results, it can be concluded that flash sales and free shipping vouchers have a significant impact in motivating students to shop on Shopee and can be an important factor in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. The motivation that arises is sometimes excessive, leading consumers to frequently make spontaneous purchases. Most students are only tempted by promotions, so they do not consider first whether the purchase is based on need or desire. This indicates that students may engage in impulse buying when they see attractive offers such as flash sales and free shipping. However, it cannot be denied that there is also a small portion of respondents who are less satisfied with these offers or find them unappealing, so it can be said that not all consumers engage in impulse buying.

Based on the research findings and conclusions obtained, the researchers provide several suggestions for future studies. First, future research can expand the scope of the study to delve deeper into impulse buying behavior by involving a more diverse sample, not only from students but also from the general public, thus providing a broader understanding of the impact of flash sales and free shipping on shopping patterns in society. Second, it is also recommended that research investigate other factors that may trigger impulse buying behavior, so as to more comprehensively uncover the motivations that drive someone to make impulsive purchases. Third, further research can focus on analyzing the long-term effects of impulse buying to identify its impact on consumer habits in both social and economic contexts.

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