The 2nd International Students Conference on Economics and Business Excellence (ISCEBE) 2025
e-ISSN: 3090-4811
Vol. 2 No.1/BM-ISCEBE (2025)

EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS IN DIGITAL MARKETING: THE ROLE OF TIME PRESSURE AND DISCOUNTS IN E-COMMERCE FLASH SALES

Made Shanti Vandana Shiva[1)], Amaliyah[2)]

1,2 Manajemen Perkantoran Digital, Faculty of Vacotional Studies, Universitas Airlangga

Corresponding author: Amaliyah@vokasi.unair.ac.id

Abstract

The rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed consumer shopping behavior, particularly through the rise of e-commerce platforms like Shopee. One increasingly popular marketing technique is the flash sale, which offers significant discounts within a limited time frame. This study aims to analyze how flash sale strategies—specifically time limitation and price discounting—influence consumer emotional responses, often leading to impulsive buying behavior. Using quantitative methods, data were collected and analyzed through statistical software such as SPSS. Findings reveal that time constraints create urgency and psychological pressure, encouraging rapid decision-making and emotional purchases. Price discounts also affect emotions but are more impactful when paired with limited time offers. Consumers often experience fear of missing out (FOMO) and perceive urgency as a signal of value and scarcity. This study concludes that flash sale strategies are not merely pricing tactics but powerful psychological tools that shape consumer behavior. E-commerce marketers can use these insights to design more effective promotional campaigns, combining emotional triggers with strategic timing and pricing to boost engagement and sales. The results contribute to a better understanding of consumer psychology in the digital retail environment.

Keywords: Flash Sale Strategy**;** Consumer Emotion**;** Impulsive Buying**;** E-commerce Marketing**;** Time and Price Sensitivity

Introduction

The current advancement of technology affects all aspects of life, including marketing. This transformation has reshaped buying and selling systems in daily life. It also influences shopping behavior with the emergence of e-commerce and marketplaces that offer the convenience of online shopping (Safitri et al., 2024). E-commerce is a concept that describes the process of purchasing, selling, and exchanging products, services, and information through a computer network—the internet (Ramadhani et al., 2022). One common marketing technique used in e-commerce is the flash sale.

Shopee is one of the e-commerce platforms that applies this strategy. In 2023, Shopee ranked second in terms of the highest number of visitors in the second quarter. In addition, Shopee became the most downloaded app on the App Store and Play Store, ranking first in that category. Shopee successfully attracted the attention of many consumers, with a monthly web visitor count second only to Tokopedia, reaching 55,964,700 visitors per month (Rizkya et al., 2024). Shopee has become a platform that provides various conveniences for consumers and offers programs that increase purchase interest. As a result, consumers are more likely to make unplanned purchases, also known as impulsive buying (Rizkya et al., 2024). In offering convenience to consumers, platforms like Shopee present various service products that successfully capture consumer interest—one such example is the flash sale.

A flash sale is a marketing strategy that offers products or services at significant discounts for a very limited period. The term "flash" reflects the rapid duration of the promotion, creating a sense of urgency among consumers to make a purchase before the opportunity ends. Flash sales are often conducted on specific or memorable dates, such as 12.12, to remind consumers to shop. Typically, flash sales last only a few hours or even minutes, making them an effective method to capture attention and drive consumers to act quickly. By offering limited-time products at attractive prices, flash sales create a shopping euphoria that is hard to match.

Flash sales leverage time constraints as a key element to induce a strong sense of urgency. Consumers faced with limited-time purchase options often feel emotional pressure to make immediate

decisions. In addition to time constraints, pricing plays a crucial role. Massive discounts or prices far below market value create the illusion of a "golden opportunity" that is hard to ignore. For consumers, low prices are often perceived as symbols of luck or achievement. This makes them willing to spend hours hunting for deals or even make impulsive purchases without considering their actual needs. The combination of low prices and time limitations is the core strength of flash sale strategies. Not only do they boost short-term sales, but they also exploit consumers' psychological traits to trigger impulsive buying decisions. Time and pricing play significant roles in managing consumer emotions, which ultimately influence their shopping behavior.

In this context, psychology plays a critical role. Emotions such as excitement, anxiety, and even fear of missing out (FOMO) significantly drive shopping behavior. FOMO refers to a condition in which individuals feel anxious or fearful of not knowing what others are doing on social media and feel compelled to stay connected to the digital world, constantly checking notifications—even when the information is not important (Maysitoh et al., 2020). Today's society is accustomed to digital tools and prefers fast and practical solutions to meet their daily needs (Nurjanah et al., 2023). When consumers believe they might miss out on attractive deals, their brains tend to prioritize quick decisions over rational analysis. This often leads to checkout actions driven by emotion rather than actual necessity. Another psychological factor at play in flash sales is social influence. On many e-commerce platforms, real-time information such as the number of purchases or remaining stock is clearly displayed to consumers. For example, messages like "only 2 items left" or "200 people are currently viewing this product" create a sense of competition among buyers. This encourages consumers to act quickly so they don't lose out to others. This competitive element adds fuel to the emotional drive in the buying process.

Undeniably, the flash sale strategy has drastically changed consumer shopping patterns. In this context, the role of technology cannot be overlooked. Sophisticated algorithms used by e-commerce platforms can personalize flash sale offers based on consumer behavior data. This personalization makes consumers feel that the offers are specially tailored for them, which in turn increases engagement and conversion rates. This article explores in greater depth how the duration and pricing of flash sales can influence consumer emotions. It also examines how technology and social elements in e-commerce enhance the impact of flash sales on shopping behavior. By understanding these aspects, it becomes clear that flash sales are not merely a marketing strategy—they are also a psychological study of how human emotions can be manipulated to achieve business objectives.

Research Methodology

Population and Sample

This study uses a descriptive quantitative method to analyze the relationship between flash sale duration, discount rate, and consumer impulsive buying behavior. Descriptive quantitative research involves describing, investigating, and explaining phenomena as they are, and drawing conclusions based on observable data using numerical analysis (Nurhabiba et al., 2023). The research was conducted through a survey using a structured questionnaire to collect numerical data from respondents.

The population of this study consists of consumers who have made purchases through e-commerce during flash sale periods, particularly on the Shopee platform. Approximately 143 respondents were selected using a simple random sampling technique to ensure representativeness. Respondent criteria include: (a) Actively shopping on e-commerce platforms for at least the past 3 months; (b) Having participated in at least one flash sale in the past 12 months.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques are strategies used by researchers to gather the necessary supporting data and information for the study (Rizkya et al., 2024). The data collection methods used in this research include:

Literature Review

A literature review was conducted to support the theoretical foundation and development of the research instrument. The literature used includes scientific journals, books, and relevant articles discussing consumer behavior, flash sale strategies, impulsive buying, and psychological factors influencing purchasing decisions. Key references include: (a) Previous research on the effect of flash sale duration on impulsive buying (Rizkya et al., 2024); (b) Theories on consumer behavior and emotions in decision-making (Anita et al., 2023); (c) Marketing management concepts related to discount and promotion strategies (Ariyanto et al., 2023). This information served as the basis for designing the questionnaire and identifying the variables to be studied, ensuring that the collected data is relevant and valid.

Questionnaire

A data collection method consisting of a set of questions related to the research issue being investigated (Rizkya et al., 2024). Data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed through social media, email, and online discussion groups. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: (a) Demographic Data: Age, gender, education level, and frequency of online shopping; (b) Likert Scale Statements: Used to measure research variables with statements such as: (i) The duration of flash sales encourages me to immediately purchase products; (ii) Big discounts lead me to buy products that I had not planned to purchase.

Research Variables

This study uses both independent and dependent variables that are interrelated. Independent Variables are Flash sale duration (X1) and Discount rate (X2). Dependent Variable is Consumer impulsive buying (Y). Operational Definition of Variables are: (a) Flash Sale Duration (X1): The time given during a flash sale, measured based on respondent perceptions (1 = very insufficient, 5 = very sufficient); (b) Discount Rate (X2): The extent of price reduction perceived by consumers during flash sales, measured using Likert scale statements such as "Large discounts lead me to buy unplanned products" and "Discounts make me shop more frequently." Responses range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).and (c) Impulsive Buying (Y): Purchase actions made without prior planning, measured using a Likert scale based on statements about shopping habits.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS or Microsoft Excel. The analytical techniques used include: (a) Descriptive Analysis: This analysis describes the demographic data of respondents and the distribution of research variables, such as age, gender, and the frequency of purchases during flash sales; (b) Correlation Test: Used to measure the degree of linear relationship between two variables, such as flash sale duration (X1) and impulsive buying (Y), or discount rate (X2) and impulsive buying (Y). Correlation is interpreted based on the r-value, where values closer to 1 indicate a strong positive relationship; (c) Multiple Linear Regression: This method is used to determine the simultaneous effect of independent variables (X1 and X2) on the dependent variable (Y). The regression results will indicate how much flash sale duration and discount rate influence impulsive buying, both individually and collectively. The significance of the effect is tested using a p-value (<0.05).

Results and Discussions

Table 1. Variables Used

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Price Strategy, Time Strategy[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Emotion

b. All requested variables entered.

Dependent Variable: Consumer Emotion
Independent Variable: Price Strategy and Time Strategy

Table 2. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.769[a]	.591	.583	3.118

a. Predictors: (Constant), Price Strategy, Time Strategy

R = 0.769 → Indicates a strong correlation between independent and dependent variables.
R Square (R^2) = 0.591 → Approximately 59.1% of the variability in consumer emotion can be explained

by price and time strategies.
Adjusted R Square = 0.583 → After adjustment, the model still explains around 58.3% of the variability.
Standard Error of the Estimate = 3.118 → Represents the standard error in predicting consumer emotion from the model.

Table 3. ANOVA Test (Goodness of Fit)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1363.051	2	681.525	70.111	<,001[b]
	Residual	942.909	97	9.721		
	Total	2305.960	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Emotion

b. Predictors: (Constant), Price Strategy, Time Strategy

F= 70.111 with p-value < 0.001 indicates that the regression model significantly explains the variation in consumer emotion.

Table 4. Regression Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.024	1.315		1.539	.127
Time Strategy	1.293	.259	.527	4.986	<,001
Price Strategy	.483	.181	.282	2.665	.009

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Emotion

Time Strategy has a greater impact on consumer emotion (B = 1.293, Beta = 0.527) compared to Price Strategy (B = 0.483, Beta = 0.282). Both variables significantly influence consumer emotion (p < 0.05).

Discussion

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that flash sale strategies significantly influence consumer emotions, particularly using time constraints and price reductions. The statistical results from the multiple regression analysis show a strong overall relationship between the independent variables—time strategy and price strategy—and the dependent variable, consumer emotion, with an R value of 0.769. This indicates a high correlation, confirming that as the intensity or effectiveness of time- and price-based strategies increases, the emotional response of consumers also tends to increase.

Notably, the R Square value of 0.591 indicates that 59.1% of the variation in consumer emotion can be explained by the flash sale strategies employed. This is a substantial proportion, suggesting that marketers can significantly influence how consumers feel during purchasing decisions simply by manipulating time and pricing tactics. Furthermore, the ANOVA test results support the validity of the regression model, showing that the model is statistically significant (p < 0.001) and fits the data well. This reinforces the importance of both variables in shaping emotional reactions in the online shopping context.

In terms of individual impact, the time strategy proved to be more influential than the price strategy. The unstandardized coefficient (B = 1.293) and the standardized beta value (β = 0.527) for the time strategy show that it has a strong and positive impact on consumer emotion. This means that when e-commerce platforms create a sense of urgency—such as offering limited-time deals or displaying countdown timers—consumers are more likely to experience emotional arousal, which can lead to impulsive buying behavior. The limited duration pushes consumers to act quickly, often overriding rational thinking in favor of emotional responses.

While the price strategy also has a statistically significant effect (p = 0.009), its impact is less pronounced than that of time, with a beta value of 0.282. Price reductions still play a crucial role in enticing consumers, especially when the discounts are perceived as highly valuable or rare. However, price alone may not create the same level of urgency or emotional pressure as a ticking clock or limited product availability. This suggests that although price is important, it works best in combination with time-based tactics to create a more compelling shopping experience.

Overall, the results align with psychological theories such as FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) and scarcity effect, where consumers are driven by emotional triggers rather than purely rational evaluation. The combination of time sensitivity and perceived value creates an environment where consumers are highly reactive and more prone to emotional decision-making. E-commerce platforms that effectively utilize both strategies can not only boost short-term sales but also enhance user engagement and repeat visits.

Conclusion

This research confirms that flash sale strategies significantly affect consumer emotions, with time sensitivity having a greater influence than discount pricing. The statistical analysis indicates that a limited purchase window creates psychological pressure, prompting consumers to act swiftly and often impulsively. While attractive prices do contribute to emotional appeal, they are more impactful when paired with time-limited offers. The sense of urgency generated through countdowns, stock limitations, and exclusive time slots taps into human tendencies such as scarcity bias and emotional decision-making. E- commerce platforms, therefore, gain a competitive advantage by leveraging these behavioral insights. Overall, flash sales are not merely about offering discounts but about creating a compelling, emotionally charged shopping environment. For marketers and online retailers, this means optimizing both pricing and timing strategies to encourage stronger consumer engagement and drive sales outcomes. These insights can be used to design more effective promotional campaigns in a fast-evolving digital marketplace.

References

Anita, S. Y., Amiruddin, E. A., & Wahyuni, R. (2023). *PERILAKU KONSUMEN*. CV. Intelektual Manifes Media.

Ariyanto, A., Bangun, R., & Indillah, M. R. M. (2023). *MANAJEMEN PEMASARAN*. WIDINA BHAKTI PERSADA BANDUNG.

Maysitoh, Ifdil, & Ardi. Z. (2020). *ingkat Kecenderungan FoMO (Fear of Missing Out) Pada Generasi Millenial*.

Nurhabiba, F. D., Misdalina, & Tanzimah. (2023). *KEMAMPUAN HIGHER ORDER THINKING SKILL (HOTS) DALAM PEMBELAJARAN BERDIFERENSIASI SD 19 PALEMBANG*.

Nurjanah, S., Sadiah, A., & Gumilar, R. (2023). *Pengaruh Literasi Ekonomi, Kontrol Diri,dan "FOMO",terhadap Pembelian Impulsif pada Generasi Milenial*, *1*.

Ramadhani, F., Satria, A., & Sari, I. P. (2022). *Aplikasi Internet Berbasis Website Sebagai E-Commerce Penjualan Komponen Sport Car*. https://jurnal.ilmubersama.com/index.php/blendsains/article/view/98/78

Rizkya, S. N., Sarah, S., & Wijaya, F. (2024). *Pengaruh Flash Sale, Gratis Ongkos Kirim, dan LiveStreamingterhadap Impulsive Buyingpada pengguna Shopee*, *5*. https://www.journal.jis-institute.org/index.php/jismab/article/view/1629/1148

Safitri, M. A., Pandjaitan, D. R.H., & Ramelan, M. R. (2024). *Pengaruh Flash Sale Terhadap Pembelian Impulsif dengan Emosi Sebagai Variabel Mediasi Pada Produk Somethinc (Studi Pada Konsumen E-Commerce Lazada di Bandar Lampung)*, *5*.

Authors' Bibliography

Made Shanti Vandana Shiva was born in Serang, Banten, Indonesia, on September 10, 2005. She is currently a fourth-semester undergraduate student in the Digital Office Management Study Program,

e-ISSN: 3090-4811
Vol. 2 No.1/BM-ISCEBE (2025)

Faculty of Vocational Studies, Airlangga University, Surabaya, Indonesia. Her academic interests include digital business management, consumer psychology, and marketing strategies in e-commerce.

Dr. Amaliyah, is a senior lecturer and researcher from the Faculty of Vocational Studies at Universitas Airlangga, currently serving as the Head of the Integrated Business Research Center (IBRC). With a strong background in business, Dr. Amaliyah teaches in the Office Management Digital program and actively contributes to academic development through her role as Associate Editor of The International Journal of Applied Business (TIJAB). As the leader of IBRC, she coordinates multidisciplinary research focusing on integrated business solutions that support innovation and real-world application. Her research interests lie in Human Resource Management, Organizational Behaviour and Sociopreneurship.