

## From Deals to Desires: The Mediating Role of Positive Emotions in the Relationship between Flash Sales, Free Shipping, and Impulsive Buying

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### Abstract

This study examines the influence of flash sales and free shipping on impulsive buying among Generation Z Shopee users in Malang City, with positive emotions as a mediating variable. Data were collected through an online, structured questionnaire designed in Google Forms and distributed via WhatsApp and social media platforms (Instagram and TikTok). Respondent access was obtained through open participation links shared in student communities across three major universities in Malang. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items adapted from previous studies and measured using a 5-point Likert scale. A total of 190 valid responses were analyzed using SEM-PLS. The findings show that flash sales do not have a direct effect on impulsive buying, whereas free shipping does. Both flash sales and free shipping significantly enhance positive emotions, which strongly drive impulsive buying behavior. Positive emotion has also been shown to mediate the relationship between promotional strategies and impulsive buying. These results emphasize the central role of emotional responses in shaping spontaneous online purchasing decisions among Generation Z.

**Keywords:** E-Commerce, Flash Sale, Free Shipping, Shopee, Z Generation.

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### INTRODUCTION

Advances in digital technology have brought major changes to the global economic landscape and consumer behavior, including in Indonesia. The digitalization process in Indonesia is growing rapidly and has a significant impact on the country's economic structure and people's lifestyles (Aldila et al., 2025). In the trade sector, digitalization has revolutionized the business ecosystem by driving a shift in consumer behavior from in-store shopping to e-commerce (Harton, 2025). The ease of internet access and the ability to conduct transactions digitally further accelerate changes in people's consumption patterns to meet the needs of the digital era (Aldila et al., 2025; Kristanti & Mranani, 2025). This condition provides consumers with greater opportunities to choose products from various locations, enjoy flexible shopping times, and obtain more competitive prices. In addition, digital marketing strategies, secure online transactions, efficient shipping, a strong brand image, and responsive customer service are essential to the success of e-commerce (Lestari & Azizah, 2023).

The e-commerce sector in Indonesia has experienced very rapid growth in recent years. Based on data from the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia, the number of e-commerce users has continued to increase since 2020, reaching 38.72 million in 2024, up from 65.65 million in 2020. It is estimated that this figure will continue to increase through 2029, reaching around 99.1 million users. One of the most popular e-commerce platforms in Indonesia is Shopee. Indonesia is even recorded as the country with the highest number of Shopee visitors, with an average of 124.9 million visits in 2023 and is projected to reach 147.7 million visits

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in 2025 (Goodstats, 2024). In addition, a report from APJII shows that 53.22% of internet users in Indonesia access Shopee — a significant increase from 41.65% the previous year.

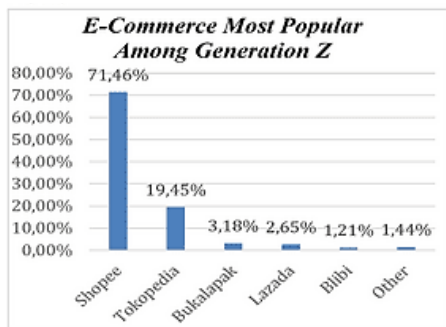


Figure 1. Commerce Most Popular

One of the largest groups of Shopee e-commerce users is Generation Z. According to Figure 1, 71.46% of Generation Z users choose Shopee as their most in-demand e-commerce platform. This generation is known to be highly responsive to visual content and to engage with real-time features in e-commerce actively. According to Malini, the behavior and preferences of Generation Z consumers show a strong tendency towards internet use and a tendency to be easily emotionally influenced, which explains why most of them prefer to shop online and are often confused when making purchasing decisions. Generation Z is also considered a vital consumer segment because they are pragmatic, tend to act quickly, and rarely think twice before making a purchase (Malini, 2021; Peng & Kim, 2014). Furthermore, according to Djafarova & Bowes (2021), impulse buying is very prominent among Generation Z, with 41% of Generation Z customers being impulse buyers, followed by Millennials at 34% and Generation X at 32%.

Generation Z's shopping behavior can be explained through the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory. This theory emphasizes that external stimuli can prompt consumers to evaluate and then respond behaviorally (Eroglu et al., 2001). In this context, flash sales and free shipping serve as external stimuli that can trigger impulsive shopping. Flash sales, with deep discounts for a limited time, create a sense of urgency and the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) phenomenon. At the same time, free shipping creates a perception of added value that can reduce doubts in the purchasing decision-making process. These two factors then affect the organism, namely internal psychological processes such as positive emotions and perceptions of benefits, which ultimately drive impulsive buying behavior among Generation Z.

Various previous studies have shown inconsistent results regarding the effect of flash sales on impulse buying. Some studies, such as those by Prakasa & Karunia (2024), Darwipat, Syam, & Marhawati (2020), Sihalohe & Safrin (2022), and Hidayah, Suhud, & Febrilia (2025), indicate that flash sales significantly influence impulse buying. However, another study conducted by Alamsyah & Rahayu (2024), Scott (2024), and Martaleni, Hendrasto, Hidayat, Dzikri, & Yasa (2022) found that flash sales had no effect on impulse buying behavior.

The same thing also happens with the free shipping variable. Most of the previous studies, such as (Alamsyah & Rahayu, 2024), (Scott, 2024), (Aqsa, Rosnani, Pebrianti, & Heriyadi, 2025), and (Ervina, Simanjorang, & Siregar, 2024), show that free shipping positively affects impulse buying. However, the studies by Laksmawan & Handayani (2024), Maidah, Hasna, Zikrinawati, & Fahmy (2023), and Mentang, Ogi, & Wangke (2024) found that free shipping does not affect impulse buying. The inconsistency in research results regarding the influence of flash sales and free shipping on impulse buying prompted a reinvestigation by adding positive emotion variables as a mediating variable, in accordance with the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theoretical framework. In addition, the novelty of this research lies in the subject studied: Generation Z of Shopee users in Malang City. This study does not generalize to all e-commerce consumers but focuses on specific generational characteristics and local contexts.

## Literature Review

### Stimulus – Organism – Response (SOR) Theory

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model describes how individuals respond to environmental stimuli. The environment consists of stimuli (S) that affect the internal conditions of individuals (organisms/O),

and produce responses (R) in the form of approach or avoidance (Pavon, Mosquera, & Naranjo, 2023). External stimuli can be psychological factors, such as perceived values, social influences, and consumer identities, that trigger cognitive processes (Svotwa, Roberts-Lombard, & Jaiyeoba, 2020; Teangsompong & Sawangproh, 2024). According to Mehrabian & Russell (1974), Environmental stimuli affect the consumer's (organism's) emotional state, which then shapes the behavior or intention to act. The S–O–R model is widely used to explain the relationship between scarcity and impulse buying (Chen & Yao, 2018; Islam et al., 2021; B. Liu, Li, Li, Zhang, & Rengel, 2021; J. Zhang, Jiang, Turner, & Pahlevan-Sharif, 2022). Therefore, this model is considered relevant to examine the influence of flash sales and free shipping (stimulus) on impulse buying (response) through positive emotion (organism) as a mediating variable.

### ***Flash Sale***

Flash sales are a form of promotion that offers a price drop for a limited time and amount (Wangi & Andarini, 2021). This strategy aims to increase sales, attract traffic to online stores, and strengthen brand awareness (Darwipat et al., 2020). In the context of flash sales, large discounts are the main external factor that increases user interest (Z. Li et al., 2022). For e-commerce platforms, the combination of limited time and large discounts can trigger impulse purchases, thereby increasing sales revenue (Berezina, Semrad, Stepchenkova, & Cobanoglu, 2016; X. Liu, Zhou, Shen, Ge, & Jiang, 2021). In addition, this system assists traders in organizing production and managing the stock of goods (X. Liu et al., 2021; M. Zhang, Cheng, & Du, 2018), while providing opportunities for newcomers to expand the market (Grande, Islas, & Rios, 2015; X. Liu et al., 2021). Flash sales are also useful to avoid excess product inventory (Sodero & Rabinovich, 2017; Tan & Chen, 2023).

### ***Free Shipping***

Free shipping is a sales promotion in which sellers cover shipping costs to encourage online purchases (Putri & Rahmi, 2024). This strategy is one of Shopee's flagship in attracting consumer interest (Istikomah & Hartono, 2022). Free shipping programs are proven to increase retailers' sales in both the short- and long-term (Shehu, Papies, & Neslin, 2020) and to have a positive impact on the development of the e-commerce industry (C. Li, Chu, Zhou, & Xie, 2020). In addition, promotions such as discounts, free shipping, special offers, and quality services have been proven effective in influencing the purchase behavior and intentions of online consumers (Ependi & Pahlevi, 2021).

### ***Positive Emotion***

Choi et al. (2016) state that emotional arousal is a form of emotional activation with varying intensities, both positive and negative. Positive emotion is an emotion that elicits pleasant feelings in individuals (Suripto, S., & Launtu, 2025). In the context of customers, positive emotions reflect psychological states of happiness, satisfaction, and enthusiasm when interacting with a brand, product, or service. These emotions not only provide momentary gratification but also shape long-term perceptions, increase loyalty, and encourage word of mouth. In addition, consumption experiences can elicit emotional responses that influence consumer purchasing decisions and post-purchase behaviors (Guo, Wang, & Wu, 2020).

### ***Impulse Buying***

This phenomenon is triggered by emotional arousal and a sense of urgency, which are often utilized in marketing strategies (Rita, Guerreiro, Ramos, & Caetano, 2024). As the internet and e-commerce develop, this behavior is becoming more common (Phan, Nguyen, & Phuc, 2024). Impulse buying is not based on real needs, but on momentary impulses or the desire to self-reward (Maggon, 2025). In practice, both physical stores and online platforms leverage strategies such as flash sales, limited stock, and personalized product recommendations to stimulate emotions and encourage spontaneous shopping decisions (Huang, Silalahi, Eunike, & Riantama, 2024; Xiang, Zheng, Lee, & Zhao, 2016).

### **Hypothesis**

Flash sales have a positive effect on impulse buying because limited-time offers can create a sense of urgency and an emotional urge to purchase immediately without planning. Several previous studies, Darwipat

et al. (2020) and Adytya et al. (2024), have shown consistent results, indicating that short-term promotions can increase impulse buying behavior. However, other studies have reported conflicting results, suggesting that the effect of flash sales becomes insignificant when consumers are highly planned or already familiar with similar promotions. Based on this, the following hypothesis is formulated :

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a positive influence of flash sales on impulse buying

Free shipping positively affects impulse buying by creating a perception of added value and reducing cost barriers in the purchasing process. Consumers tend to perceive greater benefits when they do not have to pay shipping costs, thus encouraging spontaneous purchasing decisions. Consistent with previous research, Alamsyah & Rahayu (2024) and Fitriana (2024) show that free shipping promotions can increase purchase intentions and impulsive behavior. Several other studies have found differing results, Laksmawan & Handayani (2024) and Maidah et al. (2023), indicating that the effect of free shipping becomes insignificant when consumers focus more on product needs than on its economic benefits. Based on this explanation, the following hypothesis is formulated :

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive influence between free shipping and impulse buying.

Flash sales are thought to elicit positive emotions because limited-time offers often evoke feelings of enthusiasm, excitement, and satisfaction when consumers successfully secure products at lower prices. This situation creates a positive emotional experience, strengthening interest in online shopping. Several previous studies (Mamlu'ah & Andarini, 2025) have also shown that time-limited promotions can evoke feelings of joy and euphoria due to the sensation of competition and luck. Based on this, the hypothesis is formulated that.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is a positive influence of flash sales on positive emotions.

Free shipping is thought to positively affect positive emotions because free shipping offers can evoke feelings of joy, satisfaction, and relief among consumers when shopping. Free shipping gives the impression of additional benefits without paying more, thereby creating a pleasant shopping experience. In line with previous research, Al Fajri et al. (2023) show that free shipping promotions can increase positive emotions through feelings of savings and satisfaction.

H<sub>4</sub>: There is a positive association between free shipping and positive emotions.

Consumers who experience positive emotions are thought to be more prone to impulsive buying, as the feelings of joy, enthusiasm, and satisfaction that arise during the shopping process can encourage them to make purchases without much rational consideration. Positive emotions create a mood conducive to spontaneous behavior, in which purchasing decisions are influenced more by feelings than by actual needs. Previous research also shows that the higher consumers' positive emotions, the greater their tendency to make impulsive purchases. However, several other studies, including Wulandari & Edastama (2022) and Smith & Kabamba (2022), have found that this effect can be weakened when consumers have high self-control. Based on this description, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H<sub>5</sub>: There is a positive influence between positive emotions and impulse buying.

Flash sales can trigger emotions that act as psychological mechanisms, thus encouraging impulsive buying behavior. In other words, flash sales can stimulate positive emotions, which then increase consumers' tendency to make impulsive purchases. Therefore, positive emotions are proposed as a mediating variable in the relationship between flash sales and impulsive buying. Previous research, Wulandari & Edastama (2022); Martaleni, Hendrasto, Hidayat, Alfandy Dzikri, et al. (2022); Rahmania et al. (2023); Ubaedilah et al. (2023); Al Fajri et al. (2023), has shown similar findings regarding the mediating role of positive emotions in the relationship between flash sales and impulsive behavior.

H<sub>6</sub>: Positive emotion mediates the relationship between flash sales and impulse buying.

Free shipping offers can elicit feelings of pleasure and appreciation in consumers, which builds a positive emotional state. These emotions can then drive impulse purchases as an emotional response. Thus, positive emotions are hypothesized to mediate the relationship between free shipping and impulse purchases. Previous research, Wulandari & Edastama (2022); Fathia & Vania (2023); Ubaedilah et al. (2023) , has confirmed a similar relationship, where promotional benefits such as free shipping influence impulse purchases through increased positive emotions.

H<sub>7</sub>: Positive emotion mediates the relationship between free shipping and impulse buying.

## METHODS

### Sampling

The respondents in this study were students from the faculty of economics and business at Brawijaya University of Malang, State University of Malang, and Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, who are classified as Generation Z (17–28 years old) and shop on Shopee. The number of populations in this study is unknown, so it used purposive sampling to determine the sample size; 190 samples were obtained.

### Data Collection Methods and Processes

Data collection techniques in quantitative research are carried out through two methods. First, using a questionnaire, an instrument that contains structured questions to obtain respondents' responses, measured through a choice of answers or open-ended responses. Second, through structured observation that involves systematic observation of predetermined variables using checklists or observation instruments. This technique aims to collect numerical data that can be analyzed statistically (Ardiansyah, Risnita, & Jailani, 2023).

### Measures

The path model is used to empirically test and visualize the relationships among influence variables (Drechsel, Kracklauer, Menrad, & Decker, 2025). Data analysis was carried out using SmartPLS 4.0, which implements the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method (Jahan, Kamal, Bhattacharjee, Taqi, & Ali, 2025). The analysis process consists of three stages. First, the outer model test to measure validity and reliability, including convergent validity with a loading factor value of  $> 0.5$ , composite reliability with Cronbach's Alpha  $> 0.7$ , and discriminant validity with cross-loading  $> 0.5$ . Second, the model's internal test is conducted using F-Square and R-Square. Third, a hypothesis test was conducted to assess the direct and indirect effects among the variables.

## RESULT

In this study, 190 respondents reported that Generation Z was present at several state universities in Malang City, including Brawijaya University, State University of Malang, and State Islamic University of Malang. Data were collected using questionnaires containing statements related to the research. Through the questionnaire, information was obtained about the respondents' identities and their responses to each question. The identities of the respondents in the study are presented in the following table.

**Table 1.** Respondent Characteristics

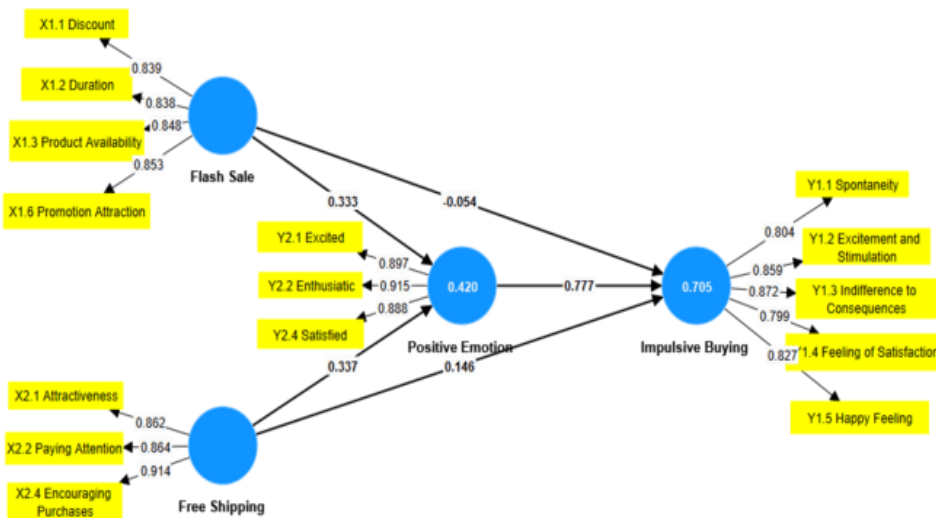
Information	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Men - men	89	47%
Woman	101	53%
<b>Age</b>		
17 years - 20 years	71	37%
21 years - 24 years old	83	44%
25 years - 28 years old	36	19%
<b>Origin of the Institution</b>		
Brawijaya University	97	51%
State University of Malang	54	28%
Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University	39	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on Table 1, most respondents were women (53%) and aged 21–24 years (44%), indicating that the sample was dominated by female Generation Z students who actively shop on Shopee in Malang City. This

study used a quantitative approach with the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method, which involved evaluating both the measurement (outer) and structural (inner) models. The path diagram visually represented the causal relationships among variables based on the proposed theories and hypotheses.

**Test Measurement Model (Outer Model)**

The blue circle in the image represents the research variables measured through a questionnaire, while each indicator serves as the basis for forming each construct. In Partial Least Squares (PLS), the causal relationships between variables are depicted through a flowchart. The evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) assesses the validity and reliability of constructs, especially in reflective models, which are evaluated on these two aspects.



**Figure 2.** Outer Model

**Validity Test**

Based on the validity test results using loading factor values, all indicators for the Flash Sale, Free Shipping, Impulse Buying, and Positive Emotion variables had values above 0.60, indicating that each indicator effectively represents its latent construct. The Flash Sale indicators ranged from 0.838 to 0.853; Free Shipping, from 0.862 to 0.914; Impulse Buying, from 0.799 to 0.872; and Positive Emotion, from 0.897 to 0.988. These results confirm that all indicators meet the validity criteria and accurately reflect their respective variables, allowing the analysis to proceed to reliability and structural model testing.

**Table 2.** Loading Factor *Validity Test*

	X1	X2	Y1	Y2	Information
X1.1	0.839				Significant
X1.2	0.838				Significant
X1.3	0.848				Significant
X1.6	0.853				Significant
X2.1		0.862			Significant
X2.2		0.864			Significant
X2.4		0.914			Significant
Y1.1			0.804		Significant
Y1.2			0.859		Significant
Y1.3			0.872		Significant
Y1.4			0.799		Significant
Y1.5			0.827		Significant
Y2.1				0.897	Significant
Y2.2				0.915	Significant
Y2.4				0.888	Significant

**Table 3.** AVE Value Validity Test

	AVE	Information
Flash Sale	0.713	Significant
Free Shipping	0.775	Significant
Impulse Buying	0.693	Significant
Positive Emotion	0.810	Significant

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test was conducted to measure the convergent validity of each construct in the research model. According to Hair et al. (2021), a good AVE value should be greater than 0.50, indicating that more than 50% of the indicator's variance is explained by the construct it measures. Based on the test results in the table above, the AVE value for each variable was obtained. The Flash Sale variable has an AVE value of 0.713, the Free Shipping variable is 0.775, the Impulse Buying variable is 0.693, and the Positive Emotion variable is 0.810.

All AVE values were above the minimum threshold of 0.50, indicating that all variables in this study met convergent validity criteria. This means that each indicator within each variable adequately explained most of the variance in the construct it measured. Thus, it can be concluded that all constructs in this research model exhibit significant convergent validity, indicating that the indicators used appropriately represent each latent variable.

**Table 4.** Cross-Loading Validity Test

	X1	X2	Y1	Y2	Information
X1.1	<b>0.839</b>	0.796	0.472	0.527	Significant
X1.2	<b>0.838</b>	0.734	0.474	0.545	Significant
X1.3	<b>0.848</b>	0.708	0.479	0.536	Significant
X1.6	<b>0.853</b>	0.707	0.468	0.506	Significant
X2.1	0.810	<b>0.862</b>	0.482	0.525	Significant
X2.2	0.716	<b>0.864</b>	0.477	0.501	Significant
X2.4	0.778	<b>0.914</b>	0.581	0.619	Significant
Y1.1	0.526	0.573	<b>0.804</b>	0.684	Significant
Y1.2	0.454	0.447	<b>0.859</b>	0.652	Significant
Y1.3	0.583	0.582	<b>0.872</b>	0.781	Significant
Y1.4	0.327	0.368	<b>0.799</b>	0.621	Significant
Y1.5	0.416	0.447	<b>0.827</b>	0.719	Significant
Y2.1	0.547	0.560	0.681	<b>0.897</b>	Significant
Y.2.2	0.635	0.603	0.792	<b>0.915</b>	Significant
Y2.4	0.503	0.527	0.776	<b>0.888</b>	Significant

The cross-loading test is conducted to determine the extent to which each indicator shows a higher correlation with its construct than with other constructs. According to Hair et al. (2021), an indicator is declared valid if its loading value on the measured construct is greater than its loading on other constructs, and the main loading value is at least  $\geq 0.70$ . Based on the table above, all indicators for the Flash Sale, Free Shipping, Impulse Buying, and Positive Emotion variables have the highest loadings within their respective constructs.

The results show that all indicators for each variable are valid and significant. For Flash Sale, the strongest indicators were Discount (0.839), Duration (0.838), Product Availability (0.848), and Promotion Attraction (0.853). For Free Shipping, the highest loadings were Attractiveness (0.862), Paying Attention (0.864), and Encouraging Purchases (0.914). Impulse Buying was strongly represented by Spontaneity (0.804), Excitement and Stimulation (0.859), Indifference to Consequences (0.872), Satisfaction (0.799), and Happy Feeling (0.827). Lastly, Positive Emotion showed excellent validity through Excited (0.897), Enthusiastic (0.915), and Satisfied (0.888).

### Reliability Test

Reliability testing is conducted to determine the extent to which a research instrument produces consistent and stable results when used to measure the same construct. Reliability is measured using two indicators: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability ( $\rho_c$ ). According to Hair et al. (2021), a construct is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values are above 0.70.

**Table 5.** Reliability Test

	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>	<b>Composite reliability (rho_c)</b>	<b>Information</b>
Flash Sale	0.866	0.856	Reliable
Free Shipping	0.855	0.868	Reliable
Impulse Buying	0.889	0.894	Reliable
Positive Emotion	0.883	0.887	Reliable

The Flash Sale variable had a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.866 and a Composite Reliability of 0.909. The Free Shipping variable had a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.855 and a Composite Reliability of 0.912. The Impulse Buying variable had a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.889 and a Composite Reliability of 0.919. The Positive Emotion variable had a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.883 and a Composite Reliability of 0.928. All values obtained exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating that all constructs in this research model have a high level of internal consistency. This means that each indicator within the variable measures the same concept consistently and reliably.

**Structural Model Test (Inner Model)**

The coefficient of determination (R-square) is used to measure how much of the dependent variable's variability is explained by the independent variables in the research model. The higher the R-square value, the better the model's ability to explain the observed phenomenon. Furthermore, the Adjusted R-square value accounts for the number of independent variables in the model, providing a more accurate measure of the model's predictive power. According to Hair et al. (2021), an R-square value of 0.67 is categorized as strong, 0.33 as moderate, and 0.19 as weak.

**Table 6.** R-Square Test

	<b>R-square</b>	<b>Adjusted R-square</b>
Impulse Buying	0.705	0.700

The Impulse Buying variable has an R-square of 0.705 and an Adjusted R-square of 0.700, indicating that 70.5% of the variation in Impulse Buying is explained by the independent variables in the model: Flash Sale, Free Shipping, and Positive Emotion. This value is considered strong, indicating that the model has high explanatory power for impulsive buying behavior. Meanwhile, the Positive Emotion variable has an R-square of 0.420 and an Adjusted R-square of 0.413, indicating that the Flash Sale and Free Shipping variables explain 42% of the variation in Positive Emotion. This value is considered moderate, suggesting that both variables have a significant influence on the formation of positive consumer emotions.

**Table 7.** Hypothesis Test

	<b>Original sample (O)</b>	<b>T statistics</b>	<b>P value (P values)</b>	<b>Information</b>
Flash Sale -> Impulse Buying	0.205	1.596	0.111	Not Sign
Free Shipping -> Impulse Buying	0.333	2.846	0.004	Sign
Flash Sale -> Positive Emotion	0.408	3.149	0.002	Sign
Free Shipping -> Positive Emotion	0.337	2.892	0.004	Sign
Positive Emotion -> Impulse Buying	0.777	14.476	0.000	Sign
Flash Sale -> Positive Emotion -> Impulse Buying	0.259	2.748	0.006	Mediating
Free Shipping -> Positive Emotion -> Impulse Buying	0.262	2.904	0.004	Mediating

The results of the hypothesis test show that Flash Sale has no significant effect on Impulse Buying, as indicated by the p-value of 0.111. On the other hand, Free Shipping has a significant effect on Impulse Buying (p-value = 0.004), suggesting that free shipping is more effective at encouraging impulsive purchases than flash sales. Furthermore, both Flash Sale and Free Shipping are proven to have a significant effect on Positive Emotion, which, in turn, has a very strong and significant effect on Impulse Buying (p-value 0.000). The mediation results also show that Positive Emotion significantly mediates the impact of Flash Sale and Free Shipping on Impulse Buying, such that impulsive purchases are more strongly triggered by positive emotions that arise during the purchasing process than by the direct influence of the promotion.

## DISCUSSION

### The Effect of Flash Sale on Impulse Buying

The results of this study indicate that Flash Sales do not have a significant effect on impulse purchases ( $p\text{-value} = 0.111; >0.05$ ). This indicates that flash sales do not directly encourage consumers to make impulse purchases. This finding differs from a previous study by Adytya et al. (2024), which showed that limited-duration promotions can trigger an immediate emotional urge to buy. Still, it is also supported by research by Alamsyah & Rahayu (2024), which found that flash sales had no influence on impulse buying. This finding is due to consumers' increasing rationality and awareness in online shopping. Generation Z, the focus of this study, tends to have high digital literacy and considers the needs and benefits of products before making purchases. Therefore, even though flash sales attract attention, consumers do not necessarily make impulse purchases without further consideration.

### The Effect of Flash Sale on Positive Emotion

In contrast, free shipping had a significant effect on impulse buying ( $p = 0.004$ ). This is in accordance with research by Alamsyah & Rahayu (2024) and Fitriana (2024), which shows an influence of free shipping on impulsive purchases. This indicates that free shipping remains a highly attractive factor for consumers and can encourage impulse purchases. The direct financial benefit of reduced shipping costs makes consumers feel more comfortable, leading to quicker purchasing decisions without much deliberation.

### The Effect of Free Shipping on Positive Emotion

In contrast to previous results, Flash Sales were found to have a positive and significant effect on Positive Emotion ( $p\text{-value} = 0.002; < 0.05$ ). This aligns with the research by Aqsa et al. (2025). This finding indicates that time-limited promotions can evoke positive emotions in consumers, such as joy, enthusiasm, and a desire to shop. The urgency of flash sales creates a sense of pleasure because consumers feel they have an exclusive opportunity to obtain products at lower prices. Thus, although flash sales do not directly influence impulse buying, this strategy is still effective at generating positive feelings that can then serve as an indirect driver of impulsive buying behavior.

### The Influence of Positive Emotion on Impulse Buying

This study found that free shipping has a positive and significant effect on positive emotions, with a  $p\text{-value}$  of 0.004 ( $<0.05$ ) according to research conducted by Al Fajri et al. (2023). These results indicate that free shipping offers have a positive emotional impact on consumers. Consumers feel happy and satisfied because they receive additional benefits from their transactions, namely, savings on shipping costs. Thus, free shipping can enhance a pleasant shopping experience and strengthen the emotional connection between consumers and e-commerce platforms like Shopee.

### The Role of Positive Emotion Mediation

The research findings show that positive emotions have a significant positive influence on impulse buying ( $p\text{-value} = 0.000 (<0.05)$ ). These results confirm that impulsive buying decisions are strongly influenced by consumers' emotional states. When consumers feel happy, satisfied, or enthusiastic about an offer, they tend to make spontaneous purchasing decisions without careful planning. This supports consumer behavior theory, which holds that positive emotions can reduce cognitive control and accelerate decision-making in shopping.

### The Mediating Role of Positive Emotion

The analysis also shows that positive emotion mediates the relationships between flash sales and impulse buying, and between free shipping and impulse buying, with  $p\text{-values}$  of 0.006 and 0.004 ( $<0.05$ ), respectively. This indicates that neither flash sales nor free shipping directly increases impulse buying behavior, but rather that they primarily do so by fostering positive emotions. In other words, an effective promotional strategy is

not only one that offers economic benefits, but also one that creates a pleasurable emotional experience for consumers.

This finding reinforces the view that psychological and emotional factors play a crucial role in digital marketing. Consumers who experience joy and satisfaction during interactions with promotions tend to demonstrate more spontaneous purchase intentions and actions. Therefore, the success of marketing strategies such as flash sales and free shipping depends heavily on their ability to create positive customer experiences that evoke positive emotions.

### Implications of Research Results

Overall, the results of this study suggest that promotions that emphasize solely rational factors, such as low prices or cost savings, are not always effective at encouraging impulse purchases. Instead, the emotional aspects of the shopping experience play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior. Therefore, for e-commerce players like Shopee, it's crucial to design marketing strategies that not only emphasize price promotions but also foster interactions and shopping experiences that evoke positive emotions, such as engaging interface designs, dynamic flash-sale notifications, and creatively packaged free shipping.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that Flash Sales and Free Shipping do not directly affect Impulse Buying, but both positively and significantly affect Positive Emotion, which in turn strongly influences Impulse Buying. This shows that promotional strategies such as flash sales and free shipping do not directly encourage impulsive buying but rather do so indirectly by fostering positive emotions in consumers. Thus, Positive Emotion acts as a mediating variable linking promotional strategies to impulsive buying behavior. This finding confirms that, in the context of online shopping, especially among Generation Z Shopee users, emotional factors play an important role in driving spontaneous purchasing decisions, making marketing strategies that create positive emotional experiences key to increasing consumer impulsive buying behavior.

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