

How Positive Emotion Shapes the Effect of Price Discounts and eWOM on Online Impulsive Buying: Evidence from Generation Z



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Abstract

The rapid growth of e-commerce and creative sectors has increased competition for digital-native consumers, especially Generation Z. In this environment, spontaneous online purchases influenced by emotions play a major role in driving sales, yet the processes connecting marketing cues to impulsive online buying are still not well understood. This study explores how positive emotion mediates the effects of price discounts and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on Gen Z's online impulsive buying behavior. Data were gathered from 160 Gen Z individuals with prior e-commerce purchasing experience using a structured online questionnaire and purposive sampling. The analysis, conducted through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), reveals that price discounts significantly influence impulsive online buying both directly and indirectly through positive emotion, indicating partial mediation. Meanwhile, eWOM has no direct impact but affects impulsive buying entirely through positive emotion, showing full mediation. These results emphasize the importance of emotional responses in converting marketing efforts into impulsive purchases. The study enriches online consumer behavior research by linking price incentives and social influence with emotional processes in an emerging market Gen Z setting. Practically, e-commerce platforms should combine compelling discounts with emotionally appealing eWOM to evoke positive emotions and boost impulse buying.

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1 Introduction

The current era of the Industrial Revolution has driven the emergence of various new businesses and intensified competition among enterprises. Companies are required to continually innovate and develop creative marketing strategies to survive and gain a competitive advantage. Competition occurs not only among large corporations but also within the rapidly growing creative industry sector in Indonesia. This Industry plays a crucial role in the national economy as it is directly related to innovation, creativity, and services with added value. The creative industry encompasses various economic sectors that rely on ideas and creativity to generate employment opportunities and enhance public welfare. Data from [Katadata \(2020\)](#) indicate that the contribution of the creative industry to Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) experienced significant growth from 2014 to 2019.

Table 1
Total Labor Force and GDP

Year	Labor Force (Million)	GDP (Trillion)
2014	15,5	784,9
2015	16,1	852,6
2016	16,9	922,6
2017	17,4	1.000
2018	18,2	1.100
2019	19,9	1.200

In line with the growth of the creative industry, business competition in the fashion sector has become increasingly intense. Consumer purchasing behavior, particularly online impulse buying, has become a key factor driving sales growth. Surveys indicate that approximately 65% of consumers often make unplanned purchases. Furthermore, a Mastercard report (2015) revealed that Indonesian millennials are the most impulsive consumers in the Asia-Pacific region. Impulse buying refers to spontaneous purchasing behavior driven by a strong emotional urge to acquire a product immediately. The factors that stimulate online impulse buying include attractive promotional offers, such as price discounts, cash back, product bonuses, or special gifts. In addition, psychological factors, particularly positive emotions, also influence purchasing behavior. This study aims to explore in greater depth the influence of price discount and electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) on online impulse buying, with positive emotion as a mediating variable, particularly among Generation Z consumers who are marketplace users in Bali, Indonesia.

Literature review

Electronic Commerce (E-Commerce)

E-commerce, as proposed by [Zwass \(2015\)](#), is the sharing of business information, the maintenance of business relationships, and the conduct of business transactions via telecommunications networks. E-Commerce refers to business transactions conducted through digital platforms and internet-based technologies. It encompasses the use of electronic media, including Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), to facilitate the exchange of goods and services. Through these systems, organizations engage in online value creation and modification processes, redefining transactional relationships between businesses and consumers. Moreover, e-commerce has become a key driver of digital transformation, enhancing efficiency, accessibility, and competitiveness in the global marketplace ([Jain et al., 2021](#)).

Z Generation (Gen Z)

Generation Z (Gen Z) refers to the demographic cohort born after the millennial generation, roughly between the mid-1997s and early 2012. Growing up in a highly digitalized era, they are recognized as digital natives accustomed to technology, the internet, and social media from an early age. This exposure has shaped their adaptability to technological change, preference for interactive communication, and demand for speed and efficiency in accessing information and engaging in economic activities.

Price Discount

According to Budiyanto (2018), a discount is a price reduction offered by sellers to encourage specific customer actions that are beneficial to them. Research conducted by Liantifa & Haryono (2022) indicates that discounts have a significant effect on online impulse buying decisions. Nevertheless, these findings differ from those of Kristiawan et al. (2018) and Faisal & Sari (2018), who found that discounts do not significantly influence online impulse buying decisions. Price discounts constitute an effective marketing strategy in the e-commerce context, as they stimulate consumers' purchase intention while simultaneously fostering loyalty toward the platform (Walangitan et al., 2022). According to Kotler (2019), in digital commerce, discount mechanisms extend beyond direct price reductions like vouchers, cashback offers that contribute to consumers' psychological perception of enhanced value.

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM)

Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) is a form of online communication in which consumers share opinions about products or services via digital platforms. It significantly influences consumer attitudes due to its broad reach and accessibility compared to traditional word of mouth (Ashouri, 2015). E-WOM effectively shapes consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions, particularly in online contexts. Studies indicate that website quality positively affects both E-WOM and online impulse buying, as consumers often rely on reviews and recommendations before making purchases (Ismagilova et al., 2020). In the digital era, where consumers are increasingly skeptical of traditional advertising, E-WOM has become a vital marketing strategy for building trust and expanding market share. However, inconsistent or low-quality information may negatively impact consumer decision-making (Zhao et al., 2020).

Positive Emotion

According to Nurlinda et al. (2020), positive emotions play a crucial role in shaping consumer involvement and decision-making. Imbayani & Novarini (2018) further note that online impulse buying can be driven by positive emotions arising from product appeal, engaging content, or a pleasant shopping environment. In e-commerce, such emotions are often stimulated by enjoyable user experiences, attractive interfaces, and promotional incentives such as discounts or free shipping. Hence, positive emotions constitute a key psychological factor that enhances consumers' propensity for online impulse buying and overall satisfaction within digital shopping environments. Moreover, fostering positive emotional responses can strengthen brand attachment and long-term customer loyalty.

Online Impulse Buying

Early research from Chan et al. (2017) defined impulse buying as a spontaneous behavior that occurs when consumers deviate from their initial purchase intentions. These studies mainly investigated how actual buying behavior varies from pre-established shopping goals. Reminder impulse buying occurs when the sight of a product evokes prior experiences or familiarity, leading to a purchase decision that involves moderate cognitive engagement. In contrast, suggestion impulse buying arises when consumers are exposed to a new product and subsequently construct a perceived need or desire for it (Zhang et al., 2018).

Prior research increasingly suggests that mixed findings on online impulse buying can be understood through emotional pathways: using the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model and cognitive–affective appraisal views, scholars argue that marketing cues such as discounts, platform convenience, and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) shape consumers' thoughts and feelings first, and these internal reactions then drive behaviors like impulsive purchases. Positive emotions (e.g., joy, excitement, pleasure) are especially influential because they can momentarily weaken self-control and heighten the appeal of immediate consumption; in e-commerce settings, flash sales, limited-time deals, and engaging digital experiences tend to spark such emotions and thereby increase impulsive buying (Sari & Yasa, 2021). Even so, important gaps persist: few studies have directly tested positive emotion as a mediator linking price discounts and eWOM to online impulsive buying among Gen Z in emerging markets; prior evidence on the direct effects of discounts and eWOM remains inconsistent, implying hidden psychological processes; and Indonesian Gen Z is still scarce despite their central role in marketplace adoption. Addressing these issues, the present study examines how discounts and eWOM affect Gen Z's online impulsive buying in Bali through positive emotion using PLS-SEM, offering clearer insight into the relative power of price versus social cues, the direct versus emotion-driven nature of their effects, and Gen Z behavior in an emerging-economy context

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Drawing from the integrated theoretical perspectives and existing empirical evidence, this study formulates the following hypotheses to further examine the proposed relationship:

- H1:** Price discounts have a positive effect on positive emotions.
H2: Price discounts have a positive effect on online impulse buying
H3: E-WoM has a positive effect on Positive Emotion
H4: E-WoM has a positive effect on Online Impulse Buying
H5: Positive Emotion has a positive effect on Online Impulse Buying
H6: Positive Emotion mediates the effect of Price Discounts on Online Impulse Buying
H7: Positive Emotion mediates the effect of E-WoM on Online Impulse Buying

2 Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative explanatory approach using a survey method to collect data from respondents and aims to empirically examine the relationship between electronic word of mouth, price discount, positive emotion, and online impulse buying in e-commerce.

Population and Sample

This study involved e-commerce users in Bali, selected through purposive sampling to ensure they met specific criteria. Respondents were required to have at least a senior high school education, prior e-commerce purchase experience, and belong to Generation Z (born 1997–2012). Referring to [Sugiyono \(2017\)](#), the minimum sample size for 16 indicators is 80–160 participants; thus, 160 respondents were included.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

The data used in this study are quantitative, consisting of words, sentences, and images. The qualitative data relevant to this research were obtained from questionnaire responses. Data were collected through observation and surveys. The data in this research were obtained through a self-administered online questionnaire distributed using Google Forms to ensure broad accessibility and effective engagement with the target respondents. The survey instruments were carefully adapted from well-established and previously validated measurement scales found in earlier studies, with contextual modifications made to suit the online food delivery environment. Each statement in the questionnaire was rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to capture respondents' perceptions, evaluations, and behavioral intentions in a nuanced and reliable manner.

Table 2
Source of Questionnaire Indicators

Construct	Indicators	Source
Price Discount	1. Price Reduction	Lestari (2018)
	2. Discount Percentage	Gumilang & Nurcahya (2016)
	3. Time-Limited Discount	Saputro (2019)
	4. Voucher/Promotional Offers	
Electronic Word of Mouth	1. Information Search	Jalilvand & Samiei (2012)
	2. Trust in Information Sources	AlDebei et al., (2015)
	3. Impact of Positive Reviews	Widianingrum & Alamsyah (2019)
	4. Number of Review Ratings	
Positive Emotion	1. Pleasure from External Stimuli	Peter & Olson (2014) Darma & Japariato (2014)
	2. Enthusiasm in the Exploration Process	Anggariawan et al., (2016)

Construct	Indicators	Source
Online Impulse Buying	3. Enjoyment in Shopping Activities	Rook & Fisher (1995)
	4. Post-Transaction Satisfaction	
	1. Unplanned Purchase	Muruganantham & Bhakat (2013)
	2. Spontaneous Response to Promotions	
	3. Difficulty Controlling Purchase Impulses	Hetharie (2012)
	4. Post-Purchase Consideration of Benefits	

This study employed SmartPLS as the primary analytical tool. PLS was selected because it functions as a predictive model that does not require specific distributional assumptions for parameter estimation or causal relationship testing. The analysis involved two main stages: the evaluation of the outer model and the inner model. The outer model, or measurement model, was assessed to determine the validity and reliability of the constructs. Through an iterative algorithm, key parameters were identified, including convergent validity, discriminant validity, composite reliability, and Cronbach's alpha. The R^2 value was also examined to assess the explanatory power of the predictive model. The inner model, or structural model, was used to analyze the causal relationships among latent variables. The bootstrapping technique was applied to generate T-statistics, which were used to test the significance of these causal relationships.

Research Framework

The conceptual framework represents the synthesis of various previously discussed theories, which are then critically and systematically analyzed to develop a comprehensive understanding of the relationships among the variables that form the focus of the study (Sugiyono, 2017).

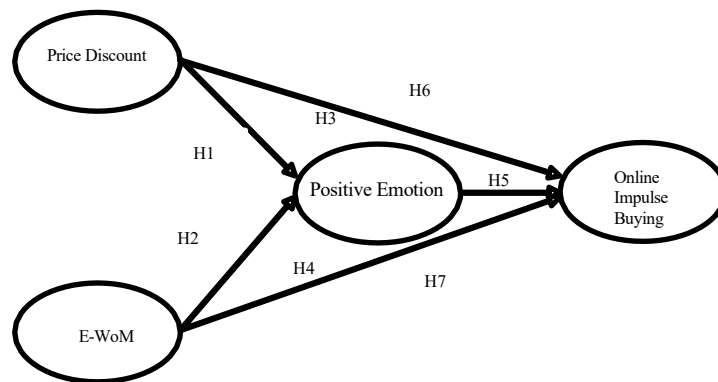


Figure 1. The conceptual framework

3 Results and Discussions

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis was conducted to present an overview of respondents' perceptions of the four primary variables investigated in this study: price discount, electronic word of mouth (eWOM), positive emotion, and online impulse buying. The findings reveal that respondents generally demonstrated favorable evaluations across all variables.

The price discount variable achieved a mean score of 4.19 "Good", indicating that discount strategies remain an effective marketing tool in stimulating consumers' purchase intentions. The eWOM variable obtained a slightly higher mean of 4.35 "Very Good", underscoring the critical role of online reviews and user-generated content in shaping consumer trust and decision-making processes. Positive emotion recorded the highest mean score of 4.43 "Very Good", suggesting that online shopping experiences are closely associated with feelings of joy, enthusiasm, and satisfaction. In contrast, online impulse buying yielded a moderate mean of 3.00 "Fairly High", implying that while spontaneous purchases do occur, consumers still exhibit a degree of rational consideration before completing transactions. Collectively, these results highlight that both price discount and eWOM significantly contribute to the emergence of positive emotional states, which subsequently encourage impulsive purchasing behavior in online shopping contexts.

Inferential Statistical Analysis (PLS-SEM Analysis)

The analytical technique applied in this study is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), adopting the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach facilitated through SmartPLS 3.0 software. This analytical framework comprises two primary stages of model evaluation, namely the outer model, which assesses the validity and reliability of the measurement model, and the inner model, which examines the structural relationships among the latent constructs.

a. Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

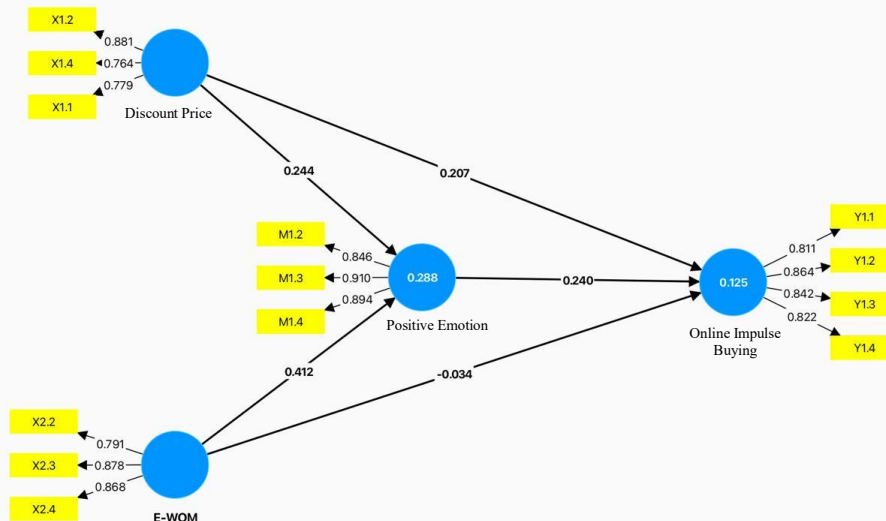


Figure 2. Result of the PLS Analysis

The evaluation of the outer model is conducted using three main criteria: convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability. The assessment of the measurement model is based on the outer loadings of reflective indicators. Reflective indicators are considered valid when they demonstrate loading values greater than 0.5, indicating that each indicator adequately represents its corresponding latent construct. This evaluation process ensures that the measurement items possess sufficient validity and reliability before proceeding to the structural model analysis.

Table 3
Result of Convergent Validity

Indicators	Outer Loading	Explanation
X11 ← Price Discount	0.779	Valid
X12 ← Price Discount	0.881	Valid
X14 ← Price Discount	0.764	Valid
X22 ← EWOM	0.791	Valid
X23 ← EWOM	0.878	Valid
X24 ← EWOM	0.868	Valid
Y1.1 ← Online Impulse Buying	0.811	Valid
Y1.2 ← Online Impulse Buying	0.864	Valid
Y1.3 ← Online Impulse Buying	0.842	Valid
Y1.4 ← Online Impulse Buying	0.822	Valid
Z1.2 ← Positive Emotion	0.846	Valid
Z1.3 ← Positive Emotion	0.910	Valid
Z1.4 ← Positive Emotion	0.894	Valid

Table 3 shows that all outer loading values for the variable indicators exceed 0.5, with a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the significance threshold of 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that all indicators have met the requirements for convergent validity.

Table 4
Result of Discriminant Validity

Construct	Correlation			
	AVE	Price Discount	EWOM	Online Impulse Buying
Price Discount	0.566			
EWOM	0.637	0.363		
Online Impulse Buying	0.694	0.319	0.162	
Positive Emotion	0.671	0.444	0.576	0.312

Table 4 shows that all constructs recorded Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50, while the correlation coefficients for each construct were higher than those between constructs. This pattern suggests that every latent construct is more effectively explained by its own set of indicators rather than by indicators of other constructs. Hence, the findings provide sufficient evidence that the measurement model meets the standards of discriminant validity.

Table 5
Result of Composite Reliability

No.	Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Explanation
1	Discount Price	0,743	0,838	Reliabel
2	E-WOM	0,810	0,874	Reliabel
3	Positive Emotion	0,834	0,890	Reliabel
4	Online Impulse Buying	0,861	0,901	Reliabel

The construct reliability of the measurement model with reflective indicators can be assessed using the composite reliability value, supported by Cronbach's alpha. According to Ghozali (2016), both composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha are considered acceptable when their values exceed 0.60. Table 5 reveals that both the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs exceed the threshold of 0.6. Therefore, it can be concluded that each construct in the research model demonstrates satisfactory reliability.

b. Structural Model (Inner Model)

The assessment of the inner model, or structural model, was conducted to examine the relationships among constructs, the significance levels, and the R-square values of the research model. In this structural model, there are two dependent variables: Online Impulse Buying and Positive Emotion.

Table 6
Result of Determination Coefficient Test

Construct	R-square
Online Impulse Buying	0,288
Positive Emotion	0,125

Table 6 shows that the R-square value for the Online Impulse Buying variable is 0.288, indicating that 28.8% of the variability in the construct is explained by the model, while the remaining 71.2% is influenced by factors outside the model. Similarly, the R-square value for the Positive Emotion variable is 0.125, suggesting that 12.5% of the construct's variability is explained by the model, whereas 87.5% is attributed to other external factors.

The model's predictive relevance was further evaluated using the Q-square (predictive relevance) statistic for the structural model, which assesses how well the observed values are reconstructed by the model and its parameter estimates. A Q-square value greater than zero indicates that the model possesses predictive relevance, whereas a value equal to or less than zero suggests a lack of predictive capability.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was carried out using the p-value test for each path representing the relationship between variables. In Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis, the significance of each hypothesized relationship is statistically examined through simulation procedures. The bootstrapping technique is employed to address potential data non-normality and to enhance the accuracy and robustness of the estimation results within the research model.

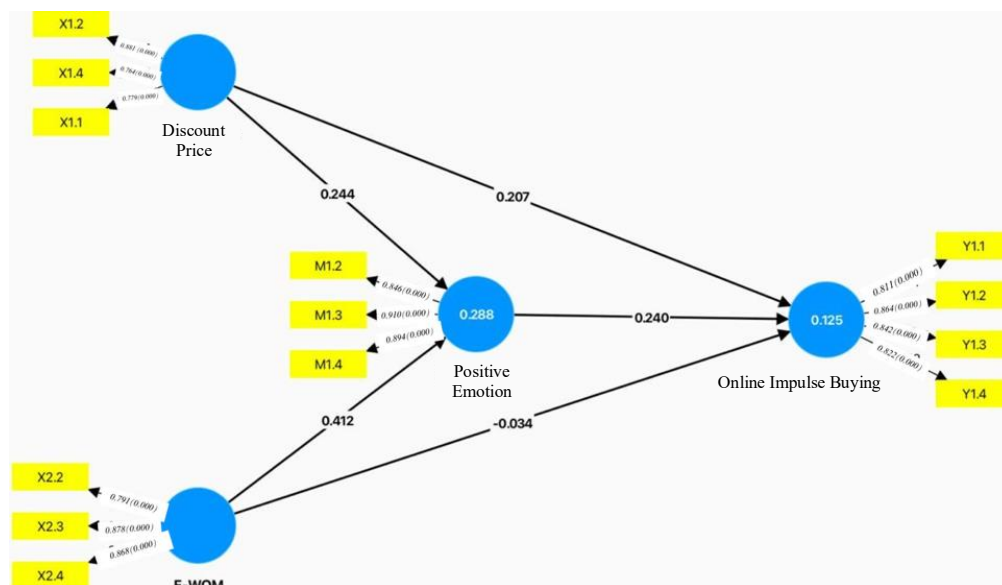


Figure 3. Result of PLS Bootstrapping Analysis

Discussion

H1: Price Discounts Have a Positive Effect on Positive Emotions.

The analysis indicates that Price Discount has a positive and significant effect on Positive Emotion ($\beta = 0.244$), suggesting that discounts enhance consumers' positive emotional responses. This finding aligns with previous studies (Gamaya & Suardana, 2024; Destasari, 2023; Saputro, 2019; Sholichah et al., 2025; Isnaini & Rahmidani, 2021), all of which report a significant positive influence of price discounts on positive emotions. Hence, **Hypothesis 1 (H1) is supported.**

H2: Price Discounts Have a Positive Effect on Online Impulse Buying

The results show that Price Discount has a positive and significant direct effect on Online Impulse Buying ($\beta = 0.207$), indicating that discounts can directly stimulate spontaneous purchasing without extensive deliberation. Discounts act as an external stimulus that accelerates consumers' decision-making processes. This finding is consistent with previous studies, which report a positive and significant influence of price discounts on online impulse buying (Kusnanto et al., 2020; Fatmawati et al., 2022; Ranto et al., 2021; Noor, 2020; Masora et al., 2016). Therefore, **Hypothesis 2 (H2) is supported.**

H3: E-WoM has a positive effect on Positive Emotion

The analysis reveals that E-WOM has a positive and significant direct effect on Positive Emotion ($\beta = 0.412$), indicating that electronic word-of-mouth generates positive emotional responses among consumers. This result aligns with prior studies, including Jiwandono et al. (2020), which found a positive effect of E-WOM on consumers' positive emotions. Similarly, Cantallops et al. (2018) and Septianto & Chiew (2018) reported positive and significant relationships involving E-WOM and positive emotions. Therefore, **Hypothesis 3 (H3) is supported.**

H4: E-WoM has a positive effect on Online Impulse Buying

The analysis indicates that E-WOM does not have a significant direct effect on Online Impulse Buying ($\beta = -0.034$). This suggests that, although E-WOM can generate positive emotions, it does not directly stimulate consumers to make impulsive purchases. Therefore, the influence of E-WOM on online impulse buying appears to be indirect, operating through the mediation of Positive Emotion. These findings contrast with previous studies, such as Fatonah & Saputra (2025), Nguyen et al. (2024), Ernestivita et al. (2023), Mukmim et al. (2025), and Ariani et al. (2025), which reported a significant positive effect of E-WOM on impulsive purchasing behavior. Based on the current results, **Hypothesis 4 (H4) is rejected.**

H5: Positive Emotion has a positive effect on Online Impulse Buying

The results show that Positive Emotion has a positive and significant direct effect on Online Impulse Buying ($\beta = 0.240$), indicating that positive emotions can increase consumers' impulsive purchasing behavior. This finding is consistent with previous studies, including Pramestya & Widagda (2020), who reported a significant positive influence of Positive Emotion on impulse buying in the fashion sector in Indonesia. Similarly, Rahadhini et al. (2020) and Kumala & Wardana (2021) found that positive emotions significantly enhance consumers' impulse buying tendencies. Therefore, **Hypothesis 5 (H5) is supported.**

H6: Positive Emotion mediates the effect of Price Discounts on Online Impulse Buying

The relationship between Price Discount and Online Impulse Buying shows that Price Discount exerts not only a significant direct effect on Online Impulse Buying ($\beta = 0.207$) but also an indirect effect through Positive Emotion (Price Discount \rightarrow Positive Emotion = 0.244; Positive Emotion \rightarrow Online Impulse Buying = 0.240). This indicates the presence of partial mediation, where Positive Emotion strengthens the effect of Price Discount on consumers' impulse purchases without fully substituting the direct influence. Thus, Positive Emotion extends the pathway through which Price Discounts impact consumer purchasing behavior. Based on these results, **Hypothesis 6 (H6) is supported.**

H7: Positive Emotion mediates the effect of E-WoM on Online Impulse. The analysis of the E-WOM \rightarrow Online Impulse Buying pathway shows that the direct effect of E-WOM is not significant ($\beta = -0.034$), while E-WOM significantly influences Positive Emotion ($\beta = 0.412$), and Positive Emotion, in turn, significantly affects Online Impulse Buying ($\beta = 0.240$). This pattern indicates full mediation, where the effect of E-WOM on online impulse buying is entirely transmitted through the enhancement of positive emotions. In other words, E-WOM cannot directly

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drive impulsive purchases but can do so indirectly by generating positive emotional responses in consumers. Based on these results, **Hypothesis 7 (H7) is supported.**

4 Conclusion

The results of this study reveal that Price Discount and E-WOM both influence Online Impulse Buying, but in different ways. Price Discount exerts a direct and significant effect on Online Impulse Buying, indicating that consumers are more likely to make spontaneous purchases when offered attractive discounts. At the same time, E-WOM does not have a significant direct effect on impulsive buying; however, it significantly influences Positive Emotion, which in turn affects Online Impulse Buying. Positive Emotion serves as a mediator in these relationships, with Price Discount showing partial mediation and E-WOM exhibiting full mediation. This suggests that consumer emotions play a critical role in translating marketing stimuli into impulsive purchasing behavior.

These findings have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, they highlight the importance of incorporating emotional responses into models of online consumer behavior, extending prior frameworks on impulse buying and marketing influence. From a managerial perspective, the results suggest that businesses should not rely solely on discounts or electronic word-of-mouth independently. Effective strategies should combine attractive pricing with emotionally engaging content that enhances positive consumer emotions. For example, campaigns can integrate personalized promotions, interactive online experiences, and compelling social proof to strengthen emotional engagement and drive impulse purchases. By leveraging both direct incentives and emotional drivers, marketers can more effectively influence online consumer behavior and foster long-term engagement in competitive e-commerce environments.

Limitation

This study has limitations as it only examines Price Discount, E-WOM, and Positive Emotion in explaining Online Impulse Buying. In addition, the research was conducted solely in Bali-Indonesia, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions with different demographic and cultural characteristics. Future studies are encouraged to explore additional factors, such as social influence, personal traits, or marketing stimuli, and to adopt mixed-methods approaches to capture the psychological and contextual dynamics of impulsive purchasing more comprehensively.

Conflict of interest statement

The authors declared that they have no competing interests.

Statement of authorship

The authors have a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The authors have approved the final article.

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