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The Influence of Seasonal Price Discounts on Online Impulsive Buying Decisions on the Steam Gaming Platform (Study on Generation Z in Bandung)

Muhammad Ghazi Raiqal[1], Mukaram Mukaram[2]
[1]Politeknik Negeri Bandung, Jawa Barat, Indonesia, muhammad.ghazi.abs421@polban.ac.id
[2]Politeknik Negeri Bandung, Jawa Barat, Indonesia, mukaram@polban.ac.id

Corresponding Author: muhammad.ghazi.abs421@polban.ac.id[1]

Abstract: The rapid growth of the digital gaming industry has intensified the use of seasonal price discounts as a marketing strategy to boost consumer purchasing interest. This study aims to examine the influence of seasonal discounts on impulsive buying decisions among Generation Z users in Bandung, Indonesia, on the Steam platform. A quantitative approach with a survey method was adopted, involving 111 respondents selected through purposive sampling. The collected data were analyzed using simple linear regression. The results reveal a significant and positive influence of seasonal discounts on impulsive buying behavior, with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.744 and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 55.4%. These findings suggest that seasonal discounts substantially drive impulsive purchase behavior among Gen Z users on Steam. The study offers practical insights for digital marketing practitioners to design more effective and consumer-focused promotional strategies.

Keyword: Seasonal Price Discount, Impulsive Buying Decision, Generation Z, Digital Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

The digital gaming industry has grown rapidly over the past decade, driven by increased internet access, technological advancements, and the rise of online marketplaces. Among the most dominant platforms is Steam, a digital distribution service for PC games that consistently attracts users through a variety of seasonal promotional campaigns. These promotions, such as the Summer Sale, Winter Sale, and Autumn Sale, often provide limited-time discounts of up to ninety percent on popular titles, which significantly influence consumer buying behavior.

One of the most responsive consumer segments to this type of marketing strategy is Generation Z. As a digitally native group, Gen Z is highly familiar with online shopping platforms, tends to make fast decisions, and is especially responsive to visual stimuli like countdown timers and flash sale banners. These features, commonly found on Steam during promotional periods, create a sense of urgency that often leads to impulsive purchasing behavior.

Seasonal price discounts are defined as temporary price reductions offered during specific times of the year, such as public holidays or school vacations, with the goal of increasing product appeal and encouraging immediate purchases. Based on prior literature, the effectiveness of these discounts is often measured through three key indicators: the presence of a discount (e.g., percentage or amount), the validity period of the discount, and the types of products included in the promotion (Yonanda Suwinovia & Trisnia Widuri, 2022). These components are believed to act as external stimuli capable of triggering unplanned consumer responses.

In parallel, impulsive buying behavior refers to unplanned purchases made spontaneously, without deliberate decision-making. According to Rook, (1987), such behavior is typically emotionally driven and triggered by both internal and external factors. The dimensions used to assess impulsive buying in this research include four main indicators: spontaneous buying, immediate reaction upon seeing a product, buying without thinking, and the tendency to buy now rather than later (Anita, 2024). These behavioral indicators help capture the psychological processes that occur when consumers are exposed to high-impact promotional tactics.

To further understand the psychological mechanism behind these behaviors, this research adopts the framework of Prospect Theory introduced by Kahneman & Tversky (1979). This theory explains how individuals evaluate potential outcomes in terms of perceived gains and losses rather than absolute value. When faced with a seasonal discount, consumers tend to perceive the reduced price as a gain and the possibility of missing out as a loss. According to Thaler, (1985), this perception is shaped by mental accounting, where consumers evaluate deals based on reference prices and emotional value rather than objective cost. The sense of urgency and loss aversion created by limited-time offers can therefore act as a catalyst for impulsive buying.

Although previous studies have investigated price discounts in broader e-commerce contexts, research focusing on seasonal discount strategies within the gaming ecosystem remains limited. Wibowo & Sari (2021) examined discount mechanisms in online platforms generally, while Marza Maulana Rughasy & Nicholas Marpaung (2023) analyzed sales volumes in relation to time-based promotions. However, few studies have directly examined the behavioral influence of seasonal discounts on Generation Z users within the gaming industry, particularly in Indonesia.

This study aims to address this gap by exploring the effect of seasonal price discounts on impulsive buying decisions among Generation Z consumers in Bandung who use the Steam platform. In doing so, it not only contributes to academic discourse in the fields of consumer behavior and digital marketing but also offers valuable insights for developers and marketers aiming to design more effective promotional strategies tailored to the behavioral traits of young digital consumers.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative causal survey method to analyze the influence of seasonal price discounts on impulsive buying decisions on the Steam platform among Generation Z in Bandung. Data were collected through an online questionnaire using a Likert scale and purposive sampling involving 111 valid respondents aged 12–27 who had made game purchases during seasonal discount events. The sample size was determined based on recommendations by Hair et al. (2010), while the validity and reliability of the instrument were tested using Pearson correlation and Cronbach's Alpha. The analytical techniques included descriptive statistics, classical assumption tests (normality, heteroskedasticity, linearity), and simple linear regression, as outlined by Chaniago et al. (2023) and Setya Budi et al. (2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Marketing management in digital environments involves implementing strategies that adapt to consumer behavior trends, one of which is impulsive buying defined as unplanned purchases driven by emotions or external triggers (Rook, 1987). This behavior is intensified by features like one-click purchases, pop-up discounts, and personalized recommendations (Madhavaram & Laverie, 2004). Key indicators of impulsive buying include spontaneity, emotional arousal, and urgency in decision-making (Anita, 2024). Seasonal price discounts, which serve as temporary price reductions, can act as psychological stimuli that influence consumer decisions, particularly when accompanied by urgency or time limitations (Kotler & Keller, 2016). This study is underpinned by Prospect Theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), which posits that individuals are more motivated by the potential to avoid losses such as missing a limited-time discount than by gains. This tendency is also aligned with the concept of mental accounting, which explains how consumers cognitively frame purchases and discounts (Thaler, 1985).

Descriptive Analysis

Based on the results of the study, respondents who are Generation Z users of the Steam platform in Bandung were dominated by individuals aged 23–27 years, totaling 39 respondents or 35.1%. This was followed by the age group of 19–22 years with 31 respondents (27.9%), then 16–18 years with 25 respondents (22.5%), and finally 12–15 years with 16 respondents (14.4%). This distribution indicates that the majority of Steam users in this study are within the early productive age range, a demographic group typically associated with high digital literacy, frequent online activity, and exposure to e-commerce platforms and marketing stimuli.

In terms of descriptive statistics, the seasonal price discount variable measured through seven items produced mean scores ranging from 3.54 to 3.72, with an overall average of 3.64. This falls into the “good” category, suggesting that respondents generally perceive Steam’s seasonal discounts as attractive, effective, and relevant. On the other hand, the impulsive buying decision variable comprising 12 indicators yielded mean values ranging from 3.09 to 3.44, with an overall average of 3.26, which is categorized as “moderate.” These findings imply that while many respondents exhibit tendencies toward impulsive purchasing during discount periods, such behavior is not consistently or strongly demonstrated across all measured dimensions.

Although the overall level of impulsive buying behavior appears to be moderate, this does not negate the statistically significant relationship found in the regression analysis. The strong correlation coefficient ($r = 0.744$) and regression results confirm that seasonal price discounts do exert a notable influence on impulsive purchase behavior among Gen Z consumers. This apparent gap between moderate behavioral scores and strong statistical influence may be explained by the presence of moderating or inhibiting factors that were not accounted for in this study. For instance, some respondents may practice financial caution, plan their purchases in advance, or make use of platform features like wishlists and refund policies that allow them to delay impulsive decisions. Moreover, not all discounted products may align with individual preferences, further reducing spontaneous reactions despite favorable perceptions of the discount program.

Table 1. Average Mean Score for Each Variable

Variables	Mean	Category
Seasonal Price Discount	3.64	Good
Impulsive Buying Decision	3.26	Moderate

Source: Research data

Thus, the moderate descriptive category should not be interpreted as a lack of influence. In the context of behavioral research, moderate scores when supported by statistically significant findings are sufficient to demonstrate the presence of a meaningful effect. This reflects a more nuanced behavioral response, where discount strategies are effective but moderated by individual decision-making processes and contextual conditions.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

The linear regression analysis in this study was conducted to examine the effect of Seasonal Price Discount (X) on Impulsive Buying Decision (Y) among Generation Z users of the Steam platform. This analysis aims to determine whether seasonal discount strategies significantly influence consumers' tendencies to make unplanned purchases. The regression model applies the least squares method to estimate the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, using data obtained from 111 respondents. The detailed results of the analysis are presented in table 2.

Table 2. Linear Regression Coefficient Output

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	15.212	2.132		7.135	<.001
	Xtotal	.936	.080	.744	11.631	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Ytotal

Source: (SPSS 27, Processed by Researcher,2025)

The results of the simple linear regression analysis indicate that seasonal price discounts have a meaningful and statistically significant influence on impulsive buying decisions among Generation Z users on the Steam platform. The regression equation obtained is Y = 15.212 + 0.936X, which means that for every additional point in respondents' perception of seasonal discounts, their impulsive buying score tends to increase by 0.936. The t-value of 11.631 with a significance value below 0.001 confirms that this relationship is highly significant. Moreover, the standardized beta coefficient of 0.744 suggests a strong and positive relationship between the two variables. This finding reinforces the idea that time-limited discounts can effectively trigger impulse buying behavior, especially in digital contexts where consumers are frequently exposed to promotions. These results are consistent with Prospect Theory, which explains how consumers are often more motivated to avoid missing out on a good deal than they are to pursue an equivalent gain.

Coefficient of Determination

Table 3. Coefficient of Determination Output

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.744[a]	.554	.550	6.05468

a. Predictors: (Constant), Xtotal

Source: (SPSS 27, Processed by Researcher,2025)

Based on the regression output, the R Square value of 0.554 indicates that 55.4% of the variation in impulsive buying decisions can be explained by the seasonal price discount variable. The remaining 44.6% is influenced by other factors not included in the model. The

Adjusted R Square value of 0.550 adjusts the model's explanatory power for the sample size and number of predictors. Additionally, the Standard Error of the Estimate is 6.05468, which represents the average deviation between the predicted and actual values. These results indicate that the model has a relatively strong explanatory power and is suitable for understanding the impact of seasonal discounts on impulsive purchases within the context of digital game platforms.

T Test

To examine whether the seasonal price discount variable exerts a statistically significant influence on impulsive buying decisions, a t-test was employed as part of the regression analysis. This test serves to determine the extent to which the independent variable (seasonal discount) contributes to variations in the dependent variable (impulsive buying behavior). Through this method, the analysis seeks to validate the research hypothesis by evaluating the strength and direction of the relationship between these two constructs. The complete results from the regression output, including the t-value, significance level, and regression coefficients, are presented in the following section.

Table 4. T Test Results

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	15.212	2.132		7.135	<.001
	Xtotal	.936	.080	.744	11.631	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Ytotal

Source: (SPSS 27, Processed by Researcher,2025)

Based on table 4, the t-value for Seasonal Price Discount is 11.631 with a significance level (p-value) of 0.000, which is less than the threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the variable significantly affects impulsive buying decision. The null hypothesis (H_0), which states that there is no effect of seasonal discount on impulsive buying, is therefore rejected. The alternative hypothesis (H_1), which suggests that seasonal price discount does have a significant effect, is accepted.

This result confirms that Steam's seasonal discount programs are not only attractive in perception but also statistically proven to influence spontaneous consumer behavior. The findings reinforce previous literature on discount-driven purchases and support the theoretical framework used in this study.

Discussion

1. The Influence of Seasonal Price Discount on Impulsive Buying Decision

Based on the results of the partial hypothesis test using the t-test, it was found that the t-count value for the Seasonal Price Discount variable (X) is 11.631, while the t-table at a significance level of 0.05 and degrees of freedom (df = n - 2 = 109) is approximately 1.982. Since the value of t-count > t-table (11.631 > 1.982) and the significance value is 0.000 (< 0.05), the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. This result shows that seasonal price discounts have a positive and statistically significant effect on impulsive buying decisions of Steam users from Generation Z in Bandung.

The regression coefficient of 0.936 also implies that for each one-point increase in respondents' perception of seasonal discounts, the impulsive buying decision score is predicted to increase by 0.936 points, assuming all other variables remain constant. This strong influence is supported by a standardized beta coefficient of 0.744, indicating a high level of contribution

from the independent variable to the dependent variable. Additionally, the constant value of 15.212 means that even when the perception of seasonal discount is at zero, the impulsive buying tendency is already present at a base level of 15.212, likely due to other factors not measured in this study.

These findings are in line with the descriptive analysis results, where the seasonal discount variable obtained an average mean score of 3.64, categorized as "good." This means that respondents generally agree with the positive statements about Steam's discount programs, including the attractiveness of discount percentages, time-limited offers, and the relevance of discounted products. Meanwhile, the average score for the impulsive buying decision variable is 3.26, which is in the "moderate" category. This shows that although the respondents do not consistently engage in impulse buying, the presence of persuasive stimuli such as seasonal discounts increases the tendency significantly.

2. Theoretical and Empirical Alignment

These empirical results reinforce several existing theories and previous research. From a theoretical standpoint, this study supports the application of Prospect Theory by Kahneman & Tversky (1979), which suggests that consumers are more influenced by the possibility of losses (e.g., missing out on a discount) than equivalent gains. The fear of losing a good deal during seasonal campaigns becomes a psychological pressure point that motivates spontaneous purchasing behavior. This aligns with Thaler, (1985) mental accounting theory, which explains that consumers interpret discounted prices as "gains" compared to reference prices, leading them to perceive greater value in immediate purchases.

From a behavioral marketing perspective, the findings are in line with Madhavaram & Laverie (2004), who argue that digital shopping environments heighten impulsive buying tendencies due to the presence of one-click purchases, algorithmic recommendations, and real-time promotions. Similarly, Rook (1987) emphasized the role of emotional and situational triggers in shaping spontaneous purchase behavior, especially in non-physical marketplaces where transaction barriers are minimal.

3. Comparison with Previous Studies

The result of this study is consistent with the findings of Primadito (2024) and Marza Maulana Rughasy & Nicholas Marpaung (2023), both of whom highlighted that time-sensitive promotions and limited-time offers are highly effective in generating unplanned purchases in digital ecosystems. In the context of the gaming industry, Yonanda Suwinovia & Trisnia Widuri (2022) also mentioned that the effectiveness of seasonal discounts depends on several dimensions, such as discount size, urgency, and product relevance all of which were confirmed in this study.

Unlike broader e-commerce platforms like Tokopedia or Shopee, the Steam platform provides a niche context where impulsive behavior is influenced not only by price sensitivity but also by emotional attachment to game titles, anticipation of future entertainment, and peer influence. Therefore, this study contributes a novel perspective by addressing impulse buying behavior within the gaming community, a topic that remains underexplored in Indonesian academic literature.

4. Implications and Novelty

Practically, these findings provide valuable insights for digital marketers and game developers who aim to optimize sales through promotional timing. Understanding that Generation Z consumers are responsive to discount-driven triggers enables businesses to design better-targeted campaigns that emphasize urgency and emotional appeal (Aprianda & Siregar, 2022; Faliha Utama et al., 2024). However, marketers are also advised to balance these strategies with ethical considerations, as excessive reliance on impulsive triggers may contribute to compulsive purchasing behavior or buyer's remorse (Pradhan et al., 2016; Verplanken & Sato, 2011).

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on a single variable seasonal discount within a specific consumer segment (Generation Z) and platform (Steam). This specificity distinguishes the study from previous works, which often integrated multiple predictors such as brand image and service quality (Marza Maulana Rughasy & Nicholas Marpaung, 2023; Nafi, 2020). By isolating one core variable, the research enables a more direct application of behavioral theories like Prospect Theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979)and mental accounting (Thaler, 1985), particularly within a digital context relevant to today's game consumption behavior.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that seasonal price discounts have a significant and positive impact on the impulsive buying decisions of Generation Z users on the Steam platform in Bandung. The results of the simple linear regression analysis show that the seasonal discount variable contributes meaningfully to consumer behavior, with a regression coefficient of 0.936, a t-value of 11.631, and a significance level of 0.000. These findings indicate that when consumers perceive Steam's seasonal discount offers as attractive, their tendency to make spontaneous, unplanned purchases increases.

The coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.554 further shows that 55.4 percent of the variation in impulsive buying decisions can be explained by perceptions of seasonal price discounts. This confirms that discount programs involving large price reductions, time limits, and relevant product offerings are effective in shaping consumer behavior, especially among digital-native users like those from Generation Z.

The results of this study are consistent with the theoretical framework used, particularly Prospect Theory, which explains how individuals tend to react more strongly to potential losses than to equivalent gains. In this case, limited-time discounts are perceived as opportunities that should not be missed, which leads to impulsive behavior. The structure of Steam's promotional campaigns appears to support this theory, as they are intentionally designed to create urgency and a sense of scarcity.

In comparison with previous studies, this research offers a more specific focus by examining the influence of seasonal discounts on a digital game distribution platform, rather than general e-commerce settings. By concentrating on a single predictor variable and a defined consumer group, this study contributes more sharply to the academic discussion on consumer behavior in the digital economy.

These findings are expected to provide marketers, game publishers, and digital business developers with practical insights into how young consumers respond to promotional pricing strategies. Understanding this behavior may help in designing marketing approaches that are not only effective, but also responsible and aligned with consumer expectations.

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