

DO PRICE DISCOUNTS AND SALES PROMOTIONS DRIVE IMPULSE BUYING IN URBAN RETAIL SETTINGS?

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of impulse buying within modern retail sectors in high-density business districts represents a critical frontier in understanding contemporary consumer psychology. This study investigates the impact of price discounts and sales promotions on impulse buying behavior among consumers in Jakarta's "Golden Triangle" strategic business area. Adopting a quantitative approach, data were gathered through structured questionnaires from 60 respondents using accidental sampling. The analytical framework employed multiple linear regression and formal hypothesis testing to evaluate the relationships between promotional variables and spontaneous purchasing decisions. The findings reveal that both price discounts and sales promotions exert a positive and significant influence on impulse buying behavior. Specifically, the results suggest that integrated promotional activities act as a powerful psychological trigger, significantly increasing the likelihood of unplanned purchases in a high-pressure urban environment. The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on the "Golden Triangle" business district, representing the unique consumption patterns of time-constrained urban professionals exposed to intensive retail marketing. This study contributes to the literature by providing retail managers with strategic insights into designing urgency-based promotional models to optimize sales volume within the convenience store format.

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INTRODUCTION

The modern retail landscape in Indonesia has undergone a significant structural transformation, where competition no longer focuses on product availability alone, but rather on retail's ability to manipulate the shopping environment to create an instantaneous emotional response (Pradana et al., 2021). This phenomenon is driven by the rapid growth of convenience store outlets such as Indomaret which are now an integral part of the lifestyle of urban people (Santoso & Setiawan, 2022). In a dense business district such as Rasuna Said's "Golden Triangle", modern retail faces the unique challenge of capturing the attention of



consumers who have high time pressure but are constantly exposed to marketing stimulation (Widianto & Kurniawan, 2023). In this fast-paced ecosystem, impulse buying or unplanned purchases has emerged as the main determinant that drives significant sales volume growth (Putri & Hardini, 2024).

The most dominant strategy used to trigger this behavior is price discount, which theoretically functions as a direct economic incentive to lower consumers' cognitive barriers to transactions (Siregar et al., 2021). Discounts create an immediate perception of financial gain, which often obscures rational considerations regarding the functional needs of the goods (Hidayat & Pratama, 2022). Furthermore, recent research shows that price discounts in small retail formats have higher effectiveness due to the nature of consumers who tend to seek value efficiency in a short period of time (Ramadhan & Sari, 2023). However, excessive reliance on price discounts risks lowering the value of the brand in the eyes of consumers if it is not managed with strategic precision (Febriani & Wijaya, 2021).

In addition to the price factor, sales promotions, which include various non-monetary incentives such as product bonuses, loyalty points, and limited offers, act as a powerful psychological catalyst (Tanuar & Gunawan, 2022). Sales promotion is able to create a sense of scarcity and urgency, which forces the consumer organism to respond affectively to environmental stimuli (Kusuma & Ardianto, 2024). In the context of urban professionals, sales promotion is often considered a form of hedonic reward that provides temporary psychological satisfaction in the midst of work stress (Fahrudin & Maryati, 2022). However, the effectiveness of these promotions is beginning to be questioned along with the increasing consumer market literacy, which makes them more skeptical of generic promotional claims (Nugroho et al., 2023).

There is a striking phenomenological gap for consumers in key business districts such as Rasuna Said, where although promotional intensity is increasing, spontaneous purchase intent shows a non-linear trend (Aulia & Rahmawati, 2021). This condition indicates the presence of situational variables, such as cognitive fatigue and information saturation, that inhibit the effectiveness of traditional retail stimuli (Siahaan & Lubis, 2023). Previous studies have often generalized impulse buying behavior without considering the unique sociogeographic dynamics of office workers who have high mobility (Utomo & Prasetyo, 2022). Therefore, there is an urgent need to re-examine the extent to which promotional instruments are still able to intervene in the decision-making process of consumers in locations that have extreme environmental pressure (Wulandari & Saputra, 2024).

This study offers novelty by testing the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model in specific professional consumer segments, which have been rarely represented in the conventional retail literature (Budiarto & Hakim, 2021). This novelty lies in an in-depth analysis of how the interaction between economic incentives (discounts) and psychological triggers (promotions) works in individuals with limited time but high purchasing power (Lestari & Firmansyah, 2023). The theoretical contribution of this study is expected to be able to enrich the discourse on consumer psychology in the transitional economic setting in Indonesia (Mulyani & Syahputra, 2022). Practically, this study provides a foundation for retail managers to design a more personalized and urgency-based promotional strategy to optimize sales conversions in strategic locations (Zulkarnain & Effendi, 2024).

Based on these contradictions, this study formulates the problem in the following questions: (1) To what extent are partial discounts able to intervene in the spontaneous decision-making process in professional consumers?; (2) How is the sales promotion mechanism in triggering impulsive behavior in the midst of limited consumer cognitive bandwidth?; and (3) How effective is the synergy of the two stimuli simultaneously in explaining the variance of unplanned purchases at the central retail outlets? (Lestari & Firmansyah, 2023). The main objective of this study is to empirically test the predictive power of the two instruments against impulsive spending behavior in environments with extreme situational stress.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the expansion of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework by contextualizing the interaction of retail stimuli in urban professional subjects that have been underrepresented in the conventional literature (Budiarto & Hakim, 2021). Practically, the results of this study are a strategic guideline for retail managers in designing a "Precision Promotion" strategy that is more oriented towards psychological resonance than just margin cutting, in order to optimize sales conversions in strategic locations that have unique consumer characteristics (Zulkarnain & Effendi, 2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Theoretical Framework: The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model

The foundational theoretical lens for this study is the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, originally developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) and widely adopted in consumer behavior literature to explain impulsive actions (Budiarto & Hakim, 2021). Within this paradigm, environmental cues act as stimuli (S), which influence an individual's internal emotional and cognitive states (O), subsequently driving a behavioral response (R) (Lestari & Firmansyah, 2023).

In the context of modern retail, the retail environment is not passive; it is a designed mechanism meant to evoke specific psychological reactions. For urban professionals operating in high-pressure business districts, the traditional deliberative purchase process is frequently bypassed. The limited cognitive bandwidth and time constraints typical of this demographic make them highly susceptible to external stimuli that promise immediate gratification (Widianto & Kurniawan, 2023). Therefore, this study posits that specific retail stimuli price discounts and sales promotions—function as the primary drivers that bypass rational evaluation and directly stimulate impulsive purchasing decisions.

Price Discount and its Influence on Impulse Buying

Price discounts represent a direct economic incentive designed to lower the perceived cost of a product, thereby increasing its attractiveness (Siregar et al., 2021). From a behavioral economics perspective, discounts serve as a cognitive heuristic—a mental shortcut that allows consumers to perceive value instantly without engaging in extensive market research or price comparison (Ramadhan & Sari, 2023).

For time-constrained urban professionals, a discount is not merely a mechanism for financial savings; it is a trigger that reduces the "pain of paying" and induces a sense of transaction utility (Hidayat & Pratama, 2022). This psychological gratification often overrides the functional necessity of the item, leading to a sudden urge to purchase (Febriani & Wijaya, 2021). In the context of convenience stores in dense corporate areas, price reductions create an immediate sense of urgency, urging consumers to capitalize on a perceived deal before it expires.

H1: Price discount has a positive and significant influence on impulse buying behavior among urban professionals in convenience stores.

Sales Promotion and its Influence on Impulse Buying

While price discounts focus on monetary value, sales promotions encompass a broader array of non-monetary incentives, including "Buy 1 Get 1 Free" offers, limited-time deals, and point-of-purchase displays (Tanuar & Gunawan, 2022). These stimuli are designed to trigger affective (emotional) rather than cognitive responses, creating a sense of excitement and spontaneity (Kusuma & Ardianto, 2024).

Sales promotions create psychological scarcity and urgency, forcing the consumer's organism to react immediately to the environmental cue (Nugroho et al., 2023). For a professional during a hectic workday, these promotions offer a fleeting hedonic reward, serving as a stress-relief mechanism that justifies an unplanned purchase (Fahrudin &

Maryati, 2022). The visual impact of these promotions at the point of sale acts as an interruption, shifting the focus from utilitarian needs to hedonic desires.

H2: Sales promotion has a positive and significant influence on impulse buying behavior among urban professionals in convenience stores.

The Synergistic Effect of Marketing Stimuli

The interaction between economic incentives (discounts) and emotional triggers (promotions) creates a synergistic effect that significantly elevates impulsive purchasing likelihood (Siahaan & Lubis, 2023). When a price reduction is coupled with a compelling promotional narrative, the cognitive load required to resist the purchase becomes unbearable for the consumer (Wulandari & Saputra, 2024).

In the specific context of high-velocity retail environments, the synergy between these stimuli dictating the variance in impulsive behavior is critical. The price discount provides the rational justification, while the sales promotion provides the emotional trigger, together ensuring that the consumer transitions from browsing to purchasing almost instantaneously.

H3: Price discount and sales promotion simultaneously have a significant influence on impulse buying behavior.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Approach

This study uses a quantitative approach with a causal correlational design. This approach was chosen to empirically test the influence of the independent variables (*price discount* (X₁) and *sales promotion* (X₂) on the dependent variable, namely *impulse buying* (Y) (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). This design allows researchers to measure the strength of relationships between variables through inferential statistical analysis based on primary data collected from respondents.

Population and Sample

The population in this study is all consumers who have made purchases at Indomaret outlets in the Rasuna Said Golden Triangle area, Jakarta. Given that the population is not known for sure (*infinite population*), the sampling technique used is non-probability sampling with an accidental sampling approach. This technique was chosen because respondents were selected based on the chance of meeting and being willing to be respondents, which was considered representative to measure impulse buying behavior instantly (Hair et al., 2019). A sample was assigned as many as 60 respondents, a number considered adequate for multiple linear regression analysis in a specific retail context.

Table 1. Operationalization of Variables

Variable	Operational Definition	Indicators	Scale	Reference Sources
Price Discount (X ₁)	Consumers' perception of the reduction from the standard product price offered by the retailer to create immediate economic value.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Discount Magnitude: Perception that the price reduction is economically valuable. Discount Frequency: Intensity of encountering promotional offers. Price Affordability: Perceived affordability of the product after the discount. 	Likert	Siregar et al. (2021); Hidayat & Pratama (2022); Ramadhan & Sari (2023)
Sales Promotion (X ₂)	Short-term incentives other than direct price reduction used to trigger affective responses and create purchase urgency (e.g., B1G1F, coupons).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promotional Attractiveness: Ability of the promotion to capture consumer attention. Promotional Urgency: Time-limited offers forcing quick purchasing decisions. Promotional Benefit: Perceived value-add beyond mere price reduction. 	Likert	Tanuar & Gunawan (2022); Kusuma & Ardianto (2024); Nugroho et al. (2023)
Impulse Buying (Y)	Unplanned, immediate purchase decision driven by strong emotional urges resulting from retail environmental stimulation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Spontaneous Purchase: Acting on the urge to buy without prior planning. Intensive Urge: Strong emotional desire to possess the product immediately. Loss of Control: Inability to resist purchasing products that are currently promoted. 	Likert	Rook & Fisher (1995); Stern (1962); Budiarto &

Data Collection and Instrumentation

Primary data was collected through *cross-sectional* surveys using structured questionnaires that were distributed to consumers after they made a purchase. The questionnaire instrument used a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) to measure respondents' perception of the variables studied. Variable indicators were compiled with reference to the previous literature, including the perception of the amount of discounts and the frequency of offers for *price* discounts, as well as the visual appeal and urgency of promotions for *sales promotion* (Rook & Fisher, 1995; Stern, 1962).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis is carried out through several stages using statistical software. First, validity tests and reliability tests are carried out to ensure that the questionnaire instrument is consistent and accurate in measuring variables. Second, a classical assumption test was carried out which included a normality test, a multicollinearity test, and a heteroscedasticity test to ensure that the regression model met the requirements of BLUE (*Best Linear Unbiased Estimator*).

Furthermore, multiple linear regression analysis techniques are used to test partial (t-test) and simultaneous (F-test) hypotheses, as well as determine the coefficient of determination (R^2) to measure how much variance of dependent variables can be explained by independent variables (Ghozali, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile and Comprehensive Descriptive Analysis

The study successfully gathered data from 60 active consumers of Indomaret located within the "Golden Triangle" business district of Rasuna Said, Jakarta. The demographic profile of the respondents was dominated by individuals within the productive age range of 25-40 years, representing office professionals characterized by high mobility and limited shopping time (time-poor consumers). Descriptive analysis revealed intriguing tendencies regarding consumer perception of retail stimuli. The *sales promotion* variable (X_2) recorded the highest mean score, indicating that consumers are more responsive to visual and emotional stimuli, such as "Buy 1 Get 1 Free" offers, compared to pure price reductions.

Conversely, the *impulse buying* variable (Y) also exhibited a high mean score, confirming that the store environment within this business district effectively triggers spontaneous purchasing decisions. Further analysis of shopping behavior at this location revealed that consumers tend to engage in impulse purchases as a form of compensation for work stress or a need for instant gratification amidst packed professional schedules. This reinforces the proposition that in corporate retail environments, marketing stimuli function as more than mere price informers; they act as psychological triggers.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

To ensure data quality, a series of instrument tests were conducted. The validity test using the Pearson Correlation method indicated that all indicator items for the three variables had an r_{calc} value greater than the r_{table} (0.254 at a 5% significance level). This proves that the questionnaire instrument utilized possessed valid capabilities to accurately measure the research variables.

Furthermore, reliability testing was performed to measure instrument consistency. The Cronbach's Alpha test yielded values above 0.70 for all variables (*Price Discount*: 0.812; *Sales Promotion*: 0.854; *Impulse Buying*: 0.795). These values demonstrate that the questionnaire possesses excellent internal consistency, rendering it a credible data collection tool for further analysis (Hair et al., 2019).

Classical Assumption Tests and Model Fitness

Quantitative data analysis requires adherence to classical assumptions to ensure that the regression model fulfills the Best Linear Unbiased Estimator (BLUE) requirements. Firstly, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test yielded an Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) value of 0.200, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the residual data is normally distributed. Secondly, the Multicollinearity Test showed VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) values for both independent variables below 10 (1.562) and Tolerance values above 0.1 (0.640), meaning no correlation exists between independent variables that could disrupt model validity.

Thirdly, the Heteroscedasticity Test using a scatterplot graph showed a random distribution of dots above and below the zero line on the Y-axis, without forming any specific pattern. This finding confirms that heteroscedasticity did not occur in the regression model. Finally, the linearity test ensured a linear relationship between independent and dependent variables, validating the use of multiple linear regression modeling.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis and Interpretation

Multiple linear regression analysis was applied to estimate the impact of *price discount* and *sales promotion* on impulsive purchasing behavior. The results of the statistical estimation are presented in detail in the table below:

Table 2. Calculation results

Variable	Regression Coefficient (β)	t-calc	Significance
Constant	20.289	3.124	0.003
Price Discount (\$X_1\$)	0.226	4.166	0.000
Sales Promotion (\$X_2\$)	0.283	4.795	0.000
F-calc	22.231		Sig. F (0.000)
\$R^2\$	0.439		

Based on the data output, the resulting regression equation model is:

$$Y = 20.289 + 0.226X_1 + 0.283X_2$$

Coefficient of Determination Analysis (R^2)

The R^2 (R-Square) value of 0.439 indicates that **43.9%** of the variance in *impulse buying* behavior can be explained by *price discount* and *sales promotion*. This figure

demonstrates that these two variables have strong predictive power in this context. The remaining 56.1% (100% - 43.9%) is influenced by other factors not included in this research model, such as store atmosphere, product availability on shelves, peer influence, or the consumers' own personality factors (Wulandari & Saputra, 2024).

DISCUSSION

Impact of Price Discount on Impulse Buying

The analysis regarding the first hypothesis (H1) confirms that price discounts exert a positive and significant influence on the impulse buying behavior of consumers at Indomaret outlets within the Rasuna Said "Golden Triangle" business district. Theoretically, price discounts function as economic stimuli that reduce the "pain of paying," thereby triggering an immediate affective response within the consumer's organism (Siregar et al., 2021). This finding indicates that price reductions are capable of interrupting rational decision-making processes, replacing them with an emotional urge to possess the product instantly.

Within the context of this research object, professional workers in Jakarta's business center frequently experience decision fatigue due to high cognitive workloads. Consequently, price discount labels serve as mental shortcuts, or heuristics, that validate spontaneous purchase decisions without deep evaluation regarding the functional necessity of the item (Ramadhan & Sari, 2023). Consumers perceive a "psychological victory" upon acquiring products below standard prices, validating spontaneous shopping decisions amidst a highly competitive environment (Febriani & Wijaya, 2021).

The managerial implication derived from this is that Indomaret management needs to devise precise psychological pricing strategies, such as tiered discounts during peak office break hours, to maximize purchase conversion. This strategy must be supported by the clear visibility of discount price labels in primary store areas to trigger instant responses from busy consumers. Furthermore, utilizing limited-time offers on discounts can enhance purchase urgency in such strategic locations.

This finding is supported by prior research indicating that the magnitude of discounts significantly triggers sudden desires to possess unplanned products. Other studies confirm that consumers are more inclined to engage in impulsive purchasing when price stimuli are effectively communicated at the point of sale (Hidayat & Pratama, 2022). Related research also emphasizes the crucial role of perceived value created by discounted prices in driving spontaneous behavior (Utomo & Prasetyo, 2022).

Impact of Sales Promotion on Impulse Buying

The discussion of the second hypothesis (H2) demonstrates that sales promotion exerts a more dominant influence in triggering impulse buying behavior compared to pure price discounts within this research context. Theoretically, sales promotions, encompassing non-monetary incentives such as "Buy 1 Get 1 Free" offers, create a sense of scarcity and visual urgency that interrupts the consumer's rational cognitive processes (Nugroho et al., 2023). This suggests that psychological intervention is more effective than mere economic incentives in driving immediate purchasing actions.

Viewing the research object in modern corporate retail outlets, these promotions successfully penetrate the cognitive defenses of urban professionals who face severe time constraints. Sales promotion functions as a stress-relief buying mechanism—an instant reward amidst a tight work schedule (Fahrudin & Maryati, 2022). The appealing visualization of promotions in cashier areas or main shelves proved highly effective in triggering consumer emotional urges at these locations.

The crucial managerial implication is that retailers should not become trapped in price wars, but rather focus on emotionally appealing point-of-purchase (POP) designs to create immediate purchase urgency. Management must invest in creative visual merchandising and strategic placement of promotional products. Utilizing personalized promotional narratives can also enhance emotional attachment and drive more spontaneous purchases (Kusuma & Ardianto, 2024).

This result is consistent with literature emphasizing that emotional promotions are more effective than monetary incentives in creating spontaneous shopping (Tanuar & Gunawan, 2022). Other studies also support the finding that promotional urgency plays a crucial role in accelerating consumer decision-making (Wulandari & Saputra, 2024). Related studies indicate that consumers are more responsive to promotions offering additional benefits beyond mere price reduction (Siregar et al., 2021).

Simultaneous Impact of Marketing Stimuli

The discussion of the third hypothesis (H3) proves that price discounts and sales promotions simultaneously exert a significant influence on impulse buying, explaining 43.9% of the variance in consumer behavior based on the coefficient of determination (R^2). Theoretically, this finding reinforces the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, where the convergence of economic stimuli (price) and psychological stimuli (promotion) creates a high stimulus load on the consumer organism (Budiartha & Hakim, 2021). The combination of these stimuli drives immediate purchase behavior response more effectively than single stimuli.

Within the research object, this synergy works optimally because consumers obtain logical reasons to save (discounts) while simultaneously receiving emotional validation to feel pleased (promotions), creating an impulsive urge that is difficult to resist (Siahaan & Lubis, 2023). Consumers feel fortunate to acquire inexpensive products while also obtaining bonus items, which maximizes transactional and psychological satisfaction. This condition triggers spontaneous shopping behavior almost instantaneously in corporate retail outlets. The practical implication is that retailers are obliged to integrate these two strategies utilizing discounts to attract attention and promotions to close the sale within a cohesive marketing narrative package. Management must ensure alignment between discount labels and promotional displays to deliver a powerful and integrated marketing message. This approach will enhance the overall effectiveness of marketing campaigns in strategic locations (Lestari & Firmansyah, 2023).

This simultaneous finding aligns with research stating that the combination of marketing stimuli drastically increases the likelihood of spontaneous shopping (Pradana et al., 2021). Other studies support the finding that interactions between marketing variables create synergistic effects on consumer behavior (Santoso & Setiawan, 2022). Related research also confirms that a holistic approach in marketing strategies yields better results in triggering impulsive purchases (Nugroho et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This research empirically confirms that both price discounts and sales promotions act as critical determinants driving impulse buying behavior among urban professionals in convenience stores located within high-density business districts. The findings highlight that while economic incentives directly reduce the perceived financial pain of purchasing, affective triggers—specifically sales promotions possess a stronger capacity to interrupt cognitive deliberation and induce immediate action. Furthermore, the convergence of these two stimuli creates a synergistic effect that significantly elevates the likelihood of spontaneous consumption, validating the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework in a high-velocity retail context. Ultimately, the intense environmental pressure in urban centers causes consumers to rely on heuristics, making them highly susceptible to well-structured marketing stimuli.

Managerial Implications

The results provide critical insights for retail strategists operating in competitive urban environments. Management should shift away from reliance on simplistic price wars,

which erode profit margins, towards "Precision Promotion" strategies that align economic incentives with psychological triggers. Retailers must focus on creating visual urgency at the point of sale, utilizing attractive, time-limited promotional displays to capture the attention of time-constrained professionals. Implementing personalized promotion narratives, rather than generic mass discounts, will foster higher emotional resonance and maximize transactional conversion rates.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite contributing valuable insights, this study possesses limitations that merit consideration. The reliance on accidental sampling restricts the generalizability of the findings to a broader population, as the sample represents only a specific segment of urban shoppers. Additionally, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to observe long-term trends in impulsive buying behavior over time. Future research should employ longitudinal methods to track behavior changes and incorporate diverse geographic locations to enhance external validity. Furthermore, exploring moderating variables such as consumer personality traits or specific product categories would provide a deeper understanding of the mechanisms driving spontaneous purchases.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis, it is recommended that retailers enhance their visual merchandising efforts by placing high-margin items in high-traffic promotional areas to capitalize on spontaneous urges. Retail management should also leverage data analytics to tailor promotional campaigns according to the specific times of day when office workers are most likely to visit the store. Finally, it is imperative to align staff training with these strategies to ensure that promotional displays are consistently managed and that the retail environment remains engaging, thereby optimizing the total consumer experience within the constraints of limited operational time.

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