



The Influence of Discounts, Free Shipping, and Online Reviews on Purchase Decisions with Buying Interest As an Intervening Variable Among Shopee Consumers In Surabaya

Enisa Tunggal Dewi^{1*}, Elsy Margaritha Prastisye Rihi², Siti Mujanah³, Achmad Yanu Alif Fiyanto⁴

¹⁻⁴ 17 August 1945 University of Surabaya, Indonesia

email: 1262500049@surel.untag-sby.ac.id¹

Article Info :

Received:
24-03-2026
Revised:
07-04-2026
Accepted:
18-04-2026

Abstract

This study aims to examine and analyze the influence of Discount, Free Shipping, and Online Review on Purchase Decision with Buying Interest as an intervening variable among Shopee consumers in Surabaya. The research method employed is quantitative with an explanatory approach. Data were collected through questionnaires from 104 respondents selected using a purposive sampling technique, with criteria including residency in Surabaya and having conducted transactions on Shopee. Data analysis was performed using Path Analysis via SPSS 27 software. The results indicate that Discount, Free Shipping, and Online Review have a positive and significant influence on Buying Interest both partially and simultaneously. Directly, the three independent variables also significantly influence the Purchase Decision. The Sobel Test results confirm that Buying Interest significantly mediates the influence of Discount, Free Shipping, and Online Review on the Purchase Decision. Discount was found to be the most dominant variable in influencing the consumer's final decision. These findings emphasize that economic incentives and the credibility of digital information are effective in driving tangible transactions if they are capable of generating a psychological drive in the form of buying interest first.

Keywords: *Buying Interest, Discount, Free Shipping, Online Review, Purchase Decision.*



©2022 Authors.. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License.
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of the digital economic ecosystem in Indonesia has transformed the landscape of consumer behavior from conventional shopping toward e-commerce platforms. As one of the primary players, Shopee has successfully dominated the market through aggressive marketing strategies. However, the shift in modern consumption patterns is no longer solely focused on product availability; rather, it is heavily influenced by economic incentives and social validation. Consumers in metropolitan cities like Surabaya, known for high levels of digital literacy, have become highly selective in evaluating offers before conducting transactions. This trend has strengthened post-pandemic, where price sensitivity is coupled with a reliance on digital information (reviews) as the primary basis for decision-making (Ayuwangi et al., 2025).

On the other hand, the contestation between e-commerce platforms in Surabaya has entered a highly saturated phase of price and service competition. Shopee consistently penetrates the market through Discount and Free Shipping policies to maintain its market share (Nugroho et al., 2025). However, reality on the ground indicates that massive price promotions do not always align linearly with sustainable purchase decisions. Modern consumers tend to filter information through Online Reviews to confront advertising promises with the actual experiences of other users (Andriani et al., 2025). This phenomenon creates an interesting paradox: even when economic incentives are available, purchase decisions are often delayed if there is insufficient Buying Interest acting as the psychological driving force (Yuwana, 2025). A functional gap emerges when large-scale promotions fail to achieve conversion targets due to low buying interest triggered by negative sentiments in the review columns (Wiratama et al., 2025).

Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) shows that e-commerce development in Indonesia has experienced significant growth. Based on the latest e-commerce survey results, the value of Indonesian e-commerce transactions in 2023 reached approximately IDR 1,100.87 trillion, a 40%

increase compared to 2022, which stood at IDR 783 trillion. This increase reflects the rapid expansion of digital trade activities and an increase in the number of e-commerce businesses by approximately 27% (Khairani et al., 2025). Furthermore, reports from Bank Indonesia indicate that although the nominal value of e-commerce transactions in 2023 was recorded at approximately IDR 453.75 trillion, the volume of transactions actually increased to 3.71 billion transactions, up from 3.49 billion transactions in the previous year. This signifies that the frequency of public digital transactions continues to rise, even though the average transaction value per purchase may fluctuate (Sari et al., 2025).

The current phenomenon shows that discounts and free shipping are often the main attractions for consumers when shopping online. Many consumers tend to postpone purchases until specific promos, such as flash sales or free shipping, become available. This indicates that purchase decisions are not always based on necessity but are also influenced by price incentives. Conversely, online reviews are becoming an increasingly vital factor in the digital era. Consumers tend to seek information and read reviews from other users before buying a product. Positive reviews can increase trust and buying interest, whereas negative reviews can hinder purchase decisions, even if the product is offered with a discount or free shipping. However, an interesting phenomenon arises when not all consumers immediately make a purchase despite the presence of discounts and free shipping. In many cases, consumers still consider psychological factors in the form of Buying Interest as an initial stage before making a Purchase Decision. This implies that discounts, free shipping, and online reviews do not always directly influence purchase decisions but first affect buying interest as an intervening variable.

This research carries high urgency alongside the rapid development of e-commerce in Indonesia, particularly on the Shopee platform, which has become one of the marketplaces with the largest number of users. Increasingly tight competition drives business actors to rely on various promotional strategies such as discounts and free shipping, as well as utilizing online reviews as digital marketing tools. However, the effectiveness of these three strategies is not always consistent in driving consumer purchase decisions.

Theoretically, this research is motivated by a research gap consisting of inconsistencies in previous findings. Regarding Discounts, Mardiyah & Saputra (2025) state their impact is significantly positive on purchase decisions, yet O. P. Handayani & Meitawati (2024) found an insignificant impact because consumers began to doubt the quality of products that were discounted too heavily. Similar debates occur regarding Free Shipping; Mus et al. (2025) proved its positive influence, while other studies found that free shipping is no longer effective if the minimum purchase requirements are too high. Likewise, with Online Reviews, where Supartono (2025) found a strong influence on purchase decisions, whereas Lestari (2025) argued that the abundance of fake reviews has begun to reduce the effectiveness of this variable in moving consumer buying interest.

In facing these literary inconsistencies, it is crucial to include the Buying Interest variable as a mediator to clarify how external stimuli are processed internally by consumers. Practically, this research has high urgency for marketers on Shopee to formulate strategies that do not only focus on "price wars" but also on strengthening purchase intentions through quality reviews. Academically, this research is urgently needed to fill the gap regarding how economic incentives (Discounts/Free Shipping) interact with digital social factors (Online Reviews) in shaping purchase decisions in the post-digital era. Based on this formulation, this study aims to examine and analyze the influence of Discounts, Free Shipping, and Online Reviews on Purchase Decisions among Shopee consumers in Surabaya, both directly and indirectly through Buying Interest as an intervening variable.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a quantitative design with an explanatory research approach to examine the relationships among variables. The population consists of all Shopee users in the Surabaya area, which is considered infinite, meaning the exact number cannot be determined. To obtain representative data, purposive sampling was applied using specific criteria: respondents must reside in Surabaya, have made a purchase via Shopee within the last week, and have been exposed to promotions such as discounts and free shipping, as well as online reviews prior to making a purchase. The sample size was calculated using the Lemeshow formula for unknown populations, resulting in 104 respondents. Primary data were collected through online questionnaires using a 1–5 Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly

agree). Descriptive analysis was then conducted to illustrate respondents' demographic characteristics and their online shopping behavior.

For inferential analysis this study utilizes path analysis with the assistance of SPSS version 27. The analytical procedures include instrument quality tests (validity and reliability), classical assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity), and regression analysis with hypothesis testing using the t-test and coefficient of determination (R^2). The study examines both direct and indirect effects of discounts, free shipping, and online reviews on buying interest and purchase decisions. Buying interest is positioned as an intervening variable that mediates the relationship between the independent variables and purchase decisions, with mediation effects tested using the Sobel test or indirect effect analysis. A total of ten hypotheses are proposed, covering the direct effects of each independent variable on buying interest and purchase decisions, the effect of buying interest on purchase decisions, and the mediating role of buying interest in linking discounts, free shipping, and online reviews to purchase decisions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the demographic data collected from 104 respondents, the profile of the respondents in this study is predominantly female, accounting for 62 individuals (60%). In terms of age, the majority of respondents fall within the productive age group of 18–20 years, with 50 individuals (48%). Regarding educational background, most respondents are currently pursuing or have completed a Bachelor's degree (S1), totalling 50 individuals (48%). Meanwhile, from a financial perspective, the respondents are dominated by the group with a relatively low one-time purchase of < 100 thousand rupiahs, making up 54% or 56 individuals.

Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	42	40%
	Female	62	60%
Age	< 18 years old	26	25%
	18–20 years old	50	48%
	21–25 years old	23	22%
	26–30 years old	2	2%
	> 30 years old	3	3%
Education	High School (SMA)	39	38%
	Associate Degree (D3)	13	13%
	Bachelor's Degree (S1)	50	48%
	Others	2	2%
Expenditure	< 100k IDR	56	54%
	101–200k IDR	38	37%
	201–300k IDR	7	7%
	> 300k IDR	3	3%

Source: Respondent Tabulation

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
X1	1.00	5.00	2.863	1.18694
X2	1.00	5.00	3.0144	1.25307

X3	1.00	5.00	2.9255	1.2047
Z	1.25	5.00	3.3389	0.68258
Y	1.50	4.75	3.0793	0.65477

Sources: Data processed by SPSS 27, (2026)

The descriptive statistical analysis of the 104 respondents indicates variations in data distribution across the five studied variables (Discount, Free Shipping, Online Review, Buying Interest and purchase decision). Variables discount, free shipping, and online review exhibit a full range of scores, spanning from a minimum value of 1.00 to a maximum value of 5.00. Among these independent variables, free shipping records the highest mean of 3.0144, alongside the highest data dispersion (std. deviation) of 1.25307, whereas discount has the lowest mean at 2.8630. On the other hand, variable buying interest shows the highest overall mean score, reaching 3.3389, with a minimum value of 1.25 and a maximum value of 5.00. Lastly, variable purchase decision presents a mean score of 3.0793, with scores ranging from a minimum of 1.50 to a maximum of 4.75, while also demonstrating the most homogeneous data distribution, indicated by the lowest standard deviation of 0.65477.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Indicator	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha
Discount (X1)	X1.1	0.961	0.973
	X1.2	0.921	
	X1.3	0.917	
	X1.4	0.937	
Free Shipping (X2)	X2.1	0.961	0.979
	X2.2	0.927	
	X2.3	0.950	
	X2.4	0.953	
Online Review (X3)	X3.1	0.958	0.978
	X3.2	0.925	
	X3.3	0.947	
	X3.4	0.952	
Buying Interest (Z)	Z1	0.851	0.916
	Z2	0.711	
	Z3	0.819	
	Z4	0.888	
Purchase Decision (Y)	Y1	0.825	0.906
	Y2	0.779	
	Y3	0.797	
	Y4	0.867	

Source: Data processed by SPSS 27, (2026)

The results of the validity and reliability instruments demonstrate that all measuring items utilized in this study are completely valid and reliable. Each measurement indicator across the five research variables yields a Corrected Item-Total Correlation value well above the critical threshold of 0.30, with coefficients ranging from 0.711 to 0.961, thereby confirming that all question items are valid for data collection. Furthermore, the internal consistency testing evaluates all variables as highly reliable, given that every single Cronbach's Alpha value substantially exceeds the required benchmark of 0.70. The highest reliability is recorded by the Free Shipping variable (X2) at 0.979, while the Purchase Decision variable (Y) holds the lowest yet highly secure reliability coefficient of 0.906.

Table 4. Classical Assumption Test Results (Model 1: X1, X2, X3 → Z)

Classical Assumption Test	Variable/ Diagnostic Metric	Statistical Value	Significance /Threshold	Result/Status
Normality(One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov)	Test	0.084	p > 0.05	Normally Distributed
	StatisticAsymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.066		
Multicollinearity (Variance Inflation Factor)	X1 (Discount)	VIF:	VIF < 10	No Multicollinearity
	X2 (Free Shipping)	1.014		No Multicollinearity
	X3 (Online Review)	VIF:		No Multicollinearity
		1.034		
Heteroscedasticity (Glejser Test)	X1 (Discount)	VIF:	p > 0.05	No Heteroscedasticity
	X2 (Free Shipping)	1.040		No Heteroscedasticity
	X3 (Online Review)	Sig: 0.305		No Heteroscedasticity
		Sig: 0.158		No Heteroscedasticity
		Sig: 0.362		No Heteroscedasticity

Source: Data processed by SPSS 27, (2026)

The classical assumption testing for Regression Model 1 (X1, X2, X3 → Z) confirms that the research data fulfills all the necessary econometric assumptions for linear regression analysis. First, the normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov method yields an asymptotic significance value of 0.066, which exceeds the 0.05 threshold, proving that the regression residuals are normally distributed. Second, the multicollinearity evaluation demonstrates that all independent variables, Discount (X1), Free Shipping (X2), and Online Review (X3), possess a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) significantly below the maximum allowable limit of 10, with the highest VIF value being merely 1.040 for X3, which indicates that no multicollinearity issues exist within the model. Lastly, the Glejser heteroscedasticity test reveals that the significance values for X1 (p = 0.305), X2 (p = 0.158), and X3 (p = 0.362) are all well above the 0.05 alpha level, firmly establishing that the model is entirely free from heteroscedasticity problems.

Table 5. Classical Assumption Test Results (Model 2: X1, X2, X3, Z → Y)

Classical Assumption Test	Variable/ Diagnostic Metric	Statistical Value	Significance /Threshold	Result /Status
Normality(One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov)	Test	0.059	p > 0.05	Normally Distributed
	StatisticAsymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.200		
Multicollinearity (Variance Inflation Factor)	X1 (Discount)	VIF: 1.176	VIF < 10.0	No Multicollinearity
	X2 (Free Shipping)	VIF: 1.131		No Multicollinearity
	X3 (Online Review)	VIF: 1.224		No Multicollinearity
	Z (Buying Interest)	VIF: 1.545		No Multicollinearity
Heteroscedasticity (Glejser Test)	X1 (Discount)	Sig: 0.532	p > 0.05	No
	X2 (Free Shipping)	Sig: 0.635		Heteroscedasticity
	X3 (Online Review)	Sig: 0.907		No
	Z (Buying Interest)	Sig: 0.105		Heteroscedasticity
				No
				Heteroscedasticity
				No
				Heteroscedasticity

Source: Data processed by SPSS 27, (2026)

The classical assumption testing for Regression Model 2 ($X_1, X_2, X_3, Z \rightarrow Y$) confirms that the research data satisfies all critical econometric requirements for linear regression analysis. First, the normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov method yields an asymptotic significance value of 0.200, which is well above the 0.05 threshold, demonstrating that the regression residuals are perfectly normally distributed. Second, the multicollinearity diagnostic shows that all independent and intervening variables, Discount (X_1), Free Shipping (X_2), Online Review (X_3), and Buying Interest (Z), exhibit Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values significantly below the maximum threshold of 10, with the highest VIF reaching only 1.545 for variable Z , thereby confirming the absence of multicollinearity within the model. Lastly, the Glejser heteroscedasticity test reveals that the significance values for X_1 ($p = 0.532$), X_2 ($p = 0.635$), X_3 ($p = 0.907$), and Z ($p = 0.105$) all markedly exceed the 0.05 alpha level, firmly establishing that the variance of the residuals remains homoscedastic and completely free from heteroscedasticity problems.

Table 6. Partial Test (t-Test)

Model	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
H1: Discount -> Buying Interest	.186	.047	.324	3.993	.000
H2: Free Shipping -> Buying Interest	.137	.045	.251	3.065	.003
H3: Online Review -> Buying Interest	.196	.046	.346	4.214	.000
H4: Discount -> Purchase Decision	.140	.025	.253	5.516	.000
H5: Free Shipping -> Purchase Decision	.135	.024	.259	5.754	.000
H6: Online Review -> Purchase Decision	.137	.025	.252	5.384	.000
H7: Buying Interest -> Purchase Decision	.506	.050	.527	10.036	.000

Source: Data processed by SPSS 27, (2026)

Hypothesis Testing Analysis

Based on the results of the path analysis with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ and a t-table value of 1.660, all proposed hypotheses are accepted. Discounts are proven to have a positive and significant effect on buying interest, as indicated by a significance value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, and a t-count of 3.993, which exceeds 1.660. Similarly, free shipping shows a positive and significant influence on buying interest with a significance value of 0.003 and a t-count of 3.065. Online reviews also significantly affect buying interest, as reflected by a significance value of 0.000 and a t-count of 4.214. These findings indicate that promotional strategies and information sources play an important role in increasing consumers' intention to purchase on Shopee in Surabaya.

Discounts, free shipping, and online reviews are all found to have a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions. Discounts show a significance value of 0.000 with a t-count of 5.516, while free shipping has a significance value of 0.000 with a t-count of 5.754, and online reviews have a significance value of 0.000 with a t-count of 5.384, all exceeding the required threshold. In addition, buying interest has the strongest influence on purchase decisions, with a significance value of 0.000 and a t-count of 10.036. This indicates that buying interest plays a crucial role as a determinant of actual purchasing behavior, while discounts, free shipping, and online reviews significantly contribute both directly and indirectly to shaping consumer purchase decisions.

The purpose of testing the mediation hypotheses in this study is to examine the extent to which the variable Purchase Intention (M) is able to mediate the relationship between the independent variables and Purchase Decision (Y).

Table 7. Sobel Test

Path Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Sobel Value (t-count)	Sig.	Result
H8: Discount -> Buying Interest -> Purchase Decision	0.140	0.094	0.234	3.686	.000	Significant (Mediation)

H9: Free Shipping -> Buying Interest -> Purchase Decision	0.135	0.069	0.204	2.801	.005	Significant (Mediation)
H10: Online Review -> Buying Interest -> Purchase Decision	0.137	0.099	0.236	3.927	.000	Significant (Mediation)

Source: Data processed by SPSS 27, (2026)

Based on the indirect effect analysis using the Sobel Test, buying interest is proven to significantly mediate the relationship between all independent variables and purchase decisions. The influence of discounts on purchase decisions through buying interest shows an indirect effect value of 0.094, with a t-count of 3.686, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.96, and a significance value of 0.000 less than 0.05. This indicates that buying interest significantly mediates the effect of discounts, meaning that attractive price reductions first stimulate consumer intention before leading to actual purchase decisions. Similarly, free shipping also has a significant indirect effect on purchase decisions through buying interest, as indicated by a t-count of 2.801, which exceeds the t-table value of 1.96, and a significance value of 0.005 less than 0.05.

This suggests that the elimination of shipping costs creates psychological interest that encourages consumers to complete purchases. In addition, online reviews demonstrate a significant indirect influence on purchase decisions through buying interest, with an indirect effect value of 0.099, a t-count of 3.927, and a significance value of 0.000 less than 0.05. These results confirm that buying interest effectively mediates the impact of online reviews, where positive consumer feedback strengthens purchase intention and ultimately drives actual buying behavior.

Table 8. F-Test

Regression Model	Dependent Variable	Predictors	F-Value	Significance (p-value)	Result / Decision
Model 1	Buying Interest (Z)	X1, X2, X3	18.156	0.000	Highly Significant
Model 2	Purchase Decision (Y)	X1, X2, X3, Z	115.060	0.000	Highly Significant

Source: Data processed by SPSS 27, (2026)

The simultaneous F-test results demonstrate that both regression models are highly robust and statistically significant. For Model 1, the combination of Discount (X1), Free Shipping (X2), and Online Review (X3) exerts a highly significant simultaneous effect on Buying Interest (Z), indicated by an F-value of 18.156 and a significance level of $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. Similarly, Model 2 yields an exceptionally strong F-statistic of 115.060 with a significance level of $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, which conclusively confirms that the independent variables (X1, X2, X3) alongside the intervening variable (Z) simultaneously and significantly predict the final Purchase Decision (Y). Consequently, these findings prove that both empirical models fit the empirical data excellently, justifying further interpretation of their individual pathway coefficients.

Table 9. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Regression Model	Dependent Variable	R	R Square (R^2)	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Model 1	Buying Interest (Z)	0.594	0.353	0.333	0.55739
Model 2	Purchase Decision (Y)	0.907	0.823	0.816	0.28100

Source: Data processed by SPSS 27, (2026)

The coefficient of determination analysis reveals varying degrees of explanatory power between the two regression models. For Model 1, the Adjusted R Square value is 0.333, indicating that 33.3% of the variance in Buying Interest (Z) can be simultaneously explained by the independent variables,

namely Discount (X1), Free Shipping (X2), and Online Review (X3), while the remaining 66.7% is accounted for by other variables outside the scope of this model. In contrast, Model 2 demonstrates an exceptionally high Adjusted R Square value of 0.816, which proves that 81.6% of the variance in the final Purchase Decision (Y) is explained by the combination of the independent variables and the intervening variable (X1, X2, X3, and Z), leaving only 18.4% to be explained by external factors. These results establish that the second framework possesses a remarkably robust capacity to predict consumer behavior compared to the first baseline framework.

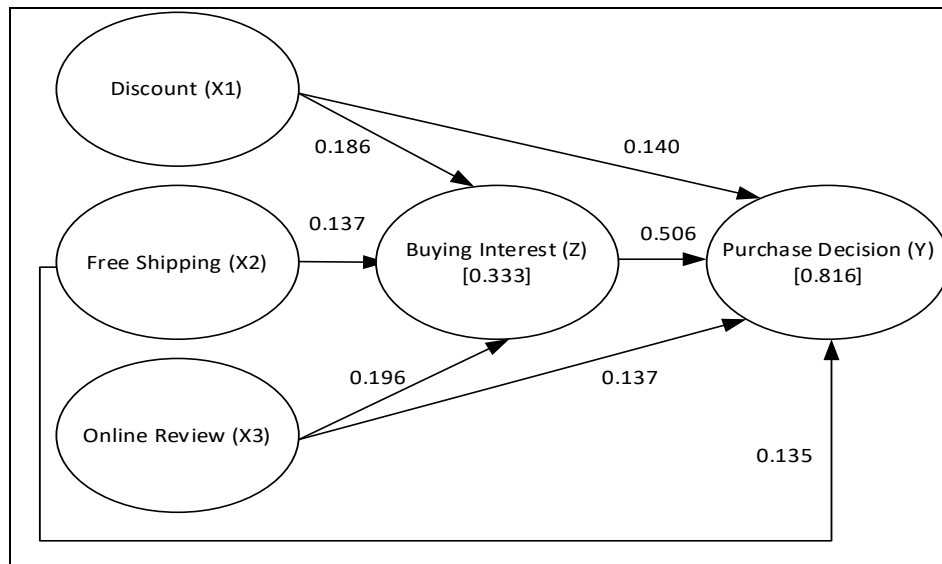


Figure 1. The Results of Path Analysis

The Influence of Discounts, Free Shipping, and Online Reviews on Buying Interest

Based on the analysis results, it is found that discounts, free shipping, and online reviews have a positive and significant influence on the buying interest of Shopee consumers in Surabaya. Theoretically, Kotler and Armstrong (2018) state that price reductions serve as economic stimuli that directly increase product attractiveness by offering immediate financial benefits to consumers. This finding is strongly supported by the research of Febrianti et al. (2026), which demonstrates that discounts significantly increase buying interest by enhancing the perceived value of the product for customers. In line with this, Paraswati and Riofita (2024) found that direct discounts are the most effective type of promotion in attracting consumer psychological interest because they provide tangible and instant financial gains. Furthermore, Silaban et al. (2026) also revealed that price reductions and promos are the primary attractions for digital platform users to visit online stores and conduct transactions.

Lastly, a study by Fridayanti and Suratno (2026) emphasized that price cuts consistently lower the psychological barriers of consumers during the decision-making process, thereby triggering strong impulsive buying behavior. In addition, it is found that free shipping has a positive and significant influence on buying interest. Theoretically, providing non-price incentives such as eliminating shipping fees functions as an effective sales promotion tool to reduce real transaction costs and consumer psychological barriers when shopping online. This empirical finding is strongly supported by the research of Nugroho et al., (2025), which states that free shipping programs consistently serve as a primary stimulus capable of increasing consumer attraction and buying interest on e-commerce platforms.

Furthermore, Ayuwangi et al., (2025) also emphasize that within a metropolitan digital ecosystem, free shipping policies psychologically reinforce the perception of financial benefits in the minds of customers, thereby driving their buying interest. In line with this, a study by Andriani et al. (2025) indicates that free shipping offers represent one of the most crucial promotional dimensions that directly trigger consumers' motivation and intention to transact. Lastly, empirical research by Febrianti et al. (2026) further proves that the elimination of delivery costs successfully shifts consumer

preferences and significantly accelerates the formation of buying interest before a final decision is made. Moreover, online reviews are also proven to have a positive and significant influence on buying interest. Theoretically, online reviews function as a form of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and social proof that drastically reduces information asymmetry and the perceived risk of uncertainty encountered by consumers when shopping digitally.

This empirical finding is strongly supported by the research of Andriani et al. (2025), which states that informative and trustworthy online reviews are crucial factors that directly shape positive perceptions and initial consumer interest in purchasing a product. Furthermore, Ayuwangi et al., (2025) emphasize that metropolitan communities with high digital literacy heavily rely on other users' reviews as a basis for objective validation before developing their buying interest. In line with this, a study by Budiarti and Mujanah (2025) also indicates that the accumulation of positive reviews on e-commerce platforms successfully builds the reputation of digital storefronts, which effectively stimulates customer purchase intentions and interest. Lastly, research by Febrianti et al. (2026) further proves that both the quality and quantity of product reviews significantly accelerate the formation of buying interest by providing a sense of security and psychological confidence for potential buyers.

The Influence of Discounts, Free Shipping, Online Reviews, and Buying Interest on Purchase Decisions

Based on the analysis results, it is found that discounts have a direct positive and significant influence on purchase decisions. Theoretically, Kotler and Armstrong (2018) explain that discounts serve as one of the most effective sales promotion tools that can directly convert a consumer's interest into an actual buying action by optimizing perceived economic value and providing immediate financial incentives. This finding is strongly supported by empirical research from Febrianti et al. (2026), which confirms that the magnitude of a discount significantly drives consumers to conclude their evaluation process and make instant purchase decisions. This result aligns with a study by Paraswati and Riofita (2024), which states that periodic price discount incentives are proven to be the primary determining factor behind consumers' ultimate decisions to select and buy products from digital storefronts.

Furthermore, Silaban et al. (2026) also emphasize in their study that aggressive discounting on e-commerce platforms is significantly and positively correlated with a surge in final purchase decisions made by customers. Lastly, Fridayanti and Suratno (2026) reinforce these findings through their research conclusion that well-targeted price reduction strategies successfully minimize consumer hesitation, thereby directly accelerating the conversion of intent into definitive purchase decisions. Furthermore, free shipping is also found to have a direct positive and significant influence on purchase decisions. Theoretically, Kotler and Keller (2016) elaborate in promotional mix theory that non-price incentives such as eliminating shipping costs serve as a strategic sales promotion instrument designed to accelerate market response by removing additional cost burdens. This empirical finding is strongly supported by research from Nugroho et al., (2025), which states that the free shipping facility directly acts as a final determinant that encourages online consumers to immediately complete their payments.

In line with this, Ayuwangi et al., (2025) also emphasize that free shipping offers are a crucial factor that consistently converts initial customer interest into actual purchase decisions. Furthermore, a study by Andriani et al. (2025) indicates that the policy of eliminating delivery costs psychologically enhances consumers' transactional satisfaction, thereby strengthening their confidence to make a final purchase decision. Lastly, Febrianti et al. (2026) reinforce these findings by concluding that free shipping programs provide an effective economic stimulus in accelerating closing sales. In addition, online reviews also have a direct positive and significant influence on purchase decisions. Theoretically, Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) explain that external information such as consumer reviews plays a crucial role in simplifying decision-making processes.

This is supported by Andriani et al. (2025), who state that review quality significantly strengthens consumer confidence in executing purchase decisions. Ayuwangi et al., (2025) further emphasize that reviews act as the primary validation basis for urban consumers. Nugroho et al., (2025) also prove that positive testimonials reduce risk and increase conversion rates. Lastly, Febrianti et al. (2026) conclude that reviews accompanied by visual evidence have strong persuasive power in encouraging purchases. Buying interest itself is also proven to have a direct positive and significant influence on purchase decisions. Theoretically, Kotler and Keller (2016) explain that buying interest is the strongest predictor of actual purchasing behavior. This is supported by Nugroho et al., (2025), Ayuwangi et al., (2025),

Andriani et al. (2025), and Febrianti et al. (2026), all of whom confirm that stronger buying interest directly accelerates the transition from intention to real transactions.

The Mediating Role of Buying Interest in the Relationship between Promotional Factors and Purchase Decisions

Based on the analysis results, buying interest is proven to positively and significantly mediate the influence of discounts, free shipping, and online reviews on purchase decisions. Theoretically, the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory explains that external stimuli first influence internal psychological states before producing behavioral responses. In the context of discounts, Febrianti et al. (2026) state that buying interest acts as a crucial intervening variable that converts discount attractiveness into actual purchases. Paraswati and Riofita (2024) and Silaban et al. (2026) also emphasize that discounts must first generate psychological attraction before leading to transactions. Fridayanti and Suratno (2026) further confirm that stronger buying interest enhances the effectiveness of discount strategies.

In the context of free shipping, Nugroho et al., (2025) and Ayuwangi et al., (2025) highlight that buying interest is a key bridge between free shipping incentives and purchase decisions. Andriani et al. (2025) and Febrianti et al. (2026) also confirm that the elimination of shipping costs first builds consumer intention before resulting in transactions. Lastly, for online reviews, Andriani et al. (2025), Ayuwangi et al., (2025), and Nugroho et al., (2025) emphasize that reviews must first stimulate buying interest before influencing final decisions. Febrianti et al. (2026) further conclude that the effectiveness of online reviews in driving purchase decisions becomes optimal when they successfully strengthen buying interest. Therefore, buying interest serves as a crucial mediating variable that bridges promotional and informational stimuli with actual consumer purchasing behavior in the e-commerce ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that all hypotheses were supported: price discounts, free shipping, and online reviews each exert positive and significant effects on consumer buying interest and directly influence purchase decisions among Shopee users in Surabaya. Path analysis and mediation testing demonstrate that buying interest functions as a significant intervening variable, strengthening the translation of promotional stimuli into final purchase actions. Collectively, these variables display strong predictive power in explaining purchase-decision dynamics within the studied sample, underscoring the combined importance of economic incentives and information signals (e.g., review quality) in digital marketplace behaviour.

Practical implications advise platform managers and merchants to complement price-based tactics with strategies that explicitly cultivate buying interest such as improving review transparency and accessibility of free-shipping programs with realistic minimums to enhance conversion and user retention. Study limitations include geographic and platform-specific sampling and the exclusion of consumer-intrinsic factors; future research should broaden geographic and platform scope and incorporate internal consumer variables (for example, income, brand trust, habitual behavior, and perceived service quality) to produce a more comprehensive model of online purchase decision-making.

REFERENCES

- Andri Puji Lestari, I. P. D. (2025). Pengaruh diskon tanggal kembar, gratis ongkos kirim, dan paylater pada Shopee terhadap minat belanja mahasiswa Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. *Edunomika*, 9(4), 1–13.
- Andriani, E. R., Pujianto, A., & Andayani, S. (2025). Pengaruh sistem pembayaran COD, gratis ongkir dan review pembeli terhadap minat beli baju di Lazada. *Nama Jurnal Belum Lengkap*, 3(2), 297–301.
- Astuti, N. P., & Susila, I. (2022). Influence analysis of customer ratings reviews online, free shipping promotion and discount promotion on purchasing decisions in e-commerce. *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research*, 218, 38–46. <https://doi.org/10.2991/aebmr.k.220107.006>
- Ayun, Q., & Purnamasari, D. (2024). Pengaruh diskon dan flash sale terhadap keputusan pembelian pada marketplace Shopee. *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen Bisnis*, 8(1), 88–102.

- Ayuwangi, B., Mujanah, S., & Fianto, A. Y. A. (2025). Scroll, stream, and shop: The effect of live streaming and flash sales on impulse buying through e-WOM among Shopee Generation Z users in Surabaya. *Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Sharia Economics (IIJSE)*, 8(3), 15583–15595. <https://doi.org/10.31538/iijs.v8i3.0081>
- Azis, E., Sitaniapessy, A., & Novandari, W. (2025). Online customer reviews and ratings as key drivers of purchase intention: The mediating role of trust. *Jurnal Manajemen Maranatha*, 25(1), 81–98. <https://doi.org/10.28932/jmm.v25i1.1001>
- Canu, N. La, Mohungo, Y., Manajemen, P. S., Ekonomi, F., & Khairun, U. (2026). Pengaruh ulasan pelanggan online dan harga terhadap keputusan pembelian yang dimediasi oleh niat beli pada pengguna cushion Glad2Glow di TikTok Shop, 5(1), 1123–1134.
- Caracara-Flores, J., Carnero-Quispe, M. F., Delgado-Paz, A. J., & Pericón-Balderrama, A. (2025). Free shipping in e-commerce: A systematic literature review. *Revista DYNA*, 92(235), 76–82. <https://doi.org/10.15446/dyna.v92n235.1139099>
- Cheung, C. M. K., & Thadani, D. R. (2012). The impact of electronic word-of-mouth communication: A literature analysis and integrative model. *Decision Support Systems*, 54(1), 461–470. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2012.06.008>
- Dedi, Refi Nabillah Royadi, S. R. (2024). Pengaruh Promosi Online Dan Harga Produk Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian melalui Sistem E-Commerce Shopee. *Jurnal Tren Bisnis Global*, 4(2), 91–96.
- Dewi, D. S., Sudiarno, A., Saputra, H., & Dewi, R. S. (2018). The effect of emotional design and online customer review on customer repeat purchase intention in online stores. *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering*, 337(1), 012052. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1757-899X/337/1/012052>
- Dewi, E. L. (2026). Analisis Kegagalan Konversi Promosi pada Platform E-Commerce: Peran Sentimen Negatif Online Review. *Jurnal Pemasaran Digital Indonesia*, 4(2), 210–225.
- Efendi & Mujanah, S. (2023). Online customer reviews and online customer ratings on purchase decisions. *Proceeding International Conference on Economic Business Management*, 3(2), 481–491.
- Evinda Lavita Dewi, R. Y. (2026). Pengaruh Promosi Gratis Ongkir, Gaya Hidup, Dan Media Sosial Terhadap Pembelian Impulsif E-Commerce Shopee Pada Gen Z Di Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta. *Bata Ilyas Educational Management Review*, 6(1), 7–18.
- Febrianti, A. S., Sawitri, N. N., & Navanti, D. (2026). Pengaruh Keputusan Pembelian : Media Sosial , Flash Sale Dan Minat Beli (Literature Review). 4(1), 31–39.
- Fridayanti, W. P., & Suratno. (2026). Promosi Penjualan dan Potongan Harga terhadap Impulsive Buying pada Social Commerce. *Al-Kharaj: Jurnal Ekonomi, Keuangan & Bisnis Syariah*, 8(4), 2357–2375. <https://doi.org/10.47467/alkharaj.v8i4.9989>
- Griffin, J. (2015). *Customer Loyalty: How to Earn It, How to Keep It*. Jossey-Bass.
- Handayani, & Maspufah. (2026). Pengaruh Gratis Ongkir terhadap Keputusan Pembelian dengan Minat Beli sebagai Mediator. *Jurnal Riset Ekonomi*, 11(1), 44–59.
- Handayani, O. P., & Meitawati, T. (2024). Pengaruh Voucher Diskon Dan Gratis Ongkos Kirim Terhadap Perilaku Konsumtif Ditinjau Dari Perspektif Islam. 24(3), 257–270.
- Handayani, O. P., & Meitawati. (2024). Dilema Diskon Besar dan Persepsi Kualitas Produk pada Konsumen Generasi Z. *Manajemen Kreatif*, 5(3), 301–315.
- Handayani, Y. I., & Maspufah, H. (2026). Pengaruh Live Streaming , Diskon , Dan Harga Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Melalui Kepuasan Pelanggan Sebagai Variabel Intervening Pada Tiktok Shop Generasi Z Di Situbondo Kota. 02(03), 2223–2231.
- Hartati, B. (2021). Pengaruh Kualitas Produk Dan Harga Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Melalui Minat Beli Produk Cosmetics Jafra Pada PT. Jafra Cosmetics Indonesia. *Jurnal Manajemen Terapan dan Keuangan (Mankeu)*, 10(01), 123–137. <https://doi.org/10.22437/jmk.v10i01.12577>
- Hikmatiar, M. Q., & Zaerofo, A. (2024). Pengaruh Label Halal, Online Promotion dan Online Customer Review terhadap Keputusan Pembelian. *Ad-Deenar: Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis Islam*, 8(02), 245–254. <https://doi.org/10.30868/ad.v8i02.55564>
- Irsyad, B. M., & Sukma, R. P. (2023). Intermediasi Minat Beli Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Melalui Digital Marketing Dan Citra Merek. *Eduturisma: An International Journal of Tourism and Education*, 7(2), 1–13.

- Khairani, A., Setyawati, N. W., Dwikotjo, F., & Sumantyo, S. (2025). Pengaruh Brand Image , Program Gratis Ongkir Dan Variasi Produk Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Produk Wardah Everyday Bb Cream Di Marketplace Shopee. 1(2), 211–226.
- Khairani, et al. (2025). Pertumbuhan Transaksi E-Commerce dan Perubahan Budaya Belanja di Indonesia. *Laporan Tahunan Ekonomi Digital*, BPS & BI.
- Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2018). *Principles of Marketing* (17th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing Management* (15th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Kusuma, E. I., Surya, J., & Suhendra, I. (2017). Pengaruh Strategi Green Marketing Dan Pengetahuan Lingkungan Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Melalui Minat Beli Sebagai Variabel Intervening. *Jurnal Riset Bisnis dan Manajemen Tirtayasa*, 1(1), 33-49.
- Latief, F., & Mokhtar, S. (2026). Meningkatkan Keputusan Pembelian Pada Shopeefood Melalui Kualitas Pelayanan , Promosi , Kemudahan Penggunaan Dan Online Customer Review Abstrak Pendahuluan. 9(1), 92–101.
- Latifah, & Nurmalasari. (2023). Pengaruh Diskon Harga, Gratis Ongkos Kirim Dan Promosi Terhadap Minat Beli Mahasiswa Pada Aplikasi Tiktok Shop. *JES [Jurnal Ekonomi STIEP]*, 8(2), 120-127.
- Lestari, S. D. (2025). Pengaruh Brand Ambassador , Online Customer Review , Dan Free Shipping Promotion Terhadap Purchasing Decision Produk Scarlett Whitening Pada E-Commerce Shopee. *Jurnal Ilmu Dan Riset Manajemen*, 2(1).
- Lindyawanti, S. T. I., & Maulida, I. S. (2025). Pengaruh Flas Sale, Live Streaming dan Brand Image Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Produk G2G Melalui Free Ongkir Sebagai Variabel Intervening di Platform Shopee. *Jurnal Ekonomi & Bisnis*, 10(2), 129-142.
- Ma, S. (2017). Fast or free shipping options in online and omni-channel retail? The mediating role of uncertainty on satisfaction and purchase intentions. *The International Journal of Logistics Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJLM-10-2016-0248>
- Macheka, T., Quaye, E. S., & Ligaraba, N. (2024). The effect of online customer reviews and celebrity endorsement on young female consumers' purchase intentions. *Young Consumers*, 25(4), 462-482. <https://doi.org/10.1108/YC-10-2023-1630>
- Mardiyah, A., & Saputra, D. (2025). Pengaruh Brand Image , Diskon Dan Kualitas Produk Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Tas Melalui Harga Pada Aplikasi Online Shop (Tiktok Shop). 01(03), 332–339.
- Mudaffar, A. G., & Firmansyah, F. (2025). Efek Harga, Diskon, dan Fasilitas Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian dengan Variasi Produk Sebagai Variabel Moderasi. *PUBLIK: Jurnal Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia, Administrasi dan Pelayanan Publik*, 12(1), 211-224.
- Mus, A. R., Mahmud, A., & Indonesia, U. M. (2025). Pengaruh Flash Sale Dan Gratis Ongkos Kirim Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Pada E-Commerce Tiktok Shop. 5, 8282–8296.
- Ningsih, N. A. W., Erida, & Yuniarti, Y. (2024). Pengaruh Diskon Dan Gratis Ongkir Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Produk MS Glow Pada Marketplace Shopee. *Jurnal Dinamika Manajemen*, 12(3), 138-146.
- Nugroho, S. D., Mujanah, S., & Fianto, A.Y.A. (2025). Bibliometric Analysis of The Effect of Discounts in E-Commerce on Increased Sales of Small and Medium Enterprise Products. *JEM17: Jurnal Ekonomi Manajemen*, 10(2), 199-210.
- Paraswati, S., & Riofita, H. (2024). Diskon sebagai Strategi Pemasaran. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 8(3), 46457-46461.
- Purnomo, H., Samari, Soejoko, D. K. H., & Syahroq, K. F. (2021). Minat Beli Sebagai Mediasi Pengaruh Persepsi Harga, Citra Merek Dan Celebrity Endorser Pada Keputusan Pembelian Busana Merek 3second. *Jembatan: Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen*, 18(1), 137-150.
- Puspitasari, L., Herawati, A., & Listyawati, L. (2023). Pengaruh Iklan dan Diskon Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Online Pada Pengguna Aplikasi Shopee di Kota Surabaya. *SAB (Soetomo Administrasi Bisnis)*, Edisi Khusus November, 267-280.
- Putri Khurota Ayun , Femei Purnamasari, A. F. (2024). Pengaruh Persepsi Risiko Belanja Online Dan Electronic Word Of Mouth (E-Wom) Terhadap Minat Beli Secara Online Dengan Kepercayaan Sebagai Variabel Moderasi. *Interdisciplinary Explorations In Research Journal (Ierj)*, 2, 1283–1310.

- Razali, G., Andamisari, D., & Saputra, J. (2022). Pengaruh Promosi Diskon dan Gratis Ongkir Shopee Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Konsumen. *CITIZEN: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin Indonesia*, 2(3), 482-491.
- Regina, R., Rini, E. S., & Sembiring, B. K. F. (2021). The Effect of Online Customer Review and Promotion through E-Trust on the Purchase Decision of Bukalapakin Medan City. *International Journal of Research and Review*, 8(8), 236-243.
- Reyhan Arya Nugraha, Adam Hermawan, S. S. M. (2024). Pengaruh Harga, Promosi, Dan Ulasan Konsumen Online Terhadap Minat Beli Go-Ride Di Kota Tasikmalaya. *Journal Of Information Systems Management And Digital Business*, 2(1), 29-38.
- Rohmawati, R. N., Herry, A., & Jika, S. (2023). Pengaruh Flash Sale Dan Tagline “ Gratis Ongkir ” Shopee Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Ulang Dengan Kepuasan Sebagai Variabel Intervening Di Kalangan Mahasiswa Pendidikan Ekonomi Universitas Pgri Semarang Tabel 1 Data Kunjungan E-Commerce Di Indonesia. 03(02), 324-333.
- Rolando, B., & Chondro, J. (2025). The Influence of Customer Reviews on Trust and Online Purchase Decisions: A Systematic Literature Review. *International Journal of Economics and Business Studies (IJEBS)*, 2(1), 1-27.
- Santoso, M. W. B., Widodo, J., & Zulianto, M. (2022). Pengaruh Diskon Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Marketplace Shopee (Studi Kasus Masyarakat Desa Kesilir Kabupaten Jember). *JPEAKU*, 2(1).
- Saputri, J., Kumbara, V. B., & Putri, D. A. (2025). Pengaruh Paylater dan Free Ongkir Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Pelanggan Melalui Digital Marketing Sebagai Variabel Intervening Pada Konsumen E-Commerce Shopee. *Jurnal Bisnis Digital*, 3(2), 171-186.
- Sari, M. D., Chaniago, H., & Indira, H. (2025). Efektivitas Diskon Dan Promosi Digital Dalam Mempengaruhi Keputusan Pembelian Konsumen Wanita Di E-Commerce Indonesia. 5(2), 603-623.
- Silaban, A. A. L., Sianturi, C. S. A., & Silaban, J. (2026). Pengaruh Diskon dan Promo Terhadap Minat Pembeli di Toko Online (TikTok Shop). *Jurnal Ekonomi Manajemen Dan Bisnis*, 3(3), 498-503.
- Supartono. (2025). Pengaruh Gratis Ongkir , Live Streaming , Dan Word Of Mouth Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Sepatu 910 Melalui Tiktok Shop. *Journal Of Artificial Intelligence And Digital Business (Riggs)*, 4(3), 6923-6929.
- Susanti, Y., & Rohmah, A. K. (2025). Pengaruh Diskon dan Free Ongkir Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Melalui E-Commerce (Studi Kasus Shopee). *Jurnal JEDBUS (Journal of Economic and Digital Business)*, 2(2), 42-53.
- Utama, A., Hariningsih, E., Mustikasari, A., Wardana, W., & Wibowo, A. (2025). Shopping under the influence: how price discounts and hedonic motivation drive impulse buying among young consumers in Indonesia. *Cogent Business & Management*, 12(1), 2539456. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2025.2539456>
- Wang, X., Guo, J., Wu, Y., & Liu, N. (2020). Emotion as signal of product quality: Its effect on purchase decision based on online customer reviews. *Internet Research*, 30(2), 463-485. <https://doi.org/10.1108/INTR-05-2018-0221>
- Wardhani, E. P., Purwanti, I., Teknologi, I., & Dahlan, A. (2025). Transformasi Digital Dalam E-Commerce : Live Streaming , Review Produk , Dan Diskon Terhadap Minat Beli Konsumen. 9(2), 439-453.
- Wiratama, A. K., & Mujanah, S. (2025). Analysis of the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the influence of service quality and facilities on word of mouth at TK Intan Surabaya. *Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Sharia Economics (IJISE)*, 8(3), 15570-15582.
- Yuwana, S. M., & Brahmayanti, I. A. S. (2025). Pengaruh brand image, kepercayaan konsumen, dan testimoni pelanggan terhadap keputusan pembelian melalui minat beli pada e-commerce Shopee di Kota Surabaya. *Gemah Ripah: Jurnal Bisnis*, 5(4), 360-372.
- Zhu, L., Li, H., Wang, F. K., He, W., & Tian, Z. (2020). How online reviews affect purchase intention: a new model based on the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) framework. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, 72(4), 463-488. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AJIM-05-2019-0128>