

THE INFLUENCE OF DISCOUNTS & FREE SHIPPING ON PURCHASE DECISIONS THROUGH THE BUYING INTEREST OF UNIVERSITAS NEGERI JAKARTA STUDENTS ON SHOPEE

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Article Info	Abstract
<i>Article history:</i> <i>Received: 16 December 2025;</i> <i>Accepted: 22 December 2025;</i> <i>Published: 29 December 2025</i> <i>Keyword:</i> <i>Discounts, Free Shipping, Purchase Decision, Purchase Intention, UNJ Students</i>	The primary objective of this investigation is to analyze how promotional incentives, specifically price discounts and free shipping, influence the actual purchasing choices of Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) students on Shopee, with purchase intention acting as a mediating factor. Using an explanatory quantitative framework, primary data were gathered from 114 active Shopee users through purposive sampling. The analytical process in this study employed Structural Equation Modeling using the Partial Least Squares technique to examine the relationships among variables. The empirical findings indicate that both price discounts and free shipping programs exert a substantial positive impact on purchase intention. However, these promotional tools do not demonstrate a significant direct effect on the final purchase decision. Instead, purchase intention serves as a critical bridge, fully mediating the relationship between marketing stimuli and transaction behavior. It is concluded that while external incentives attract attention, the actual conversion into a sale depends heavily on the consumer's psychological intent. These results imply that e-commerce platforms should prioritize strategies that nurture consumer interest and desire rather than relying solely on cost reduction. Effective marketing for the student demographic must bridge the gap between initial attraction and the internal commitment to buy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The shift in consumption patterns toward the online sphere has increasingly become a global phenomenon in recent years. In Indonesia, internet penetration and the use of mobile devices have created new opportunities for consumers to access e-commerce anytime and anywhere. Data shows that around 65% of Indonesia's total population uses e-commerce platforms to conduct online transactions. Among younger generations, particularly university students who are active internet users, online shopping has shifted from merely an alternative option to becoming an integral part of their lifestyle. For example, surveys indicate that around 70% of Generation Z in Indonesia make online purchases of fashion products and daily necessities at least 2–3 times per month, recording 133.1 million monthly website visits as of December 2024 and 237 million visits in September 2023.

Recent findings from APJII further strengthen the dominance of e-commerce usage. During the period of April–July 2025, Shopee was recorded as the most frequently accessed platform by Indonesian consumers with a percentage of 53.22%, far surpassing its competitors such as TikTok Shop (27.37%), Tokopedia (9.57%), and Lazada (9.09%). These data affirm that Shopee is the platform most widely chosen by consumers, making it relevant to be

used as the object of research on students' purchasing behavior, particularly in relation to the effectiveness of promotional tools such as discounts and free shipping.

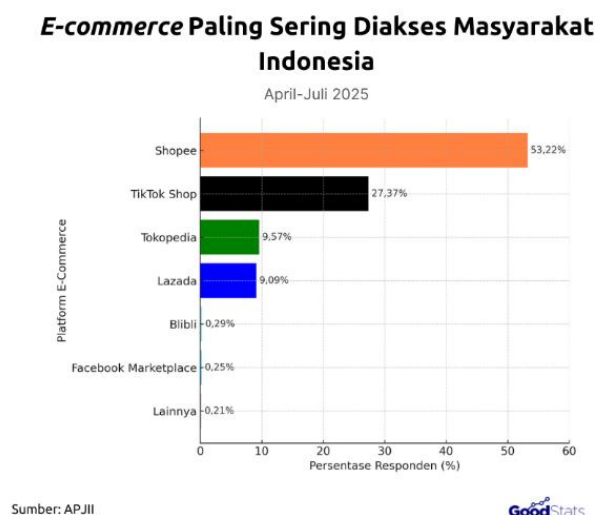


Figure 1. E-commerce Usage Data in Indonesia

Source: Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (2025)

Platforms such as Shopee are increasingly solidifying their position in the Indonesian e-commerce market through aggressive promotional strategies, one of which is large discounts and free shipping programs. The provision of discounts and free shipping has become an important instrument due to two main factors: first, price and shipping costs are the most apparent barriers for online consumers, especially when consumers are students who have limited funds; second, such promotions can reduce psychological and financial barriers, thereby facilitating purchase decisions. Research shows that free shipping promotions significantly reduce the perception of shipping cost barriers in online transactions.

In the context of student consumer behavior, several studies show that factors such as ease of use, ease of access, and promotions play key roles in accelerating purchase decisions. For example, research on students in various universities found that one of their main motivations for shopping online is the presence of promotions and discounts. However, although many studies confirm that discounts and free shipping influence purchase decisions in e-commerce, several aspects remain underexplored in empirical studies.

First, previous studies have extensively examined the role of discounts and free shipping in the context of e-commerce, particularly in relation to purchase intention and purchasing decisions. Research conducted by Lewita Dwi Cahyani (2024) demonstrates that discounts have a positive effect on students' purchase intention, indicating that the greater and more attractive the discounts offered, the higher the consumers' intention to make a purchase. Similar findings were reported by Latifah and Nurmallasari (2022), who found that price discounts and free shipping have both simultaneous and partial effects on students' purchase intention. However, most of these studies position purchase intention as the final outcome, without empirically linking it to purchasing decisions as the subsequent stage in the consumer decision-making process.

Second, several studies have directly examined the influence of promotional strategies on purchasing decisions. Tusanputri and Alyasinta Viela (2021) found that free shipping programs exert a stronger influence on purchasing decisions than advertising in e-commerce platforms. In addition, Blasius Ferryanto Sanjaya et al. (2024) revealed that discounts act as a stimulus that encourages impulsive buying behavior, which ultimately affects purchasing decisions. Nevertheless, these studies have not explicitly incorporated purchase intention as a mediating variable that explains how promotions initially shape consumers' willingness to buy before leading to actual purchasing decisions.

Third, from a conceptual perspective, Aditya Wardhana (2024) emphasizes that purchasing decisions do not occur instantaneously, but rather through a psychological process involving purchase intention, social influences, and promotional stimuli such as discounts. Although this theoretical framework clearly explains the relationships among variables, empirical studies that integrate discounts and free shipping as independent variables, purchase intention as a mediating variable, and purchasing decisions as the dependent variable within a single comprehensive model remain limited, particularly in the context of university students at Universitas Negeri Jakarta as e-commerce consumers.

By considering these gaps namely the lack of studies that position purchase intention as a mediating variable, the limited research focusing on UNJ students, and the changes in current e-commerce promotional strategies this research is conducted to analyze how discount schemes and free shipping programs relate to consumer purchasing behavior on purchase decisions through purchase intention among Universitas Negeri Jakarta students who use Shopee.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Background

2.1.1 Discount

A discount is one of the price promotion strategies used by sellers to reduce the selling price of a product for a certain period with the aim of attracting consumer attention and encouraging purchases. Discounts provide the perception that consumers obtain greater value or benefits from the transaction made. According to Blasius Ferryanto Sanjaya, Pupung Purnamasari et al. (2024), discounts become one of the causes of impulsive buying. Discounts function as promotional pricing mechanisms that reduce perceived costs and enhance consumer value perceptions.. Discounts are a long-term promotional strategy for offline and online transactions. By purchasing goods at discounted prices, buyers can certainly save more when making purchases.

In addition, discounts also influence purchase intention. According to Lewita Dwi Cahyani (2024), it is explained that there is an influence between discounts on online purchase intention, proven by the fact that the more product discounts offered or provided, the higher the possibility of increasing purchase intention among students to shop. Thus, discounts can be understood not only as a form of price reduction, but also as a marketing stimulus capable of increasing perceived value and encouraging the formation of consumer purchase intention.

2.1.2 Free Shipping

The free shipping program is one of the promotional strategies proven to influence consumers' purchase decisions. Findings reported by Tusanputri and Alyasinta Viela (2021) reveal that free shipping program has a more pronounced influence on purchase decisions than advertising efforts.. This shows that consumers tend to consider the presence of shipping cost exemption when making decisions to purchase a product.

Students as digital consumers are very sensitive to additional costs, so free shipping promotions function as a trigger that increases their tendency to make purchases, especially for low-value and repeated purchases. Thus, it can be concluded that the free shipping program partially influences purchase decisions. The presence of free shipping is able to reduce the burden of additional costs for consumers, thereby encouraging them to be more certain in making transactions. This program not only functions as an initial attraction, but also as a determining factor in the online purchase decision-making process.

2.1.3 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is an individual's psychological tendency to have the desire to buy a product after going through a process of observation, consideration, and evaluation of information regarding the product. Purchase intention arises before the purchase decision and becomes one of the strong indicators that predict consumption behavior. Purchase intention also acts as a mediating variable that connects the influence of promotions on purchase decisions. According to Latifah and Nurmallasari (2022), purchase intention is the likelihood of a buyer to purchase a particular product or service. According to them, there is an influence between price discounts, free shipping, and promotions simultaneously as well as partially on the purchase intention of students on e-commerce applications.

2.1.4 Purchase Decision

According to Aditya Wardhana in his book titled "Consumer Behavior in The Digital Era 4.0" (2024), a purchase decision can be understood as a process through which consumers arrive at a buying outcome influenced by purchase intention, brand preference, and other supporting factors. The connection between purchase intention and purchase decision is influenced by the views of other important people for the consumer and unexpected situations such as income, price, and expected product benefits. The purchase decision process involves various considerations, starting from the selection of brands, places of purchase, purchase quantity, transaction time, to payment methods.

An additional consideration that shapes in purchase decisions is the time of purchase, namely when consumers decide to carry out a transaction based on needs and perceived benefits. The time of purchase can be influenced by various conditions, such as the presence of large discounts that encourage consumers to make spontaneous purchases without prior planning. In addition, consumers may also take advantage of lower prices for seasonal needs, for example buying raincoats or umbrellas before the rainy season arrives. The time of purchase can also be routine and scheduled, such as purchasing phone credit and internet data packages that are carried out periodically. On the other hand, the time of purchase can also be triggered by emergency conditions, such as purchasing medicine or urgent supplies when unexpected situations occur.

2.2 Empirical Review and Hypothesis

Tabel 1. Empirical Review and Hypothesis

Research & Year	Research Title & Object	Research Variables	Research result	Relevance to This Research
Lewita Dwi Cahyani (2024)	The Influence of Discounts and Free	Discount, Free Shipping	Discounts influence online purchase intention. The	Contributes relevant empirical evidence

	Shipping Promotions on Online Purchase Intention among 2019 Economic Education Students	Promotion, Purchase Intention	more discounts offered, the higher the students' purchase intention.	supporting the conducted between discounts and purchase intention explored in this research.
Blasius Ferryanto Sanjaya, Pupung Purnamasari, Rinda Putri Agusti Damanik, Yoki Dwi Sambudi (2024)	The Influence of Discounts on Purchase Decision with Impulsive Buying as an Intervening Variable	Discount, Purchase Decision, Impulsive Buying	Discounts have a positive influence on impulsive buying. Discounts become a determining factor in purchase decisions.	Strengthens the idea that discounts act as a stimulus that encourages consumer purchasing behavior.
Tusanputri & Alyasinta Viela (2021)	The Influence of Advertising and Free Shipping Program on Purchase Decisions on the TikTok Shop E-commerce PlatformTiktok Shop	Advertising, Free Shipping, Purchase Decision	The free shipping program has a stronger influence on purchase decisions compared to advertising.	Reinforces the position of free shipping as a variable influencing purchase decisions.
Latifah & Nurmalasari (2022)	The Influence of Price Discounts, Free Shipping, and Promotion on Students' Purchase Intention on the TikTok Shop Application	Discount, Free Shipping, Promotion, Purchase Intention	Price discounts, free shipping, and promotions simultaneously and partially influence students' purchase intention.	Strengthens that both discounts and free shipping influence purchase intention.
Dr (Cand). Aditya Wardhana, S.E, M.Si, M.M (2024)	Consumer Behavior in The Digital Era 4.0 (Book)		Purchase decisions are influenced by purchase intention, brand preference, the views of other important people, unexpected situations, and purchase timing. Large discounts can trigger spontaneous purchases.	Serves as a theoretical basis that purchase decisions are influenced not only by purchase intention but also by promotional stimuli such as discounts.

Source: Author (2025)

Previous research shows that discounts and free shipping have an influence on purchase intention and purchase decisions of consumers online. Discounts are proven to be able to encourage consumers' interest in shopping, while free shipping plays a role in reducing additional cost barriers that often become the main consideration in digital transactions. In addition, purchase decisions are also influenced by psychological factors such as the intention to buy and situational impulses, including the presence of large-scale promotions.

However, most existing research still separates the testing between purchase intention and purchase decisions, or only places purchase intention as the dependent variable, not as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of promotions on purchase decisions. On the other hand, some research places more emphasis on impulsive behavior as the mediating variable, so the role of purchase intention as a psychological stage before the purchase decision has not been examined in depth.

In addition, research that specifically examines students as digital consumers in the context of the Shopee platform is still limited, even though students are a group that actively shops online, are sensitive to price, and are very responsive to promotions such as discounts and free shipping. Changes in e-commerce promotional strategies that are increasingly dynamic also require updated research that is relevant to current conditions.

The existence of these unresolved issues encourages this study to construct an integrated analytical

framework that places discount policies and free shipping programs as driving factors, positions purchase intention as the linking mechanism, and examines purchase decisions as the final outcome, with Universitas Negeri Jakarta students serving as the empirical context.

Framework of Thought

In this research, discounts and free shipping are viewed as forms of sales promotion provided by the Shopee e-commerce platform to consumers. These promotions function as stimuli that can attract consumers' attention, reduce cost barriers, and increase the perceived value of the product. However, promotions do not directly lead to purchase decisions. Consumers first go through a psychological process in the form of the emergence of purchase intention, which is the interest and desire to make a purchase.

It is this purchase intention that then becomes the link (mediator) between the promotional stimulus and the actual purchase decision. This is in accordance with consumer behavior models, where the decision to buy is the result of evaluation and tendencies formed within the consumer beforehand.

Thus, this research positions purchase intention as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of discounts and free shipping on the purchasing decisions of Shopee-using students at the State University of Jakarta.

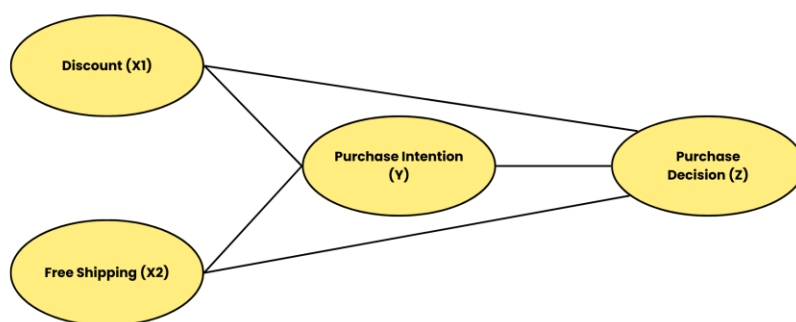


Figure 2. Diagram of the Relationship Between Variables

Source: Author (2025)

Discounts (X1) are perceived as a promotional strategy that can enhance product attractiveness and increase consumers' perceived transactional benefits, thereby stimulating purchase intention (Y). As purchase intention strengthens, consumers become more inclined to proceed toward making an actual purchase decision (Z).

Free shipping (X2) reduces additional costs associated with online transactions, which helps lower both financial and psychological barriers faced by consumers. The reduction of these barriers can positively influence purchase intention (Y), which subsequently leads to stronger purchase decisions (Z).

Purchase intention (Y) plays a central role in this framework as a mediating variable that connects promotional strategies with purchasing outcomes. This indicates that while discounts and free shipping may directly influence purchase decisions, their impact becomes more substantial when consumers have already developed a strong intention to purchase.

Drawing from the established conceptual framework, the study formulates the following propositions hypotheses:

H1: Discounts have a positive effect on the purchase intention of Universitas Negeri Jakarta students on the Shopee platform.

H2: Free shipping has a positive effect on the purchase intention of Universitas Negeri Jakarta students on the Shopee platform.

H3: Discounts have a positive effect on the purchasing decisions of Universitas Negeri Jakarta students on the Shopee platform.

H4: Free shipping has a positive effect on the purchasing decisions of Universitas Negeri Jakarta students on the Shopee platform.

H5: Purchase intention has a positive effect on the purchasing decisions of Universitas Negeri Jakarta students on the Shopee platform.

H6: Purchase intention mediates the effect of discounts on purchasing decisions on the Shopee platform.

H7: Purchase intention mediates the effect of free shipping on purchasing decisions on the Shopee platform.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Types and Approaches of Research

This research adopts a quantitative approach within an explanatory research design, as it emphasizes

systematic variable measurement and the examination of inter-variable relationships through statistical analysis. Through this approach, the numerical data obtained from respondents can be processed objectively, resulting in findings that can be re-examined.

The explanatory research type is used because this research not only describes a phenomenon, but also seeks to explain the causal relationship between the discount and how free shipping influences purchase decisions through the formation of purchase intention. This approach allows the researcher to identify the extent to which the promotions offered by Shopee influence the purchasing process of students at Universitas Negeri Jakarta, both directly and through a psychological mechanism in the form of intention or willingness to buy.

3.2 Location and Time of Research

This study was conducted among university students at Universitas Negeri Jakarta who actively use the Shopee platform for online purchases. Primary data were gathered from October to December 2024, adjusted to the academic calendar and the availability of respondents to complete the questionnaire.

UNJ was chosen as the research setting because its student population reflects active digital consumers who frequently engage in online shopping and tend to respond sensitively to promotional incentives such as discounts and free shipping. These characteristics support the relevance of the research focus and ensure that the collected data accurately represent the consumer behavior of the intended population

3.3 Population and Sample

Students of Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) who actively use the Shopee platform to make online purchases constitute the primary population examined in this study.

The study applied a non-probability sampling approach, specifically purposive sampling, in which respondents were selected according to predetermined criteria:

- a. Active students of Jakarta State University.
- b. Have made purchases through Shopee at least twice in the last 6 months.
- c. Willing to fill out the research questionnaire.

3.4 Measurement Scale

This research employs a 5-point Likert Scale to measure all variables. This scale is used because it allows respondents' perceptions and attitudes to be converted into quantitative data suitable for statistical analysis. The scale categories are as follows:

Table 2. Likert Scale Measurement

Score	Remarks
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Don't agree
3	Neutral
4	Agree
5	Strongly agree

Source: Author (2025)

Additionally, the data collected through the Likert scale were analyzed using SEM-PLS (SmartPLS). This method was chosen because it is suitable for explanatory research, capable of testing relationships between variables simultaneously, and remains effective even when the data do not meet strict normality assumptions.

3.5 Data Analytics Techniques

3.5.1 Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The model was evaluated to ensure that all constructs in this study Discounts (X1), Free Shipping (X2), Purchase Intention (Z), and Purchase Decision (Y) meet the criteria for validity and reliability before proceeding to structural model analysis. The evaluation focused on convergent validity and reliability. Convergent validity assesses how well the indicators consistently reflect their respective latent variables, while reliability examines the consistency and stability of the indicators in measuring the same construct.

Based on SmartPLS results, all indicators for Discounts, Free Shipping, Purchase Intention, and Purchase Decision have outer loading values above 0.70. Moreover, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.50. This demonstrates that all indicators meet convergent validity requirements and are effective in representing their latent constructs.

Instrument reliability was evaluated by observing Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values. The analysis reveals that each construct exceeds the minimum acceptable criterion, suggesting that the measurement items consistently reflect the intended variables. Consequently, the model is considered suitable for subsequent structural

evaluation.

3.5.2 Structural Model (Inner Model)

Structural model analysis was employed to assess the interconnections among the latent variables, including both direct and indirect effects. This analysis aims to examine the influence of promotions Discounts (X1) and Free Shipping (X2) on Purchase Decisions (Y) and how Purchase Intention (Z) mediates this relationship. The model evaluation includes R-Square (R^2), Q-Square (Q^2), Effect Size (f^2), and the significance of path coefficients using bootstrapping.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) represents the explanatory power of exogenous constructs on endogenous constructs:

1. $R^2 \geq 0.75$ indicates strong explanatory power,
2. $R^2 \approx 0.50$ indicates moderate explanatory power,
3. $R^2 \approx 0.25$ indicates weak explanatory power.

Q^2 assesses the predictive relevance of the model, with $Q^2 > 0$ indicating good predictive relevance and $Q^2 \leq 0$ indicating limited predictive capability. Effect Size (f^2) evaluates the contribution of each exogenous variable to the endogenous variable and is interpreted as small (0.02), medium (0.15), and large (0.35). Multicollinearity is also examined via Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), where $VIF < 5$ indicates no multicollinearity.

Significance testing of path coefficients through bootstrapping uses t-statistics and p-values to determine whether hypothesized relationships are statistically supported. This approach enables a thorough assessment of how discounts and free shipping relate to purchase intention and purchase decisions.

3.5.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing evaluates the direct effects (Discounts $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention, Free Shipping $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention, Purchase Intention $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decisions) and indirect effects mediated by Purchase Intention. Path coefficients indicate the direction and magnitude of relationships: positive coefficients show that increases in exogenous variables increase the endogenous variable, while negative coefficients indicate the opposite. A p-value < 0.05 indicates a statistically significant relationship. Bootstrapping ensures robust estimates for hypothesis testing.

3.5.4 Mediation Analysis

Mediation analysis was conducted to examine whether Purchase Intention mediates the effects of Discounts and Free Shipping on Purchase Decisions. Indirect effects were tested using bootstrapping, with significance set at $p < 0.05$. Effect Size (f^2) was also calculated to assess the strength of the mediating effect. According to Hair et al. (2021):

1. $f^2 = 0.02$ indicates a weak effect,
2. $f^2 = 0.15$ indicates a moderate effect,
3. $f^2 = 0.35$ indicates a strong effect,
4. $f^2 < 0.02$ indicates a negligible effect.

This analysis highlights the key role of Purchase Intention as a mediator while Discounts and Free Shipping can influence Purchase Decisions directly, their effects become stronger and more relevant when consumers already have Purchase Intention.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Result

This study involved 114 respondents, consisting of male and female students from Jakarta State University (UNJ) from various faculties, including the Faculty of Economics and Business and others. All respondents were active e-commerce users, thus aligning with the research focus on factors influencing purchasing behavior on online shopping platforms.

Demographically, the gender composition shows that 43% of respondents are male and 57% are female. Based on age, 8% of respondents are under 20 years old, 69.1% are 20–22 years old, 22% are 23–25 years old, and 8% are over 25 years old. This distribution illustrates that the majority of respondents are in the young adult age range who are actively involved in digital transactions and exposed to e-commerce-based marketing strategies.

This respondent profile provides a relevant basis to support the interpretation of the analysis results in the next section.

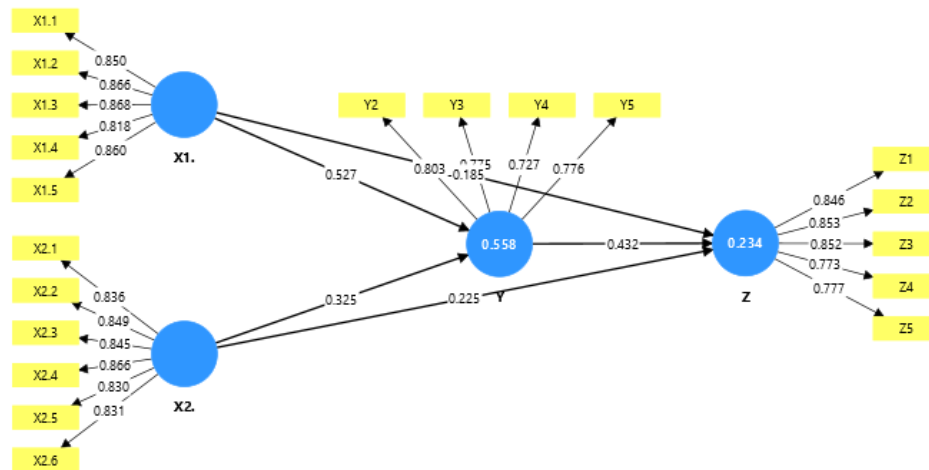


Figure 3. Outer Loading Research
Source: Author (2025)

The findings obtained from the SEM-PLS analysis indicate that all indicators in the variables Discount (X1), Free Shipping (X2), Purchase Intention (Y), and Purchase Decision (Z) show outer loading values above the minimum threshold of 0.7. This indicates that each indicator makes a strong contribution in representing its respective construct. All loading values are also stable and do not indicate any indicators that need to be eliminated, so that each construct in the model can be considered reliable in terms of indicators. With the achievement of indicator reliability, the evaluation then continues with the internal consistency of the construct.

The reliability test results showed that all variables had Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values exceeding 0.7. This finding indicates that each construct has excellent internal consistency, and all questionnaire items are stable in measuring the same variable. Thus, the research instrument is deemed reliable and suitable for use in the structural analysis stage.

Furthermore, the convergent validity test using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value shows that all variables have an AVE value above 0.5, indicating that more than 50% of the indicator variance is successfully explained by their respective constructs. The results of discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion also strengthen this finding, where the square root of the AVE of each construct is higher than its correlation with other constructs. This indicates that each variable truly measures a different concept and there is no overlap between constructs, so the measurement model is acceptable.

Path coefficient analysis was conducted to determine the significance of the relationship between variables based on the path coefficient, t-statistic, and p-value from the bootstrapping results. The test results show several important findings related to the influence of the Discount (X1) and Free Shipping (X2) variables on Purchase Intention (Y) and Purchase Decision (Z). The relationship between Discount and Purchase Intention has a path coefficient of 0.527, with a t-statistic of 5.980 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that Discounts have a significant positive influence on Purchase Intention, where the sample mean value of 0.526 and a standard deviation of 0.088 indicate good estimation stability.

Meanwhile, the effect of discounts on purchasing decisions has a negative coefficient of -0.185 , a t-statistic of 1.760, and a p-value of 0.078, indicating that this relationship is not statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. This indicates that although discounts can increase purchase intention, their direct effect on purchasing decisions is less strong and insignificant.

For the Free Shipping variable, the analysis results show that its effect on Purchase Intention has a coefficient of 0.325, a t-statistic of 3.526, and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a positive and significant relationship. Conversely, the effect of Free Shipping on Purchase Decisions has a coefficient of 0.225, a t-statistic of 1.679, and a p-value of 0.093, making it statistically insignificant. These findings indicate that Free Shipping plays a greater role in shaping Purchase Intention than directly influencing Purchase Decisions.

The Purchase Intention variable itself shows a fairly strong contribution to Purchase Decisions with a coefficient of 0.432, a t-statistic of 3.093, and a p-value of 0.002. The sample mean value of 0.434 and a standard deviation of 0.140 indicate that the influence of Purchase Intention on Purchase Decisions is stable and significant. This finding confirms Purchase Intention's position as an important intermediary variable linking the influence of Discounts and Free Shipping on Purchase Decisions.

In addition, effect size (f^2) analysis is used to evaluate the magnitude of the influence of each exogenous variable on the endogenous variable. The f^2 value shows that the effect of Discount on Purchase Intention (0.464) is

in the large category, indicating a substantial contribution in increasing Purchase Intention. The effect of Free Shipping on Purchase Intention (0.177) is in the medium category, indicating an important role although not as large as Discount. The effect of Purchase Intention on Purchase Decision (0.108) is also in the medium category, confirming the position of Purchase Intention as a fairly strong intermediary factor in influencing Purchase Decision. Conversely, the direct effect of Discount and Free Shipping on Purchase Decision is 0.022 and 0.042, respectively, included in the small category, indicating its direct contribution is relatively weak compared to the indirect effect through Purchase Intention.

Tabel 3. Moderation Test Results

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ((O/STDEV))	P values
X1. -> Y	527	526	88	5.980	0
X1. -> Z	-185	-192	105	1.760	78
X2. -> Y	325	332	92	3.526	0
X2. -> Z	225	237	134	1.679	93
Y -> Z	432	434	140	3.093	2

Source: Author (2025)

Table 3 shows the detailed results of the test of the relationship between variables. The relationship between Discounts and Purchase Intention has an Original Sample (O) value of 0.527, Sample Mean (M) of 0.526, Standard Deviation (STDEV) of 0.088, t-statistic of 5.980, and p-value of 0.000, which confirms a positive and significant influence. The influence of Discounts on Purchase Decisions (O = -0.185, M = -0.192, STDEV = 0.105, t = 1.760, p = 0.078) is not significant, so discounts play a stronger role through Purchase Intention than directly. Free Shipping on Purchase Intention (O = 0.325, M = 0.332, STDEV = 0.092, t = 3.526, p = 0.000) is significant, while its influence on Purchase Decision (O = 0.225, M = 0.237, STDEV = 0.134, t = 1.679, p = 0.093) is not significant. Purchase Intention on Purchase Decision (O = 0.432, M = 0.434, STDEV = 0.140, t = 3.093, p = 0.002) shows a significant and stable influence, confirming the mediating role of Purchase Intention in strengthening the effect of Discounts and Free Shipping on Purchase Decision.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 The Effect of Discounts on Purchase Interest

The main findings indicate that *discount* has a significant direct influence on *interest in buying* with a coefficient value of 0.527 and a p-value of 0.000. The effect size value ($f^2 = 0.464$) is classified as big, so the discount variable can be considered a strong predictor in shaping students' purchase intention. This evidence supports earlier findings reported in the literature that emphasize the role of discounts as cognitive triggers that increase perceived value and purchase urgency. In the context of students, discounts are a particularly relevant incentive, given that this group tends to have limited financial resources and is therefore sensitive to price offers.

4.2.2 The Influence of Discounts on Purchasing Decisions

The effect of discounts on purchase *decision* was not significant (coefficient -0.185; p-value 0.078). Although the direction of the effect was negative, the magnitude of the effect was very small ($f^2 = 0.022$). These results indicate that discounts stimulate interest, but do not automatically lead to purchase action. This phenomenon can be explained through the concept of *intention-behavior gap*, where high intentions don't always result in actual behavior. Students may be attracted by discounts, but their final decisions are still influenced by other factors such as actual needs, timing, or quality considerations.

4.2.3 The Effect of Discounts on Purchase Interest

Free shipping significantly influences purchase intention (coefficient 0.325; p-value 0.000) with a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.177$). This finding reinforces the view that shipping costs are one of the most sensitive determinants of online transactions. This sensitivity is even more pronounced among college students because free shipping lowers total costs, thereby increasing perceptions of efficiency and convenience.

However, just like discounts, *free shipping* did not have a significant influence on purchasing decisions (coefficient 0.225; p-value 0.093; $f^2 = 0.042$). This indicates that students tend to view free shipping as a driving factor for interest, but still consider other factors (e.g., transaction security, real needs, or availability of funds) before finally deciding to purchase.

4.2.4 The Influence of Buying Interest on Purchasing Decisions

This finding proves that purchase intention has a significant influence on purchasing decisions with a coefficient of 0.432 (p-value 0.002) and a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.108$). This finding confirms that students' decision-making process follows a pattern *planned behavior*, where purchasing actions are more determined by

internal interest or intention than external stimuli alone.

The overall results demonstrate a significant mediating effect on purchase intention. Discounts and free shipping act as initial stimuli, but the final decision is only made after strong enough interest has developed. Therefore, this research model provides a theoretical contribution by confirming that, in the context of online student purchases, price promotions do not operate directly, but rather through the psychological mechanism of intention.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that influence of Discounts and Free Shipping on Purchase Decisions through Purchase Intention on the Shopee platform is generally supported. Discounts and Free Shipping are shown to significantly enhance Purchase Intention among students of Universitas Negeri Jakarta, which subsequently functions as a mediating factor that strengthens the effect of promotional strategies on purchase decisions. In contrast, the direct impact of Discounts and Free Shipping on Purchase Decisions is not statistically significant, suggesting that promotional efforts are more effective when they first stimulate Purchase Intention rather than directly triggering purchasing actions. These results contribute to a deeper understanding of online consumer behavior, particularly by emphasizing the role of Purchase Intention as a psychological mechanism that connects promotional stimuli with actual purchasing decisions.

Academically, this study makes a novel contribution by highlighting the importance of Purchase Intention as a previously understudied mediating variable in the context of e-commerce in Indonesia. These findings add empirical evidence to how price promotions, whether in the form of discounts or free shipping, can influence student purchasing behavior through psychological mechanisms, not just direct stimuli.

However, this study has several limitations. The sample consisted only of UNJ students, so generalizing the findings to other consumer groups requires caution. Furthermore, the study only examined two forms of promotion, while other factors such as brand loyalty, social influence, or product characteristics may also influence purchase intention and purchase decisions.

To strengthen external validity, future research could incorporate a wider range of respondents, add other moderating or mediating variables such as trust, perceived value, or peer influence, and use a longitudinal design to capture the dynamics of consumer behavior over time.

In terms of practical and policy implications, these findings suggest that the Shopee platform and policymakers need to focus strategies on shaping consumer purchase intention. For e-commerce players, promotions that not only reduce transaction costs but also increase perceived product benefits will be more effective in driving purchasing decisions. More broadly, these findings can be used as a reference in designing digital marketing strategies, promotional policies, and e-commerce development instruments that are more responsive to consumer psychology, particularly among students and the younger generation.

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