Phenomenological Study: The Impact of Impulsive Shopping Tendency on Online Shopping Behavior of Students at Indragiri Tembilahan Islamic University

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ARTICLE EI NFO	ABSTRACT
	This qualitative study in-depth investigates the online impulsive shopping experience among students at Indragiri Tembilahan Islamic University through a phenomenological approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 20 purposively selected participants. The findings revealed that: (1) Emotional factors (stress, boredom) and external stimuli (targeted advertising, flash sale discounts) are the main triggers; (2) Behavioral impacts include disruptions in personal financial management and changes in consumption patterns; (3) The campus environment acts as a moderating factor through peer influence. This study provides theoretical contributions to the literature on digital consumer behavior in the context of Indonesian higher education as well as practical implications for e-commerce platform developers and campus policymakers. *This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC license.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of e-commerce has fundamentally changed the way we shop, especially for the younger generation who grew up amidst the convenience of technology. With transaction value expected to reach $59 billion in Indonesia by 2023 and annual growth of 34%, the country's e-commerce market demonstrates undeniable dominance. Astounding data from Statista, (2023) reveals that 68% of these transactions are driven by Generation Z, demonstrating the close relationship between them and the world of online shopping. Behind this fantastic growth, a phenomenon has emerged that has caught the attention of academics and practitioners: online impulse buying. Although often considered trivial, this behavior has a significant impact, especially on an individual's financial health (Leong et al., 2021).

Previous studies have attempted to unravel the factors that trigger impulsive shopping. Generally, these factors can be classified into three main categories: A. Personal Factors: Includes innate impulsive tendencies and a person's ability to control emotions (Chen and Wang, 2021). B. Platform Stimulus: User interface (UI/UX) design and personalized product recommendations are strong driving factors (Pradhan et al., 2023). C. Social Influence: Testimonials, product reviews, and social commerce phenomena often trigger unexpected purchases (Yin et al., 2022).

However, despite the wealth of existing research, significant gaps remain to be filled. Much of this research relies on quantitative approaches that are less able to capture the complexity and depth of subjective experiences behind each purchase click (Huang and Li, 2022). Research in the

Indonesian higher education context remains very limited, despite the unique social dynamics of campus environments (Sari et al., 2021). Exploration of the role of institutional environments, such as campus policies or peer influence in dormitories, remains limited (Zhang et al., 2023).

Recognizing this gap, this study aims to make a significant contribution. We aim to answer three main questions: How do college students interpret their online impulsive shopping experiences? What factors mediate the relationship between impulsive tendencies and actual behavior? How does the campus environment influence online consumption patterns? Through a phenomenological approach, this study will not only enrich the literature with empirical findings but also provide theoretical contributions by developing a new conceptual model of impulsive shopping relevant to the higher education context. Integrating a phenomenological perspective into the study of digital consumer behavior, which has previously been dominated by quantitative approaches. Thus, this study is expected to provide a more holistic and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of online impulsive shopping among students (Wangshu & Guanhua, 2020).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Approach and Methodology Study

This study employed a qualitative method with an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach. This approach was specifically chosen because it focuses on lived experiences and a deep understanding of how individuals interpret significant life events (Smith et al., 2021). Therefore, IPA is highly suitable for exploring students' subjective experiences related to online impulsive shopping behavior.

Participants and Criteria

This study involved 20 active students, consisting of 12 women and 8 men, with an age range between 19 and 22 years. They chosen in a way purposive based on two criteria main:
a. Have a high frequency of online shopping, namely at least 4 times a month.
b. Have you ever made an unplanned or impulsive purchase in the past month?
These criteria ensure that participants have relevant and rich experiences to analyze, so that the data collected can answer the research questions in depth (Lim, 2025).

Procedure Data Collection and Analysis

data collection process is carried out through a number of stages for ensure wealth and validity findings. The main method used is semi- structured interviews, which took place between 60 to 120 minutes. Interview This done in a way face face (offline) for build deeper relationship Good with participants and enable further exploration in-depth. In addition to interviews, researchers also conducted analysis document personal participants, such as catch history screenshot transactions and records finance, for get proof Empirical. Participatory observation in the shopping community on campus was also conducted to understand social dynamics and environmental influences directly. The collected data was then analyzed following strict stages in IPA (Smith et al., 2022), namely:
a. Verbatim Transcription: All interview recordings are converted into full text.
b. Thematic Coding: The researcher identified recurring themes in the transcripts using NVivo 14 software.
c. Identifying Essential Patterns: Coded themes are grouped to find essential patterns that describe participants' shared experiences.
d. Validation: The results of the analysis were validated through a member checking process, where participants were asked to verify the research findings to ensure accurate interpretation.

Research Ethics

This study was conducted in accordance with strict research ethics standards. Prior to the interview, each participant provided informed consent to ensure they understood the purpose of the study and their rights. All participant data was kept anonymous to protect privacy. Participants also had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence, affirming the researchers' commitment to academic ethics and integrity (Dahal, 2024).

3.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the main findings of this qualitative research, divided into three broad themes that emerged from the analysis of the in-depth interviews. These findings not only reveal the subjective experiences of the participants but are also supported by direct quotations and linked to relevant literature.

A. Impulsive Trigger Pattern

Research has found that students' impulsive shopping behavior is triggered by a combination of internal and external factors. Emotional Factors: Many participants reported that negative emotions such as stress and boredom were the primary drivers. One participant, P19, bluntly stated, "I buy makeup when I'm stressed about exams... it feels like a self-reward." This finding is consistent with mood regulation theory, which states that individuals tend to use consumption as a way to manage their moods (Verhagen and Dolen, 2021). Technological Factors: The features designed by e-commerce platforms also play a significant role. Participants often feel pressured by features such as "flash sale countdowns," which psychologically create a sense of urgency and scarcity, prompting them to make purchases immediately without much consideration (Pradhan et al., 2023).

B. Impact Behavior

Findings show that behavior shopping impulsive This bring consequence real for life students, good in a way financial and psychological.

Table 1: Impact Categories and Frequency

Category Impact	Frequency (%)	Example Quote
Disturbance budget	75%	"I had to borrow money from a friend for the canteen." (P7)
Regret cognitive	60%	"The item arrived but wasn't used." (P12)

Source: Processed Data 2025

Like seen in the table above, the most common impacts is disturbance budget personal, where some big participants (75%) admitted that purchase impulsive bother stability finance them. In addition, more from half participants (60%) experienced regret cognitive—feelings guilty or disappointed after goods accepted Because it turns out No needed or no in accordance expectation(Matarazzo et al., 2021).

C. The Role of the Campus Environment

One of the most unique findings of this study is the role of the institutional environment as a moderator of shopping behavior. The " Dormitory Effect ": The dormitory environment (kos) is a place where peer influence is very strong. Participant P5 described this phenomenon simply, "If someone buys, usually I follow." This creates what can be called "digital peer pressure" (Yin et al., 2022), where friends' online shopping activities trigger the desire to participate. Campus Policies: On the other hand, campus policies, such as restrictions on package delivery to dorms or certain hours, also play a role in moderating shopping behavior.

D. Theoretical Discussion

These findings provide important contributions to consumer behavior theory. Specifically, they strengthen the Extended Model of Internet Commerce Adoption (EMICA) by adding two important dimensions: Institutional Factors as Moderators: These findings emphasize that the macroenvironment, such as institutional policies and social dynamics on campus, cannot be ignored. This aligns with Zhang et al. (2023) research, which emphasizes the importance of the institutional context in consumer behavior. The "Digital Peer Pressure" construct: This study successfully identifies and provides empirical evidence for the concept of digital peer pressure, a modern manifestation of social influence in the e-commerce era. Overall, the results of this study not only provide a rich and detailed picture of the impulsive shopping experience but also pave the way for the development of a more comprehensive theoretical model(Wu et al., 2020).

4. CONCLUSION

This study provides strong conclusions and significant implications, not only for academics but also for stakeholders. The findings confirm that impulsive online shopping behavior among college students is a complex phenomenon influenced by various factors, ranging from personal emotions to the social environment and institutional policies. A. Theoretical Implications. Theoretically, this research provides two main contributions, namely. 1. Strengthening qualitative approaches: this research demonstrates the importance of qualitative approaches, particularly phenomenology, in the study of digital consumer behavior. this method is capable of capturing nuances and subjective experiences that are often overlooked in large-scale quantitative studies. 2. Integrating macro factors: findings on the role of the campus environment suggest the need to integrate macro factors such as institutional policies into impulse buying models. existing models should be expanded to include social and environmental influences that moderate consumption behavior. B. Practical Implications. The results of this study also provide concrete recommendations that can be implemented by e-commerce platforms and educational institution managers. 1. For e-commerce platforms: implementation of cooling-off period: platforms can offer a feature where users have a short period of time (e.g., 5-10 minutes) to cancel an impulse purchase without consequences, giving them a break to reconsider. integrated budgeting feature: platforms can provide a feature that helps users monitor spending or set monthly spending limits, encouraging wiser consumption behavior. 2. For campus policy: digital financial literacy program: campuses can hold seminars or workshops that educate students about the risks of impulsive shopping and how to manage personal finances in the digital age. collaboration for responsible marketing: campuses can collaborate with e-commerce platforms to promote more responsible marketing practices, for example by avoiding the use of tactics that trigger excessive urgency (such as aggressive flash sale countdowns) in the student environment. C. Research Limitations. Despite providing valuable findings, this study has several limitations that warrant consideration. The generalizability of these findings is limited to the Indonesian campus context, so the results may not be fully applicable to student populations in other countries. Furthermore, there is potential recall bias in the interviews, where participants may not accurately recall details of impulse purchases. These limitations open up opportunities for future research to explore this topic further with different methods or in broader contexts.

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