

# ESSAYS ON ONLINE FLASH SALE



सिद्धिमूलं प्रबन्धनम्  
भा. प्र. सं. इन्दौर  
IIM INDORE

BY

**ANJALI SHARMA**

A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

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## ABSTRACT

Online flash sale (OFS) has become very popular with e-commerce platforms. It is a new tool used by the online merchants or the e-commerce websites to boost sales, revenues and profits by offering heavy discounts on the merchandise for a limited time period (Peng *et al.*, 2018). Depending on the sales period, flash sale offered by online business platforms, are also known as ‘deal of the day’, ‘daily deal’, ‘lightning deal’ and so on. The deal typically ends at a pre-announced time or when all the items on sale are sold out, whichever occurs first (Shi and Chen, 2015). The people who participate in such OFS or the promotion sales are referred to as deal prone consumers. According to Martínez and Montaner (2006), a deal-prone customer is one who alters his purchase behavior and decisions so as to be benefitted from the incentives offered by the promotions. This dissertation titled ‘Essays on Online Flash Sale’, explores different phenomenon related to consumer’s OFS participation experiences. The consistent theme across the essays is the consumer re-participation intention in OFS following an online service/ product failure. The first section of the thesis (Essay 1) looks at the consumer re-participation in an OFS following a service failure, whereas the second section (Essay 2), explores the reasons for consumer re-participation in an OFS following a product failure.

The first essay in this dissertation address the research questions which are, ‘why does a consumer in spite of experiencing a service failure still continue to participate in an OFS?’ and ‘what are the boundary conditions for re-participation in OFS following a service failure?’. The literature of this phenomenon is limited, exception being the Vakeel *et al.* (2018) work. The current study considering the role of mental resources in OFS participation. Recently it has been observed that the online shopping has outperformed and surpassed the conventional stores sales, this makes it

quite essential and crucial to understand the factors that has led to such a consumer response (Soergel, 2016).

As electronic marketing becomes central piece of marketing strategy, there is a growing need for developing new knowledge models and theories on internet commerce behavior (Close and Kukar-Kinney, 2010). This study is an attempt in this direction by integrating literature to build an integrated mediated model to gain a better understanding of the process of participation in OFS following service failures. This essay explore the phenomenon of consumer OFS participation, where the primary focus is on the identification of the appropriate online flash sale deal type. Then the focus is on the development of service failure stimuli for the deal types. Lastly the results from the previous two studies is implanted a survey. The study results reveals mediations, serial mediation and moderated mediations through consumer competition, human capital and deal type as a moderating variable.

The second essay in this dissertation address the research questions which are, ‘why do a consumer in spite of experiencing a product failure still continue to participate in an OFS?’ and ‘what are the boundary conditions for re-participation in OFS following a product failure?’. This essay attempts to understand this phenomenon in two different studies. The first study is an attempt in this direction by integrating literature to build an integrated moderated model to gain a better understanding of the process of participation in OFS following product failures along with understanding the moderating role of consumption motivation and deal type. However, the second study is an attempt to build an integrated moderated model to gain a better understanding of the process of participation in OFS following product failures along with understanding the moderating role of brand visibility and product assurance.

This essay explore the phenomenon of consumer OFS participation, where the primary focus is on the identification and development of product failure stimuli with appropriate manipulations for brand visibility, product assurance, consumption motivation and deal types. Lastly the scenarios are is implanted a survey. The results of study 1 reveals moderation of consumption motivation and moderated moderation of consumption motivation and deal type on the main effect i.e. deal proneness to re-participation intention. Whereas, the results of study 2 reveals moderation of brand visibility and moderated moderation of product assurance and brand visibility on the main effect.

Both the essays have interesting insights about consumer behaviour. The studies contribute to the literature with some very relevant managerial implication.

**Keywords:** Deal proneness, re-participation intention, service failure, product failure, deal type, consumer competition, human capital, consumption motivation, brand visibility, product assurance.

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