

The Mediating Role of Visual Appeal in the Influence of Emotional Appeal and FOMO on Impulsive Buying

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia's cosmetics industry grew by 21.9%, with companies increasing from 913 in 2022 to 1,010 in mid-2023. Skintific, a rising skincare brand, capitalized on this growth through TikTok flash sales and emotionally driven marketing. This study examines the influence of emotional appeal and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) on impulsive buying, with visual appeal as a mediating variable. A quantitative survey involving 385 TikTok users who purchased Skintific products was conducted and analyzed using SMART PLS 3.1. All seven hypotheses (H1-H7) were statistically supported. Emotional appeal significantly influenced impulsive buying ($\beta = 0.352$, $t = 5.504$, $p = 0.000$) and visual appeal ($\beta = 0.455$, $t = 6.892$, $p = 0.000$). FOMO also had significant effects on impulsive buying ($\beta = 0.158$, $t = 2.062$, $p = 0.004$) and visual appeal ($\beta = 0.511$, $t = 7.840$, $p = 0.000$). Visual appeal strongly impacted impulsive buying ($\beta = 0.463$, $t = 7.049$, $p = 0.000$) and mediated the effects of both emotional appeal ($\beta = 0.211$, $t = 5.236$, $p = 0.000$) and FOMO ($\beta = 0.237$, $t = 4.962$, $p = 0.000$) on impulsive buying. The findings underscore the strategic importance of emotional and visual marketing in digital commerce.

Keywords: Emotional Appeal; Fear of Missing Out; Impulsive Buying; Skincare Industry; TikTok Marketing; Visual Appeal

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Indonesia's skincare industry has experienced rapid growth, driven by increasing public awareness of the importance of skincare for health and appearance. Skincare is no longer seen solely as a necessity but has become a lifestyle component, especially among younger consumers who are highly active on digital platforms. Alongside this shift, marketing strategies have increasingly adopted digital approaches, most notably through TikTok flash sales, creating new forms of consumer engagement and prompting more spontaneous purchasing behavior.

Impulsive buying refers to unplanned, immediate purchases made without prior intention, often driven by affective and social influences (Nuseir, 2020; Utami et al., 2021). Among the most influential psychological triggers of impulsive buying is emotional appeal, defined as marketing communication that seeks to elicit emotional responses to strengthen the consumer–brand connection (Vrtana & Krizanova, 2023). When emotional engagement with a product is high, consumers are more prone to act on impulse, bypassing rational decision-making.

Another key factor is the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), which describes the anxiety individuals feel when they believe others might be enjoying experiences they are missing. In consumer behavior, FOMO is frequently activated by limited-time offers, exclusive deals, or viral trends on social media platforms (Oberoi, 2024). This emotional and social pressure can strongly influence consumers to make quick, unplanned purchases to avoid the feeling of exclusion.

Meanwhile, visual appeal plays a critical role in enhancing consumer attention and emotional engagement. Visual appeal encompasses the aesthetic and sensory elements of marketing content, such as product images, colors, layout, and design that attract attention and influence perception (Lyu & Huang, 2024; Yahya et al., 2024). Research has shown that visually rich content can increase trust, interest, and emotional resonance, especially in digital commerce environments (Marwan et al., 2024; Sunarso & Mustafa, 2023). However, while previous studies have independently examined emotional appeal, FOMO, and visual stimuli in digital marketing, there is limited empirical research that explicitly investigates how visual appeal mediates the relationship between emotional and social cues (such as FOMO) and impulsive buying behavior—particularly within the unique algorithmic and participatory context of TikTok flash sales.

Most existing studies have focused on general online consumer behavior or impulsive buying in offline retail contexts, with limited attention to how the interaction of emotional appeal and FOMO is channeled through visual engagement in social commerce platforms like TikTok. This study aims to fill that gap by empirically examining the mediating role of visual appeal in the influence of emotional appeal and FOMO on impulsive buying.

Thus, the contribution of this study lies in advancing the understanding of how emotional and social stimuli, when mediated by visually engaging content, drive impulsive consumer behavior in digital settings. Specifically, this research focuses on Skintific skincare products in Indonesia, a brand that actively utilizes TikTok flash sales as part of its digital strategy. The study's findings are expected to offer valuable insights for marketers aiming to design visually compelling, emotionally resonant campaigns that effectively capture consumer attention and convert it into purchasing behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Behavior

According to [Espinoza et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Sutisna & Susan \(2022\)](#), consumer behavior encompasses activities involved in acquiring, using, and disposing of products and services, shaped by personal elements (such as motivation, perception, attitude, personality, values, and lifestyle) and environmental influences (like reference groups, situations, family, and culture), as well as marketing actions that address these factors. [Khegay & Aubakirov \(2021\)](#) and [Satoto & Putra \(2021\)](#) add that consumer behavior covers the process of searching, selecting, purchasing, utilizing, and evaluating goods or services to satisfy needs and desires, closely tied to decisions about what to buy, where, and how frequently. Kotler, as cited by [Kambey et al. \(2024\)](#), explains that consumer behavior includes a range of purchasing-related activities, driven by social, cultural, personal, and psychological factors.

Emotional Appeal

Emotional appeal refers to marketing tactics that evoke consumer emotions to distinguish brands and build stronger connections ([Kharisma, 2024](#)). This strategy leverages positive or negative emotions to influence purchase behavior and decision-making ([Chen, 2024](#)). Emotional experiences impact memory and consumer choices ([Guido et al., 2018](#)). Emotional appeal comprises dimensions such as cognitive, affective, social, motivational, identity, and moral aspects that collectively shape consumers' purchase intentions ([Marghaputra, 2024](#)).

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO)

FOMO reflects the anxiety individuals feel when detached from others' social activities, often leading them to compulsively check notifications, even if the content is trivial. It stems from feelings of anxiety, insecurity, and fear of exclusion, exacerbated by social media use ([Mazlum & Atalay, 2022](#)). FOMO involves a persistent fear of missing enjoyable experiences, causing dissatisfaction and unhealthy comparisons ([Syandana & Dhaniala, 2024](#)). According to [Alabri \(2022\)](#), FOMO pushes individuals to remain connected online, stemming from unmet psychological needs for relatedness and autonomy.

Impulsive Buying

Impulsive buying describes an unplanned, strong urge to purchase, often triggered by emotional stimuli, promotional tactics, or environmental factors ([Iyer et al., 2020](#)). Promotions and internal states such as mood and financial conditions significantly influence impulsive purchases ([Prameshti & Dwiridotjahjono, 2022](#)). Technology and online platforms have amplified impulsive buying behavior ([Gulfraz et al., 2022](#)). [Farah and Ramadan \(2020\)](#) categorize impulsive buying into dimensions such as impulse buying tendency, shopping enjoyment, consumer mood, situational factors, website quality, retailer-driven motivation, and online impulsivity.

Visual Appeal

Visual appeal refers to the attractiveness of design elements like fonts, colors, and graphics that enhance a website's presentation and influence consumer evaluation ([Jeannot et al., 2022](#)). It involves features such as templates, layouts, and product clarity, which stimulate online buyers and improve their shopping experience ([Kimiagari & Malafe, 2021](#)). A visually appealing website creates a positive first impression, influencing user satisfaction through aesthetic elements like color, typography, and structure, which affect emotions and perceptions. Key dimensions of visual appeal include color, shape, structure, layout, typography, texture, contrast, simplicity, and

balance, all contributing to an engaging and harmonious design that enhances user interaction and satisfaction (Seifi & Moshayeri, 2024).

Hypotheses Development

Emotional Appeal Toward Impulsive Buying

Emotional appeal is an effective marketing tool that influences consumer behavior more deeply than rational information alone. By understanding and utilizing emotional appeal, marketers can create more compelling promotions and increase the likelihood of impulsive purchases. Therefore, it is important for consumers to recognize the influence of emotions in their shopping decisions to manage their spending more effectively. Research by Destari et al. (2020) shows that emotional appeal has a positive and significant effect on impulse buying. The stronger the emotional appeal, the higher the likelihood of impulse buying, as seen in consumers who are drawn to branded products offered by platforms like Lazada, leading them to make spontaneous purchases. It is known that as emotional appeal increases, visual appeal also rises. This means that emotions and visuals are interconnected in attracting consumer attention and interest. Strong emotional elements can enhance the visual perception of a product. Additionally, as emotional appeal grows, it leads to an increase in impulsive buying, which in turn boosts visual appeal. Emotional elements strengthen visual attraction, heightening the desire to make a purchase.

- H1: Emotional appeal has a significant effect on impulsive buying on TikTok flash sales of Skintific skincare products in Indonesia.
- H2: Emotional appeal has a significant effect on visual appeal in the TikTok flash sale of Skintific skincare products in Indonesia.
- H6: Emotional appeal significantly affects impulsive buying through visual appeal on TikTok flash sales of Skintific skincare products in Indonesia.

FOMO Toward Impulsive Buying

FOMO is defined as the motivation to stay connected to social media and always want to know what others are doing. Additionally, various product or service promotions through ads on social media, offering limited-time discounts, can trigger a FOMO on those deals, leading to impulsive buying. The feeling of FOMO can prompt individuals to make shopping decisions without careful consideration, often resulting in impulsive purchases. FOMO may lead to reckless buying, neglect of planning, and feelings of regret or dissatisfaction afterward. According to a study by Muharam et al. (2023), it was concluded that FOMO has a significant impact on impulsive buying among students in Semarang City on TikTok Shop. The study found that students in Semarang frequently engage in impulsive buying on TikTok Shop, and those experiencing FOMO on trends and experiences are more likely to make impulsive purchases. As the FOMO increases, it leads to a rise in visual appeal. This means that the greater the FOMO on something, the higher the potential to enhance the product's visual attraction. Additionally, as emotional appeal increases, it is followed by an increase in impulsive buying, boosting visual appeal. Consumers feel compelled to buy to avoid missing out on something valuable. By creating visually appealing elements and providing information about limited-time offers, marketers can encourage impulsive buying.

- H3: FOMO has a significant effect on impulsive buying in the TikTok flash sales of Skintific skincare products in Indonesia.
- H4: FOMO has a significant effect on the visual appeal of TikTok flash sales of Skintific skincare products in Indonesia.
- H7: FOMO has a significant effect on impulsive buying through visual appeal on TikTok flash sales of Skintific skincare products in Indonesia.

Visual Appeal Toward Impulsive Buying

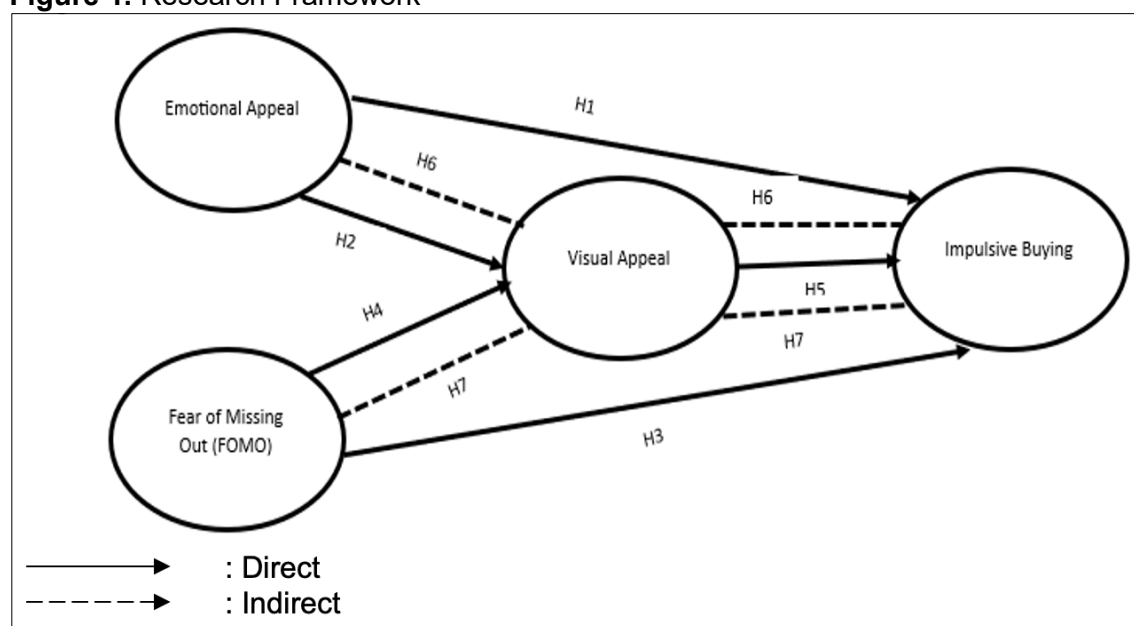
Visual appeal refers to elements like fonts, graphics, and other visual components designed to enhance the overall presentation of a website. It is based on the website's aesthetics, which include elements such as color, language, animation, and layout. The aesthetic appeal of a website reflects the level of satisfaction, enjoyment, and entertainment that consumers experience when interacting with it. According to research by Belliza and Kusumawati (2024), visual appearance is crucial as it forms the first impression on e-commerce platforms, influencing consumers' purchasing decisions. Consumers tend to respond to visual appeal early, and this perception affects how they view other attributes of the e-commerce service. The visual appeal of an e-commerce app aids consumers in effectively searching, browsing, and evaluating the products they want and need. Visual aesthetics can enhance the perceived value of online shopping for consumers, and previous studies have shown that visual appeal has an indirect impact on impulsive online purchasing (Yang et al., 2021). Therefore, visual appeal plays a key role in improving the overall appearance of an app.

H5: Visual appeal has a significant effect on impulsive buying on TikTok flash sales of Skintific skincare products in Indonesia.

Conceptual Framework

The study framework model is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Framework



RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a quantitative approach because it is able to measure the relationship between variables such as emotional appeal and impulse buying objectively and statistically. This type of research is explanatory in nature, with the aim of testing the influence of variables. The research population is consumers who have purchased Skintific products through flash sales on TikTok in the past six months. The sampling technique was purposive with these criteria. The sample size was determined using the Cochran formula, assuming the population was not known with certainty, resulting in a total of 100 respondents.

The research instrument was a questionnaire structured on a Likert scale of 1-5, where 1 means “strongly disagree” and 5 means “strongly agree”. This questionnaire consists of: 5 items for emotional appeal variables, four items for brand image, and five items for impulse buying; all adapted from previous relevant research and have been validated. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling based on the Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method using SmartPLS software. SEM-PLS was chosen because it is able to handle complex models with mediating variables and relatively small samples efficiently.

RESULTS

Respondents' Demographic Profiles

The study gathered data from 385 Skintific product users across Indonesia. Data collection was conducted via Google Forms, with distribution through social media platforms.

Table 1. Respondent Demographics

Category	Sub-Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Man	8%
	Woman	92%
Age	17-21 years old	8%
	22-26 years old	60%
	27-30 years old	14%
	>30 years old	18%
Occupation	Student	11%
	Employee	61%
	Civil Servant	13%
	Self-Employed	15%

Table 1 illustrates the demographic profile of the respondents based on three categories: gender, age, and occupation. In terms of gender, the majority of respondents are women, accounting for 92%, while only 8% are men. This indicates a significant gender imbalance among the participants. Regarding age distribution, most respondents fall within the age range of 22 to 26 years old, representing 60% of the total sample. This is followed by 18% of respondents who are over 30 years old, 14% aged 27 to 30 years, and 8% aged 17 to 21 years. These results suggest that the research is mainly dominated by young adults, particularly those in their early to mid-twenties. As for occupation, the largest group consists of employees, making up 61% of the respondents. Other occupational groups include self-employed individuals at 15%, civil servants at 13%, and students at 11%. Overall, the data reflect that the majority of respondents are young working women, particularly those employed in various sectors.

Statistical Results

Table 2. Convergent Validity (N =385)

Construct	Indicator	Loading Factor (>0.5)	AVE (>0.5)	Conclusion
Emotional Appeal	EA1	0.869	0.761	Valid (> 0.5)
	EA2	0.859		
	EA3	0.870		
	EA4	0.858		
	EA5	0.874		
	EA6	0.862		
	EA7	0.882		
	EA8	0.868		
	EA9	0.887		

	EA10	0.891		
	EA11	0.880		
	EA12	0.866		
FOMO	FMO1	0.866	0.788	
	FMO2	0.906		
	FMO3	0.894		
	FMO4	0.885		
	FMO5	0.900		
	FMO6	0.886		
	FMO7	0.875		
Impulsive Buying	IB1	0.864	0.769	
	IB2	0.886		
	IB3	0.889		
	IB4	0.873		
	IB5	0.893		
	IB6	0.879		
	IB7	0.876		
	IB8	0.886		
	IB9	0.887		
	IB10	0.856		
	IB11	0.889		
	IB12	0.878		
	IB13	0.836		
	IB14	0.882		
Visual Appeal	VA1	0.876	0.763	
	VA2	0.859		
	VA3	0.873		
	VA4	0.887		
	VA5	0.854		
	VA6	0.870		
	VA7	0.869		
	VA8	0.888		
	VA9	0.875		
	VA10	0.873		
	VA11	0.871		
	VA12	0.872		
	VA13	0.878		
	VA14	0.878		
	VA15	0.877		
	VA16	0.870		
	VA17	0.883		

Table 2 presents the results of a construct validity analysis using two main criteria: Loading Factor and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Both of these indicators must exceed the threshold of 0.5 to be considered valid. The first construct, Emotional Appeal, consists of 12 indicators (EA1 to EA12), all of which have loading factors ranging from 0.858 to 0.891. The AVE value for this construct is 0.761, indicating strong convergent validity. The second construct, FOMO, includes seven indicators (FMO1 to FMO7) with loading factors between 0.866 and 0.906. Its AVE is 0.788, further confirming that this construct is valid. The third construct, Impulsive Buying, is measured with 14 indicators (IB1 to IB14) that show loading factors from 0.836 to 0.893. The AVE value of 0.769 supports the conclusion that the construct is valid and reliable. Lastly, the Visual Appeal construct is composed of 17 indicators (VA1 to VA17), with loading factors ranging from

0.854 to 0.888 and an AVE of 0.763. These results demonstrate that all constructs meet the validity criteria, as all indicators have high loading values and their respective AVE scores are above 0.5. Therefore, it can be concluded that all the indicators are valid and can be used to measure their respective constructs accurately.

Table 3. Cross Loading

Indicator	Emotional Appeal	FOMO	Impulsive Buying	Visual Appeal
EA1	0.869	0.819	0.830	0.823
EA2	0.859	0.810	0.816	0.821
EA3	0.870	0.801	0.813	0.804
EA4	0.858	0.808	0.810	0.772
EA5	0.874	0.826	0.805	0.824
EA6	0.862	0.812	0.797	0.812
EA7	0.882	0.846	0.828	0.829
EA8	0.868	0.804	0.813	0.811
EA9	0.887	0.827	0.827	0.832
EA10	0.891	0.840	0.821	0.821
EA11	0.880	0.826	0.805	0.826
EA12	0.866	0.800	0.798	0.812
FMO1	0.811	0.866	0.819	0.813
FMO2	0.852	0.906	0.830	0.839
FMO3	0.826	0.894	0.800	0.818
FMO4	0.837	0.885	0.830	0.837
FMO5	0.848	0.900	0.851	0.862
FMO6	0.826	0.886	0.802	0.834
FMO7	0.827	0.875	0.797	0.826
IB1	0.808	0.804	0.864	0.811
IB2	0.822	0.814	0.886	0.830
IB3	0.844	0.829	0.889	0.836
IB4	0.825	0.812	0.873	0.817
IB5	0.819	0.809	0.893	0.822
IB6	0.811	0.792	0.879	0.822
IB7	0.802	0.810	0.876	0.813
IB8	0.823	0.814	0.886	0.831
IB9	0.814	0.821	0.887	0.824
IB10	0.823	0.793	0.856	0.828
IB11	0.834	0.805	0.889	0.830
IB12	0.809	0.818	0.878	0.836
IB13	0.786	0.788	0.836	0.809
IB14	0.828	0.812	0.882	0.828
VA1	0.851	0.864	0.836	0.876
VA2	0.835	0.827	0.808	0.859
VA3	0.840	0.841	0.834	0.873
VA4	0.828	0.843	0.830	0.887
VA5	0.803	0.820	0.815	0.854
VA6	0.797	0.814	0.796	0.870
VA7	0.805	0.822	0.799	0.869
VA8	0.821	0.823	0.818	0.888
VA9	0.807	0.817	0.819	0.875
VA10	0.795	0.806	0.818	0.873
VA11	0.809	0.801	0.813	0.871
VA12	0.784	0.797	0.814	0.872
VA13	0.804	0.808	0.814	0.878

VA14	0.823	0.826	0.831	0.878
VA15	0.821	0.810	0.847	0.877
VA16	0.831	0.801	0.823	0.870
VA17	0.830	0.817	0.847	0.883

Table 3 demonstrates good discriminant validity for all constructs: Emotional Appeal, FOMO, Impulsive Buying, and Visual Appeal. Each indicator shows a higher loading value on its associated construct compared to others. For instance, indicators under Emotional Appeal (EA1-EA12) load more strongly on Emotional Appeal than on FOMO, Impulsive Buying, or Visual Appeal. The same pattern is observed for FOMO (FMO1-FMO7), Impulsive Buying (IB1-IB14), and Visual Appeal (VA1-VA17), where each indicator loads highest on its own construct. This confirms that all indicators are valid and distinct in measuring their respective constructs.

Table 4. Fornell Lacker

	Emotional Appeal	FOMO	Impulsive Buying	Visual Appeal
Emotional Appeal	0.872			
FOMO	0.938	0.888		
Impulsive Buying	0.933	0.922	0.877	
Visual Appeal	0.935	0.939	0.940	0.874

Table 4 shows the Fornell-Larcker criterion results, which are used to assess discriminant validity in a measurement model. According to this criterion, a construct should have a higher square root of its AVE, represented by the diagonal values, than its correlations with other constructs, represented by the off-diagonal values. In this table, the square root of AVE for Emotional Appeal (0.872), FOMO (0.888), Impulsive Buying (0.877), and Visual Appeal (0.874) all exceed the threshold of 0.5, indicating good internal consistency. However, the correlations between constructs are notably high. For example, the correlation between Visual Appeal and Impulsive Buying is 0.940, which is higher than the square root of AVE for either construct. Similar patterns are seen across other constructs, where correlation values are close to or even higher than their respective diagonal values. This suggests that while the constructs are internally valid, their discriminant validity may be compromised, indicating potential overlap or similarity between the measured constructs.

Table 5. Reliability test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Minimum Requirement	Result
Emotional Appeal	0.971	0.974	> 0.7	Reliable
FOMO	0.955	0.963		
Impulsive Buying	0.977	0.979		
Visual Appeal	0.981	0.982		

Table 5 presents the results of the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability for four variables: Emotional Appeal, FOMO, Impulsive Buying, and Visual Appeal. The minimum requirement for both reliability measures is a value greater than 0.7. All variables exceed this threshold, indicating strong internal consistency. Emotional Appeal has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.971 and a Composite Reliability of 0.974. FOMO scores 0.955 and 0.963, Impulsive Buying scores 0.977 and 0.979, while Visual Appeal has the highest scores at 0.981 and 0.982, respectively. These results confirm that all measurement items are reliable in assessing their respective constructs.

Table 6. Inner Model

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Predictive Relevance (Q-Square)
Impulsive Buying	0.909	0.908	Q ² = 0.983
Visual Appeal	0.906	0.905	
Goodness of Fit Model			
	Saturated Model		Estimated Model
SRMR	0.025		0.025
d ULS	0.771		0.771
d G	1.503		1.503
Chi-Square	2986.956		2986.956
NFI	0.888		0.888

As shown in Table 6, the model demonstrates strong explanatory and predictive power. The R² value for impulsive buying is 0.909, while the R² for visual appeal is 0.906. These values indicate that over 90% of the variation in both impulsive buying and visual appeal can be explained by the variables included in the model. This suggests that emotional appeal and FOMO, along with visual appeal as a mediating factor, play a significant role in shaping consumer behavior in the context studied.

The model's predictive strength is further supported by a Q² value of 0.983, which exceeds the commonly accepted threshold and indicates excellent predictive relevance. This means the model performs well not only in explaining existing data but also in predicting future outcomes—an important feature for applying the findings beyond the sample studied.

In terms of model fit, the SRMR value is 0.025, which is well below the recommended cut-off of 0.08, showing that the model closely matches the observed data. The NFI value of 0.888 also suggests that the model fits the data well, approaching the ideal benchmark of 0.90.

Altogether, these results indicate that the model is statistically sound and reliable. It provides a solid foundation for understanding how emotional factors and visual strategies influence impulsive buying, particularly in digital marketing contexts like TikTok flash sales.

Table 7. Hypothesis Result

Hypothesis	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Result
H1	0.352	0.351	0.064	5.504	0.000	Accepted
H2	0.455	0.453	0.066	6.892	0.000	
H3	0.158	0.157	0.076	2.062	0.004	
H4	0.511	0.514	0.065	7.840	0.000	
H5	0.463	0.464	0.066	7.049	0.000	
H6	0.211	0.210	0.040	5.236	0.000	
H7	0.237	0.239	0.048	4.962	0.000	

Table 7 presents the results of hypothesis testing for the structural model. All seven hypotheses (H1-H7) were statistically supported, as indicated by p-values below 0.005. Specifically, emotional appeal was found to significantly influence both impulsive buying (H1: $\beta = 0.352$, $t = 5.504$, $p = 0.000$) and visual appeal (H2: $\beta = 0.455$, $t = 6.892$, $p = 0.000$). FOMO also had a significant impact on impulsive buying (H3: $\beta = 0.158$, $t = 2.062$, $p = 0.004$) and visual appeal (H4: $\beta = 0.511$, $t = 7.840$, $p = 0.000$). Furthermore, visual

appeal significantly affected impulsive buying ($H5: \beta = 0.463, t = 7.049, p = 0.000$). The mediating effects were also confirmed, with visual appeal mediating the relationship between emotional appeal and impulsive buying ($H6: \beta = 0.211, t = 5.236, p = 0.000$), as well as between FOMO and impulsive buying ($H7: \beta = 0.237, t = 4.962, p = 0.000$). These results indicate that all proposed relationships in the model are significant and accepted, providing strong support for the conceptual framework.

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Emotional Appeal on Impulsive Buying

In the hypothesis test that has been carried out, the t-statistic obtained is $5.504 > 1.96$ and p-values $0.000 < 0.005$, so $H1$ is accepted. The direction of the relationship between emotional appeal and impulsive buying is positive and significant. So, it can be stated that the more emotional appeal increases, the more impulsive buying will follow. Emotions play an important role in unplanned purchasing decisions. When the emotional appeal of a product or service increases, the likelihood of consumers making impulse purchases will also increase. Skintific uses emotional appeal as one of its marketing strategies. The marketing strategy carried out by Skintific is to use the experience of customers who have used Skintific products. This can encourage consumers to buy Skintific products.

According to research conducted by [Destari et al. \(2020\)](#), emotional appeal has a positive and significant effect on impulse buying. The higher the emotional appeal of consumers, the higher the impulse buying. This means that consumers who decide to make purchases at Lazada are driven by the offer of branded goods, so that consumers are interested in buying the goods offered by Lazada.

The Effect of Emotional Appeal on Visual Appeal

The results of the hypothesis test indicate a t-statistic of 6.892 and a p-value of 0.000, both of which meet the threshold for statistical significance ($p < 0.005$). These results support $H2$, affirming that emotional appeal has a significant and positive influence on visual appeal in the context of TikTok flash sales for Skintific skincare products.

This finding suggests that emotional cues play a critical role in enhancing the perceived visual attractiveness of a product. Emotional appeal—often conveyed through personal testimonials, empathetic narratives, or sentiment-driven messaging—can significantly shape consumers' perceptions of a brand's visual elements. When consumers emotionally connect with a brand, they are more likely to perceive its visual presentation (such as product packaging, branding, or promotional content) as aesthetically pleasing or compelling.

In Skintific's case, emotional appeal is strategically embedded within its marketing initiatives, particularly through authentic user testimonials, influencer endorsements, and emotionally resonant narratives that emphasize self-care and skin confidence. These elements not only evoke positive emotional responses but also enhance how the brand's visual content is interpreted and valued by consumers.

This aligns with previous research, which posits that emotional responses can influence perceptual judgments, including visual evaluations ([Bhandari et al., 2019](#)). Emotions act as a filter through which visual stimuli are processed, and a positive emotional state can amplify aesthetic appreciation. Consequently, the synergistic relationship between emotional appeal and visual appeal becomes a critical factor in shaping consumer behavior, especially in fast-paced, visually saturated digital environments such as TikTok.

Thus, the empirical evidence from this study underscores the importance of integrating emotional and visual strategies in digital marketing, for brands targeting impulse-driven platforms, enhancing emotional engagement may be an effective pathway to elevate the visual appeal of promotional content, thereby increasing its persuasive impact and potential to drive consumer action.

The Effect of FOMO on Impulsive Buying

In the hypothesis test that has been carried out, the t-statistic obtained is $2.062 > 1.96$ and p-values $0.000 < 0.004$, so H3 is confirmed. The direction of the relationship between FOMO and impulsive buying is positive and significant. So, it can be stated that increasing FOMO will lead to an increase in impulsive buying. Fomo often encourages individuals to buy something so as not to feel left behind or miss opportunities. The higher the FOMO on an experience or product, the more likely consumers are to make unplanned purchases. Skintific utilizes FOMO in its marketing strategy by collaborating with influencers so that influencer followers are encouraged to buy Skintific products that have been reviewed by influencers.

According to research conducted by [Muharam et al. \(2023\)](#), FOMO has a major effect on the impulsive buying of Semarang City students at TikTok-Shop. Based on these findings, students in Semarang City often make impulsive purchases on TikTok Shop. People who are FOMO, or afraid of missing out on trends and missing out on other people's previous experiences, are more likely to make impulsive purchases.

The Effect of FOMO on Visual Appeal

The hypothesis testing results indicate a t-statistic of 7.840, which exceeds the critical value of 1.96, and a p-value of 0.000, which is well below the significance threshold of 0.005. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 (H4) is supported, confirming that FOMO has a positive and significant effect on visual appeal. This suggests that as consumers experience higher levels of FOMO, their perception of the visual appeal of a product or promotional content also increases.

This finding reflects the psychological mechanism by which FOMO enhances the effectiveness of visual stimuli in marketing contexts. In digital commerce environments, particularly on platforms like TikTok, FOMO is often triggered by time-limited offers, social proof, or perceived exclusivity, all of which are frequently reinforced through strategic visual design. When consumers feel an urgent need to participate in a trending purchase or avoid missing out on limited deals, their attention becomes more acutely focused on visually appealing cues that signal value, popularity, and immediacy.

In the case of Skintific, FOMO is strategically amplified through a number of visually driven tactics. These include the use of countdown timers during flash sales, visually prominent promotional banners indicating limited-time discounts, and the display of popular or fast-selling products. Such visual elements not only capture user attention but also reinforce a psychological urgency that compels quicker decision-making. The visual representation of scarcity, such as labels like "almost sold out" or "limited stock," further enhances the perception of desirability through social and temporal pressure.

Moreover, the connection between FOMO and visual appeal aligns with prior studies in consumer behavior and digital marketing, which emphasize that emotional triggers like FOMO heighten cognitive engagement with marketing content, especially when it is visually rich ([Hodkinson, 2019](#)). This cognitive engagement increases the likelihood that consumers will perceive the visual aspects of a product or advertisement as more attractive or persuasive.

Therefore, the empirical evidence supports the conclusion that FOMO can act as a catalyst for heightened visual appeal. For marketers and digital brands, this underscores the importance of synchronizing FOMO-driven messaging with compelling visual design to effectively capture and convert consumer attention in high-stakes, time-sensitive promotional contexts.

The Effect of Visual Appeal on Impulsive Buying

In the hypothesis test that has been carried out, the t-statistic obtained is $7.049 > 1.96$ and p-values $0.000 < 0.005$, so H5 is accepted. The direction of the relationship between visual appeal and impulsive buying is positive and significant. So, it can be stated that the increase in visual appeal will be followed by an increase in impulsive buying. An attractive and aesthetic design can attract consumer attention and trigger the desire to buy. Skintific creates an attractive visual appearance, such as the use of colors that are easily recognizable by its consumers. In addition, the promotional content on Skintific's social media is also of high quality, so that it can increase product attractiveness and encourage impulse purchases.

Based on the results of research conducted by [Belliza and Kusumawati \(2024\)](#), it is stated that visual appearance is very important because it is the first impression on e-commerce platforms for consumers before determining purchasing decisions. Consumers tend to feel visual appeal early, and these perceptions will influence their perceptions of other attributes of activities on e-commerce application services. The visual appeal of e-commerce apps helps consumers effectively search, browse, and evaluate the products they want and need. The visual aesthetics associated with an app can increase the perceived value of consumers' online shopping. Meanwhile, previous research has shown that visual appeal has an indirect influence on online impulse purchases ([Yang et al., 2021](#)). Thus, visual appeal has an important role to play in enhancing the overall appearance of an app.

The Mediating Role of Visual Appeal

In the hypothesis tests that have been conducted, the t-statistics of 5.236 and 4.962 (both > 1.96) and p-values of 0.000 (< 0.005) indicate that both H6 and H7 are statistically supported. These results confirm that visual appeal significantly mediates the relationships between emotional appeal and impulsive buying (H6), as well as between FOMO and impulsive buying (H7). This means that the impact of emotional triggers and fear-driven urgency on consumer behavior is amplified when accompanied by strong visual stimuli.

The positive and significant mediating effect of visual appeal suggests that consumers are more likely to act on emotional impulses or FOMO when these feelings are reinforced by visually engaging content. For example, emotionally resonant content, such as heartfelt customer testimonials, aspirational imagery, or storytelling in advertisements, can increase the emotional appeal of a brand. When these emotional messages are packaged within a visually attractive format, such as aesthetic product photography, well-curated TikTok videos, or clean interface design, the consumer's likelihood of making a spontaneous purchase increases.

Similarly, the FOMO effect becomes stronger when paired with visual elements that emphasize scarcity or urgency. In Skintific's case, strategies like countdown timers, limited-time promotional banners, and influencer collaborations that show trending product usage contribute to the consumer's perception of exclusivity and immediacy. These visual cues not only support the emotional intensity of FOMO but also serve as a

tangible representation of time-limited opportunities, thereby reinforcing the consumer's impulsive response.

These findings emphasize the interactive nature of psychological and perceptual stimuli in digital marketing. Rather than acting in isolation, emotional and cognitive drivers (like emotional appeal and FOMO) work synergistically with sensory elements (like visual appeal) to influence decision-making processes. This aligns with dual-process theories in consumer psychology, which suggest that consumers use both affective (emotional) and heuristic (visual and experiential) cues when making rapid purchasing decisions (Yao & Shao, 2021).

From a managerial perspective, this means that emotional and urgency-based marketing campaigns are most effective when delivered through visually compelling and contextually relevant formats. Brands like Skintific can optimize their digital marketing performance by integrating visual strategies that enhance emotional storytelling and create a stronger sense of social and temporal pressure.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the influence of emotional appeal and FOMO on impulsive buying behavior during TikTok flash sales of Skintific skincare products in Indonesia, with visual appeal serving as a mediating variable. The objective was to understand how emotional and psychological factors, combined with visual presentation, shape impulsive consumer behavior in the digital retail environment.

Based on the research findings and detailed analysis, it can be concluded that all proposed hypotheses (H1-H7) were statistically supported. Emotional appeal and FOMO both demonstrated a significant and positive influence on impulsive buying and visual appeal. Visual appeal, in turn, had a strong and direct effect on impulsive buying. These results confirm the powerful role of both emotional triggers and visual aesthetics in influencing consumer purchasing behavior, particularly in fast-paced digital sales events such as TikTok flash sales.

Moreover, visual appeal was shown to mediate the relationships between emotional appeal and FOMO toward impulsive buying. This suggests that the emotional resonance and urgency created by marketing efforts are amplified when paired with visually engaging content, ultimately increasing the likelihood of unplanned purchases.

For practical application, it is recommended that Skintific enhance emotionally driven campaigns using authentic customer testimonials and emotionally resonant storytelling. The company should also refine visual strategies by optimizing the use of color, layout, and limited-time visual cues to enhance consumer appeal without causing excessive pressure. Incentives like flash discounts or loyalty rewards can further boost impulsive responses.

Future studies are encouraged to replicate this research in other product categories or platforms, incorporate new moderating or mediating variables, and utilize broader, more diverse samples to enhance generalizability and theoretical development.

LIMITATION

This study is limited by its use of purposive sampling among Indonesian TikTok consumers, restricting generalizability. The cross-sectional design limits causal interpretations, and the use of self-reported questionnaires may introduce bias. Additionally, the study only focuses on specific variables, excluding other potential

influencing factors such as brand loyalty or peer influence. Future research should consider longitudinal approaches, broader samples, and additional variables.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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