

## The Art of Selling: Examining the Visual Aesthetic, Storytelling, and Impulsive Buying Decisions

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Article Information	Abstract
Article History: Received: February 2024 Accepted: March 2024 Published: March 2024	This research examined the visual aesthetic, storytelling, and impulsive buying decisions of home décor products on Instagram. This research uses quantitative analysis with statistical tests. Data analysis using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach is a statistical method used to test cause-and-effect relationships between variables in a model. The statistical tool used is SmartPLS; it provides various statistics to evaluate model fit. The sample size was conducted on 100 Indonesian Instagram user accounts who had at least once purchased a product after viewing Instagram content related to home decoration using the link linked to the Instagram account. The results of studies presented that visual aesthetics have a significant influence on impulse buying behavior. In contrast, storytelling does not have a similar impact. Attractive visual aesthetics can increase consumers' tendency to make impulse purchases. On the other hand, a second study suggests that while storytelling may be compelling in building emotional connections with consumers, its lack of ability to create sufficient positive impressions may not be enough to encourage impulse buying.
Keywords: visual aesthetic, storytelling, impulsive buying, home décor product	
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### INTRODUCTION

Today's dynamic marketplace, the realm of consumerism is characterized by a plethora of choices and a constant barrage of visual stimuli. The success of any product or service often hinges not only on its inherent utility but on the artful orchestration of persuasive elements that stimulate the consumer's senses and emotions. In modern marketing, people are dominated by digital media and increasingly fierce competition. Instagram is a highly sought-after social media platform for selling products and building brand associations. Instagram is designed for sharing photos and videos which makes it a very effective platform for visually showcasing products. Cited from Hootsuite, the average Instagram Business account posts 1.55 posts on the main feed per day. 41.7% of business account main feed posts are photos. That's the most common type of post, but videos make up 38.2% of main feed posts for business accounts, while 20% of business posts are carousel posts. Instagram has a shopping feature that allows businesses to tag products in their posts. This makes it easier for users to discover and purchase products directly through the platform. Instagram also provides powerful tools for targeting ads to reach the right audience based on interests, behaviour, and demographics, thereby increasing the likelihood of conversion. Based on data from Napoleon Cat, there are 106.72 million Instagram users in Indonesia as of February 2023. This number has increased by 12.9%

compared to the previous month which was 94.54 million users. Narrowed that many business owners in Indonesia use the Instagram platform as their marketing media.

Amid intense competition and the large number of advertisements on the Instagram platform, companies need to display visuals that are as attractive as possible for consumers. Visual aesthetics create a halo effect and enhance a product's quality and symbolic meaning (Alcaraz et al., 2022). Consumer engagement with a product or brand is often triggered by visual stimuli. These stimuli include elements such as packaging design, store layout, advertising graphics, and visual content on digital platforms. When consumers are exposed to an appealing visual aesthetic, it can trigger a strong emotional response and influence their decision to purchase. Using an effective visual strategy is crucial for brand posts to hold consumers' attention long enough for users to absorb the content (Kusumasondjaja, 2020).

Visual aesthetics has become key in attracting consumers' attention and influencing their purchasing behaviour. For the visual perception of the store page, the overall aesthetics are an important issue, in particular, so that the products are visible and easily perceivable by the customer (Sulikowski et al., 2022). The importance of aesthetics visual content has been escalated, organizations could have an opportunity to use design features such as images and videos to improve their interaction with users (Nia & Shokouhyar, 2020). Moreover, aesthetics involves a cognitive process whereby a viewer clarifies, intensifies, and interprets events in a visual environment (Cai & Xu, 2011).

Visual backgrounds with narration can be a very effective tool for conveying complex information or a story to an audience in a way that is engaging and easy to understand. Storytelling is essential in Instagram ads to capture audience attention, build emotional connections, and increase engagement. By conveying a brand's message or values through a compelling story, Instagram ads can encourage audiences to take a specific action, such as purchasing a product or using a service. Storytelling is regarded as an effective advertising format to deliver messages and promote communication, a narrative form in a message is more easily conveyed than an informational form (Kang et al., 2020). Storytelling emerges as an alternative to other ad formats to overcome the challenges of capturing attention and generating digital engagement with video advertising, it allows for interactions between marketers and even net celebrities and consumers (Coker et al., 2021).

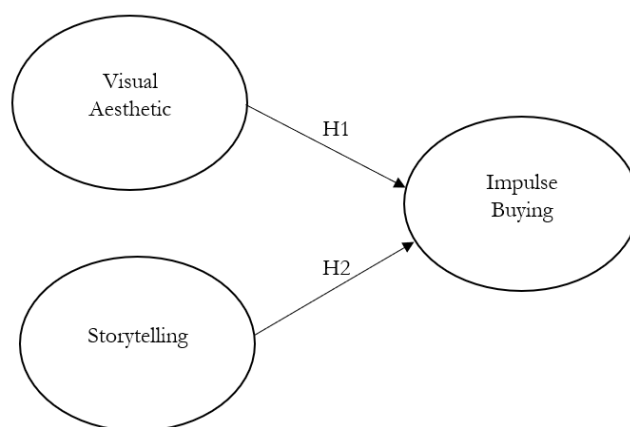
The importance of storytelling for impulse buyers can be seen in its ability to create strong emotional bonds with consumers. Stories told well through digital media can evoke a variety of emotions such as excitement, desire, or admiration, which directly influence their purchasing decisions. Over time, with the rise of digital platforms, brand narratives became multidimensional, interactive, and increasingly tailored to individual consumer experiences, stories as invaluable assets in capturing attention, conveying values, and engendering loyalty (Hu, 2023). Storytelling constitutes a promising tool in destination brand communication. storytelling contents are better understood, it helps brands to be considered real, relevant, and personal, which further positively impacts consumer-brand relationship (Pachucki et al., 2022). If a company could understand the story their customers were living in relationship to their brand, they could invite customers into a story. By positioning the company as the guide in the customer story, they could more easily speak to customer needs (Peterson., 2019).

Furthermore, changes in modern lifestyles, including urbanization trends and increased mobility, have triggered consumer purchasing behaviour that is not limited to consumer products. Modern lifestyle causes people to pay attention to their living environment. Today's society cares about interior design or home decoration that is pleasing and functional. People want to create comfortable, inviting home spaces to suit busier, more urban lifestyles. Social media and the internet have played an important role in popularizing home decor. People can easily seek inspiration and design ideas from platforms like Instagram. This has created a greater demand for home decor products that suit modern trends and lifestyles. However, consumer feel pressure to own a home that portrays style and a sense of design. The rarity of home decor items is considered important to consumers with a high need for uniqueness (Bickle et al., 2006). Moreover uniqueness, visual aesthetics as a product attribute is more than simply the creation of pleasing product shapes and styles, it can be viewed as a communicator of the firm's quality image and product integrity (Yamamoto & Lambert, 1994). Companies providing home decor products certainly compete to create various products, apart from being unique but also having to be aesthetic, the way they sell them must also be attractive.

This research will explore visual aesthetics and storytelling has a significant impact on impulse buying. In addition, we will also discuss the practical implications of this research in the context of marketing and sales strategy to understand and utilize the power of visual aesthetics in influencing impulsive consumer behaviour. In conclusion, the art of selling aims to contribute to the evolving discourse on consumer behaviour and marketing strategies. By scrutinizing the visual aesthetic, storytelling elements, and the psychology of impulsive buying decisions, this research seeks to offer valuable insights that can empower businesses to craft more effective and resonant strategies in an ever-evolving marketplace.

Based on the explanation of this background, the hypothesis model is figured out as follows:

**Figure 1: Hypothesis Model**



**The Relation of Visual Aesthetic and impulse buying**

However, the role of visual aesthetics is more pronounced for impulse buyers. Impulsive buyers tend to make purchasing decisions without careful consideration and are often influenced by emotional and impulsive factors. In this context, visual

aesthetics can be a key trigger that triggers purchasing impulses. As consumers navigate an increasingly visual and interconnected world, the impact of aesthetics on purchasing behaviour has become a focal point of interest for marketers and researchers alike. The visual appeal of a product or the overall design of a brand can captivate and engage consumers, influencing their perceptions and creating a lasting impression. This research seeks to unravel the nuances of visual aesthetics in the context of sales, exploring how visual elements contribute to shaping consumer preferences and purchasing decisions. Previous research has been predicted that aesthetics is significantly associated with the preference for online purchases (Anindita & Perdana, 2022; Himawari et al., 2018; Le, 2018)

**H1 : Visual Aesthetic has significant and positive relationship on impulse buying.**

### **The Relation of Storytelling and impulse buying**

Powerful stories often evoke emotions in audiences. When audiences feel emotionally connected to a story, they are more prone to impulse buying. Effective storytelling can strengthen brand associations with positive values or experiences desired by the audience. When audiences feel connected to the story, they are more likely to be influenced to make impulse purchases from brands associated with the story. It focuses on making the customers experience commitment, and the customers would relate their own stories to the brand through that experience (Chae et al., 2021). Creative advertisements employ unique ideas and storytelling techniques to stand out and influence impulsive buying decisions (Feng et al., 2023). The phenomenon of impulsive buying adds an intriguing dimension to the equation, as spontaneous purchases often defy rational decision-making models. By examining the psychological triggers that lead to impulsive buying, this research endeavours to shed light on the underlying mechanisms at play. Understanding the relationship between visual aesthetics, storytelling, and impulsive buying decisions is pivotal for businesses seeking to navigate the competitive landscape and establish a compelling brand presence.

**H2 : Storytelling has significant and positive relationship on impulse buying.**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research aims to understand the relationship between visual aesthetics and storytelling on impulse buying of home decoration products in content shared by Instagram users. This study uses a quantitative approach to test the relation among variables. There are independent variables proxied by visual aesthetics and storytelling, then dependent variable is proxied by impulse buying.

The object of this research is Indonesia's Instagram user accounts. The number of populations is infinite, the sampling technique uses purposive sampling with some criteria: (1) Instagram user accounts who view home-decor content #homedecorindonesia; (2) at least once purchased a product after viewing Instagram content related to home decoration using the link attached to the Instagram account. The sample size is determined by the Lemeshow formula:  $n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot xp(1-p)}{d^2}$ , z score is level confident 95% = 1,96; p score is maximum estimation = 0,5; d score is alpha or sampling error = 10%. Based on the formula is obtained 96 samples, it rounded to 100 samples. Data was collected by distributing questionnaires to respondents who

met the criteria. The questionnaire contains indicator statements measured using a Likert scale of 1 to 5, meaning strongly disagree to agree completely.

Data analysis using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach is a statistical method used to test cause-and-effect relationships between variables in a model. SEM can be used to study the relationships among latent constructs that are indicated by multiple measures (Lei & Wu, 2007). The type of SEM used is confirmatory analysis. This tests previously proposed theoretical models based on specific hypotheses about cause-and-effect relationships between variables. This research has a clear hypothesis and aims to test the suitability between the theoretical model and the data obtained.

The statistical tool used is SmartPLS; it provides various statistics to evaluate model fit. PLS represents a causal–predictive approach to SEM that emphasizes prediction in estimating models, whose structures are designed to provide causal explanations. PLS-SEM is also useful for confirming measurement models (Hair et al., 2021). The results shown are Bootstrap, which is the method used to obtain confidence intervals for path coefficients and test the statistical significance of these coefficients. PLS is a more flexible method that tolerates violations of normality assumptions and small samples. The use of valid and reliable measurement instruments is important to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. Control measures are also implemented to reduce bias and ensure reliable research results.

**Table 1: Research Construct**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Operasionalization</b>	<b>Code</b>
Visual Aesthetic (Moshagen & Thielsch, 2010)	I feel that the visuals in the video content seem simple, which makes it easier to understand the message or information	Q1
	I feel that the visuals in video content are designed to attract attention and be easy to enjoy	Q2
	I feel that the visuals in video content cover a variety of concepts, styles, and aesthetics	Q3
	I feel that video content presents diverse stories and narratives	Q4
	I feel that the video content has color harmony, contrast, and effects that are in harmony and create an interesting visual effect	Q5
	Use color in video content according to the message or mood you want to convey	Q6
	I see that the visuals in the video content have quality details and are done professionally	Q7
	I see that the visuals in video content are unique and creative	Q8
Storytelling (Atiq et al., 2022)	The narrative in the video content makes me interested and remember the message in the video content.	Q9
	Narrative in content contains a structured sequence of events or message flow.	Q10
	The narrative in video content makes me feel connected (relate) to personal experiences.	Q11

	I feel that the narrative in the video content suits the interests and needs of the target audience.	Q12
	After watching the video content, I have a positive overall impression of the narrative conveyed	Q13
Impulse Buying (Verplanken & Herabadi, 2001)	After seeing the video content, I was spontaneously interested in purchasing the product mentioned.	Q14
	After viewing video content, I often buy the products mentioned without thinking.	Q15
	After viewing video content, I often purchase products depending on how I feel.	Q16
	When I see a product with a limited offer (promo) in video content, I want to buy it immediately.	Q17

Source: Data Processed

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research was conducted by distributing questionnaire to the respondent. Based on data collected, it revealed respondent identity is described in table 2. Most respondents are women 67.7%, the age range of respondents is 26-35 years, frequency of using intagram 2-5 hours a day, 51.6% most watch tutorial video, and 9.7% most want storage product.

**Table 2: Respondent Description**

Description	Result
Gender	67.7% Female 32.3% Male
Age	58.1% 26-35 years old 29% 19-25 years old 12.9% 36-45 years old
Domisili	29% Depok 25.8% Tangerang 16.1% DKI Jakarta 16.1% Bogor 12.9% Bekasi
Frequency of using Instgram	64.5% 2-5 hours a day 22.6% > 5 hours a day 12.9% < 1 hours a day
Content most watch	51.6% Tutorial 38.7% Inspiration 9.7% Review
Product most wanted	9.7% Storage 6.5% Wall Decor

Source: Data Processed, Researcher (2024)

### Validity and Reliability Test

The validity test can be seen through convergent and discriminant validity, which measures the extent to construct variable in the model has a strong relationship with the indicator. Convergent validity is evaluated by looking at the significance and

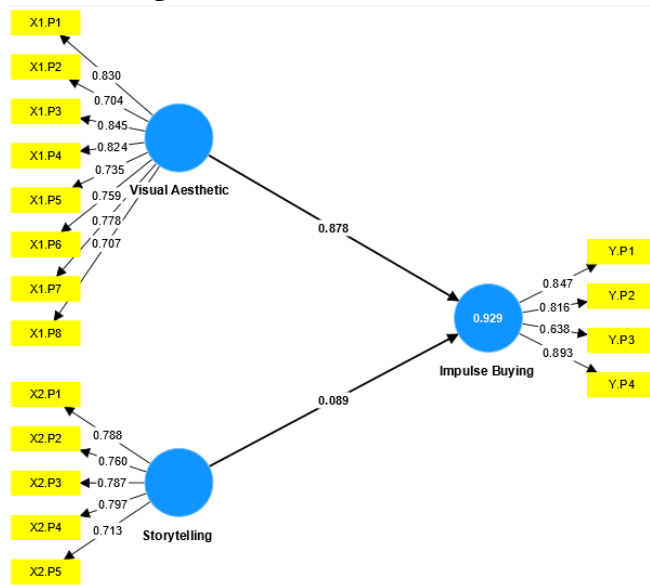
strength of the factor loading coefficient between the indicator and construct. It can also be seen from the Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. A high CR value and AVE indicate that the construct significantly contributes to the indicator. The loading factors values must be greater than 0.5. Based on the statistical test, all the indicators are valid to reflect the variable. Cronbach's alpha values over 0.7 are generally considered reliable. The criteria value for the suitability of composite reliability is greater than 0.70. AVE is more than 0.5, convergent validity is satisfactory (Kamranfar et al., 2023). In using SmartPLS, Henseler et al.,(2015) suggests measuring discriminant validity using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). If the HTMT value is below 0.90, discriminant validity has been established between two reflectively measured constructs. The results of the reliability test, all indicators are deemed reliable for forming a construct variable.

**Table 3: Validity and Reliability Test**

Construct	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	HTMT
Visual Aesthetic	Q1	0.825	0.035	0.830	0.904	0.907	0.600	0.774
	Q2	0.702	0.036	0.704				
	Q3	0.840	0.036	0.845				
	Q4	0.821	0.035	0.824				
	Q5	0.733	0.034	0.735				
	Q6	0.759	0.026	0.759				
	Q7	0.772	0.046	0.778				
	Q8	0.703	0.043	0.707				
Storytelling	Q9	0.790	0.018	0.788	0.829	0.835	0.593	0.770
	Q10	0.754	0.051	0.760				
	Q11	0.782	0.043	0.787				
	Q12	0.796	0.030	0.797				
	Q13	0.703	0.059	0.713				
Impulse Buying	Q14	0.848	0.018	0.847	0.811	0.816	0.647	0.804
	Q15	0.813	0.036	0.816				
	Q16	0.630	0.060	0.638				
	Q17	0.892	0.019	0.893				

Source: Data Processed, Researcher (2024)

**Figure 2: Inner Model Test**



Source: Data Processed, Researcher (2024)

**Hypothesis Testing**

The research construct was assessed by examining the R-square value to see whether the influence of the exogenous latent variable on the endogenous latent variable has a substantive influence. R Square values of 0.75, 0.50 and 0.25 can be considered substantial, moderate, and weak (Henseler et al., 2012). In this research, R-square value is 9.28 or 92,8% which means it has strong predictors. Hypothesis testing was conducted through the examination of the inner model, which aimed to measure the relationships between latent variables. A relationship between variables is deemed significant if the T-Statistic value exceeds 1.96 with a P-Value less than 0.05 (alpha level of 5%). The results of the path coefficients are presented in Table 4 present that visual aesthetic has positive and significant impact on impulse buying behaviour, it can be seen t-statistic value 8,865 more than 1.96 (P-Value lower than 0.05). Then, storytelling has positive and no significant impact on impulse buying behaviour, it can be seen t-statistic value 0.895 less than 1.96 (P-Value more than 0.05).

**Table 4: Test of Hypothesis**

Path Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Result
Visual Aesthetic → Impulse Buying	8.865	0.000	Accepted
Storytelling → Impulse Buying	0.895	0.371	Rejected

Source: Data Processed, Researcher (2024)

**Discussion**

The research concludes that visual aesthetics has a significant effect on impulse buying. The research results show that an attractive visual concept in a video significantly influences consumers' tendency to make impulse purchases. Unique and



creative visual concepts can attract attention and create a sudden desire to buy. An aesthetic video style, such as dramatic lighting, interesting compositional settings, or stunning visual effects, can increase consumer appeal and encourage them to make impulse purchases. Visual aesthetics in videos can trigger strong emotions in viewers. Research finds that when consumers are exposed to videos with an appealing visual aesthetic, they are more prone to engaging in impulse purchases due to the emotions triggered by the videos.

The research results show that visual aesthetics significantly influence impulse buying and highlight the importance of visual aspects in product marketing. This research considers various elements of visual aesthetics, such as simplicity, diversity, colourfulness, and craftsmanship, to understand their impact on consumer behaviour. The implications of the results of this research can help marketers increase sales by optimizing visual aspects in their marketing strategies, including updating online store designs, improving visual branding, or using social media to display products with attractive visual aesthetics. In line with previous research of (Anindita & Perdana, 2022), aesthetic appeal such as ads, branding, look and feel has significant influence on impulse buying. (Ariasih et al., 2023), the high-quality visual content has indirect impact on impulse buying behaviour.

This research provides a deeper understanding of how visual aesthetics can influence consumer behaviour in the context of impulse buying. These findings help marketers design more effective marketing strategies and provide a foundation for improving consumers' overall shopping experience. By optimizing visual aesthetics in online content, companies can create more compelling and engaging experiences for consumers, which in turn can increase customer loyalty and overall business growth. Thus, this research reveals the relationship between visual aesthetics and impulse buying and provides a foundation for innovation and the development of more effective marketing strategies in the future.

The results of the second study show that storytelling does not significantly influence impulse buying. This reveals that although marketing stories can influence consumers' perceptions and knowledge about products, they do not directly encourage impulse purchases. These findings highlight the importance of understanding the role and effectiveness of various marketing strategies in the context of consumer behaviour. Although storytelling can be an effective tool for building brands and creating emotional connections with consumers, the results of this study emphasize that it may not always impact impulse buying.

The research may find that storytelling does not significantly affect impulse buying due to its lack of ability to create sufficient positive impressions on consumers. While marketing stories can successfully build a compelling or emotional narrative, they may not be effective enough in producing a solid impression that drives consumers to make impulse purchases. This may be due to the need for additional factors, such as attractive promotional offers, direct incentives, or more robust emotional drives, which can trigger an impulsive response from consumers. Thus, although storytelling can be an effective tool in building brands and creating emotional connections, its lack of ability to directly influence impulse buying behaviour suggests that there is a need to seek additional, more appropriate marketing strategies. The results of this study contradict research by Ariasih et al., 2023; Feng et al., 2023, stated that storytelling influences impulse buying.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the two research results presented, the conclusion can be drawn that visual aesthetics have a significant influence on impulse buying behaviour. In contrast, storytelling does not have a similar impact. The first study highlighted the importance of visual aspects in product marketing, showing that attractive visual aesthetics can increase consumers' tendency to make impulse purchases. On the other hand, a second study suggests that while storytelling may be compelling in building emotional connections with consumers, its lack of ability to create sufficient positive impressions may not be enough to encourage impulse purchases. Therefore, the results of this research provide an in-depth look at the distinct roles of visual aesthetics and storytelling in marketing and demonstrate the need for more holistic and integrated strategies to influence consumer purchasing behavior. Based on these two research results, the implication that can be drawn is that marketing practitioners can use visual aesthetics effectively to influence consumer impulse buying behavior. Online marketing can optimize their website design, product images, and digital advertising to create engaging visual experiences. This can include using high-quality product images, intuitive layouts, and eye-catching design elements.

Additionally, awareness of the limitations of storytelling in influencing impulse purchases highlights the importance of developing diverse and integrated marketing strategies. This can include a combination of strong storytelling with direct promotions or shopping incentives that appeal to emotions to create a compelling shopping experience and encourage impulse purchases. The implications of this research reinforce the importance of a deep understanding of consumer behaviour and appropriate marketing strategies to achieve desired business goals. Therefore, the implications of this research underscore the importance of a comprehensive digital marketing strategy, which combines compelling visual aesthetic elements with strong storytelling and direct marketing tactics to maximize influence on consumer purchasing behaviour.

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