

The role of FoMO in skincare products endorsed by social media influencers in Indonesia

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the role of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) in influencing the purchase intention of skincare products in Indonesia. The type of research used is basic research. This research is quantitative research using primary data, distributed through questionnaires with $N = 178$. Target respondents who fill out the questionnaire are users of skincare products in the last 1 year. Data processing using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method with the help of SPSS and AMOS software. Results show significant positive effects: imitation of influencers on social comparison ($\beta = .485$, $p < .001$) and on materialism ($\beta = .428$, $p < .001$); social comparison on FoMO ($\beta = .570$, $p < .001$) and on materialism ($\beta = .287$, $p < .001$); FoMO on buying intention ($\beta = .601$, $p < .001$); and materialism on buying intention ($\beta = .254$, $p < .001$). These findings provide insights for skincare companies in Indonesia to utilize relevant influencers to create emotional and social appeal to increase consumer purchase intention.

Keywords: imitation of influencers, social comparison, materialism, fomo, buying intention

Introduction

With the growth of social networking platforms, interaction and communication with customers have become more important (Wang, 2021). Social media platforms are programs or websites where people can create, share, and connect with different content (Farasandy & Arafah, 2023). The proliferation of new media, particularly social media, has significantly altered the landscape of consumer behavior. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and X (Twitter) are frequently used by Generation Z and millennials today. We Are Social, one of the world's leading survey organizations, released the results of their survey on internet and social media usage globally and in Indonesia. One of the survey data released pertains to the most widely used social media platforms in Indonesia throughout 2023, where WhatsApp ranks first as the most widely used social media platform in Indonesia, followed by Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Telegram, X (Twitter), and so on. This clearly demonstrates the immense importance of social media in today's era.

In recent years, the phenomenon of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) has become one of the main factors influencing how consumers shop for a product. Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is the anxiety experienced by individuals when others are having valuable experiences, while they themselves are not. FoMO is characterized by the desire to stay connected with what others are doing (Nizam, 2024). In this context, influencers play a crucial role in fostering FoMO. Influencers can attract audiences with higher commitment and build connections with followers and customers (Shen, 2021). The use of influencers is considered capable of expanding brand reach and increasing closeness with consumers. As many as 40.5% of consumers in Indonesia show a preference for buying products that are often promoted by various influencers within a certain period of time (Wirapraja et al., 2023). Skincare labels such as Somethinc, Scarlett, and Whitelab have translated these dynamics into sizable sales by orchestrating frequent creator collaborations and platform-native content strategies (Compass, 2022).

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FoMO, materialism, and buying intention. However, behind this popularity, it is important to understand the psychological mechanisms that drive consumer purchasing interest, particularly the role of FoMO and the tendency to imitate influencers. Previous research by Dinh and Lee (2022) shows that imitation of influencers has a positive effect on social comparison, materialism, and ultimately increases buying intention, with FoMO as a key mediator. However, these findings come from a Western cultural context (the United States), which may not fully apply in Indonesia, a country with different social dynamics, collective values, and consumption patterns. A more recent Indonesian replication does not reproduce all path relationships. The Jakarta study reports that FoMO and materialism remain related to buying intention, while the links from social comparison to FoMO or materialism are weaker or not supported. This divergence highlights important contingencies tied to culture, platform ecosystems, and content formats in Indonesia (Pramudiani & Leon, 2024). These two pieces of evidence together create a clear need to clarify which links travel across contexts and which are contingent on local usage patterns.

This study examines Indonesian skincare endorsed by social media influencers, foregrounding social mechanisms over utilitarian performance beliefs. Drawing on observational learning, this study models imitation of influencers as a precursor to in-feed social comparison. We then specify FoMO and materialism as socio-psychological bridges that translate comparison into buying intention (Koay et al., 2022). The approach aligns with international evidence on influencer-led consumption dynamics (e.g., the roles of follower cues, credibility, and parasocial ties) and with Indonesian findings linking TikTok exposure and FoMO to purchase intention for beauty and mass-market products (Falajunah & Hendayani, 2024).

Three research gaps motivate the contribution of this study. The first gap concerns age-related susceptibility. A large share of social-feed consumption is driven by Generation Z and younger millennials, yet many studies treat age heterogeneity as a control rather than a core theoretical concern (The Global Statistics, 2025). Indonesian and regional evidence points to particularly high activity and purchase orientation among Gen Z in social commerce (Huwaida et al., 2024). Gen Z also reports strong engagement with short-form video and live formats that heighten immediacy and can intensify FoMO (Alfarisi & Sukaris, 2024). The literature has not sufficiently foregrounded this susceptibility when theorizing how FoMO and social comparison shape purchase intention in Indonesia (Chávez-Díaz et al., 2025).

The second gap is contextual and comparative. International findings indicate that exposure to influencers can set off a sequence that runs from social comparison to FoMO and then to higher consumption tendencies (Dinh et al., 2024). Indonesian studies show mixed patterns. Some report strong roles for social comparison and FoMO in shaping intention for local brands and products, while others find that social comparison is weak or non-significant in predicting intention in certain categories, with materialism or bandwagon motives carrying more weight (Zulkamal, 2024; Andriana & Saputro, 2024). These differences suggest platform ecosystems, social norms, and community embeddedness in Indonesia condition the strength of social pathways. The result is a contextual gap that requires a focused Indonesian test of the social model.

The third gap relates to the distinctive nature of skincare as a product class. Skincare decisions combine social signaling and self-caution (Garg & Bakshi, 2024). Consumers absorb creator routines, textures, and visible results (Parikh et al., 2025). They also weigh irritation risks, ingredient safety, and the credibility of sources. Recent work shows people place higher trust in dermatologists than influencers for skincare information (Bal et al., 2025). Indonesian studies highlight consumer awareness of hazardous ingredients and regulatory concerns (Kashuri et al., 2025). These findings indicate that skincare decisions involve identity and care at once. This duality deserves explicit attention when interpreting how social comparison, FoMO, and materialism translate into intention in Indonesia (Sudrajad & Edastama, 2025).

The present model remains anchored on social mechanisms by design, while acknowledging skincare's risk-and-care nuance as a boundary condition for interpreting effect sizes.

Against this background, the purpose of the study is to examine how imitation of influencers, social comparison, FoMO, and materialism relate to buying intention for skincare products in Indonesia. The study addresses three issues at once. It calls attention to the underexplored susceptibility of Gen Z in social-media purchase journeys. It reconciles differences between international and Indonesian findings by situating the model within local platform usage and content practices. It foregrounds the unique character of skincare as a category in which social pressure and self-caution coexist. By focusing on these gaps, the study aims to produce evidence that is locally relevant and theoretically useful. The findings can inform brand managers who plan influencer collaborations for skincare in Indonesia, and they can inform researchers who seek mid-range theory on FoMO and social comparison in mobile-first markets where creator culture is strong.

Literature Review

Imitation of Influencers is the desire of followers to improve or perfect their personal characteristics to resemble their favorite influencers (LaFerle & Chan, 2008). Consumers consider influencers as reliable sources, so they easily follow their recommendations. Social comparison is the tendency of individuals to compare themselves with others who are considered superior (Najla & Zulfiana, 2022). Social comparison works when individuals evaluate and determine their personal value based on their perception of how they measure up to others in various domains (Scully et al., 2023). Deep exposure to ideal and attractive images displayed through SNS can cause customers to experience higher social comparison. Therefore, hypothesis 1 can be formulated as follows:

H1: Imitation of influencers has a positive effect on social comparison.

Materialism is a view or orientation of life that excessively prioritizes the value and significance of material objects, wealth, and possessions as the main elements in achieving happiness or success in life (Ashikali & Dittmar, 2012). According to research by Dinh and Lee (2022), the more often consumers imitate their favorite influencers, the more important they will consider material possessions. Therefore, hypothesis 2 can be formulated as follows:

H2: Imitation of influencers has a positive effect on materialism.

FoMO is a widespread fear that other individuals may gain valuable experiences that we never have (Przybylski et al., 2013). FoMO occurs in individuals when they see, read, or learn about the actions of others and feel that they are missing out on those opportunities (Gupta & Shrivastava, 2022). People with high levels of FoMO tend to check social media on their smartphones to see what others are doing or to avoid missing out on rewarding experiences (Przybylski et al., 2013). According to research by Dinh and Lee (2022), followers' motivation to compare themselves with influencers leads followers to FoMO on products endorsed by influencers. FoMO also develops when people fail to keep up with the latest trends, causing them to be excluded from the community and left behind. Therefore, hypothesis 3 can be formulated as follows:

H3: Social comparison has a positive effect on FoMO.

Buying intention is a strong urge and tendency in individuals to purchase a product (Dinh & Lee, 2022). Consumer buying interest is always hidden within each individual, where no one can know what consumers want and expect. Therefore, this purchasing interest is often influenced by internal factors such as personal preferences and external factors such as promotions or social influence. According to research by Dinh and Lee (2022), FoMO increases customer anxiety, thereby encouraging them to make purchases. Thus, hypothesis 4 can be formulated as follows:

H4: FoMO has a positive effect on buying intention.

According to research by Dinh and Lee (2022), social comparison is the main trigger in the process of consumers imitating the materialistic lifestyles of influencers and trying to achieve them through consumption. Therefore, hypothesis 5 can be formulated as follows:

H5: Social comparison has a positive effect on materialism.

According to research by Dinh and Lee (2022), the urge to fulfill desires and the influence of imitation of the ideal image created by influencers encourage materialistic individuals to make purchases. Therefore, hypothesis 6 can be formulated as follows:

H6: Materialism has a positive effect on buying intention.

Figure 1 shows the research model used in this study.

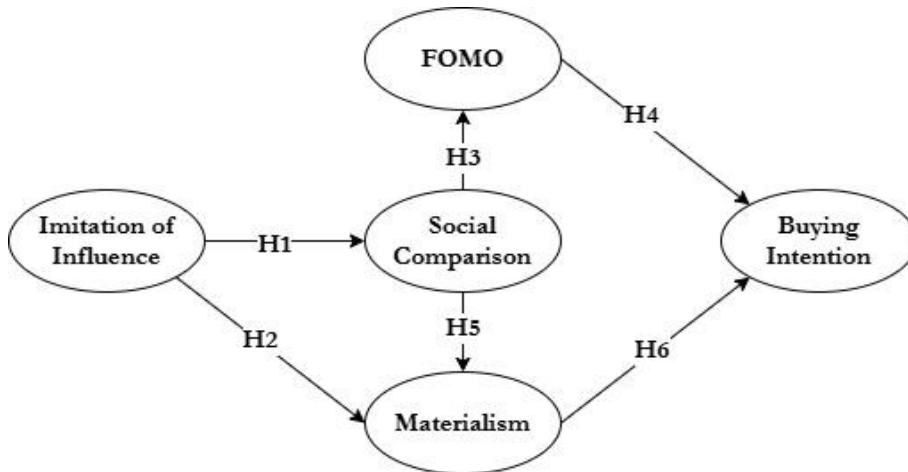


Figure 1. Research Model

Research methodology

This study is basic research with a quantitative approach and causal research type, which aims to examine the causal relationship between exogenous variables—imitation of influencers, fear of missing out (FoMO), materialism, and social comparison—and the endogenous variable of buying intention for skincare products in Indonesia.

Data were collected through questionnaires as primary data from respondents who had purchased skincare products in the past year. Before entering the core questions, respondents first answered screening and identity questions (gender, age, education, domicile, type of skincare used, and favorite influencer).

Variables were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, with scores ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with IBM SPSS Statistics 25 and AMOS software. Before SEM testing, the questionnaire was validated to ensure the validity and reliability of the indicators used.

Findings

In this study, a total of 158 respondents' data were successfully collected. Respondent demographic data are shown in Table 1. Data analysis was performed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) operated through Amos software. The measurement model was evaluated through the Goodness of Fit (GoF) model results, which referred to several predetermined criteria (see Table 2).

Table 1. Respondent Demographics (N=158)

		Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age	22	26	16.5
	24	35	22.2
	26	32	20.3
	28	43	27.2
	30	22	13.9
	<i>Total</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>100</i>
Gender	Female	79	50
	Male	79	50
	<i>Total</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>100</i>
Highest Level of Education	D4	27	17.1
	Bachelor	81	51.3
	High school or equivalent	50	31.6
	<i>Total</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>100</i>
Residence	Balikpapan	1	0.6
	Bandung	17	10.8
	Cirebon	1	0.6
	Jakarta	45	28.5
	Yogyakarta	31	19.6
	Magelang	27	17.1
	Semarang	1	0.6
	Surakarta	35	22.2

		Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
	Total	158	100
Frequency of Skincare Use	>2 times	38	24.1
	1 time	40	25.3
	2 times	80	50.6
	Total	158	100
Favorite Influencer	Abel Cantika	33	20.8
	Danisefrnc	1	0.6
	Fany Rahm	1	0.6
	Jessica Jane	1	0.6
	Jharna Bagwani	31	19.5
	Nanda Arsyinta	31	19.5
	Rachel Goddard	31	19.5
	Tasya Farasya	30	18.9
	Total	159	100
Type of Skincare	Face mask	85	17.7
	Moisturizer	74	15.4
	Face cleanser	81	16.8
	Serum	83	17.3
	Sunscreen	73	15.2
	Toner	85	17.7
	Total	481	100
	Several times a month	3	1.9

		Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Frequency of Viewing Endorsers	Several times a week	86	54.4
	Rarely	7	4.4
	Every day	62	39.2
	Total	158	100
Frequency of Purchasing Skincare Products	Rarely	4	2.5
	Sometimes	10	6.3
	Often	70	44.3
	Very often	74	46.8
	Total	158	100

Table 2. Goodness of Fit Test for CFA Measurement Model

Index	Criteria	Results	Description
CMIN/DF	CMIN/DF \leq 3.0	1.037	Good fit
RMSEA	RMSEA \leq 0.08	0.015	Good fit
GFI	GFI \geq 0.9	0.873	Marginal fit
CFI	CFI \geq 0.9	0.998	Good fit
TLI	TLI \geq 0.9	0.998	Good fit

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that the GoF model in this study has met the criteria. The CMIN/DF value in this study shows a figure of 1.037, which has met the requirements. The RMSEA value shows a value of 0.015, thus meeting the requirements. The GFI value shows a marginal fit because it is between $0.8 \leq 0.873 \leq 0.9$. The TLI value shows a figure of 0.998, thus meeting the requirements. The CFI value shows a figure of 0.998, thus meeting the requirements.

Table 3 shows the standardized loading, AVE, and CR values in the measurement model. Each variable is declared valid because the standardized loading value is ≥ 0.5 . In addition, reliability will be checked by calculating Construct Reliability (CR). The AVE value will be declared valid if the result obtained is ≥ 0.5 . Meanwhile, the CR value will be declared eligible if the result obtained is ≥ 0.7 . The AVE and CR tests in this study have met the requirements. The highest AVE is found in the materialism variable, which is 0.852. Meanwhile, the highest CR is found in the fear of missing out variable, which is

0.978. Based on Hair et al. (2014), to test validity, two requirements are used, namely a standardized loading value ≥ 0.5 and AVE ≥ 0.5 . Standardized loading aims to test the validity of each variable indicator, while the AVE value calculation is used to test the validity of the variable alone. However, if the AVE value is ≤ 0.5 , it is not a problem. This is because the standardized loading value is prioritized.

Table 3. Measurement Model Results

Variable	Item	Std. Loading	AVE	CR	Description
IM	IM1	0.916	0.847	0.943	Valid and Reliable
	IM2	0.918			
	IM3	0.927			
FOMO	FOMO1	0.929	0.847	0.978	Valid and Reliable
	FOMO2	0.906			
	FOMO3	0.940			
	FOMO4	0.907			
	FOMO5	0.914			
	FOMO6	0.930			
	FOMO7	0.919			
	FOMO8	0.916			
MA	MA1	0.917	0.852	0.966	Valid and Reliable
	MA2	0.933			
	MA3	0.928			
	MA4	0.915			
	MA5	0.922			
SC	SC1	0.923	0.842	0.977	Valid and Reliable
	SC2	0.921			

Variable	Item	Std. Loading	AVE	CR	Description
	SC3	0.912			
	SC4	0.908			
	SC5	0.908			
	SC6	0.923			
	SC7	0.925			
	SC8	0.920			
BI	BI1	0.908	0.821	0.932	Valid and Reliable
	BI2	0.915			
	BI3	0.895			

After conducting AVE and CR testing, structural model testing will then be carried out, which will then yield hypothesis testing results. The results of structural model testing in this study can be seen from the Goodness of Fit model results that have met the following requirements; (1) $CMIN/DF \leq 3$ (good fit), (2) $RMSEA \leq 0.08$ (good fit), (3) GFI, CFI, and TLI 0.8-0.9 (marginal fit) or ≥ 0.9 (good fit).

Table 4. Goodness of Fit Test for the Structural Model

Index	Criteria	Result	Description
CMIN/DF	$CMIN/DF \leq 3.0$	1.072	Good fit
RMSEA	$RMSEA \leq 0.08$	0.021	Good fit
GFI	$GFI \geq 0.9$	0.868	Marginal fit
CFI	$CFI \geq 0.9$	0.996	Good fit
TLI	$TLI \geq 0.9$	0.995	Good fit

Table 4 shows that CMIN/DF and RMSEA have met the specified requirements, namely CMIN/DF with a value of 1.072 and RMSEA with a value of 0.021. Thus, both indices have obtained results that fall into the good fit category. The GFI, CFI, and TLI values also meet the specified requirements, namely, GFI is in the marginal fit category, while CFI and TLI are in the good fit category. Next, the hypothesis testing stage will be carried out. There are two requirements for a hypothesis to be considered supported. The first requirement is that the critical ratio (C.R.) value is ≥ 1.645 and the p-

value is < 0.001 . The second requirement is that the direction of the hypothesis must be consistent with the empirical results, which can be seen through the standardized estimate.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path	Std. Estimate	C.R.	P-value	Description
H1 (+)	IM→SC	0.485	6.326	***	Hypothesis Supported
H2 (+)	IM→MA	0.428	5.375	***	Hypothesis Supported
H3 (+)	SC→FOMO	0.570	7.830	***	Hypothesis Supported
H4 (+)	FOMO→BI	0.601	8.526	***	Hypothesis Supported
H5 (+)	SC→MA	0.287	3.720	***	Hypothesis Supported
H6 (+)	MA→BI	0.254	3.883	***	Hypothesis Supported

Based on Table 5, the results of testing all hypotheses show that 6 hypotheses are supported. Hypothesis 1 in this study is supported, namely, the variable imitation of influencers (IM) on social comparison (SC). The C.R. and p-value values are 6.326 and 0.001 (**). This finding is in line with the research by Dinh and Lee (2022) and Pramudiani and Leon (2024), which states that influencers, as role models, are the main reference for comparison for consumers when interacting through social media. This finding is also in line with the research by Steijn et al. (2018), which states that consumers who follow beauty influencers on Instagram tend to compare themselves with these influencers and imitate the beauty behaviors promoted by them. Influencers are considered a means of communication capable of conveying product information to a wide network of followers, shaping, promoting, and disseminating trending products through the content they create and share. The image of influencers on social media also influences perceptions of the products and brands they support.

The results of testing hypothesis 2 in this study are supported, namely, the variable imitation of influencers (IM) on materialism (MA). The C.R. and p-value values are 5.375 and 0.001 (**), indicating that H2 is supported and significant because it complies with the criteria $|C.R.| \geq 1.96$ and $p\text{-value} \leq 0.1$. This finding is in line with the research by Dinh and Lee (2022), which states that consumers tend to compare themselves with others based on material possessions, especially in the online realm, because now many people prefer to show off their possessions on the internet. This finding is also in line with the research by Pramudiani and Leon (2024), which reveals the link between imitating influencers and materialism. This study found that consumers who follow beauty influencers on social media tend to imitate their lifestyle and buy products promoted by these influencers, even if the products do not suit the consumers' needs.

The results of testing hypothesis 3 in this study are supported, namely, the variable of social comparison (SC) on fears of missing out (FOMO). The C.R. and p-value values are 7.830 and 0.001 (**), indicating that H3 is supported and significant because it complies with the criteria $|C.R.| \geq 1.96$ and $p\text{-value} \leq 0.1$. This finding is in line with the research by Dinh and Lee (2022), which states that the desire to resemble influencers encourages consumers to compare themselves with the ideal image of

influencers, thereby triggering FOMO towards products supported and used by influencers. However, this contrasts with Pramudiani and Leon (2024), who concluded that there is no influence between social comparison and fears of missing out (FOMO).

The results of testing hypothesis 4 in this study are supported, namely, the variable fears of missing out (FOMO) on buying intention (BI). The C.R. and p-value values are 8.526 and 0.001 (**), indicating that H4 is supported and significant because it complies with the criteria $|C.R.| \geq 1.96$ and $p\text{-value} \leq 0.1$. This finding is in line with the research by Dinh and Lee (2022) and Pramudiani and Leon (2024), which states that influencers are often pioneers in introducing new trends or products that attract the attention of their consumers. Through product videos on social media platforms, influencers promote the latest products from a brand and convey their views that encourage consumer purchase intentions. This finding is also in line with the research by Good and Hyman (2020), which states that FOMO can trigger customer concerns, prompting them to make purchases.

The results of testing hypothesis 5 in this study are supported, namely, the variable of social comparison (SC) on materialism (MA). The C.R. and p-value values are 3.70 and 0.001 (**), indicating that H5 is supported and significant because it complies with the criteria $|C.R.| \geq 1.96$ and $p\text{-value} \leq 0.1$. This finding is in line with the research by Dinh and Lee (2022), which states that consumers buy products not only for functional needs but also as material symbols. The gap between the ideal life and reality triggers the desire to own material possessions. This finding is also in line with the research by Islam et al. (2018), which states that social media has become a platform for individuals to show off their possessions. This finding indicates that the more consumers compare themselves to influencers on social media, the higher their level of materialism and desire to buy skincare products.

The results of testing hypothesis 6 in this study show that the hypothesis is supported, namely that there is a positive and significant relationship between the materialism (MA) variable and buying intention (BI). The C.R. value of 3.883 and p-value of 0.001 (**) meet the statistical testing criteria, namely $|C.R.| \geq 1.96$ and $p\text{-value} \leq 0.1$. This finding is consistent with research conducted by Dinh and Lee (2022), which states that after comparing themselves with social media celebrities, materialistic tendencies increase. Social comparison with social media influencers triggers materialistic desires, which in turn influence consumer purchase intentions. Materialism has been proven to motivate customers to buy products. A similar study was conducted by Pramudiani and Leon (2024), who stated that the higher the level of materialism, the greater the intention to purchase products promoted by influencers.

Conclusions

This study replicates the model of Dinh and Lee (2022) in the context of skincare consumers in Indonesia and finds that all six hypotheses are significantly supported. These findings reinforce the relevance of the psychological model behind influencer marketing in Indonesia, while also showing that social mechanisms such as social comparison, fear of missing out, and material orientation remain strong drivers in skincare product purchasing decisions. These results provide an empirical basis for skincare companies to design influencer-based marketing strategies that trigger healthy social comparison, lifestyle aspirations, and FOMO through authentic content on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. However, this study has limitations in terms of geographical coverage and respondent characteristics, so further studies are recommended to expand the sample beyond Java and use a longitudinal approach to capture consumer behavior dynamics more comprehensively.

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