

The Follower-Influencer Experience Affecting the Intention to Follow Recommendation: PAD Perspective

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Abstract—In harnessing social media, concerns are mostly concentrated on the influencer side of social media for the followers to follow the recommendation from the influencer. However, the follower's experience is equally important as it is the follower who determines whether or not to follow the influencer's advice above all other influences. This research investigates the follower experience in deciding whether the follower will follow the influencer's advice. The emotional dimensions: Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance (PAD) is employed as a theoretical lens to portray these phenomena. 314 screened responders were collected and analysed in total using Structural Equation Modelling. The results show that the PAD significantly improves the commitment of the followers which might lead them to intention to follow the influencer's recommendation. Theoretically, this study indicates that PAD can well mediate the follower-influencer experience that might affect the intention to follow a recommendation. In practice, this study tells the influencer and the brand that knowing the experiences of the followers is equally important for a more effective impact. Limitations and future research directions are also discussed.

Keywords—Instagram, Intention to Follow, Purchase Intention, Commitment, Follower-Influencer Experience

I. INTRODUCTION

Social media is used as a platform for users to connect, communicate, and interact with each other through the internet. One of the most prominent ones with many users (more than 1 billion users and 500 million daily active users) is Instagram (IG) [1]. It is used as the most influential media marketing with a vast percentage 90% among 5000 marketing agencies, brands, and other industry professionals [2]. IG users who follow other users are called followers. The user being followed is called a social media influencer (SMI) or opinion leader (hereafter referred to as an influencer), a user who can influence followers.

The follower-influencer interaction allows the followers to see all IG's activities regularly with the influencer and interact. Consequently, the influencer can post and share content to influence the followers' opinions and behaviours [3]. The followers follow an influencer because they associate themselves with the influencer, for instance, a follower follows a particular product or criteria the influencer endorse through the IG post to catch the followers' interest. Moreover,

the influencer's personal brand is crucial for the followers to be influenced by the post [4]. It determines the trust and credibility of the influencer [5].

Notwithstanding these, once an IG user follows (follower), an influencer does not necessarily mean (s)he will follow the influencer's recommendation. This is challenging. Emotional factors might drive the followers to follow the influencer's recommendation. These factors essentially are the ones that might induce their joy and happiness as well as their dominance. A considerable amount of literature has examined the follower-influencer experience that motivates the follower to follow the advice from the influencer [6, 7]. However, most of them are focused only on parasocial interaction, which is a one-way interaction and influence from the influencer, for instance, an influencer with many followers determines the effectiveness of the brand marketing, uniqueness of the product endorsed by the influencer, personal brand of the influencer per se, etc., [5]. Very little is known about the experience from the follower's side that drives them to continue following the advice from the influencer. Understanding this is crucial as that is the follower who decides to follow advice from the influencer.

This research aims to understand how the follower-influencer experiences affect the intention to follow the influencer's recommendation. As emotion dimensions are the key factors determining the follower's intention to follow the recommendation of the follower, pleasure-arousal-dominance (PAD) is employed as a theoretical lens to portray these phenomena. The article is structured as follows: the second section describes works underpinning this research. Section 3 draws the conceptual model and the hypotheses developments. Section 4 discusses the methodology, and the data analysis is described in the next section. Sections 6 and 7 describe the discussion and implications, and the limitation and future research direction, respectively.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Social Media Influencer and Follower

Social media influencer (hereafter refers to as an influencer) in this context is defined as "online personalities with large numbers of followers, across one or more social

media platforms (e.g., YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, or personal blogs), who have an influence on their followers” [8]. Influencers are those who embrace the power of social medias to influence the perceptions of the followers to a particular product or brand [9]. They have ability to drive actions and receive people’s engagements through a post which is shared by them using their social media channels. On the other hand, individuals who purposely follow other users’ posts in their social media timeline are called the followers [10]. The followers who follow the influencer is due to the followers that associate themselves as the influencer. While the followers follow the influencer because of the certain product or criteria they endorse that caught the followers’ interests, the influencers, therefore, promote only relevant content and to a targeted audience. They both lend themselves to represent the mutual interest of each other.

B. Follower-Influencer Experience

A follower-influencer experience is created when a follower and an influencer engage [11]. This relationship becomes a component that underpins the follower’s behavioural changes. While the follow is critical in this follower-influencer relationship experience, the study intend to examine the follower purchase intention to the product the influencer promotes. It is critical for the company and influencer to keep their followers loyal for economic reasons and commercial survival. It increases the follower’s commitment and motivates them to live a better life [12]. Emotional elements of the follower are among the criteria that influence this: pleasure, arousal and dominance experienced by the follower.

These experiences are viewed by followers depending on the influencer’s postings. While information experience measures to the extent to which information posted by the influencer benefits the follower, entertainment experience is one of the intangible benefits that people hope to reap from following their favourite influencer’s content is the chance to be entertained. In addition, while the homophily experience index quantifies the degree to which an influencer’s audience has a common worldview with that audience, a follower’s level of connection with others is evaluated based on their shared experiences in interpersonal relationships [13]. If the postings produce enough pleasure, arousal, and dominance in the followers through the follower-influencer interaction, this leads to the commitment of the follower to the intention to buy product promoted by the influencer.

C. Emotional Dimensions: Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance

Emotional dimension refers to the emotional state model posited by Mehrabian and Russel [14]. As earlier described, we draw our research based on the Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance (PAD) perspective [15]. The PAD is functioned to mediate the purchase intention of the follower as a result of follower-influencer interaction because of the content promoted by the influencer in IG. According to Mehrabian and Russel [14], pleasure is a state of mind that can vary from acute pain or sadness to extreme joy or ecstasy. One’s arousal level is the measure of how excited, aware, and stimulated they are. A sense of dominance is the conviction that one can shape one’s environment rather than merely react to it. As such, it is envisaged that PAD model will be able to accurately represent people’s feelings.

The premise of the PAD model is that people’s interactions with their environments are shaped by the ways in which

various stimuli affect their three primary emotions [16]. A case in point is that applied the PAD model to the study of customer reaction to website atmospherics (e.g., task-relevant signals) and discovered that PAD modulate the effect of website atmospherics on purchase intention [17]. In others, for instance, in here [18] they employ PAD in their research and reveals that players’ emotional states have an impact on their ability to maintain focus and win games (i.e., self-reported pleasure, arousal, and dominance). Although extensive research has been carried out on employing emotional dimensions to investigate a particular user’s behaviour, no single study exists utilising the follower’s behaviour driven by the influencer’s content promotion in social media IG.

D. Follower Commitment and Purchase Intention

One of the most crucial concerns in follower-influencer experience is converting the influence into purchase commitment [19]. Commitment is defined as a key component of relationship marketing management and as a prerequisite for attaining a company’s objectives. A solid commitment foundation is required to measure the success of the influence by the influencer. Purchase commitment has a major impact on follower’s loyalty, word-of-mouth, and other marketing performance. Jang et al. [20], for example, reported that commitment had a significant influence on brand loyalty. Hur et al. [21] investigated the impact of the follower-influencer interaction effect and trust on brand community commitment, which had a favourable impact on purchase intention. In the context of follower-influencer relationship, follower’s commitment refers to the follower’s attitude to maintain the relationship with the influencer, from following the content’s update to the lifestyle through IG. Thus, it is not a surprise that this factor is the key indicator to measure the brand attitude towards the purchase intention of the product promoted by the influencer.

III. RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

This research aims at understanding determinants affecting the purchase intention of the product promoted by the influencer through IG. Interaction between both creates a follower-influencer experience which will be the driving factors for the purchase intention of the follower of the product promoted by the influencer. Our proposed research model is drawn in Figure 1.

A. Information Experience dan PAD

Information experience is an essential aspect in the pragmatic dimension of follower-influencer interaction since it can supply followers with pleasure, arousal, leading to the dominance [22].

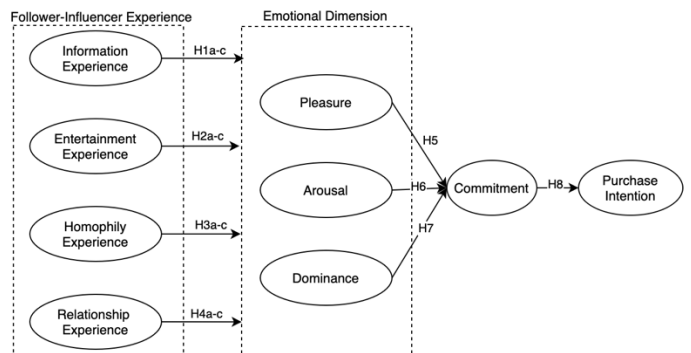


Fig. 1. Proposed research model.

This is because information is among the parts of virtual atmospheric cues that make it easy for followers to find what they are looking for throughout the interaction with the influencers. For instance, in the online tourism literature, if consumers gain information value from virtual online tourist communities, the knowledge gives consumers with experiences such as perceived utilitarian experience, which produces commitment and satisfaction. A similar idea has emerged from research on follower-influencer experience in the social media context. In their relation, the IG follower demand information that is useful, relevant, current, and distinct from mass media advertising [23]. The follower-influencer experience allows the follower to get informational support, potentially increasing their pleasure, arousal, and dominance [24]. Accordingly, we hypothesise that:

- H1a.** Information experience positively affects pleasure.
- H1b.** Information experience positively affects arousal.
- H1c.** Information experience positively affects dominance.

B. Entertainment Experience dan PAD

The value of entertainment may be characterised as an intangible reward desired by followers [25]. It refers to the methods in which people seek enjoyment and relaxation and spend their leisure time pursuing their interests. Individuals seek enjoyment in the online community setting through playing games or communicating with others. An individual's level of excitement and stimulation may be thought of as their level of pleasure. The literature defines pleasure as a sensation that can vary from acute pain to extreme delight. Entertainment experiences have a powerful impact on customer's desire for pleasure. Emotions are affected by playing electronic games, and the experience are often rewarding. Players' entertainment experiences in an online game rise to a new level when they master the game's more difficult later levels. Entertainment experience, when repeated, provide players pleasure. Thus, we hypothesise that:

- H2a.** Entertainment experience positively affects pleasure.
- H2b.** Entertainment experience positively affects arousal.
- H2c.** Entertainment experience positively affects dominance.

C. Homophily Experience and PAD

People want to form relationships with others that have similarities with them. This is the homophily principle [26]. In this research, the experience resulted from the follower-influencer relationship has fundamentally altered the communication and collaboration preferences of individuals. IG in this context is a social media platform where the follower-influencer interaction is driven by a shared sense of identity [27]. Homophily in the present research refers to the degree of similarity through the content posted by the influencer on the IG based on her/his views, values, social status, and interests [26]. Due to the fact that numerous interactions with peers in social media platform may establish emotional ties, this unique type of homogeneity is emotional connections. As such, we hypothesise that:

- H3a.** Homophily experience positively affects pleasure.
- H3b.** Homophily experience positively affects arousal.
- H3c.** Homophily experience positively affects dominance.

D. Relationship Experience and PAD

People use social media to make new connections and share information [28]. The relationship experience, especially intimate ones, impacts emotional control and depression. Two people in a social setting may influence each

other's emotions [29]. Relationships, such as lovers, friends, and family, are linked to interpersonal emotions; persons in relationships may influence one another's feelings. For instance, to conquer large hurdles in online games, players frequently play in groups and inspire one another, producing collective emotions or sensations. Follower-influencer relationship builds social capital and strengthens follower's loyalty to the influencer through the posted content. This interaction may lead to an ideal experience. In this context, we assume the following hypotheses:

- H4a.** Relationship experience positively affects pleasure.
- H4b.** Relationship experience positively affects arousal.
- H4c.** Relationship experience positively affects dominance.

E. PAD dan Commitment

As described earlier, pleasure, arousal and dominance as emotional dimensions perceived by followers in their interaction with the influencers lead to the commitment to the purchase intention. This commitment is induced by the experiences the followers feel in follower-influencer interaction. The positive emotions that are increased by the content generated by the influencer on the social media IG affect the followers' commitment that might direct them to purchase the products promoted by the influencer. Accordingly, we assume that:

- H5.** Pleasure positively affects commitment.
- H6.** Arousal positively affects commitment.
- H7.** Dominance positively affects commitment.

F. Commitment dan Purchase Intention

In social media, including IG, although a product posted by an influencer is aimed at positively influencing a follower's perception of it, the follower might easily switch to the other influencers that promote the same product [30]. Thus, to increase the intention to purchase the product promoted by the influencer, a strong commitment should be built first by the influencer and the followers that might improve their purchase intention. Wang et al. [13] posited that the loyal and committed follower to the influencer is believed to have a better relationship to increase the follower-influencer experience. As such, it is assumed that commitment influence the purchase intention of the product promoted by the influencer. We hypothesise that:

- H8.** Commitment positively affects the purchase intention.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Sample

Table 1 informs the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents that are based in Indonesia. A total of the participants is 314 IG users. However, as the targeted respondents are IG users and at least follow an influencer, these control questions screened the participants to be only 257 valid respondents.

B. Research instrument

As this is quantitative research, a questionnaire is used to collect the sample for this study, focusing on IG users in Indonesia. We created the questionnaire in Google Forms to swiftly submit it to the target respondents online. The respondents' replies are assessed using 5-point Likert scales, with 1 (one) representing strongly disagree and 5 (five) representing strongly agree, respectively.

TABLE I. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Profile	Category	%
Gender	Male	40%
	Female	60%
Education	High school or below	11%
	Diploma	15%
	Bachelor	70%
	Master or above	4%
Age	< 16-Year-old	3%
	16 - 25-Year-old	89%
	26 - 35-Year-old	6%
	> 36-Year-old	3%
Occupation	Student	86%
	Government employee	3%
	Private	7%
	Entrepreneur	1%
	Others (housewife, intern, freelance)	3%
Income	1 - 5 million IDR	84%
	5 - 10 million IDR	10%
	10 - 20 million IDR	5%
	20 - 50 million IDR	1%

Prior to delivering the questionnaire to the respondents, it is piloted by all authors and other respondents to strengthen its readability and reduce ambiguities. Once the questionnaire was completed, we distributed it through social media platforms such as, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp. We addressed data collection using a purposive sampling strategy. SmartPLS 4.0's Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) is used as an analytical technique in this study. All the measurement items used in this study are adopted and altered from previous publications. Table 2 describes all the research variables: Information Experience (IE), Entertainment Experience (EE), Homophily Experience (HE), Relationship Experience (RE), Pleasure (PL), Arousal (AR), Dominance (DO), Affective Commitment (AF) and Intention to Follow (IF). The references to all the measurement indicators are also shown.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT

A. Measurement Model Evaluation

The assessment of measurement models is the first of two steps in data analysis. The examination begins with a look at Factor Loading (FL). FL values are generally accepted if the value is more than 0.7. As in Table 2, indicators RE3 and IF3 are excluded from further analysis as they did not meet the threshold. The internal consistency reliability is assessed employing both Cronbach's alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR) values. All CA and CR scores are acceptable once the values are no less than 0.7. Convergent validity is the next one to evaluate using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). It is accepted once the level is 0.5 or greater (Astrachan et al., 2014). The next to evaluate is discriminant validity. This is based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Our evaluation shows that discriminant validity is well established.

B. Structural Model Evaluation

Once the reliability and validity of the research instrument are evaluated, the structural model evaluation is examined. But first, it is required to assess the possibility of collinearity in the structural model to ensure that there is no substantial relationship between the components of the proposed model (Hair et al., 2017). The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values of the linked constructs in this research are within the

acceptable range of 1.000 to 3.274. As a result, the structural model assessment may proceed. It is shown in Table 3.

As in the table, 13 out of 16 hypotheses are accepted. Three of them are rejected; they are H1a, H1b and H5, as their p values are not statistically significant (<0.05). The measurement used one-tail evaluation as the developed hypotheses demand the influencer direction (positive affect) with 5000 subsamples of bootstrapping procedure and a 0.05 significance level. As for the coefficient of determination (R^2) for pleasure, arousal, dominance, commitment, and intention to follow are 0.448, 0.425, 0.423, 0.400 and 0.246, respectively and the predictive power (Q^2) values are 0.426, 0.400, 0.395, 0.216 and 0.196 respectively.

VI. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

In this paper, we examine the emotional dimensions: pleasure, arousal, and dominance as mediation factors of follower-influencer experience that might lead the commitment of the follower to follow the recommendation promoted by the influencer. It is worth mentioning that measuring the follower-influencer experience that determines the intention to follow a recommendation is not new.

However, in this study, we contribute to this issue by enriching our understanding with other emotional dimensions, pleasure-arousal-dominance perspective, as the mediation factors that affect the follower's intention to buy products recommended by the influencer. As depicted in the evaluation, out of sixteen hypotheses, thirteen of them are accepted, and three are rejected; they are information experience that does not positively affect pleasure (H1a) and arousal (H1b), and pleasure that has no positive effect significantly on commitment (H5).

For the rejected hypotheses of H1a and H1b, these results indicate that information experienced by the influencer based on the content promoted is not the driving force for the follower to follow the recommendation. That the information experience perceived by the followers does not please them but only galvanises their dominant feeling (H1c). This implies that the information experience delivered by the content promoted by the influencer positively increases the follower confidence as the knowledge they obtained from it.

On the other hand, the entertainment (H2a-c), homophily (H3a-c) and the relationship (H4a-c) experiences through the content promoted by the influencer positively affect the emotional dimensions of the follower. These typical experiences essentially prescribe us that the feelings of joy, happiness, and related/connected to others are more dominant perceived by the followers from the posts promoted by the influence. This signifies that what the followers seek from the content promoted by the influencer on social media IG is the hedonic and social ties from those with the same interest that follow the same influencer and pleasure rather than the information experience. In addition, for the rejected hypothesis of H5, this result indicates that pleasure perceived by the follower has no positive effect statistically on the commitment. In other words, the commitment to follow the influencer's recommendation cannot be attained from pleasure as it has no positive effect statistically ($0.703 > 0.05$) but from arousal ($p = 0.000$) and dominance ($p = 0.000$).

TABLE II. CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS OF THE VARIABLES

Code	Indicator	Reference	FL
IE CA; CR; AVE = 0.794; 0.879; 0.707	IE1	[13]	0.855
	IE2		0.822
	IE3		0.845
EE CA; CR; AVE = 0.735; 0.849; 0.653	EE1	[13]	0.744
	EE2		0.869
	EE3		0.807
HE CA; CR; AVE = 0.724; 0.844; 0.642	HE1	[13]	0.809
	HE2		0.807
	HE3		0.789
RE CA; CR; AVE = 0.871; 0.911; 0.720	RE1	[13]	0.812
	RE2		0.850
	RE4		0.882
	RE5		0.848
PL CA; CR; AVE = 0.916; 0.947; 0.857	PL1	[16]	0.916
	PL2		0.924
	PL3		0.937
AR CA; CR; AVE = 0.757; 0.862; 0.678	AR1	[16]	0.857
	AR2		0.884
	AR3		0.719
DO CA; CR; AVE = 0.829; 0.879; 0.593	DO1	[16]	0.775
	DO2		0.801
	DO3		0.740
	DO4		0.759
	DO5		0.775
AC CA; CR; AVE = 0.893; 0.926; 0.758	AC1	[31]	0.825
	AC2		0.892
	AC3		0.901
	AC4		0.862
IF CA; CR; AVE = 0.794; 0.879; 0.707	IF1	[13]	0.903
	IF2		0.923

Finally, the results also show that commitment significantly affects the intention to follow recommendations ($p = 0.000$). That is, once the commitment has been built by the emotion evoked from the follower-influencer interaction, the follower's intention to follow recommendations based on the content promoted by the influencer is high. The results also reveal that the variance of the antecedents determining the intention to follow the recommendation is substantial (R^2 of intention to follow = 0.246) (Cohen, 1998). Accordingly, the developed model is not surprising as good predictive power (all the Q^2 values are > 0).

Theoretically, these results imply that the PAD perspective can be used as a theoretical lens to capture the emotional dimensions of the follower-influencer interactions. The experiences perceived by the followers through the

interactions drive them to set the commitment to follow the recommendation of the follower. From the managerial perspective, this study also informs that the information experience has no positive effect on pleasure and arousal but dominance.

While the other experiences: entertainment, homophily and relationship, positively affect statistically the emotional dimensions that lead the follower to follow the influencer's recommendation. For the practical implication, this research can be used to inform brands and influencers that to be able to touch the emotion of their follower, the contents posted on IG social media need to focus only on the factor that might generate joy, relatedness and homophily of the followers.

TABLE III. STRUCTURAL MODEL EVALUATION

Hypothesise	Path	T Statistics	P Value	Remark
H1a	Information Experience → Pleasure	0.951	0.342	Rejected
H1b	Information Experience → Arousal	0.763	0.445	Rejected
H1c	Information Experience → Dominance	5.046	0.000	Accepted
H2a	Entertainment Experience → Pleasure	7.537	0.000	Accepted
H2b	Entertainment Experience → Arousal	6.348	0.000	Accepted
H2c	Entertainment Experience → Dominance	2.179	0.029	Accepted
H3a	Homophily Experience → Pleasure	2.887	0.004	Accepted
H3b	Homophily Experience → Arousal	2.791	0.005	Accepted
H3c	Homophily Experience → Dominance	2.642	0.008	Accepted
H4a	Relationship Experience → Pleasure	2.562	0.010	Accepted
H4b	Relationship Experience → Arousal	4.134	0.000	Accepted
H4c	Relationship Experience → Dominance	7.221	0.000	Accepted
H5	Pleasure → Commitment	0.382	0.703	Rejected
H6	Arousal → Commitment	3.776	0.000	Accepted
H7	Dominance → Commitment	5.606	0.000	Accepted
H8	Commitment → Intention to Follow	9.149	0.000	Accepted

VII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

In this paper, however, we also highlight several limitations. First, as in the social demographic respondents table, most of the respondents are those from the university students' groups comprising bachelor and diploma (in total 85%). Although this cohort is the digital native in which they are also social media net-savvy, however, these characteristics do not represent the diversity of the population of IG social media. This cohort also informs that there is a need to have more diverse respondents other than them only to represent the real phenomena of the IG users and for the generalisability of the research.

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