The mimicker and the mimicked: Desirable digital influencer to follow (taste leader vs. opinion leader)

Rahmat Berliano Jeyhan | Christian Haposan Pangaribuan

Abstract The impact of social media on consumer purchasing behavior is explored in this study, employing the Influence Framework Theory and Doppelganger Theory as theoretical frameworks. The four phases of the Influence Framework Theory are examined to uncover how influencers shape consumer behavior. TikTokers are specifically scrutinized as opinion leaders, with hedonic experiences assuming a pivotal role. Moreover, their perception as taste leaders is investigated, emphasizing the influence of attractiveness and prestige. Furthermore, conscious desires to emulate are scrutinized, suggesting a positive correlation between opinion and taste leadership and this desire. Lastly, the study delves into the nonsocial outcomes of these influential efforts, emphasizing the link between the desire to imitate and consumers’ propensity to make purchases. Regression analysis demonstrates the positive impact of hedonic experiences, attractiveness, and prestige on perceptions of opinion and taste leadership. Additionally, both opinion and taste leadership significantly contribute to consumers’ conscious desire to emulate, subsequently influencing their inclination to make purchases. These findings shed light on the mechanics underlying TikTokers’ influence on consumer behavior and offer valuable insights for marketers seeking to leverage these influencers to drive purchase intentions.

Keywords: influence framework, doppelganger effect, tiktok

1. Introduction

For both individuals and businesses, the Internet and all its applications present a plethora of new possibilities. Users can create material on social media sites that are particularly active, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter (Pangaribuan et al., 2019). More than 4.8 billion individuals use social media, indicating the platform’s expanding importance in marketing (Statista.com, 2023). Consequently, an array of terminologies, notions, and methodologies have been devised to underscore the essential benefits that social media profusely affords the corporate sphere. One such tactic is influencer marketing.

Audrezet et al. (2018) define influencer marketing as leveraging influencers to publicize or endorse a company. Instead, a more practical definition of social media includes well-known new concepts such as social media influencers (SMIs), prominent social media users who serve as role models for other users (Barta et al., 2023). Because TikTok is the social media platform with the greatest growth and the most well-known channel for influencer marketing, researchers will examine its influencers (Geyser, 2023). TikTok is a one-way platform that allows users to create, watch, edit, and share videos with minimal context. The videos create enormous links and can be simply skipped or combined with other videos that have been shared in a similar way. Customers see SMIs as role models that can (or should) be followed, but it is not obvious if followers are inspired to follow those SMIs, which could affect their purchasing decisions to purchase the same goods that SMIs do. This study was carried out to close this gap in the literature.

According to Ki and Kim (2019), businesses are ready to invest extra to find the right influencer. This is backed by a number of strong justifications. First, according to consumer perceptions, content created by influencers is more reliable, timely, and genuine than celebrity endorsements (Audrezet et al., 2020; Glucksman, 2017; Willemsen et al., 2011). Second, SMIs help businesses interact with larger segments of their target market (Singh et al., 2020). SMI-generated content was claimed to be 6.9 times more effective than studio-shot material. Third, companies supposedly make $5.20 for every $1 invested in influencer marketing (Ki and Kim, 2019). Furthermore, compared to superstars, which may polarize, SMIs might have a more balanced effect (Ewers, 2017).

Despite TikTok’s potential and success, more study is needed to understand how followers respond to influencer marketing (Barta et al., 2023). The literature on modern SMIs should be improved in a few areas. One of them is that consumers and brands desire help choosing the best SMI even though they know the advantages of SMI (Rozamuri et al., 2022). While the majority of studies take into account auxiliary characteristics, a small number (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017)
2017; De Veirman et al., 2017; Ki, 2018) concentrate on the core SMI qualities. Second, there has not been much study done in the SMI literature to comprehend opinion leadership or the effects of taste leadership (McQuarrie et al., 2012; Ki and Kim, 2019). Although customers view SMIs as role models that can (or should) be followed, it is unclear whether followers are motivated to imitate SMIs, which could influence their purchasing decisions (Gashi, 2017). The purpose of this study was to close this gap in the literature.

This study aims to develop and validate a comprehensive framework that builds upon Scheer and Stern's (1992) influence framework. The goal is to identify the key characteristics of social media influencers, or TikTokers, and the strategies they employed to influence audience attitudes, behavioral outcomes (such as the propensity to purchase), and desire to mimic. Furthermore, this study investigates whether the desire to replicate target functionalities in the setting of social media (such as TikTok) is a sign of compliance using consumer Dopplerganger effect theory (Ruvio et al., 2013). As such, the questions that follow are thus made up.

RQ1: Does the audience’s positive perception that SMIs give them a hedonic experience have positive attitudinal effects, such that they deem SMIs opinion leaders?

RQ2: Does the audience’s positive perception that SMIs are visually attractive and convey prestige have positive attitudinal effects, such that they deem SMIs to be taste leaders?

RQ3: Does the audience’s positive attitudinal response (i.e., the perception that SMIs are opinion leadership and taste leadership) toward influencers positively correlate with their desire to comply, which is the conscious desire to mimic SMIs?

RQ4: Does the conscious desire to mimic SMIs positively affect the audience’s behavioral outcomes, that is, the propensity to purchase the same goods, services, or brands that SMIs promote or post?

This research provides a thorough understanding of the literature on influencer marketing as well as a theoretical understanding of the traits of influencers (SMIs) that affect target audiences. Additionally, it looks to see if viewers’ positive perceptions influence their inclination to imitate. It will serve as a resource for more study and provide Indonesian marketing professionals with the information they require to design effective hiring strategies.

1.1. Influence framework

The influence framework of Scheer and Stern (1992), which is designed to examine the power dynamics underlying influencers’ attempts to persuade others to perform specific actions, is used as the conceptual framework in this study. Scheer and Stern (1992) split the aforementioned power dynamics in the marketing environment into four stages: (1) the influencers’ attempts to exert their influence, (2) the audience’s attitude toward the influence attempts, (3) the audience’s desire to comply, and (4) the audience’s behavioral outcomes.

Influencers use their power resources—such as their attractiveness, status, and capacity to deliver a pleasurable experience—to sway their target audience during the first phase (Ki and Kim, 2019; Barta et al., 2023). Because audiences view SMIs as opinion or taste leaders, the second stage of controlling attempts is contingent upon the target’s assessment of attitude (Scheer and Stern, 1992). The third stage entails audiences developing a favorable perception of SMIs’ influence resources and assessing their propensity to heed their recommendations. A consumer’s willingness to imitate is one of those willing to comply (Ruvio et al., 2013). Because audiences view SMIs as role models, there is a greater desire on the part of consumers to imitate the influencer (Ki and Kim, 2019). In the last stage, viewers imitate and follow their SMIs, which motivates them to share their content and purchase the same or a suggested product (Ruvio et al., 1992; Ki and Kim, 2019). These behavioral effects might be social or nonsocial. This study investigates the dynamics of power between audiences and SMIs on TikTok.

1.2. Dopplerganger effect

The saying “monkey see, monkey do” is true. As stated by White and Argo (2011) and Chartrand and Bargh (1999), the “chameleoon effect” describes the unintentional imitation of behaviors, habits, expressions, and postures. Based on these circumstances, mimicry can be either conscious or unconscious. According to research, mimicking—including body language and emotions—occurs primarily unintentionally. Nevertheless, the dopplerganger effect theory was developed by Ruvio et al. (2013), which states that customers also engage in remarkable mimicking behaviors that have a distinct goal, such as copying their role model. Consumer mimicry, according to this notion, is deliberate imitation.

The idea was empirically tested by Ruvio et al. (2013). Their results provide credence to the theory that a buyer will copy those who she views as role models to become or seem more like the models. Any individual who personifies the ideals, attitudes, and actions of a certain perspective is a role model. It is also regarded as a person whose actions in a certain capacity are replicable by others (Ki and Kim, 2019). Role models can thereby affect the views and choices of others. According to Ruvio et al. (2013), role models can be unidirectional (such as SMIs) or bidirectional (such as family members and acquaintances). Additionally, imitation is said to play a large role in customer decision-making.
Researchers have found that people’s conscious desire to imitate affects their choices for clothing and consumption behavior in a variety of situations (Rogers, 2010; Ruvio et al., 2013). Furthermore, mimicking is a useful tactic for building interpersonal interactions (Lakin and Chartrand, 2003). There is additional evidence to suggest that when someone mimics someone else, their relationships become more affectionate (Jacob et al., 2011; Duffy and Chartrand, 2015). Consequently, it has been discovered that customers’ intents to make purchases are positively and considerably influenced by a conscious desire to mimic (Ki and Kim, 2019).

We suggest that the conscious desire to mimic is a more appropriate mode of the desire to comply with the method by which an SMI influences a target customer by merging the influence framework with the theory of the consumer dopipelganger effect. Moreover, we believe that the goal of a target consumer to imitate an SMI will lead to positive nonsocial behavioral effects, such as purchase intention.

1.3. Opinion leadership and perceived hedonic experience

Scholars have utilized a variety of constructs connected to happiness to investigate happiness as a component of well-being (Garcia-Buades et al., 2020). Emotions are thus contagious (Li et al., 2017). Viewers synchronize their emotions with TikTok influencers due to the influencers’ use of verbal and nonverbal cues, as well as their ability to make viewers laugh with their brief yet humorous videos, resulting in a more positive hedonic experience and a stronger sense of the influencer’s friendliness among those followers (Lee and Theokary, 2021). Hedonic experience was defined in this study as consumers’ (i.e., TikTok users’) perception of satisfaction and pleasure when they are entertained by their SMI content (Nambsian and Baron, 2007). When using social media, users typically follow people who make them laugh and have a good time (Poyry et al., 2013).

According to Mainolfi et al. (2022), social media users are drawn to accept the recommendations of SMIs due to their hedonic drive. As demonstrated by Lin et al. (2018), SMIs can boost their standing as opinion leaders among their followers by raising their hedonic value, which is consistent with previous research. This is achieved by raising the perceived status of SMIs among their followers. This study suggests the following for these reasons:

Hypothesis 1: The followers’ hedonic experience stemming from the SMI content significantly and positively affects their perception that the SMI is an opinion leader.

1.4. Taste leadership, attractiveness, and prestige

Perceptions of SMIs’ attractiveness and prestige-emitting qualities among audiences and followers have a favorable and significant impact on how SMIs are seen as having taste leadership. As a result, being a taste leader encourages regular social media users to serve as role models whom their audiences will imitate and follow (McQuarrie and Philips, 2014). Audiences’ and followers’ perceptions that SMIs are attractive and exhibit prestige positively and significantly affect their perceived taste leadership toward SMIs.

The SMIs’ perceived aesthetic appeal—as measured by followers’ opinions on the SMIs’ content, according to Ohanian (1990)—has been crucial to their recognition as taste leaders. For instance, someone is said to possess taste leadership if they are able to identify or recognize items with exceptional aesthetic notions or objects (McQuarrie et al., 2012). According to Ki and Kim’s (2019) research, SMIs’ perceived taste leadership among their followers is greatly influenced by their attractiveness in the Instagram setting. After all, aesthetic taste is the outcome of integrating other sensory inputs with visual sensitivity (Krishna et al., 2010). This implies that aesthetic sensitivity and taste leadership are significantly influenced by visual sensitivity.

However, Hoyer and Stokburger-Sauer (2012) indicate that taste leadership is also significantly impacted by prestige. McQuarrie (2015) even went so far as to contend that prominent persons, or those in higher social positions, are the ones who provide sound aesthetic judgment, reinforcing the importance of prestige for a taste leader. According to McQuarrie (2012), SMIs who lack the ability to project prestige to their followers are unlikely to be embraced and viewed as role models by their followers. As a result, Ki and Kim (2019) discovered that for SMIs to be viewed as taste leaders by their followers on Instagram, they must perceive a high level of status. Using these justifications, the research suggests the following:

Hypothesis 2: Followers’ perceived attractiveness of SMIs significantly and positively affects their perception that SMIs are taste leaders.

Hypothesis 3: Followers’ perceived prestige of SMIs significantly and positively affects their perception that SMIs are taste leaders.

1.5. Follower’s conscious desire to mimic opinion leadership and taste leadership

Ruvio et al. (2013) found that people are more likely to intentionally copy their interaction partner’s product choices when they see their partner favorably as one of their role models. Researchers found that participants aspired to closely
resemble the consumption patterns of individuals who they considered to be unidirectional or bidirectional role models. Known alternatively as conscious mimicry, this phenomenon occurs when people are aware of the behavior they are mimicking (Argo and White, 2011). According to existing research, people are likely to watch and emulate the attitudes, behaviors, and routines of their role models—such as SMIs, parents, and teachers (Martin and Bush, 2000).

People rely on multiple cues when selecting role models (Sims and Brinkman, 2002). An individual would view someone as a role model and want to emulate them if they follow verbal or visual cues, suggesting that they are someone they can look up to (Nisbet and Kotcher, 2009). The visual elements of SMIs that center on their unique way of life, fashion sense, and brand selections reveal whether an SMI is a taste leader (McQuarrie et al., 2012). According to McQuarrie (2012) and Ki and Kim (2019), taste leadership refers to an SMI’s capacity to project stylish and appealing preferences, demonstrate a sophisticated taste in aesthetic presentation, and instruct followers on how to look good through their material. Therefore, when an SMI is recognized as a taste influencer and serves as a role model, people are inspired to emulate their lifestyle or product preferences (De Veirman et al., 2017). Furthermore, according to Ki and Kim (2019), Instagram users’ deliberate desire to imitate is significantly influenced by opinion and taste leadership (McQuarrie et al., 2012; Ki and Kim, 2019).

A strong verbal cue for people to identify an SMI as a role model is when they demonstrate opinion leadership or the capacity to shape the opinions or behaviors of their TikTok audiences (Lyons and Henderson, 2005; Clark et al., 2001; Kratzer and Lettl, 2009). People think opinion leaders are more inventive, seasoned, and informed than they are on a variety of products (Childers, 1986; Chan and Misra, 1990). People look up to these opinion leaders as trustworthy consumer advocates who can be emulated (Ruvio et al., 2013). In light of this logic, the study suggests the following:

Hypothesis 4: Followers’ perception that SMIs are opinion leaders significantly and positively affects their conscious desire to mimic SMIs.

Hypothesis 5: Followers’ perception that SMIs are taste leaders significantly and positively affects their conscious desire to mimic SMIs.

1.6. Propensity to purchase and desire to mimic

Propensity to purchase is defined by Armstrong et al. (2016) as consumer behavior that occurs when outside factors influence a person’s decision to buy depending on that person’s traits and decision-making processes. The first step in this process is the appearance of a demand (need arousal) for a good or service, after which customers digest information (consumer information processing). Customers will also evaluate the business or product, which will increase their likelihood of making a purchase. Alternatively, a propensity to purchase might be defined as the audience’s or follower’s deliberate attempt to purchase a good or service in a scenario more closely tied to SMI (Barta et al., 2023; Belanche et al., 2021). As such, this study aims to comprehend the impact of the urge to mimic the nonbehavioral consequence of influence attempts, the propensity to purchase, in accordance with the final stage of Scheer and Stern’s (1992) Influence Framework.

The desire to imitate has a substantial impact on a consumer’s tendency to buy in numerous research situations (Jacob et al., 2011; Herrmann et al., 2011; Ki and Kim, 2019). Tanner et al. (2007) suggest that the reason for this could be the social contact that takes place during the buying process. Notably, it happens in a way that makes people unknowingly mimic the consumption habits of their interaction partners (Chartrand and Bargh 1999; Dimberg et al., 2000). According to a study, salespeople who emulate the verbal or visual cues of their potential customers—such as body language and expression—also succeed in closing deals (Jacob et al., 2011). As a result, studies (Viswanathan et al., 2000; Rogers, 2010) have demonstrated that customers mimic the style, clothing, and behavioral preferences of their interaction partners. In light of this rationale, the study suggests the following:

Hypothesis 6: Followers’ conscious desire to mimic SMIs significantly and positively affects their propensity to purchase the same services, brands, or products they own.

1.7. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework is designed to better show the relationship between variables in the present study. This study aimed to examine the effect that SMIs’ power or qualities have on their audiences. As previously broken down in the hypothesis development segment, all the correlations between variables in this research are positive. Hence, any increase or decrease in the variable will significantly increase or decrease its counterpart value. The framework model is depicted in Figure 1.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Time and place of study

https://www.malque.pub/ojs/index.php/msj
Sekaran and Bougie (2016) distinguish between longitudinal and cross-sectional research in terms of time frame. According to their definition, a cross-sectional study is one in which the data are acquired just once, possibly over a day, a week, or a month. A cross-sectional study will, therefore, be used because the data collection for this research will only take place once. The time frame for this study’s data collection spans between April and May 2023. To further compact the research findings, the respondents are divided into two groups based on where they are living: (1) living in Jabodetabek and (2) living outside Jabodetabek.

![Figure 1 Framework model.](https://www.malque.pub/ojs/index.php/msj)

2.2. Research approach

A research design is a plan for gathering, measuring, and analyzing data to answer a research question. It includes exploratory investigation, descriptive study, and hypothesis testing (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). This study used hypothesis testing, which is used to explain the variance in the dependent variable or predict an organizational outcome. Furthermore, as this study collects and analyzes numerical data, it is considered a quantitative study.

2.3. Population and sample

The population of this research comprises those individuals who live in Indonesia (which is divided into living inside or outside Jabodetabek), are aged 17–34, and follow at least one influencer on the TikTok app. The current research will use convenient sampling, a type of nonprobability sampling in which a subset of the population is selected that can easily offer information (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). Per Hair et al. (2017), the total sample size should be at least ten times the largest number of indicators used in measuring one variance. As a consequence of the items representing the highest number of indicators used in the variable, which is 5, the sample count will be more than or equal to 50. However, to deliver more reliable and meaningful results, this study will collect and use data from 130 respondents instead.

2.4. Data collection method

This study employed a quantitative methodology, as decided earlier. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) state that questionnaires are often created with the intention of gathering a large amount of quantitative data. Therefore, the main method of data collection for this study will be a questionnaire. Two methods were used to distribute the questionnaires: (1) via social media (such as Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and Facebook) and (2) by asking participants to complete the survey in person.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

A solid validity model can be demonstrated by AVEs above 0.5, and values above 0.7 are acceptable, according to Hair et al. (2010) and Alarcón et al. (2015). All of the indicators employed in this study are thought to be able to explain the variance, as seen in Table 1 when the AVEs of the variables are combined with the earlier idea of AVEs from Hair et al. (2010) and Alarcón et al. (2015). No variable has an AVE level below 0.5.
Table 2’s results demonstrate strong discriminant validity, with all indicators on the selected variables displaying greater values than indicators on other variables. As a result, it can be said that every indication used in this research is thought to be reliable for measuring the various concepts.

Table 1 Validity test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attractiveness</td>
<td>0.760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to Mimic</td>
<td>0.662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic Experience</td>
<td>0.653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion Leadership</td>
<td>0.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige</td>
<td>0.793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propensity to Purchase</td>
<td>0.758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste Leadership</td>
<td>0.655</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The degree to which a set of items is positively associated is indicated by the reliability coefficient Cronbach’s alpha. Cronbach’s alpha is determined by averaging the intercorrelations between the concept-measuring items. The variable taste leadership’s Cronbach’s alpha is deemed appropriate for use in this study, as indicated by Table 3. The questionnaires used are thought to be good and reliable for measuring the variance in this study, with the exception of taste leadership, which has a Cronbach’s alpha value below 0.80 (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

Table 2 Discriminant validity test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ATT</th>
<th>DMC</th>
<th>HED</th>
<th>OLS</th>
<th>PRE</th>
<th>PTP</th>
<th>TLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATT</td>
<td>0.872</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMC</td>
<td>0.344</td>
<td>0.870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HED</td>
<td>0.786</td>
<td>0.446</td>
<td>0.808</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLS</td>
<td>0.799</td>
<td>0.486</td>
<td>0.786</td>
<td>0.866</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRE</td>
<td>0.550</td>
<td>0.404</td>
<td>0.433</td>
<td>0.676</td>
<td>0.890</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTP</td>
<td>0.474</td>
<td>0.625</td>
<td>0.591</td>
<td>0.526</td>
<td>0.530</td>
<td>0.870</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLS</td>
<td>0.661</td>
<td>0.457</td>
<td>0.505</td>
<td>0.679</td>
<td>0.715</td>
<td>0.555</td>
<td>0.809</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection for the study included 130 respondents; seven of them were dropped since they did not use TikTok. In addition to ensuring representativeness, respondent profiles provide age and gender data for more relevant insights. The context provided by the findings’ residence and monthly income enables improved interpretation and generalization to particular contexts or target audiences. Table 4 was created after a descriptive analysis with Excel and Smart-PLS was finished. These results are essential for comprehending the viewpoints and actions of people from various geographic locations and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Table 3 Reliability test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>rho_A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attractiveness</td>
<td>0.842</td>
<td>0.860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to Mimic</td>
<td>0.827</td>
<td>0.834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedonic Experience</td>
<td>0.822</td>
<td>0.837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion Leadership</td>
<td>0.832</td>
<td>0.837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige</td>
<td>0.870</td>
<td>0.881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propensity to Purchase</td>
<td>0.839</td>
<td>0.841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste Leadership</td>
<td>0.737</td>
<td>0.738</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of research participants, including 83 individuals or 63.8%, were female. This almost equates to 47 male respondents, or 36.2% of all respondents. Ages 18 to 34 make up the majority of responders (183.6%), or 123 persons, in the whole sample in the current study. Next, four respondents who are under the age of seventeen and three who are over the age of thirty-four comprise the remaining statistics.

With 66.2% of all respondents living in Jabodetabek, the bulk of respondents are residents of that area. Meanwhile, 33.8% of the population is from outside the region. Four income groups comprise the respondents: 12.3% are living with their parents or “don’t have an income yet,” while 67.7% make between IDR1,000,000 (USD 65) and IDR5,000,000 (USD 315), 15.4% make between IDR5,000,000 (USD 315) and 10,000,000 (USD 630), and 4.6% make more than IDR10,000,000 (USD 630).

In response to the question, “Which social media do you use the most?” respondents indicated that they used at least one social media platform, as shown in Figure 2. Among the responders, 108 selected TikTok, 110 selected Instagram, 57 selected YouTube, 51 selected Twitter, 17 selected Facebook, 5 selected Snapchat, and 3 selected WhatsApp.

https://www.malque.pub/ojs/index.php/msj
Table 4 Demographic profile.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages</td>
<td>&lt; 18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 - 34</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>94.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence</td>
<td>Jabodetabek</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>66.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outside Jabodetabek</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Income</td>
<td>IDR 1,000,000-5,000,000</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IDR5,000,000-10,000,000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than IDR10,000,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on their regular use of social media, the study divided the participants into six clusters. The respondents’ time was divided into five categories: five minutes or less, sixteen minutes or less, thirty minutes or less, 38 minutes or less, 29 minutes or less, 19 minutes or less, and twenty-five minutes or more. Figure 3 shows the six groups into which the respondents were placed according to how much time they spent on social media.

![Most Used Social Media](image1)

**Figure 2 Social media used.**

The majority of TikTok users follow a variety of topics, with beauty being the most popular. Fashion, cooking, travel, health, interior design, and other topics are among the others. On the other hand, Figure 4 shows that individuals who select “other” topics such as fishing, gaming, and education are more likely to follow these subjects.

The respondent will answer the statement using the Likert scale, with 1 denoting strongly disagree and 5 denoting greatly agree, to measure the variables that have been supplied. Following Table 5, it can be observed that prestige has the highest mean value, while the conscious desire to mimic has the lowest mean value.

![Time Spent](image2)

**Figure 3 Time spent on social media.**

The predictive model’s capacity to account for intrinsic variability in independent variables is assessed using the R-square statistic. Four models with dependent variables—opinion leadership, taste leadership, desire to mimic, and propensity to purchase—are used in this study. According to Huang et al. (2013), R-squared values over 0.67, between 0.33 and 0.66, and between 0.19 and 0.32 are classified as high, moderate, and weak, respectively. The Smart-PLS Bootstrapping test is used to create the data in Table 6.
Figure 4 Main subjects of TikTokers.

Table 6 shows a moderate relationship between opinion leadership and customers’ hedonic experience, with an R-squared value of 0.487, explaining 48.7% of the relationship. This indicates a moderate relationship between perceived attractiveness and prestige, with taste leadership accounting for 55.2% of the independent variable. The test also depicts the moderate relationship between opinion leadership and taste leadership, explaining that 37.3% of customers desire to mimic, with a 0.261 R-squared value, explaining 26.1% of the variance.

To calculate the t value and the significant value (also known as the p value) of the variances, bootstrapping analysis was performed in Smart-PLS. The following tables show the bootstrapping regression results. Thus, all seven hypotheses are evaluated to see if they are supported or rejected based on the data displayed in Table 7.

Table 5 Variable descriptive data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HED</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATT</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRE</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLS</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLS</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMC</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTP</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2. Discussion

Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 apply Scheer and Stern’s (1992) influence framework, where influencers present their capabilities to the audience. The audience’s attitudinal response to these quality sources will determine whether they perceive influencers as opinion leaders or taste leaders. Hypothesis 1 suggests that followers’ hedonic experience positively affects their perception of influencers as opinion leaders. This finding aligns with previous studies (Akdevelioglu and Kara 2020; Barta et al., 2023) demonstrating the effectiveness of consumers’ hedonic experiences in generating opinion leaders from influencers. Social media users tend to follow those who provide pleasant and hedonic experiences (Poyry et al., 2013). The study found that a one-unit increase in hedonic experience is associated with a prediction of an increase in leadership opinion of 0.617 units, assuming that other factors remain constant.

According to Hypothesis 2, followers’ perceptions of social media influencers (SMIs) as taste leaders are positively influenced by their perceived attractiveness. According to earlier research, being attractive increases one’s likelihood of being seen as a taste leader. According to Ki and Kim (2019), SMIs are more likely to be viewed as taste leaders when they can present and create engaging material. The expectation is that taste leadership will rise by 0.268 for every increment in attractiveness.

Table 6 R Square.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>R² Adjusted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OLS</td>
<td>0.487</td>
<td>0.477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLS</td>
<td>0.552</td>
<td>0.533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMC</td>
<td>0.373</td>
<td>0.346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTP</td>
<td>0.261</td>
<td>0.246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to hypothesis 3, followers’ opinions of SMIs as taste leaders are greatly influenced by how prestigious they think they are. For a taste leader, prestige is essential since it influences others’ perceptions of aesthetic quality (Hoyer and Stokburger-Sauer 2012). In contrast, people who have a reputation for lacking status are less likely to be seen as taste leaders (McQuarrie 2012). As a result, followers are more likely to view SMIs with high rank and reputation as taste leaders. According to the results of the regression analysis, there is a 0.468 unit correlation between a gain in prestige and a forecast of an increase in taste leadership.

The influence framework developed by Scheer and Stern (1992) is applied in hypotheses 4 and 5. This is the stage where the audience chooses whether to heed the SMI’s advice. Therefore, our study suggests that the conscious desire to mimic is a more appropriate mode of the desire to comply with the method by which an SMI influences a target customer, adopting the doppelganger theory of Ruvio et al. (2013). The fifth hypothesis bolsters the notion that followers’ conscious desire to imitate SMIs is greatly influenced by their impression of them as opinion leaders. This is consistent with a study by Ki and Kim (2019) that found opinion leadership to be important in explaining Instagram users’ deliberate intention to emulate. Opinion leaders are perceived by the public as being more creative, experienced, and informed about different items than the public itself (Childers, 1986; Chan and Misra, 1990). According to Ruvio et al. (2013), people look up to opinion leaders as trustworthy role models whose purchasing decisions are replicable. The more followers attempt to emulate SMIs, the more they see them as influential role models. According to the study, there will be a 0.209 predicted increase in the urge to mimic every unit increase in opinion leadership.

According to hypothesis 5, followers’ conscious desire to mimic SMIs is strongly and favorably impacted by their impression of them as taste leaders. This is consistent with previous research (Nisbet and Kotcher, 2009), which indicates that people are more likely to emulate a role model if they can trace their visual cues. When an SMI is seen as a taste leader, followers are inspired to emulate their choices in products or lifestyle (De Veirman et al., 2017; Ki and Kim, 2019). According to the study, people’s conscious intention to mimic is significantly influenced by taste leadership, with an increase of one taste leadership unit predicted to result in a 0.537 rise in mimicking behavior. This implies that consumers’ conscious desire to imitate is more influenced by taste leadership than by opinion. This suggests that taste leadership has a greater impact on customers’ conscious desire to mimic than opinion leaders.

Phase 4 of Scheer and Stern’s (1992) influence framework is addressed by Hypothesis 6, which focuses on the nonsocial result of intention attempts. It demonstrates how followers’ conscious desire to mimic social media influencers has a large and favorable impact on their likelihood of buying similar services, brands, or goods as SMIs. This result is in line with other research (Jacob et al., 2011; Ki and Kim, 2019). The propensity for purchasing is predicted to rise by 0.612 for each unit of desire to mimic, indicating a strong impact of this tendency. Individuals have a tendency to copy the style, habits, and consumption patterns of others with whom they encounter; therefore, the more someone aspires to emulate SMI, the more likely it is that they will purchase the same goods and services.

### 4. Conclusions

This study looks at how followers see opinion leaders in relation to their hedonic experiences, the attractiveness of SMIs, and taste leadership. Additionally, it reveals that taste leadership, with taste leadership having a higher impact, greatly influences the conscious desire to mimic. The study emphasizes how crucial it is for consumers to intentionally want to emulate SMI advertisements.

### 4.1. Theoretical Implications

The study contributed to the body of knowledge on SMIs by indicating that despite its establishment in 1992, Scheer and Stern’s Influence Framework can still be used in modern advertising channels to describe the power dynamics between SMIs and target audiences. It also showed that followers’ positive attitudes are influenced by the attributes of SMIs. The study discovered that information that was visually appealing and emphasized prestige raised people’s opinion of SMIs as opinion leaders. The conscious desire to mimic was more significantly impacted by taste leadership, which increases the relevance of SMIs as individuals possessing either taste leadership or opinion leadership. The study emphasizes how crucial it is that consumers intentionally want to imitate SMI advertisements.
4.2 Managerial implications

The current study indicates that social media influencers (SMIs) can affect customer behavior through hedonic motivation, attractiveness, and prestige for managers and business practitioners. By working with pertinent SMIs, managers can increase trust and improve brand image by using their influence. To encourage followers to imitate SMIs, taste leadership is essential, and managers should find influencers who have unique tastes that appeal to their target market. Businesses may improve consumer behavior, credibility, and brand image by collaborating with taste leaders. Furthermore, generating interesting material that inspires deliberate emulation can raise customer engagement and brand exposure, which in turn influence purchasing decisions.

4.3. Limitations

Based on the respondents’ demographics, the study’s conclusions about how social media influencers (SMI) affect consumer behavior must be considered. The study’s target audience is primarily younger; 94.6% of the sample respondents were between the ages of 18 and 34. Furthermore, most responders are found in Indonesia’s densely populated Jabodetabek region. The attitudes and actions of respondents from that region may have been reflected in the geographic concentration (66.2%). Recognizing that consumer preferences and access to SMIs can be influenced by age and place of residence is crucial. This suggests that additional study is needed to validate and generalize the results, with a sample that is more diverse and geographically representative.

4.4. Future studies

This study also examines the influence of the desire to mimic customers’ purchasing tendencies. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that subconscious or unconscious forces can also influence how consumers behave. Future studies could examine how conscious and unconscious processes interact with the impulse to emulate. Since TikTok was the only social media platform used for data collection, future research should examine other platforms as well.

Ethical considerations

The authors confirm that I have obtained all consent needed by the applicable law to publish any personal details or images of patients, research subjects, or other individuals used. They agree to provide the Multidisciplinary Science Journal with copies of the consent or evidence that such consent has been obtained if requested.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Funding

This study did not receive any financial support.

References


Gashi, L. (2017). Social media influencers - why we cannot ignore them: An exploratory study about how consumers perceive the influence of social media influencers during the different stages of the purchase decision process (Bachelor’s Thesis, Kristianstad University). http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn:urn:nbn:se:hr:diva-17470


