

Impact of Social Experience on Customer Purchase Decision in the Social Commerce Context of Instagram

Vivia Jacinda, Ronald & Amelia

Abstract:

Social commerce is a new business model formed from the merger of social networking and e-commerce that promotes product sales and influences user purchasing behavior via a network of social media and social networking sites. As social experience such as recommendations, interactions, and communication between people, is viewed as the fundamental component that drives social commerce, monitoring its influence on an individual's purchase decision becomes critical. The writing of this thesis is to research Instagram as research object to analyze factors of Social Experience which are impacting Customer Purchase Decision. The data was obtained by distributing a questionnaire to 125 respondents who had Instagram apps installed on their smartphone and had at least two transactions in the previous 6 months. The data were analysed with the Structural Equation Model (SEM) using Amos 22.0 software. The study has indicated that Subjective Norms has positive significant effect on Customer Purchase Decision with regression coefficient value of 0.195; Peer Communication has positive significant effect on Customer Purchase Decision with regression coefficient value of 0.247; Emotional Support has positive significant effect on Customer Purchase Decision with regression coefficient value of 0.336, Parasocial Interaction has positive significant effect on Customer Purchase Decision with regression coefficient value of 0.352 and lastly Perceived Herd Behavior has positive significant effect on Customer Purchase Decision with regression coefficient value of 0.325.



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Introduction

Social commerce is a new business model formed from the merger of social networking and e-commerce that promotes product sales and influences user purchasing behaviour via a network of social media and social networking sites (Chen, Hsiao, & Wu, 2018). Social commerce can provide various advantages, namely making shopping a social experience, reducing the opportunity for consumers to change their minds, making it easier for marketing to provide the right product or service for its consumers, and making it easier for marketers to get feedback on marketing content from their consumers (Mclachlan, 2020). It utilizes the interaction and contribution of social media users to make online purchases (Purwantini, 2017). Based on data from last year (Wijayanto, 2021), transactions obtained from the social commerce sector in 2021 reached 42 trillion rupiah. Individual purchasing behaviour on social platform is impacted by social experience in the context of social commerce (Chen & Shen, 2015). The customer gathers product-related knowledge from others in the form of opinions, experiences, or evaluations regarding certain items or services (Chow, 2015) to enhance their purchasing decision-making through networking, collaborating, and information-sharing (Sharma, Menard, & Mutchler, 2017). In 2022, Indonesian Instagram users are reported to reach 99.15 million people with increase of 16.6% from last year, making it the second most used social media platform after WhatsApp (Riyanto, 2022). They usually share information, real review, product try-ons, even engaging with their followers further by sharing bits of their personal life. According to (Decker, 2020), 90% of Instagram users follow at least one brand, and 83 percent of users feel Instagram has assisted them in discovering new products and services. Current study focuses on Instagram as the object of the research. This study also includes social experience and customer purchase decision as the variable. Social experience variable is proposed from the social impact theory to determine the social influence of the sender on the receiver, which consists of three attributes: the strength, immediacy, and number of the people who generate information to an individual, in order to measure the quality of social experience in the context of social commerce. Factors of Social Experience which are observed to be impacting Customer Purchase Decision (CPD) are Subjective Norms (SN), Peer Communication (PC), Emotional Support (ES), Parasocial Interaction (PI) and Perceived Herd Behavior (PH).

Literature Review

Social Experience

An individual's need for and experience with communication in unfamiliar circumstances has been defined as "social experience" (Duran, 1992). According to Duran (1992), these encounters culminate in the formation and refining of a repertoire of social scripts. According to Baozhou (Baozhou, Weiguo, & Mi, 2016), they believe that social commerce is based on two sets of constructs, namely, social technologies and community interactions, as variables that enable the existence of social experience.

Social Impact Theory

Social impact theory seeks to capture how people influence and are impacted by one another across time (Latané B. , 1981). Social impact theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how individuals are influenced by their social surroundings. A wide range of research areas have used social impact theory to account for academic issues or practical phenomena such as the impact of a mere social presence on consumers' attitudes and behaviors (Argo et al., 2005), the effect of user generated content on social media (Mirand Zaheer, 2012) and others.

Social Commerce

Social commerce refers to an online platform that employs a social network component to let consumers to exchange and receive evaluations, experiences, information, or expertise about a certain vendor's products or services (Hajli, 2014; Chen and Shen, 2015; Shanmugam et al., 2016; Lal, 2017; Farivar et al., 2017). Social commerce, in general, combines social experience and transaction-related activities (Esmaeili & Hashemi, 2019), with the emphasis on social experience rather than transaction (Lu et al., 2016; Ko, 2018).

Customer Purchase Decision

D. A. Kolopita and A. S. Soegoto (Kolopita & Soegoto, 2015) define customer purchase decision as the act of selecting an option among two or more alternatives.

Subjective Norms

Subjective norms are set of beliefs on how an individual believe they should perform based on expectations from people who are close or important to them (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), or social factors that indicate the perceived social pressure to do or not do an action. Subjective norm can also be explained as the desires or expectations of people around the individual regarding the behavior of an individual, social norms are very dependent on the culture and habits of the people around the individual. Subjective norms have been proven to have a substantial relationship with intentions of buying (Pavlou & Chai, 2002). As a result, the following hypotheses follow:

H1: Subjective norms has significant impact on customer purchase decision

Peer Communication

Peer communication is the process of an individual learning about the attitudes, actions, and expertise of other consumers about certain products or services through online social interaction (Huang, 2016). According to Lueg and Finney (2007), social engagement, such as online peer communication, has a major impact on consumers' buying patterns as online shoppers. As a result, the following hypotheses follow:

H2: Peer communication has significant impact on customer purchase decision

Emotional Support

Emotional support is said to inspire and drive people to help others by sharing information and knowledge about certain items and services that will affect their purchasing decisions (Zhang et al., 2014). People will develop trust in other members of the social commerce community as a result of emotional exchange and connection with other members of the community (Ommen, et al., 2008). As a result, the following hypotheses follow:

H3: Emotional support has significant impact on customer purchase decision

Parasocial Interaction

Parasocial interaction is described as a one-sided connection formed by a user on a social commerce platform with other users, particularly celebrities or experts, that results from perceived closeness or delusion (Xiang L., Zheng, Lee, & Zhao, 2016). These users, for example, may buy things recommended by others (Horton and Wohl, 1956). As a result, the following hypotheses follow:

H4: Parasocial interaction has significant impact on customer purchase decision

Perceived Herd Behavior

From a psychological standpoint, this social phenomenon is also known as the bandwagon effect, in which people prefer to accept an action, trend, belief, or concept after many others

have done so (Lee and Hong, 2016). This signifies that the individual is impacted by a large number of referents (Osatuyi and Turel, 2019). As a result, the following hypotheses follow:

H5: Perceived herd behavior has significant impact on customer purchase decision

Research Issue and Methodology

This study is using quantitative approach with the population were taken from Instagram users in Medan, Indonesia with the age of 18-60 years old that have made purchase using Instagram for two times in the last six months. The sampling technique used in non-probability sampling using questionnaire as the main tool for collecting the responses. In this study, the researchers used purposive sampling technique, a sampling method used to select people who have extensive knowledge of the phenomenon studied. The number of respondents collected are 125 in Medan, Indonesia. The research model can be seen below:

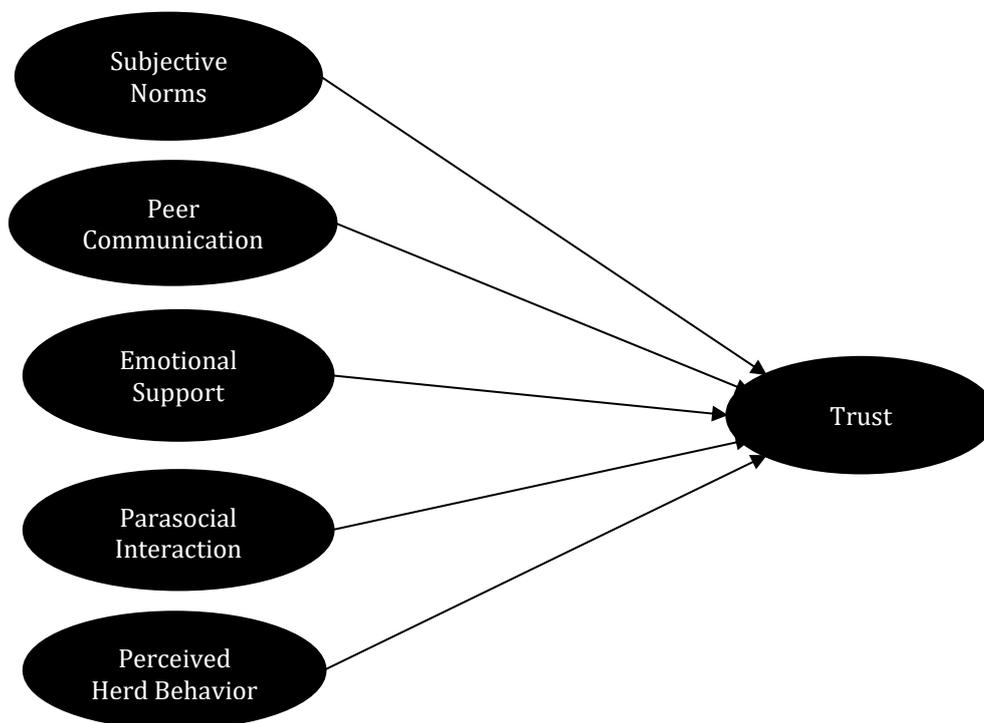


Figure 1 Research Model

Source: Yonathan Dri Handarkho (2020)

Findings and Discussion

In this study, the relationships between the variables were tested using the Structural Equation Model (SEM). AMOS 22.0 is the statistical analysis tool used in this research to answer the question formulated before. After the questionnaires have been filled out and sent back, descriptive statistics-analysis must be done.

In figure 2, it shows the majority of the respondent are Female with 71 Respondent (56.8%) and male respondent with 54 respondent (43.2%).

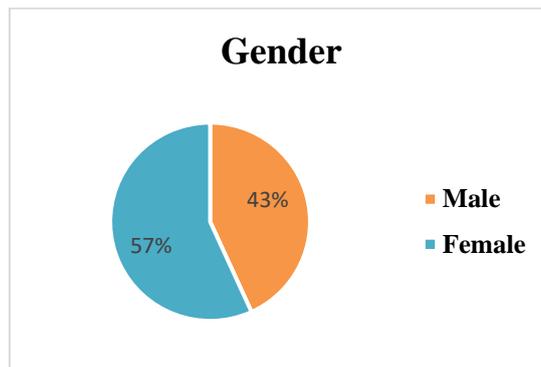


Figure 2 Respondent Characteristic by Gender

Source: Author

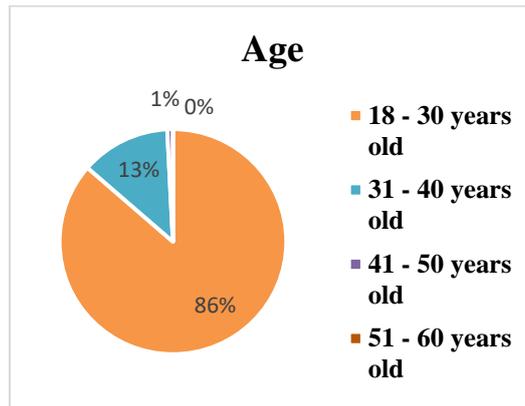


Figure 3 Respondent Characteristic by Age

Source: Author

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents (86.4%) are between the ages of 18 and 30 years old, followed by those between 31 and 40 years old (12.8%), and those between 41 and 50 years old (0.8%) with no respondent in age of 51-60 (0%).

Table 1: Respondent by Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-30	108	86.4	86.4	86.4
	31-40	16	12.8	12.8	99.2
	41-50	1	0.8	0.8	100
	51-60	0	0	0	100
	Total	125	100,0	100,0	

Source: Author

Based on the results on the below table 2, all of the indicators standard deviation is below 2.0 which shows that the responses given by the respondent are homogeneous. The indicator SN3 or *People expect me to purchase things on Instagram* in variable Subjective Norms has the highest standard deviation value with 1.08, this indicates that the respondent gives answer to Subjective Norms least homogeneous compared with other variables. The indicator with the highest mean is SN1 or the people whose opinion I value would approve my decision to purchase in Instagram and ES1 or When faced with difficulties, people on Instagram are on my side with 3.56. This indicates that the respondents agree with the indicators of subjective norms and emotional support in Instagram.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistic

Variable	Indicator	Description	Descriptive Statistic	
			Mean	SD
Subjective Norms (X1)	SN1	The people whose opinion I value would approve my decision to purchase in Instagram	3.56	1.06
	SN2	People I know view Instagram favorably to make purchases	3.36	1.03
	SN3	People expect me to purchase things on Instagram	3.33	1.08
Peer Communication (X2)	PC1	I talked with my peers about the product on Instagram	3.50	1.06
	PC2	I asked my peers opinion about the product	3.41	1.01
	PC3	I obtained product information from my peers	3.30	0.94
	PC4	My peers encourage me to buy the product	3.38	1.02
Emotional Support (X3)	ES1	When faced with difficulties, people on Instagram are siding with me	3.56	1.03
	ES2	When faced with difficulties, people on Instagram comfort and encourage me	3.50	0.99
	ES3	When faced with difficulties, people on Instagram express interest and concern over my well-being	3.42	0.97
Parasocial Interaction (X4)	PI1	Instagram shows me what other followers are like, even relevant celebrities / influencers I'm interested in	3.42	0.98
	PI2	I compare my own opinion on the product/service with others, especially celebrities'	3.30	0.95
	PI3	I trust the information from other followers, especially the celebrities / influencers I'm interested in	3.28	0.96
	PI4	When people post information on Instagram, they seem to understand what I want to know	3.44	0.96
Perceived Herd Behavior (X5)	PHB1	My decision to purchase is influenced by number of people buying on Instagram	3.46	1.02
	PHB2	If I find many of my acquaintance purchasing, I would be more willing to make a purchase	3.47	0.99
	PHB3	The more people who purchase, the more preferable it is for me to make purchase	3.29	0.97
	PHB4	It is wise to adopt the choice of other users when deciding whether or not to make a purchase	3.39	0.99
Customer Purchase Decision (Y)	CPD1	I am aware of the product before making the purchase	3.46	1.02
	CPD2	I search for information regarding the products before deciding on purchase	3.47	0.99
	CPD3	I am sure to make purchase after being recommended / informed by others	3.29	0.97

Source: Author

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Exogeneous Construct

Factor loading of CFA Exogeneous Construct must greater than 0.50 to be perceived as valid in forming constructs and can be used to build models.

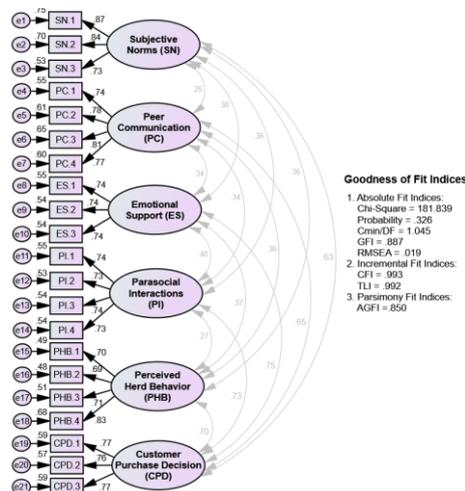


Figure 4 CFA Exogeneous Construct

Source: Author

Table 3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Exogeneous Construct

Construct	Indicator	Factor Loadings	Critical Value	Result
Subjective Norms (X1)	SN.1	0,866	≥ 0,50	Valid
	SN.2	0,840	≥ 0,50	Valid
	SN.3	0,729	≥ 0,50	Valid
Peer Communication (X2)	PC.1	0,744	≥ 0,50	Valid
	PC.2	0,779	≥ 0,50	Valid
	PC.3	0,806	≥ 0,50	Valid
	PC.4	0,775	≥ 0,50	Valid
Emotional Support (X3)	ES.1	0,744	≥ 0,50	Valid
	ES.2	0,738	≥ 0,50	Valid
	ES.3	0,736	≥ 0,50	Valid
Parasocial Interactions (X4)	PI.1	0,742	≥ 0,50	Valid
	PI.2	0,729	≥ 0,50	Valid
	PI.3	0,737	≥ 0,50	Valid
	PI.4	0,731	≥ 0,50	Valid
Perceived Herd Behavior (X5)	PHB.1	0,703	≥ 0,50	Valid
	PHB.2	0,692	≥ 0,50	Valid
	PHB.3	0,711	≥ 0,50	Valid
	PHB.4	0,826	≥ 0,50	Valid

Source: Author

According to Table 3, each indicator in each exogenous construct shows that in the measurement model, each indicator in each construct is subjective norms, peer communication, emotional support, parasocial interactions, perceived herd behavior, and customer purchase decisions, all of which already have a factor loading value of greater than 0.50, so that the indicators is valid in forming constructs and can be used to build models.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Endogenous Construct

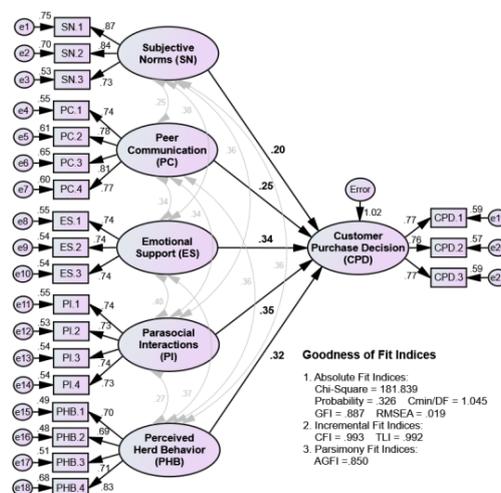


Figure 5 CFA Endogenous Construct

Source: Author

Table 4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Endogenous Construct

Construct	Indicator	Factor Loadings	Critical Value	Result
Customer Purchase Decision (Y)	CPD.1	0,770	≥ 0,50	Valid
	CPD.2	0,757	≥ 0,50	Valid
	CPD.3	0,770	≥ 0,50	Valid

Source: Author

In the measurement model, each indicator in endogenous construct has a factor loading value greater than 0.50, as shown in Table 4. This means that these indicators are applicable to building structures and can be used to create models.

Reliability Test

Table 4-5 Construct Reliability

Variable	Construct Reliability	AVE	Result
Subjective Norms (X1)	0,854	0,662	Reliabel
Peer Communication (X2)	0,858	0,603	Reliabel
Emotional Support (X3)	0,783	0,547	Reliabel
Parasocial Interactions (X4)	0,824	0,540	Reliabel
Perceived Herd Behavior (X5)	0,824	0,540	Reliabel
Customer Purchase Decision (Y)	0,810	0,586	Reliabel
Requirement	≥ 0,70	≥ 0,50	

Source: Author

Each construct has a construct reliability value of more than 0.70 and an AVE value of more than 0.50. This means that these indicators are reliable in expressing the constructs of subjective norms, peer communication emotional support, parasocial interactions, perceived herd behavior and customer purchase decision.

Full Structural Equation Modeling

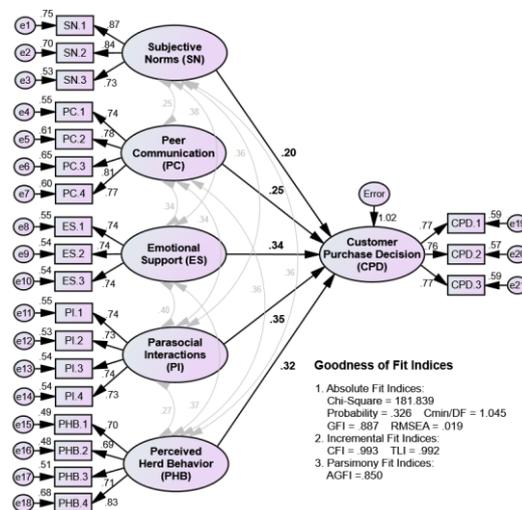


Figure 6 SEM Model Estimation Result

Source: Author

Table 6 SEM Conformity Index

Fit Measure		Index Value	Critical Value	Result
Absolute Fit Indices	Probability square (a)	0,326	> 0,05	Good fit
	Cmin/DF	1,045	≤ 2,00	Good fit
	GFI	0,887	≥ 0,90	Marginal fit
	RMSEA	0,019	≤ 0,08	Good fit
Incremental Indices	TLI	0,993	≥ 0,95	Good fit
	CFI	0,992	≥ 0,95	Good fit
Parsimony Indices	AGFI (b)	0,850	≥ 0,90	Marginal fit

(a) Even if the probability value is less than 0.05, a model with a sample size of n>250 or more than 30 indications (m>30) is declared to be fit. Hair et al. (2014):584

(b) In examining the adequacy of a single model, parsimony fit indices are not used (Hair et al., 2014:581).

Source: Author

The findings in table 6 show that all of the model suitability criteria (good fit or marginal fit) were met, allowing the structural model to be accepted. A good fit indicates that the model already has a good model fit, whereas a marginal fit indicates that the model conformance is within acceptable parameters.

Testing Structural Relationship

Table 7 Hypothesis Testing

Hip	Influence Between Variables		Std Estimate	C.R.	P-value	
H ₁	Subjective Norms (X ₁)	→	Customer Purchase Decision (Y)	0,195	2,898	0,004*
H ₂	Peer Communication (X ₂)	→	Customer Purchase Decision (Y)	0,247	3,506	0,000*
H ₃	Emotional Support (X ₃)	→	Customer Purchase Decision (Y)	0,336	4,127	0,000*
H ₄	Parasocial Interactions (X ₄)	→	Customer Purchase Decision (Y)	0,352	4,568	0,000*
H ₅	Perceived Herd Behavior (X ₅)	→	Customer Purchase Decision (Y)	0,325	4,290	0,000*

* : Significant at the 0.05 level

n.s. : Not significant

Source: Author

Table 7 shows that the C.R. value for Subjective Norms (H₁), Peer Communication (H₂), Emotional Support (H₃), Parasocial Interaction (H₄) and Perceived Herd Behavior (H₅) is greater than 1.96. This means that the relationships between the studied variables are significant.

Discussion

According to the findings of this study, Subjective Norms, Peer Communication, Emotional Support, Parasocial Interactions, Perceived Herd Behavior all have a positive and significant impact on Customer Purchase Decision. The most influential variable on Customer Purchase Decision is Parasocial Interaction, which has a C.R. value of 4.568 and a regression coefficient value of 0.352. This means the "fourth wall" has been torn through by the rise of Instagram, exposing the possibility to enhance communication between persons appearing in front of the camera and those viewing from another. This is in line with Phua et al (2018) that Emotional Support has significant influence on Customer Purchase Decision. Table 8 shows that PI-1 is the most accurate predictors with lambda loading of 0.742.

Table 8 Parasocial Interaction indicators

Variable	Indicator	Lambda Loading	Mean
Parasocial Interaction (X ₄)	PI1	0.742	3.42
	PI2	0.729	3.30
	PI3	0.737	3.28
	PI4	0.731	3.44

Source: Author

The second most influential variable is Perceived Herd Behavior which has the C.R. value of 4.290 and regression coefficient value of 0.325. This is in line with what Lee and Hong (2016) said, when people see that many other people are already participating in something especially in social commerce context, they are more likely to do the same. Table 9 shows that PHB4 is the most accurate predictor of Perceived Herd Behavior variable with lambda loading of 0.826.

Table 9 Perceived Herd Behavior indicators

Variable	Indicator	Lambda Loading	Mean
Perceived Herd Behavior (X ₅)	PHB1	0.703	3.46
	PHB2	0.692	3.47
	PHB3	0.711	3.29
	PHB4	0,826	3,39

Source: Author

The third most influential variable Emotional Support which has the C.R. value of 4.127 and regression coefficient value of 0.336. This is in line with what Zhang (2014) said, that the link created from Emotional Support will encourage and motivate people to share expertise and information about goods and services that will influence their purchase decisions with others. The most accurate predictor of Emotional Support variable is ES1 with lambda loading of 0.744.

Table 10 Emotional Support indicators

Variable	Indicator	Lambda Loading	Mean
<i>Emotional Support (X3)</i>	ES1	0.744	3.56
	ES2	0.738	3.50
	ES3	0.736	3.42

Source: Author

The fourth most influential variable on Peer Communication which has the C.R. value of 3.506 and regression coefficient value of 0.247. The result show similarity with Lueg and Finney (2007)'s study where Peer Communication has significant influence on Customer Purchase Decision. Table 11 shows that PC3 is the most accurate predictor of Peer Communication variable with lambda loading of 0.806.

Table 11 Peer Communication indicators

Variable	Indicator	Lambda Loading	Mean
<i>Peer Communication (X2)</i>	PC1	0.744	3.50
	PC2	0.779	3.41
	PC3	0.806	3.30
	PC4	0.775	3.38

Source: Author

The fifth most influential variable is Subjective Norms which has C.R. value of 2.898 and regression coefficient value of 0.195. The outcome is consistent with what Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) said, that a person has a particular sort of belief in order to carry out a behaviour based on the people closest to them (group preferences), as well as because the environment has an impact on the decisions the person makes. The most accurate predictor of Subjective Norms variable is SN1 with lambda loading of 0.866.

Table 12 Subjective Norms indicators

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Mean
<i>Subjective Norms (X1)</i>	SN1	0.866	3.56
	SN2	0.840	3.50
	SN3	0.729	3.42

Source: Author

Conclusion

This study's model was created to understand the influence between the between Social Experience based on Social Impact Theory that consist of Subjective Norms (SN), Peer Communication (PC), Emotional Support (ES), Parasocial Interaction (PI) and Perceived Herd Behavior (PH) towards Customer Purchase Decision (CPD). From the study conducted, subjective norms, peer communication emotional support, parasocial interactions, perceived herd behavior all have a positive and significant influence on customer purchase decision. Therefore, the managerial implication will revolve around the significant variables. First, for Subjective Norms variable, As there are a lot of other forms of social commerce other than Instagram that has many similar or different function, Instagram as a photo/video sharing application should stand out among the competitors. To maximize it, Instagram should maintain their certain brand image in giving off vibe that people who purchase via their application can differ from purchasing from others. By doing this, individuals will be able to comprehend and assess the perks and see trends, what is available, and what is trending not just locally but also globally. People will be encouraged to make purchase by being put on some 'expectations or 'pressure' to, the impulses heightening their desire to adopt certain viewpoints, including owning things by purchasing it. Second, for Peer Communication variable, Instagram must comprehend user behaviour and continue to innovate to support it. They can improve by making direct message having better features that support media sharing as good as messaging applications. To be able to pin certain products or chats, making call

function better, keywords search etc. By doing this, audiences will be able to have appropriate discussions and offer suggestions that will encourage purchasing. Third, for Emotional Support, it is suggested that Instagram manage its community standards properly to prevent abuse and encourage feature development. Instagram has given many users the opportunity to communicate their emotions and allow others to relate to them by being a social sharing platform. Fourth, for Parasocial Interaction, Instagram must retain and strengthen its ability to interact with and present these people to sizable audiences through its services. They can improve by enabling a button that allows coupon sharing or purchase code in-app. By doing this, it will encourage and ease people's buying experience. Viewers will be able to learn more, engage with individuals in a way that would typically be difficult in real life, and form opinions about the products that are being advertised. Fifth, for Perceived Herd Behavior, it is recommended for Instagram to further improve their feature as showing numbers of purchases on a product, top selling, and also recommendation results that are relevant to their interests and enhance recommendations for more secure buying decisions.

Suggestions for further study

This research examined the impact of social experience on customer purchase decision in the social commerce context of Instagram. Additional research may be conducted by connecting the factors to customer purchase decisions, such as perceived risk, and applying moderating variables like gender, age, and experience. This would allow the researcher to compare various findings regarding the widespread implementation of the social experience in the era of digitalization.

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