

# THE INFLUENCER AND HEDONIST LIFESTYLE OF DIGITAL SOCIETY

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**Abstrak:** Influencers become a booming fashion icon among the society. They represent themselves with an ideal identity to the society, from fashion, makeup, vacation spots and other modern lifestyles. Influencers want to make themselves as role model for society and become a culture followed by society. Influencers have power relations to their followers, so they can affect their followers to follow the culture brought by them. Previous research said that influencer became a phenomenon in the new media era towards the establishment of a hedonist lifestyle of digital society. Researcher argued that in addition to the power relation from the influencer to their followers, the emotional pleasure problem of the followers in consuming, especially in consuming the same stuff as the influencer, becomes an important aspect to the establishment of hedonist lifestyles. This research uses a qualitative approach with interviews and visual analysis from influencer's Instagram account.

**Keywords:** digital society; influencer, power relation, hedonist lifestyle

## Introduction

Society consume digital media to obtain information through social networks. People who have adapted to the rapid development of technology and digital media, experience social changes such as how to interact, how to dig information, establish relationships, and how to build their identity. The use of social media in society becomes an aspect of life inherent with society. GlobalWebIndex in Global Social Media Trends 2015, European Publishers Council, shows that the global society spends most of their time on using media in a day most of their time used to consume social networking by 15%, which is the largest number compared to other media. The use of social networks gave an effect to the dividing wall between private and public realm, real or imaginary identity, personal or commercial entertainment.<sup>1</sup>

Influencers appear in the digital society alongside with technological developments and the rise of social media platforms. Influencers through social media platforms become a fashion icon of society, they are entering the lifestyle of digital society that includes fashion, makeup or the stuff they use, the food they eat, the place they visit and other modern and luxurious lifestyles. They are praised for their ideal lifestyle and become the dream of society. Influencers with their appealing content make themselves a reference to society in determining behavior, attitudes, values, and determinants in consumption activities that can make people who love it hypnotized and imitate their lifestyles.

“@tasyafarasya: Say #BYEHEAVYMATTE with Maybelline’s Powder Mattes. The 1<sup>st</sup> Ultra lightweight Lipstick from Maybelline. So lightweight guys. And if feels naked on lips, but looks perfect! I’m use shade “Touch of Nude” #ByeHeavyMatte #MaybellineIndonesia.”<sup>2</sup>

The caption is probably very familiar with Instagram users. That caption was posted by one of the famous influencers on Instagram platform or called Instafamous. With their ability to influence in producing content such as photos, videos, and captions that can attract people to follow their lifestyles such as buying the product that they used, consuming the same product, and going to the same place. Such things bring out author's argument that influencers are a new role model in the digital society and could make others follow their lifestyles. The question in this paper is how the role of influencer to the lifestyle of digital society? How big their power relation to its followers?

### Literature Review

Studies about influencer has been widely discussed by some literatures, but not enough for scientific researchers, because the issue of influencers continues to grow alongside with the development of digital technology and social media. The Influencer issue is very warm and closely related to the digital society. The literature review includes the identification of the influencer, the power relation analysis of the influencer.

#### Digital Society

Alongside with the development of technology and digital society, people began to innovate in developing facilities and information media, they use digital technology to seek information through social networks. Social network research is marked by a focus on the structural nature of the mutual relationship between the collective social entities.<sup>3</sup> Digital media becomes a tool that enables social movements to achieve goals.<sup>4</sup>

The development and innovation of technology become the stimulant factor of social change in society. Society has changed on the way of accessing media, information, and entertainment, where the use of digital technology is appeal. Society in the fulfillment of their needs must adapting to the environment, where the advance of technology, open access to information through social networks, then the public consumption of digital media is very rapid. It gave birth to a new face of society which is digital society. The digital society experiences different ways of interaction dan communication, where people connect with each other through digital technology such as social media. The rapid growth of social media users in society, led to the influencers of social media that have an important role in changing someone's lifestyle and in the birth of a new popular culture with content that they're uploaded.

### **Who is Influencer?**

Influencer or rather a social media Influencer, Freberg defines it as a third-party endorser that creates and shapes consumer attitudes through the use of blogs, tweets, or social media sites.<sup>5</sup> Influencers are just the same thing with celebrities, it's just that they are famous in a smaller scope. Theresa M. Senft defines influencers as micro celebrities, he argues that micro celebrities are the ones who increase their popularity on the internet through blogs, vlogs, and other social networking sites.<sup>6</sup>

In recent years, non-traditional digital or celebrity groups such as YouTube and instafamous have risen exponentially and are increasingly perceived as a more credible source than traditional celebrities, because they are considered more relatable.<sup>7</sup>

Influencers have the ability to display compelling content on their social media platforms, they show their identity, such as their lifestyle, fashion style, makeup, products and luxury goods used, luxury vehicles used, nice and luxurious places visited, fancy and fun events such as concerts, parties, and so forth. They want to be a fashion icon for the society, featuring their ideal life side, and glamor to make it easier for them to influence people's views in the new lifestyle ideology and popular culture they bring.

Influencers interact and communicate more quickly, because with what they post will elicit a faster response from readers like "what product is used?", "Where is the restaurant?" "How is the product going," and the influencer responds back to answer questions and responses of readers. In this paper the researcher focuses more on social media influencers, namely on the Instagram platform that we call instafamous or selebgram. Active participation of Influencer in interacting with the followers or readers is the

driving force of the people's trust. The content produced by Influencer is interesting and the messages conveyed are clear and specific, their words or captions are very authentic without any impression of compulsion and attachment. Things like that build the power of relations between the influencers and the society, where their trust and influence become greater. The author did research on the influencer of social media Instagram or referred to as "Instafamous".

### **Hedonist Lifestyle**

The followers of influencers try to imitate their lifestyles, where they're assume that the influencer figure is an ideal figure of the upper social class with a modern lifestyle, a modern lifestyle that is not outdated. The followers of influencers imitate their consumptive lifestyles, aim to improve their social status, with or without unconsciously and racing to take advantage of stuff or consume the symbol that considered to be valuable in that time and regarded as their own existence.

Several previous relevant researches, Monica Utari research on social media impact Instagram account @princessyahrini about hedonist lifestyle of her followers, said that social media Instagram account @princessyahrini had a positive effect on hedonism lifestyle.<sup>8</sup> Rizka Monanda on The Effect of Social Media Instagram @awkarin About Hedonist Lifestyle Among Teenage Followers said that there was a social media Instagram @awkarin influence on hedonist lifestyle among followers with low category.<sup>9</sup> Based on previous exposure and previous research, researchers interested in conducting research with a qualitative approach to the phenomenon of influencers in the digital society hedonist lifestyle.

Plummer defines lifestyle, "An individual way of life that is identified by how people spend their time (activities), what they consider important in their lives (interest) and what they think about the world around them."<sup>10</sup> According to Chaney, the hedonist lifestyle is a lifestyle where the activities are just for the enjoyment of life, such as playing time, buying expensive items that they're like and wanted to be the center of attention.<sup>11</sup> The researchers used Chaney's hedonistic lifestyle concept, because researchers wanted to see how the role of influencer in the digital society hedonist lifestyle.

### **Power**

Power is the ability to influence others to believe, behave, or appreciate as those in power wanted to or reinforce, validate, or affirm belief, behavior, or present value. According to French & Raven, there are two types of power: personality and position. There are 4 personal powers lied in

individual characteristics that can be used to influence others; consisting of expertise, reference authority, access to important network information and connections. Positional power is given to people based on the position they hold in an organization or society and often includes some elements of legitimacy, coercion, and respect.<sup>11</sup>

The author uses several power bases according to French and Raven. There are five power bases: gift power, reward power, coercive power, the power of reference, and the expert power.<sup>12</sup> The power of a gift is defined as a force that is essentially the ability to reward. Referent power, the power that gained from the attraction, so the identification happened. The greater attraction, the greater identification, and the power of reference become stronger too. Expert power is the power gained because of the knowledge and expertise in a field. Expert power comes when one has knowledge or task expertise that is appreciated by other organizations or individuals. According to French and Raven, expert power comes from the perception that a person has power because of the perception that he or she possesses knowledge and expertise in a particular field and gains trust or recognition from others of the person's knowledge (role models).<sup>13</sup>

## **Research Method**

This research uses qualitative approach because the author wanted to analyze a role of influencer in the digital society and how the digital society imitation proces against social media influencers. The unit of analysis of this research is individual, where Selebgram and Netizen or Instagram users as a research subject. Source of data in this research is Instagram, where author use Instagram collecting visual data to be analyzed, interview result, literature study, and documentation study.

## **Findings and Discussion**

This research focuses on Influencer of social media Instagram or called as Instafamous or Selebgram, that is an Instagram user who achieve popularity in social media Instagram who has so much followers and have ability to produce an interesting content and have an authentic language and particpate directly in mutual interaction with their followers. Influencers accept a wide range of businesses in their social media content such as paid promote and promoting endorsements, it is the occurrence of refraction between the private realm or the business realm. This research analyzes how power relation of Influencer on social media to hedonistic lifestyle of digital society.

## The Power of Social Media Influencer

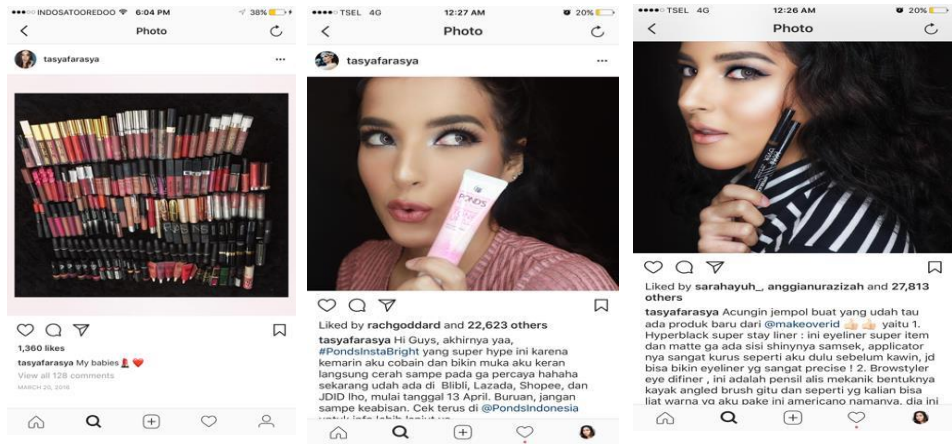


Figure 1.

Source: <https://www.instagram.com/tasyafarasya/>

Figure 1 is the example posts from influencer's Instagram account. They showed products they had and what they were used. Figure 1 shows one of the beauty influencers @tasyafarasya post a photo of herself holding a product she used. Picture in her caption describes a product she is currently using. Influencer social media becomes the ideal figure to become a fashion icon, a product ambassador, and as a socialization agent in a digital society.

Through their interesting approaches such as live interaction through live features on Instagram, respond to comments or reply messages and of course with interesting content becomes very easy to be accepted by the society. The ability and experience of an influencer become the source of their greatest power. Many brands of product made collaboration with Influencers because they have a power relation to the society. Influencers are able to influence the digital society to follow their preferences, such as joining the same product, buying products in the recommended places, following influencer lifestyles, engaging in influencer-requested activities such as following giveaway, meet n greet, and so forth.

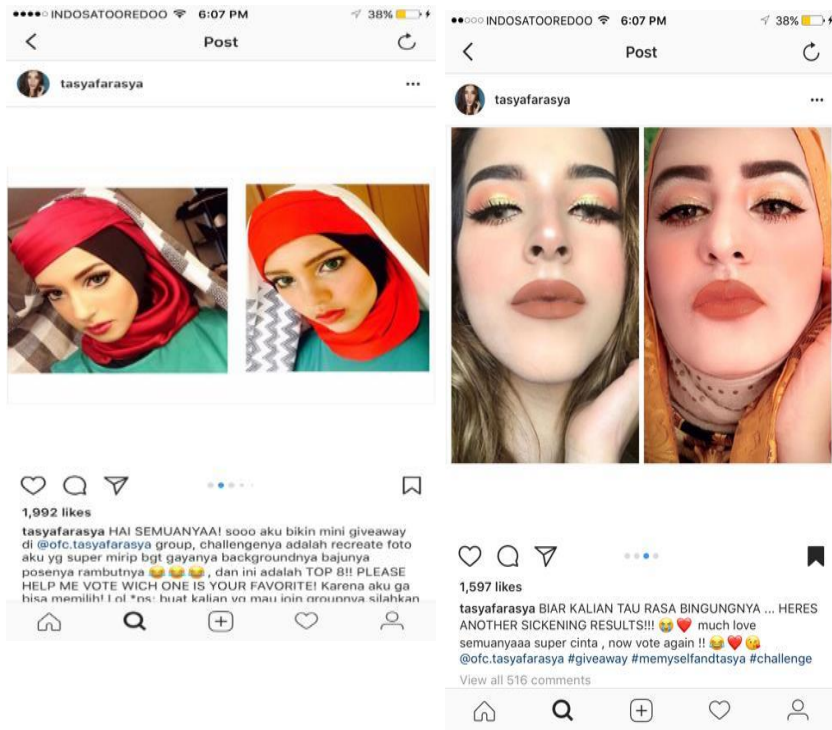


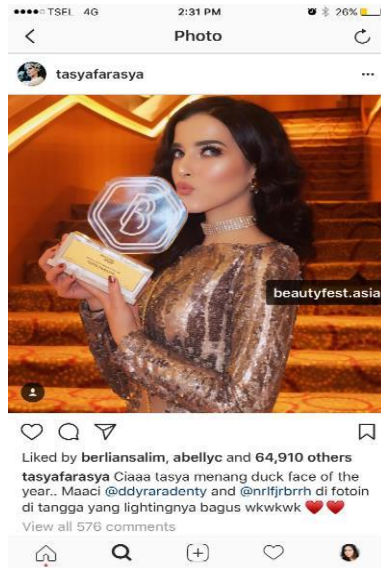
Figure 2.

Source: <https://www.instagram.com/tasyafarasya/>

Figure 2 showed the power of relations between influencers with the society, where people love lifestyle and the appearance of the identity of the influent and make the lifestyle of the influencer. Figure 2 illustrated the case of one of the social media influencers @tasyafarasya who organized a giveaway that was a competition for her followers to recreate the makeup look and style of Tasya Farasya with hashtag #memyselfandtasya. The followers were flocked to follow the competition by recreate makeup look like Tasya Farasya by using the same property with her.

Influencers have ability to influence others, the power that comes from the ability (expert power), attractiveness, and ability to reward. Influencer has experience and expertise in a particular field, where it becomes the basis of the power that Influencer has. Example, a beauty influencer @tasyafarasya, who has the knowledge and expertise in the field of beauty. She is expert at applying makeup tools and always look beautiful in every appearance and post. She also creates content that convinces her skill such

as create a tutorial makeup as well as reviewing makeup products. She won several awards for her work, such as the best beauty influencer award and the best beauty content creator award. She has thousands of followers around 640,000. Not few producers of various brands and online shop make cooperation with her.



**Figure 3. Tasya Farasya Awarded**

Source: <https://www.instagram.com/tasyafarasya/>

Beside an expert power, there is referent power, the power that comes from the attraction, so that it can influence others to identify. To become an influencer, someone must have the appeal to lure and make people likes and hypnotized by their looks. Through their content, influencer spreading their appeal, such as posting their best performances in clothing, makeup, great places, and even by writing captions with language and words that catch the attention of others. Prestige from Influencers is also an attraction, where they post a luxurious lifestyle such as luxury goods and a beautiful and luxurious vacation spot so that attracts followers to keep up with the social media influencers and identifying them.

Reward Power is also the basis of Influencers' power. They often give giveaway to their followers. Giveaway is held to give rewards to the followers who have actively participated in the activities held. Giveaway



given following with the applicable terms and conditions, such as following a brand, use a brand, post back an Influencer post, write an interesting caption about a product, and recreate an influencer look. Giveaway is given for the primary purpose of promoting a product and for expanding the popularity of the influencer itself. Rewards are not given away for free, but with the ability to reward them through competition, encouraging others to follow what the influencer wants to achieve a goal. Like the giveaway by @tasyafarasya, a beauty influencer who collaborate with a makeup brand by repost @tasyafarasya's photo and write a comment, the reason to get the product from the brand on comment field, and about 1500 people participated on that giveaway. It was not only able to give rewards to the followers, but also rewards to the producers who work with them. Influencer able to provide rewards in the form of achievement of producer goals, such as increased public interest in the product and increase sales figures of these products.

### **The Influencer and Hedonist Lifestyle**

The definition of influencer media today focuses primarily on the frequent content distribution through social media channels. Therefore, according to Nonprofit Business Advisors, influencers are people who have greater potential than average to influence others because of attributes such as frequency of communication, persuasion or personal measure and centrality social network.<sup>14</sup> Through regular uploads, a unique visual aesthetic of their pictures/videos and a close connection to their followers, these Instagrammers become micro-celebrities and serve as idols for their followers. By allowing their followers to participate in their daily life, Instagrammers appear approachable and sometimes even perceived as friends or peers by their followers.<sup>15</sup> These perceptions increase trust and an Instagrammers influence on her followers buying decisions. Instagrammers, perceived as peers, can motivate their followers to buy a certain brand or avoid other brands in order to be like them.<sup>16</sup>

The phenomenon of Influencer in a digital society is closely related to changes in patterns of behavior and lifestyle. Influencers have made their identity a reference in the formation of behavior, the determination of consumption and the new lifestyle of society. Influencer has brought a new popular culture to the society through the content it uploads, with the aim that people can follow the culture. Influencer has a variety of cooperation with several manufacturers to review and promote their products and shops.

Paid promote and endorsement are sometimes difficult to distinguish from personal posts without sponsorship. Their posts still get a public response. Therefore, influencers serve as an advertising tool that is involved

in the production system not just as a consumer. This is supported by the perception of digital society about power owned by Influencer. Producers are interested in working with influencers because in addition to reducing production costs, influencers are considered more effective as an agent of socialization due to effective interaction between influencers and the society or followers through active participation of Influencers. The message that is delivered also considered more acceptable to the public. In addition to producer activity that has been induced by the activities of influencers, consumption patterns and lifestyle changes.

The most widely lifestyle measurement approach is the AIO rating statement (Activities, Interests, and Opinions).<sup>17</sup> Lifestyle as used in lifestyle segmentation research measures society activity in terms of how they spend their time, what interests they perceive to be important, how they think according to their view of themselves and the world around them as well as some basic characteristics such as their stage in the life cycle, incomes, education, and where they live.<sup>18</sup>

Today's digital society makes influencers as a reference in behaving, where they will follow influencers with similar interests such as fashion, makeup, vacation, and so on. Someone who likes makeup will follow influencers with makeup content, they will love to see and imitate influencers like what makeup that they used, where's to buy that stuff, how to review the product, how to apply it, how the end result, a sense of curiosity driven by the similarity of hobby or interest and how they spend time in the same way as the influencer. The influencer's opinion on a value influences the opinion of the people who followed them.

Based on the results of interviews with some Instagram users who viewed the influencer account, they said that they followed the influencer's social media because they like to the content that posted by influencer, they followed influencers who shared interests with them, and because of their interesting activities.

"I followed @berliansalim, because she often created makeup tutorials and really expert on makeup, where I also just started to learn makeup," said one of the followers beauty influencer @berliansalim.<sup>19</sup>

"I follow Berlian Salim because she often updates about makeup, and I like makeup too, I'm interested with her tutorial videos, and I like to recreate her look, and I'm interested with the product what @berliansalim use and review. Eeverytime I see her post about makeup makes me want to buy that product too because her reviews about makeup product is always impressed me."<sup>20</sup>

Post Influencers such as reviews, tutorials, and so forth become a reference for their followers in deciding the purchase or consumption. What is reviewed and used by Influencer encourages its followers to get interested and buy the same product. The digital society prefers to review Influencers' reviews and posts about a product rather than looking at conventional mass media such as magazines or newspapers, brochures, catalogs and television. As selbgram is able to build trusts to the society, in addition to being more relatable, influencers perceived to have the ability to value a product . It led to a change in the pattern of consumption of digital society and formed a hedonist lifestyle in a digital society. This is reinforced by the response of one of the users of social media Instagram.

"I am more interested by seeing the reviews of influencers, because they must use it once or twice before reviewing, Influencer also has the ability to rate products that can be more reliable."<sup>21</sup>

The digital society also chooses social media as a means of searching for information more effectively. Content posted by Influencer is also considered to facilitate the public in the search for information of a product such as what products are used, where to buy it because of a label or tag that is directly connected to the brand account or the seller's account of the product. Postings in the form of advertising have a purpose to promote a product, gain followers interest, and buy the product.<sup>22</sup> It is that which changes the pattern of public consumption and shaping the hedonistic lifestyle of the digital society

## **Conclusion**

This study shows that in the digital society the use of social media has been inherent with every aspect of life. People prefer to seek information through social networking because of its effectiveness. Along with the development of technology and digital media that gave birth to the role model or reference in determining a value, attitude and behavior, namely Influencer.

Social media Influencer gained popularity in social media with their interesting content. Influencers have the power relations between Influencers to their followers, power based on expert or skills that get the public's attention and recognized as photography skills, interesting content creation, as well as language skills or in the use of words in social media that influence people.

The power that comes from the attraction to be a reference for others and make others to identify them. And the power that comes from the ability to give rewards to others, thus making others consistently follow them. With such power, the Influencer able to influence others in order to act in accordance with the expected goals, such as increasing the interest of followers, influence the opinions and behavior of others such as consumptive behavior. The power of influencers is a driving factor in changes in consumption patterns and the formation of the hedonist lifestyle in a digital society.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> See Global Social Media Trends. *European Publishers Council*, Retrieved May 2, 2018, from <http://epceurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/epc-trends-social-media.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> @tasyafarasya's caption posted, <https://instagram.com/p/Bbi57pYD2ZI/>, November 16<sup>th</sup> 2018.

<sup>3</sup> See Engkus Kuswarno, "Potret Wajah Masyarakat Digital Indonesia," *Journal Communicate* 1(1) (2015): 47-54.

<sup>3</sup> *Loc. Cit.*: 48

<sup>4</sup> *Loc. Cit.*: 50

<sup>5</sup> "The Social Media Influencer and Brand Switching," Lund University, School of Economics and Management, Retrieved November 18, 2017, <http://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordId=8910352&fileId=8910354>: 21

<sup>6</sup> *Loc. Cit.*: 23

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> See Monica Utari, "Pengaruh Media Sosial Instagram Akun @princessyahrini Terhadap Gaya Hidup Hedonis Para Followersnya," *JOM FISIP* 4(2) (2017).

<sup>9</sup> Olivia M. Kaparang, "Analisa Gaya Hidup Remaja Dalam Mengimitasi Budaya Pop Korea Melalui Televisi," *Journal' Acta Diurna'* 2(2) (2013): 3

<sup>10</sup> *Loc. Cit.*: 4

<sup>11</sup> J. T. Plummer, "The Concept and Application of Life Style Segmentation," *Journal of Marketing*, Vol.38, No.1. (1974): 33-37.

<sup>12</sup> J. R. P. French Jr. & B. H. Raven, "The Bases of Social Power," in D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies in Social Power* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959), 150-167.

<sup>13</sup> *Loc. Cit.*: 263-67

<sup>14</sup> N. Zietek, "The Characteristics and Components of Fashion Influencer Marketing," Retrieved November 17<sup>th</sup> 2017, <http://www.diva-portal.se/smash/get/diva2:972106/FULLTEXT01.pdf>: 9.

<sup>15</sup> Lennart A. Braatz, *#Influencer Marketing on Instagram: Consumer Responses Towards Promotional Posts: The Effect of Message Sidedness and Depiction* (Master Thesis University of Twente, 2017), 7.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Plummer, *Op. Cit.*, 33.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Respondent is female, 18 years old.

<sup>20</sup> Respondent is female, 17 years old.

<sup>21</sup> Respondent is female, 17 years old.

<sup>22</sup> See Morgan Glucksman, "Rise of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Lifestyle Branding: A Case Study of Lucie Fink," *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, 8(2) (2017).

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