



Antecedents and Consequences of Parasocial Relationships in Tourism Marketing: A Case Study of Social Media Influencers

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Abstract

Most research in tourism marketing only explores planned and impulsive factors to study visitors' travel behavior and ignores relationship aspects. This research aims to produce a comprehensive model extending Parasocial Interaction Theory to explain the mechanisms of parasocial relationships involving antecedents and consequences (intentions, attitudes, and behavior) in the context of tourism marketing via social media in Indonesia. A quantitative approach with survey methods is suitable for completing the objectives of this research. Respondents were selected using two criteria because this study choose a non-probability sampling approach, especially purposive. The number of respondents who met the criteria and filled in the data was 619 respondents, and the data was analyzed using SEM, which showed several results. First, the antecedent variables of Emotional Engagement, Motivational Entertainment, Value Congruence, and Intimate Self-Disclosure are proven to influence parasocial relationships. Second, Parasocial Relationships successfully influence Brand Trust, Travel Intentions, and Sharing Intentions. Third, Travel Intention is a predictor of travel decisions. The extension of parasocial interaction theory has been shown to help understand the dynamics of the relationship between individuals and media figures in the digital era and the implications of this relationship in explaining the mechanisms of its influence on tourism attitudes and behavior.

Anteseden dan Konsekuensi Hubungan Parasocial dalam Pemasaran Pariwisata: “Studi Kasus Influencer Social Media”

Abstrak

Mayoritas penelitian dalam konteks pemasaran pariwisata hanya mengeksplorasi faktor-faktor terencana dan impulsif untuk mempelajari perilaku berwisata para pengunjung dan mengabaikan aspek hubungan. Target tujuan penelitian ini yaitu menghasilkan model komprehensif perluasan Teori Interaksi Parasosial dalam menjelaskan mekanisme hubungan parasosial yang melibatkan anteseden dan konsekuensinya (niat, sikap, dan perilaku) dalam konteks pemasaran pariwisata melalui media sosial di Indonesia. Pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode survei sesuai untuk menyelesaikan tujuan penelitian ini. Responden dipilih dengan dua kriteria karena studi ini memilih pendekatan non-probability sampling khususnya purposive. Responden yang memenuhi kriteria dan lengkap mengisi data berjumlah 619 responden dan data dianalisis dengan SEM yang menunjukkan beberapa hasil. Pertama, variabel anteseden yang terdiri dari Keterikatan Emosional, Motivasi Hiburan, Kesesuaian Nilai, dan Pengungkapan Diri secara Intim terbukti berpengaruh pada Hubungan Parasosial. Kedua, Hubungan Parasosial menjadi variabel yang berhasil untuk memberikan pengaruh terhadap Kepercayaan Merek, Niat Berwisata, dan Niat Berbagi. Ketiga, Niat Berwisata secara nyata terbukti menjadi prediktor untuk keputusan berwisata. Perluasan teori interaksi parasosial terbukti membantu memahami dinamika hubungan antara individu dan tokoh media dalam era digital, serta implikasi dari hubungan tersebut dalam menjelaskan mekanisme pengaruhnya terhadap sikap dan perilaku berwisata.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism in Indonesia plays an essential role as a driver of the country's economic growth (Lusianingrum & Pertiwi, 2023). The tourism sector can contribute to foreign exchange and employment. The value of foreign exchange contributions from the tourism sector for Indonesia in 2023 will reach 218 trillion (Arini, 2024). Apart from that, the tourism sector's post-pandemic growth has absorbed a workforce of 22.89 million people (Hasibuan et al., 2023). This condition resulted in tourism becoming a sector that recovered quickly after the shock of the pandemic, so it succeeded in contributing 3.9% to GDP in 2023.

Unsurprisingly, the tourism sector is a leading sector and a priority for the country. The tourism sector's positive trend, which has managed to survive and grow during and after the pandemic, shows that this sector has the potential to contribute significantly to GDP (Hermanwan, 2021). In 2024, the tourism sector is projected to provide foreign exchange contributions of more than 14 billion US dollars, and the target will continue to increase in the following year. Achieving this target needs to be supported by massive and contemporary efforts to promote the tourism sector effectively and efficiently to encourage an increase in tourist visits (Lusianingrum & Pertiwi, 2023).

Digital marketing is beneficial in promoting tourism destinations, for example, using social media (Lusianingrum et al., 2023; Pertiwi et al., 2022; Ong et al., 2022). Social media has now played a role as a contemporary communication channel that has a significant impact in the era of digital transformation (Georgiou & Galbreath, 2023). This condition is because social media channels are critical in the contemporary period and have a signifi-

cant influence on the attitudes, behavioral intentions, and actual behavior of tourists (Wang et al., 2023; Caraka et al., 2022; Azhar et al., 2022). For most tourism entrepreneurs, social media has been considered successful in significantly changing how they communicate with partners (Li et al., 2021). Social media marketing has become necessary to twenty-first-century business or society 5.0. This social media has changed market dynamics and endangered the competitive position of brands, including brands in the tourism sector. Tourism brands increasingly adopt social media for marketing activities such as branding, customer relationship management, service provision, and sales promotion (Elsharnouby et al., 2021).

Previous research highlights the importance of social media and digital data in understanding tourism dynamics (Peco-Torres et al., 2021; Joo et al., 2020; Giglio et al., 2019). Social media is a technology platform widely used to share travel information and experiences, motivating audiences to further explore engagement with tourism brands through social media (Paul & Roy, 2023). In other words, the pervasive impact of social media provides new opportunities to study audiences' attitudes towards tourism and further express their opinions and read about tourism developments on social media (Chu et al., 2020). Social media-based information exchange from influencers to audiences and tourists is part of a practice-based solution for better planning sustainable tourism promotions (Vu et al., 2020).

Social media influencers have significantly changed how people interact and disclose personal information. Influencers have also taken action by leveraging this new mode of interaction and leveraging their marketing capabilities to connect with their target audiences. Marketing activities carried out by influencers on social

media reinforce familiar emotions that audiences associate with certain brands, thereby allowing audiences to empathize with the celebrity or influencer (Chen et al., 2023). In addition, social media has been believed to increase brand value because it has a broad platform for users to exchange ideas and information (Ashraf et al., 2023). The ever-growing profile of social media has encouraged recent research investigating how to foster relationships between customers and celebrities or influencers through social media (Kim, 2023). Given the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool, it is essential to consider how best to understand and harness the power of celebrity or influencer parasocial relationships. However, most research only concentrates on the direct impact of social media influencers or celebrities on attitudes and behavior (Pop et al., 2022). Qiu et al. (2024) said that short videos from influencers on social media platforms direct influence tourists' travel intentions and attitudes. Furthermore, Hu et al. (2024) also focuses on seeing the direct impact of influencer vlogs on travel intention and audience engagement. Previous research ignores mechanisms that explore the formation of parasocial relationships that can accelerate the impact of influencers or celebrities on audience attitudes and behavior. With the development of social media, the role of influencers has become increasingly dominant. Influencers often build strong and personal relationships with their followers, which may differ from traditional parasocial relationships with celebrities or television personalities (Lou, 2022). Further research into these dynamics and a focus on emotional approaches will provide a better understanding of how parasocial relationships form and function in the context of social media in tourism marketing (Meng et al., 2024). Parasocial interaction theory is a framework that explains

the emotional and cognitive impacts of parasocial relationships from modern influencers (Burnasheva & Suh, 2022).

This research will fill the gap with novelty by focusing on social media-based tourism marketing involving parasocial relationships, which still receive little attention. Parasocial relationships refer to media-enabled relationships between users and influencers (Kilipiri et al., 2023). This connection makes the audience feel like they enjoy interpersonal relationships with their favorite media influencer; the relationship appears so intimate that audiences feel the celebrity is a personal friend, father figure, sibling, or lover (Conde & Casais, 2023). Parasocial relationships are based on transparent communication between celebrities and their admirers, an essential factor in influencing audience attitudes and behavior.

Studies on tourism behavior focusing on marketing via social media have been widely discussed from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) perspective, Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and Stimulus-Organism-Response (Kim & Cake, 2024; Lusianingrum & Pertiwi, 2023; Joo et al., 2020). However, these three theories have received criticism because they emphasize rational reasoning and impulsive activities more, and interaction and relationship factors must be considered. Thus, it is essential to identify social media-based tourism marketing mechanisms emphasizing forming parasocial relationships to generate travel intentions and decisions. Parasocial relationships resulting from interactions between influencers and their audiences have been proven to accelerate the generation of audience travel intentions and decisions (Yılmazdoğan et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2023).

The research model developed is the Parasocial Interaction Theory perspective with the antecedents and consequences of social media influencer parasocial rela-

tionships. Lacap et al. (2024) stated that the antecedents of parasocial relationships are self-disclosure and social media interactions, while the consequences, namely brand loyalty, brand credibility, and source trustworthiness; do not involve behaviour. Furthermore, Leite & Baptista (2022) show that the antecedent of parasocial relationships is intimate disclosure, and its consequences are brand trust and intentions, but it does not involve behaviour. Furthermore, Zhao et al. (2022) explained that the antecedents of parasocial relationships consist of emotional engagement, entertainment motivation, value congruence and its consequence, namely the intention to share. Studies on parasocial relationships in the context of tourism marketing that have been carried out previously have proven that the focus is still limited to the consequences of intentions and attitudes so that they do not involve behaviour (Yilmazdoğan et al., 2021). In fact, a comprehensive model is needed for scientific developments and practical implications for academics and tourism marketers, starting from the disclosure of antecedents to the consequences of parasocial relationships. So, this research is very urgent because it has novelty through the expansion of parasocial interaction theory to explain the antecedents of parasocial relationships, which consist of intimate-self disclosure, emotional engagement, entertainment motivation, and value congruence. To produce a comprehensive conceptualization model, this study also examines the consequences of parasocial relationships, including brand trust, travel intentions, sharing intentions (intentions and attitudes), and travel decisions (behaviour). Involving behavioural aspects, namely travel decisions, is by the recommendations of Ong et al. (2022) so that the model is more comprehensive because the three previous studies only predicted travel intentions and attitudes.

Relationship between Emotional Engagement and Parasocial Relationships

Zhao et al. (2022) and Shen et al., (2022) believe that emotional engagement refers to the emotional connection and expression of social media audiences who see content and immediately respond to influencers and other audiences. In this case, the audience interacts via streaming media with the influencer. Meanwhile, interact with fellow audiences via instant chat to gain alternative experiences (Chen, 2023). Emotional engagement means that tourists can feel an emotional connection through content shared live or by posting short videos and tourist photos. A feeling of emotional connectedness arises from fast-paced, instant interactions and chats with other users. In this case, the audience will respond to each other's comments and questions, including severe comments for streaming media. When audiences are in a fast-paced instant chat environment, they may experience the phenomenon of immersion or a "feeling of spiritual devotion", which encourages them to connect with others actively and participate in emotionally emerging connectivity and emotional expression so that it can lead to parasocial relationships (Forster, 2022; Shen et al., 2022). Researchers believe that audiences' ability to understand the emotional responses of others, such as tourism influencers, is closely related to parasocial relationships (Zhao et al., 2022).

H1: Emotional engagement has positive effects on parasocial relationships

Relationship between Entertainment Motivational and Parasocial Relationship

Influencers have a great opportunity to communicate and build parasocial relationships by exploiting the potential motivation of their audience (Cheung et al., 2022). In this case, social media users'

motivation to use media can influence parasocial relationships (Zhao & Wagner, 2023). Likewise, tourists who use social media platforms to view tourism content also have the opportunity to generate parasocial relationships. When watching short video content shared by influencers, the user will feel entertained. Conde & Casais (2023) believe that entertainment will encourage the development of parasocial relationships because audiences prefer to pay attention to information that can fulfil their motivation. Audiences with entertainment motivation will pay more attention to the entertainment value of the content (Santateresa-Bernat et al., 2023), which makes them feel closer to the tourism being reviewed in the content.

H2: Entertainment motivational has positive effects on parasocial relationships

Relationship between Value Congruence and Parasocial Relationships

Value Congruence originates from a theory which views that there is compatibility between the environment and humans (Haobin Ye et al., 2021). This condition describes a process of how the environment can fulfil human desires, needs, preferences and values. Complementary adaptation will occur when someone tries to complement or modify characteristics that are similar to other individuals in a particular environment (Koay et al., 2021). The level of congruence between the main values of content and tourists in this research refers to the congruence of values believed in the tourism context. Santateresa-Bernat et al. (2023) found that artificial content contributors and a focus on audience needs can influence perceived source credibility as well as attitudes and intentions to use social media for tourism. The similarity between value congruence and the influencer on social media can

lead to positive attitudes and behavioural intentions of the audience. The similarity in attitudes between influencer and audience drives parasocial relationships. Therefore, tourists tend to form a positive attitude and even have a sense of intimacy like that of influencers in short video content about tourist trips who are considered to have a personality that suits the audience. Based on the same values, audiences are likely to have a favourable impression of tourism influencers and consider their tourism information to be trustworthy.

H3: Value congruence has positive effects on parasocial relationships

Relationship between Intimate Self-Disclosure and Parasocial Relationships

Social media users may experience psychological processes that are very similar to real relationships (Leite & Baptista, 2022). When a social media influencer communicates personal details and information that is not known to the public, it can indicate to the recipient of the message that he or she is a responsible person. Gaining appreciation and trust for a social media influencer is important, especially when the information is only seen as a casual expression to friends (Koay et al., 2023). Thus, receiving intimate self-disclosure from others may function as a social reward (Lu et al., 2023). The relationship between intimate self-disclosure and parasocial relationships is primarily explained by the intimacy that followers may feel when receiving personal disclosure from a social media influencer. As a social media user, hearing and seeing social media influencers directly through social media accounts makes you feel as if you know the social media influencer personally and feel greater intimacy with influencer.

H4: Intimate self-disclosure has positive effects on parasocial relationships

Relationship between Parasocial Relationship and Brand Trust

The exchange of information between consumers and a brand involves risk; trust plays an important role in the process (Ameen et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023) social media influencers (SMIs). However, sometimes, brands alone cannot gain consumer trust. Therefore, trust can be transferred from someone who is trusted (i.e. influencer). With the abundance of information online, consumers often seek advice from trustworthy individuals (Pop et al., 2022). In this way, trust in social media influencers is very important so that consumers have confidence in the brands they support (Leite & Baptista, 2022). This is because when followers see a social media influencer as a friend, they can assume that their trust in them is greater than in other people and do not consider their friends. Considering that friendship is based on trust between individuals, the formation of parasocial relationships in the realm of social media makes social media influencers a trusted source.

Strong parasocial ties from followers or audiences can reduce feelings of uncertainty that come from social media influencers (Zheng et al., 2022). Marketing and advertising literature has documented the transfer of influencers' qualities and attitudes towards the promoted tourism product, and ultimately influence consumers' attitudes towards the endorsed brand (Chen et al., 2022). By forming parasocial relationships through social media influencers, consumer trust in social media influencers can be transferred to brands, and this will lead consumers to increase their trust in the brands they support through the meaning transfer models (Leite & Baptista, 2022). The high intensity of parasocial relationships can increase audience trust in social media influencers' recommendations by reducing the likelihood of perceived travel risks and their

consequences, thereby making them trust the recommended brand and reducing the perception of travel risks.

H5: Parasocial relationships has positive effects on brand trust

Relationship between Parasocial Relationships and Travel Intention

Tourist destinations benefit from parasocial relationships between audiences and influencers (Bi et al., 2021). Thus, parasocial responses to social media influencers can influence the process of forming and changing the audience's behavioral intentions when travelling. Social media influencers are considered pseudo-friends who can increase perceptions through closeness and relevance with their followers (Silaban et al., 2023). By incorporating endorsements into personal stories on social media, influencers strategically use the benefits of emotional engagement created in dominant parasocial relationships to their advantage (Chen et al., 2023).

According to the literature, people compare themselves with people who are recognizable, closer, and role models directly and more informally (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020), for example, as family and friends (Kilipiri et al., 2023). In the process of parasocial relationships, audiences may consider social media influencers as friends. Therefore, as consumers typically seek recommendations from friends who may have many things in common (Pop et al., 2022), social media influencers can move from secondary levels and formal reference groups to primary and more informal groups, namely social influence groups. This can increase the possibility of audiences comparing themselves with social media influencers (Su et al., 2021), which in turn can contribute to encouraging behaviour that imitates the behaviour of social media influencers by taking branded trips that can help their lifestyle be the same with amazing influencers (Chen

et al., 2023). An illusory friendship with a social media influencer can reduce the amount of uncertainty the audience feels (Kilipiri et al., 2023). This happens because consumers trust their friends' recommendations, so they will trust the advice of social media influencers who work with them by having a feeling of parasocial relationship (Pop et al., 2022). In short, the audience compares their travel behaviour with the behaviour of social media influencers in travelling and reduces, thereby increasing the audience's intention to carry out travel activities.

H6: Parasocial relationships has positive effects on travel intention

Relationship between Parasocial Relationship and Sharing Intention

Sharing Intention is defined as an online user's Intention to find information that is useful for others, attract the attention of others on the internet and then share this information with others (Zhao et al., 2022). Alhaidar & Xue (2023) studied the performance of influencers and the audience response of social media users who often shared information that was beneficial, interesting, and in line with their preferences with other people. This shows that an intimate relationship exists between the influencer and the audience through this interaction. This relationship can explain how this "intimacy" is built through examples of influencer behaviour when travelling that are shared through content. In this research, parasocial relationships refer to imaginary intimate relationships, that is, a sense of intimacy. Many parasocial relationships have been used to study the phenomenon of the impact of using influencers in social media marketing. The stronger the audience's parasocial relationship with the influencer, the higher the positive emotions (Cheng et al., 2024). Previous research shows that the stronger the emotions aroused, the stronger the feeling

of interaction, and the greater the possibility of Intention to share useful information about tourism (Zhao et al., 2022).

H7: Parasocial relationships has positive effects on sharing intention

Relationship between Travel Intention and Travel Decision

According to the literature, people compare themselves with people who are recognizable, closer, and role models directly and more informally (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020), for example, as family and friends (Kilipiri et al., 2023). In the process of parasocial relationships, audiences may consider social media influencers as friends. Therefore, as consumers typically seek recommendations from friends who may have many things in common (Pop et al., 2022), social media influencers can move from secondary levels and formal reference groups to primary and more informal groups, namely social influence groups. This can increase the possibility of audiences comparing themselves with social media influencers (Su et al., 2021), which in turn can contribute to encouraging behaviour that imitates the behaviour of social media influencers by taking branded trips that can help their lifestyle be the same with amazing influencers (Chen et al., 2023). An illusory friendship with a social media influencer can reduce the amount of uncertainty the audience feels (Kilipiri et al., 2023). This happens because consumers trust their friends' recommendations, so they will trust the advice of social media influencers who work with them by having a feeling of parasocial relationship (Pop et al., 2022). In short, the audience compares their travel behaviour with the behaviour of social media influencers in travelling and reduces, thereby increasing the audience's intention to carry out travel activities.

H8: Travel intention has positive effects on travel decision

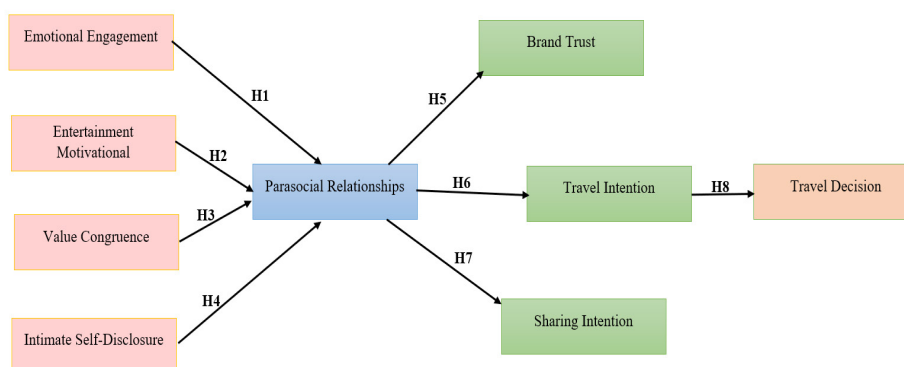


Figure 1. Research Framework

Source: Leite & Baptista (2022); Zhao et al. (2022)

The following is Figure 1, which visualizes the expanded model of Parasocial Interaction Theory. The antecedents of parasocial relationships consist of emotional engagement, motivational entertainment, value congruence, and intimate self-disclosure. Furthermore, parasocial relationships influence brand trust, travel intention, and sharing intention, which in turn influences travel decisions.

METHOD

This study focuses on testing the extension of the parasocial interaction theory model by involving antecedent and consequent variables from parasocial relationships. Based on these objectives, a quantitative approach is considered appropriate because it provides a strong and systematic framework for testing a model, ensuring accurate, reliable, and applicable results.

It consists of the research design (the method, the data, the data source, the data collecting technique, the data analysis technique, the variables measurement and the scales which is used in the research) that written in the form of a paragraph.

The primary data for this study is from an online survey. The online survey consists of three parts. The first is the sec-

tion that contains a screening statement regarding the criteria for being a respondent. The second is the section regarding descriptive statistics of responses. The third section comprises 40 statements to measure all variables using a 1-5 Likert Scale, with one (1) being “strongly disagree” and five (5) being “strongly agree”.

Emotional engagement can be defined as the level of emotional involvement shown by an individual in an activity and relationship measured through enthusiasm, interest, emotional connectedness, and feelings of pride (Zhao et al., 2022). The instrument to measure emotional engagement is adapted from Zhao et al. (2022) and consists of 4 statement items. Motivational entertainment is intentionally designed and evaluated based on its ability to motivate, inspire, and bring positive change to the audience (Zhao et al., 2022). The instrument to measure motivational entertainment is adapted from Zhao et al. (2022) and consists of 5 statement items. Influencer value congruence can be operationalized as the level of conformity or alignment between the values embraced by the influencer and the followers’ values (Zhao et al., 2022). The instrument to measure value congruence is adapted from Zhao et al. (2022) and consists of 3 statement items. Intimate self-disclosure in

influencers can be operationalized as influencers sharing personal and emotional information with their followers (Leite & Baptista, 2022). The instrument to measure intimate self-disclosure is adapted from Leite & Baptista (2022) and consists of 9 statement items.

Parasocial relationships are one-way relationships between a follower or viewer who feels a close relationship or emotional bond with an influencer, even though there is no direct or reciprocal interaction (Zhao et al., 2022). The instrument to measure parasocial relationships is adapted from Zhao et al. (2022) and consists of 8 statement items. Trust in tourism brands can be operationalized as consumer confidence in the reliability, credibility, capability, safety, and comfort offered by a brand or tourism destination (Helal et al., 2023). The instrument to measure trust in tourism brands is adapted from Helal et al. (2023) and consists of 3 statement items. Travel intention can be operationalized as a person's intention or desire to travel, measured through the intention to travel and travel planning in 3 statement items (Zhou & He, 2024). Sharing intention can be operationalized as an individual's intention or tendency to share tourism content or information with others (Zhao et al., 2022). The instrument to measure sharing intention is adapted from Zhao et al. (2022) and consists of 3 statement items. A person makes a travel decision regarding essential aspects of a trip or tour, measured by 2 statement items (Pop et al., 2022).

Eligible survey participants as respondents are determined based on two criteria, namely, social media users and having followed tourism influencers for at least six months. These two criteria were determined because this study focused on determining respondents using a non-probability sampling approach, especially purposive sampling. This research targets at least 615 respondents to achieve a suf-

ficient sample size. This number is based on sample adequacy from Ghazali (2018), who recommends that, at least in multivariate, the ratio between the number of variables and respondents should be between 15 and 20 times. After the survey data is collected, it will then be analyzed using the help of the Smart PLS 3 application.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis Result

The survey results, obtained by filling in an online questionnaire with the help of G-form, were 629 responses. However, only 619 data sets meet the requirements. Respondents aged 17-30 years were 341 people (55.08%); aged 31-43 years, 198 people (32%); and over 43 years 80 people (12.92%). The majority comprised 370 female respondents (59.77%) and the remaining 249 male respondents (40.23%). Two hundred ten respondents used social media TikTok (33.93%), and 409 people used Instagram (66.07%). The respondents were from Java-Bali Island, 397 people (64.13%); Sumatra Island, 78 people (12.6%); Kalimantan Island, 84 people (13.57%); and Sulawesi, 60 people (9.7%).

Reliability and Validity Test

Ensuring that the measurement instruments used are reliable and valid in quantitative research is very important. Reliability refers to the consistency of results obtained from a measurement instrument when used under similar condition. A reliable instrument will produce similar results every time used in the same situation, so it can be relied on to provide consistent data. Validity, on the other hand, measures the extent to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. A valid instrument ensures that the collected data is accurate and genuinely reflects the researched construct.

Table 1. Result of Reliability and Validity Test

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Reliability	AVE	Conclusion
Emotion Engagement	EE1: I like and quote the influencer's kind/witty comments or words in their videos or content.	.724	.771	.593	Reliable & Valid
	EE2: The influencer uses kind or witty words in their content.	.775			
	EE3: I express my feelings about the influencer's travel content through comments using emoji symbols.	.789			
	EE4: I feel emotionally connected to other social media users when participating in chats/comments on the influencer's travel content.	.790			
Entertainment Motivation	EM1: I watch travel content from influencers to fill my free time.	.809	.904	.722	Reliable & Valid
	EM2: I watch travel content from influencers because it is entertaining.	.876			
	EM3: I watch travel content from influencers to fill my time when bored.	.854			
	EM4: I watch travel content from influencers because it can be relaxing.	.811			
	EM5: I watch travel content from influencers because it is fun to watch.	.894			

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Reliability	AVE	Conclusion
Value Congruence	VC1: I support the core values contained in the travel content created by influencers.	.879	.837	.753	Reliable & Valid
	VC2: I agree with the core values of the travel content created by influencers.	.865			
	VC3: I clearly understand the core values of travel content created by influencers.	.859			
Intimate Self-Disclosure	ISD1: Influencers share information about themselves when traveling through social media.	.803	.944	.692	Reliable & Valid
	ISD2: Influencers talk about their behavior when traveling through social media.	.794			
	ISD3: Influencers share their feelings about traveling through social media.	.863			
	ISD4: Influencers share their emotions when traveling through social media.	.870			
	ISD5: Influencers share their desires to travel through social media.	.811			
	ISD6: Influencers share their mood when traveling through social media.	.852			
	ISD7: Influencers share their thoughts through social media.	.866			
	ISD8: Influencers share their opinions when traveling through social media.	.869			
	ISD9: Influencers share their beliefs in traveling through social media.	.751			

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Reliability	AVE	Conclusion
Parasocial Relationship	PR1: I look forward to watching travel content created by influencers.	.856	.931	.676	Reliable & Valid
	PR2: I look forward to watching travel content created by influencers to be aired on other channels and will continue to watch it.	.838			
	PR3: Watching travel content created by influencers makes me feel like I am part of the group.	.807			
	PR4: I want to meet the travel content influencers in person.	.828			
	PR5: If there is a story about travel content from influencers in the newspaper or magazine, I will read it.	.875			
	PR6: Travel content from influencers makes me feel comfortable as if I am with a friend.	.735			
	PR7: I find travel content from influencers engaging.	.847			
	PR8: Visiting travel influencers' social media sites makes me relaxed.	.784			
Brand Trust	BT1: Tourist destinations in influencer content are reliable.	.875	.886	.814	Reliable & Valid
	BT2: Tourist destinations in influencer content are trustworthy.	.918			
	BT3: Tourist destinations in influencer content have integrity.	.914			

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Reliability	AVE	Conclusion
Travel Intention	TI1: I am willing to visit tourist destinations in influencer content in the future.	.934	.927	.873	Reliable & Valid
	TI2: I plan to visit tourist destinations that use influencer content in the future.	.945			
	TI3: I will try to visit tourist destinations in influencer content in the future.	.924			
Sharing Intention	SI1: I am repeatedly encouraged to share travel content created by influencers.	.908	.908	.844	Reliable & Valid
	SI2: I have a strong desire to share travel content created by influencers.	.939			
	SI3: Suddenly I want to share interesting travel content from influencers.	.909			
Travel Decision	TD1: The final decision regarding destination selection is due to influencer content.	.941	.819	.844	Reliable & Valid
	TD2: The decision to change existing travel plans due to influencer content.	.896			

Source: Data Processed (2024)

Table 1 shows the results of reliability and validity tests for the variables emotion engagement, entertainment motivational, value congruence, intimate self-disclosure, parasocial relationships, brand trust, travel intention, sharing intention, and travel decision. The test results show that all statement items are stated to be able to measure each variable (valid) because the loading factor value is > 0.6 . Furthermore, Table 1 also shows evidence that the nine variables can consistently measure a construct (reliable) because the Cronbach Alpha value is > 0.7 . Furthermore, Table 1 also shows the results of the AVE values for the nine variables between 0.593 and 0.873 so that they can be dec-

lared to meet the criteria because they are more than 0.5.

Table 2 shows the discriminant validity results of all constructs of this research variable because the square root value of each construct is more significant when compared to the correlation between constructs. The table demonstrates that all AVE square root values on the diagonal are more significant than the correlation between constructs (off the diagonal), indicating good discriminant validity of the model.

Furthermore, Table 3 shows the coefficient of determination value, often known as R Square in this research model, between 0.719 and 0.342. The R Square

Table 2. Result of Discriminant Validity

Variable	BT	EE	EM	ISD	PR	SI	TD	TI	VC
Brand Trust	.902								
Emotional Engangement	.483	.770							
Entertainment Motivational	.542	.547	.850						
Intimate Self-Disclosure	.542	.458	.552	.832					
Parasocial Relationships	.666	.638	.758	.463	.822				
Sharing Intention	.445	.503	.477	.344	.704	.919			
Travel Decision	.542	.448	.357	.305	.573	.570	.919		
Travel Intention	.666	.412	.464	.413	.585	.519	.651	.935	
Value Congruence	.674	.528	.644	.554	.735	.645	.526	.586	.868

Source: Data Processed (2024)

value means that the independent variable can explain around 71.9 to 34.2 percent of the variability of the variables it influences.

Meanwhile, the Adjusted R Square value for this research is in the range of 0.717 to 0.341. This Adjusted R Square value is an indicator that can better describe the contribution of the independent variable to the dependent variable. Based on the R Square and Adjusted R Square values in Table 3, it can be said that the contribution of each independent variable to the dependent variable in this research is said to be quite good.

Table 4 shows the path coefficients, t-value, and F-square as the basis for determining each hypothesis test result. The F Square test results in Table 4 show the strong relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The strength of

the relationship is based on criteria with the condition that F Square >0.02 means the relationship is weak; F Square >0.15 then medium; and F Square > 0.35 then the relationship is strong. Table 4 shows four strong variable relationships: the relationship between the parasocial relationships variable and brand trust, the relationship between social relationships and travel intention, parasocial relationships with sharing intention, and the relationship between travel intention and travel decision. Furthermore, there are also 4 weak relationships, namely the relationship between emotional engagement and parasocial relationships, motivational entertainment with parasocial relationships, value congruence with parasocial relationships, and intimate self-disclosure with parasocial relationships. Hypothesis testing was carried out using the Smart PLS 3 appli-

Table 3. Result of Determination Coefficient Test (R^2)

Variabel	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Brand Trust	.443	.414
Parasocial Relationships	.719	.717
Sharing Intention	.495	.494
Travel Decision	.423	.422
Travel Intention	.342	.341

Source: Data Processed (2024)

Table 4. Result of Research Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis		Path Coefficients	t-value	F-square	Results
Emotion Engagement → Parasocial Relationships	H1	.245	9.319	.135	Support
Entertainment Motivational → Parasocial Relationships	H2	.434	13.308	.330	Support
Value Congruence → Parasocial Relationships	H3	.382	11.507	.261	Support
Intimate Self-Disclosure → Parasocial Relationships	H4	.100	3.565	.022	Support
Parasocial Relationships → Brand Trust	H5	.666	21.013	.795	Support
Parasocial Relationships → Travel Intention	H6	.585	16.840	.981	Support
Parasocial Relationships → Sharing Intention	H7	.704	24.497	.519	Support
Travel Intention → Travel Decision	H8	.651	10.793	.734	Support

Source: Data Processed (2024)

cation with the bootstrapping method to determine which research hypothesis to reject or accept. A hypothesis is accepted with statistical results for a p-value <0.05 and a t-coefficient <1.96. Table 4 shows that all hypotheses are accepted because the t-coefficient value is >1.96 with a p-value <0.05. Emotion Engagement Hypothesis → Parasocial Relationships (t=9.319; p=0.05); Entertainment Motivational → Parasocial Relationships (t=13.308; p=0.05); Value Congruence → Parasocial Relationships (t=11.507; p=0.05); Intimate Self-Disclosure → Parasocial Relationships (t=3.565; p=0.05); Parasocial Relationships → Brand Trust (t=21.013; p=0.05); Parasocial Relationships → Travel Intention (t=16.840; p=0.05); Parasocial Relationships → Sharing Intention (t=24.497; p=0.05); and Travel Intention → Travel Decision (t=10.793; p=0.05).

Discussion

This research model adopts the Parasocial Interaction Theory by involving the antecedents of intimate-self disclosure, source credibility, entertainment motivation, value congruence and consequent brand trust, travel intention, and intention sharing, proven to be able to close the gap in previous research that ignores the mechanism of the parasocial relationship process involving emotional aspects. The results of the eight hypotheses developed from this model were all accepted.

Hypothesis 1, based on the parasocial interaction theory model, is that emotional engagement is integral to forming and maintaining parasocial relationships, which aligns with this research's findings. When audiences on social media experience emotional engagement with tourism influencers regularly, it indicates that the-

re has been a development of feelings of closeness and connectedness resembling a social relationship that occurs in a natural and mutually beneficial way (Zhao et al., 2022). Emotional involvement, affection, and deep empathy from the audience make it seem like they have a personal relationship with the social media influencer. This can happen from when the audience starts observing until they respond to the influencer on social media as if a real interaction occurs. Audiences who feel emotionally connected to influencers will have a higher intensity of engagement and response to the content they share.

Hypothesis 2, parasocial interaction theory provides a basic framework for understanding how motivational entertainment can influence the formation of parasocial relationships based on the results of hypothesis 2 testing of this study. The audience's motivation to seek entertainment through social media contributes to developing a one-way relationship, such as real social relationships, by increasing understanding of the dynamics of social interaction (Santateresa-Bernat et al., 2023; Qiu et al., 2024). So, when the audience is motivated to seek entertainment on social media, they can engage cognitively and emotionally with the influencer. This involvement can create a conducive condition that supports the development of feelings of closeness and connectedness. Ultimately, it will further strengthen the parasocial relationship with the influencer.

Based on hypothesis 3 testing, value congruence plays a role in growing and strengthening a parasocial relationship according to the assumptions of parasocial interaction theory. When the audience feels that they align with the values demonstrated by the tourism influencer, they will have more emotional involvement and trust, which are the main components of

growing parasocial relationships (Haobin Ye et al., 2021; Koay et al., 2021). It can be said that value congruence can increase feelings of connectedness and closeness to strengthen parasocial relationships.

The support of hypothesis 4 further strengthens that intimate self-disclosure is proven to stimulate parasocial relationships in line with the understanding of parasocial interaction theory. Deep self-disclosure by tourism influencers on social media has been proven to play a role in strengthening parasocial relationships (Lu et al., 2023). When tourism influencers share emotional experiences, personal information, and stories when traveling, the social media audience will feel they know and are closer to the influencer.

After testing hypothesis 5, it was found that the stronger the parasocial relationship felt by the audience towards the tourism influencer, the higher the trust in the influencer's endorsed tourism brand. Emotional ties and involvement are believed to build trust in the tourism brand (Kim, 2023). In this case, audiences who feel emotional closeness to travel influencers tend to trust the tourism brands they associate with because they assess these influencers as authentic and trustworthy sources of information.

The results of hypothesis 6 testing strengthen the parasocial interaction theoretical framework that a one-way relationship between the audience and the influencer (parasocial relationship) can increase travel intention. Audiences will increase the frequency and duration of watching travel content from influencers so that they can strengthen parasocial relationships and travel intention (Silaban et al., 2023). Exposure to tourist content that is viewed repeatedly can attract and inspire audiences to travel. This is because the audience is more accepting and trusting travel recommendations from tourism

influencers who are considered to have parasocial closeness.

Hypothesis 7, parasocial interaction theory explains that parasocial relationships can stimulate audiences to share intentions because of the mechanisms of identification, involvement, affection, social acceptance, and social norms, according to the findings of hypothesis 7. Audiences have the motivation to share tourism content related to social media influencers because they want to express their identity (Zhao et al., 2022). And values relevant to that influencer. The audience is also motivated to share influencer content because it is a form of respect for the influencer they admire. The level of audience involvement in parasocial relationships can influence the intensity of interacting with travel content created by influencers. This will encourage more emotional involvement so that sharing intentions emerge.

Hypothesis 8, parasocial interaction theory helps us understand that the travel decision-making process is not only based on practical and economic considerations but is influenced by psychological factors of travel intention by the results of hypothesis testing 8 in this study. Someone who has enthusiasm and positive feelings for a tourist destination will be more motivated to change travel intentions into tangible actions to travel (Karl et al., 2020). Additionally, emotional involvement in the form of curiosity, the intention to explore, and the hope of having a deep and memorable experience also encourage a person to make a travel decision.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In the case of this research, the expansion of parasocial interaction theory has been proven to help understand the complexity of the mechanism of the interaction process between audiences and social media influencers in tourism mar-

keting content. The study results prove that emotional engagement, motivational entertainment, value congruence, and intimate self-disclosure contribute as antecedents of parasocial relationships. Furthermore, the variables brand trust, travel intention, and sharing intention are also proven to be consequences of parasocial relationships. Furthermore, this theory also proves that travel intention is a predictor that can encourage the creation of travel decisions.

The findings of this research prove that parasocial interaction theory is essential and relevant to consider in understanding tourism consumer behavior and social interactions on digital media, especially social media. The implications of these findings can be used as a reference for developing tourism marketing strategies to optimize the use of social media and online interactions by utilizing social media influencers to influence tourism consumer behavior.

There has been extensive research on parasocial relationships in the context of social media. However, more research is needed on how parasocial relationships are impacted by the emergence of new technologies like augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and artificial intelligence (AI). Future research could focus on how parasocial relationships develop in VR and AR environments, where users can interact with virtual versions of public figures or fictional characters.

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