

# The Effect of Perceived Creativity of Sports Store Instagram Posts on the Interactive Intention of Followers With the Mediating Role of Affective Commitment

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study aimed to investigate the effect of perceived creativity of Instagram posts in sports stores on interactive intention with followers.

**Methods:** This research was descriptive-correlational. The statistical population of this study was 3200 participants of a sports page. Among them, 135 samples were selected by the available sampling method. Perceived creativity was measured by a questionnaire Andrews and Smith (1996), affective commitment was measured by Belanche et al (2013) and interactive intention was measured by Casalo et al (2017) were used for data collection. The validity of the questionnaires was assessed by experts. Reliability based on Cronbach's alpha for each questionnaire was 0.81, 0.83 and 0.90, respectively, which was confirmed. To analyze the data, the structural equations method and PLS software were used.

**Results:** The results showed that the perceived creativity of sports store Instagram posts has a positive and significant effect on affective commitment ( $t=7.45$ ,  $\beta=0.53$ ) and intention to interact ( $t=5.56$ ,  $\beta=0.35$ ). The affective commitment has a positive and significant impact on the interactive intention ( $t=9.28$ ,  $\beta=0.57$ ) of the followers' and further, the affective commitment has a mediating role in the relationship between perceived creativity and the interactive intention of the followers.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, managers of sports stores using creative ideas such as product categories in highlights, comparing journal and non-journal photos of the product, mentioning all the specifications of the product in the copying of Instagram posts of products can provide the grounds for people's interaction to purchase products by creating emotional commitment in the followers.

**Keywords:** Emotional Commitment, Creativity, Sports Shops, Instagram

## Introduction

Today, the advancement of technology has led to a significant increase in e-commerce and social commerce. Many people worldwide use trading platforms on social media and other websites to quickly and easily purchase desired products and services (Herzallah et al., 2021). According to the survey results of the Taiwan Network Information Center (2019), 82.1% of people over the age of 12 use mobile devices to surf the Internet, and the most-used device is the mobile phone (96.8%), with an average of 4.3 hours of Internet surfing per day. Social media usage accounts for 80.6% of Internet service community usage (Liu et al., 2021). Social networks, thus, host hundreds of millions of users, allowing one to communicate with other people far from any restrictions, among which Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram platforms are the most widely used platforms (Belanche et al., 2019). Image-based social networking sites have gained popularity in the past years, with Instagram emerging as the most influential social network, which has occurred mainly in the marketing industry, which has recently reached a billion active users with the fastest growth compared to competitors (Casaló et al., 2021). On Cristiano Ronaldo's Instagram, the Manchester United striker is among those with more than 415 million followers on Instagram (Statista, 2022). Most people use social media mainly for entertainment and convenience, and Instagram provides personal satisfaction, functional usefulness, social roles, product information and entertainment. People use Instagram to express emotions, follow fashion and socialize, and capture and share moments of their lives in real-time (Liu et al., 2021).

Instagram besides allowed users to take photos from the beginning, apply filters, and share photos with followers who want to like and comment on them (Siegel et al., 2022). This has led Instagram to achieve higher engagement rates than Facebook and Twitter, assisting in receiving an average of more interactions per post and surpassing competitors in attracting more users (Ha et al., 2019). Marketing through various social media is

one of the strategies that companies use to increase profits (Sengar, 2021). In addition to traditional print and multimedia advertising, advertising on social media has emerged in recent years (Truong et al., 2019). In the same regard, Matharu et al. (2019) reported that social media can improve purchase intentions and increase corporate profits. Due to the popularity of social media, sports brands have spent a lot of time and resources integrating social media activities into their marketing strategy (Kouzechian et al., 2021). Thus, since Story Instagram supports information sharing, it can motivate potential customers and expand the market for positives and services. Hence the use of Instagram has become a marketing method used by most marketers (Sánchez-Cobarro et al., 2021). For this reason, the promotional message should provide the audience with the advertised brand's characteristics so that users of sports pages can tie their individual and social identities to the brands (Kouzechian et al., 2021). Regarding users' interactive intent, new technologies have made it easier to interact and obtain information from these platforms (Casaló et al., 2017); as a result, interaction goals such as clicking the like button or commenting on an uploaded post are considered on Instagram (Casaló et al., 2017). In this regard, Blazevic et al. (2014) reported that brands can foster a degree of interaction between their account by producing brand-related content. That is important for their development in social media. Creativity is also an attractive topic in the field of marketing, and brands use creativity to achieve better results in social networks (Casaló et al., 2021). Creativity is a combination of two main factors: novelty (searching for what is original and unique) and proportionality (communication or meaningfulness, usefulness and effectiveness); Despite the critical and well-known role of creativity in marketing and advertising communications, few studies have examined the consequences of creative online communication (Bowden & Mirzaei, 2020). Hence, the visual nature of Instagram chooses it as the most suitable platform for the development of creativity. The

creativity used in images and videos uploaded to Instagram is one of the reasons for using it. Likewise, the brand's product stores offer several content templates (e.g. filters, live videos and boomerangs) that allow them to expand the creativity of their posts and thereby transfer valuable features of products to the suppliers (Casaló et al., 2021; Choi & Sung, 2018).

Commitment has been defined as the user's desire to maintain an enduring relationship that (s)he regards as important and valuable (Moorman et al., 1992). Effective commitment stems from the emotions and closeness created among social media users. Effective commitment is defined as customers' emotional bond with brands; therefore, consumers are effectively committed to a brand due to the intense dependence generated through previous experiences, which leads to the development of a positive relationship with the brand (Shukla et al., 2016). By posting content on Instagram, brands can strengthen their emotional bonds with their followings, leading to more followers' desire for branded content and more likely to purchase guaranteed products (Casaló et al., 2010). Hence, by producing brand-based content, brand product stores can foster interaction between the brand's account and its followings (Casaló et al., 2017). The key to developing effective marketing programs for sports organisations and producers to achieve predetermined goals is how sports audiences think, behave, decide, and what factors affect their tendency to various sports products. On the other hand, one of the essential concerns of companies and factories from the past to the present has been the proper sale of their positives (Abdolmaleki et al., 2016).

On the subject of the research, Casaló et al. (2021) reported that perceived creativity is one of the essential aspects of Instagram. In addition, emotional commitment plays a minor mediating role in the relationship between perceived creativity and mutual goals. In their research, Liu et al. (2021) concluded that the perceived usefulness and ease of use of Instagram stories influence users' attitudes. Likewise, user attitudes

have a positive effect on behavioral intentions. Additionally, in their research, Djafarova & Bowes (2021) reported that Instagram's marketing tools are most effective in shopping behavior. So that it is very influential in encouraging sudden purchases; thus, advertising, thoughts and content produced by users act as a stimulus in arousing people, which subsequently causes sudden purchases. In addition, Jones & Lee (2021) concluded in their research that the use of captions, emojis, images and mega influencers as effective elements on Instagram could significantly influence interaction. In their study, Yavarigohar & Koraghli (2019) investigated the effect of brand relationship stimuli on brand loyalty in social media, taking into account the mediating role of brand interaction, and showed that brand relationship drivers had a direct and significant effect on brand loyalty.

Further, the result of the mediating variable of interaction with the brand was proved. Ziadkhani Ghasemi & Palmet (2019) reported that all aspects of social marketing stimulus significantly impact online brand engagement on Instagram. As a result, it positively affects brand trust and online purchase intention. Hedayatpour et al. (2020) examined the impact of Facebook's retransmission on satisfying sports product customers. Their findings showed that Facebook's social network had no significant effect on the marketing of sports products. Zakerian et al. (2019) investigated the factors of internet advertising in the behavior of sports consumers. They concluded that conflict with internet advertising and its role in purchasing products is primarily based on the requirements, application and importance of the product for individuals. Then, providing attitude and excellent and eye-catching content can increase sales of products.

Social networking sites are essential marketing tools that allow brands to interact with consumers (Matharu et al., 2019). In the meantime, Instagram has become an increasingly popular tool for sports organizations to share visual content (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2018). Like other manufacturing companies and sales centres, sports

stores are one of the important shopping centres in the community. Due to competitive market conditions and reducing the impact of traditional media, they should try to find new ways to connect with their potential customers (Fransen et al., 2015).

Thus, due to limited studies and the fact that in domestic research in Iran in sports, no studies have been conducted on the role of creativity that increases brand dependence on Social Networks of Instagram. As a result, in the present study, researchers are trying to use the research model (Fig. 1). Investigate the perception of creativity caused by viewing content on Instagram based on

users' affective commitment and its impact on the intention to interact with sports store customers in this regard, provide solutions on how managers of sports stores can nurture this process and take more effective steps in the development of marketing and advertising of their products.

Finally, the question is answered: How does creating creativity in sports store posts affect the interactive intention of page users of that sports store? And how can users' effective commitment play a mediating role in the relationship between the creativity of posts and the intention of user interaction?

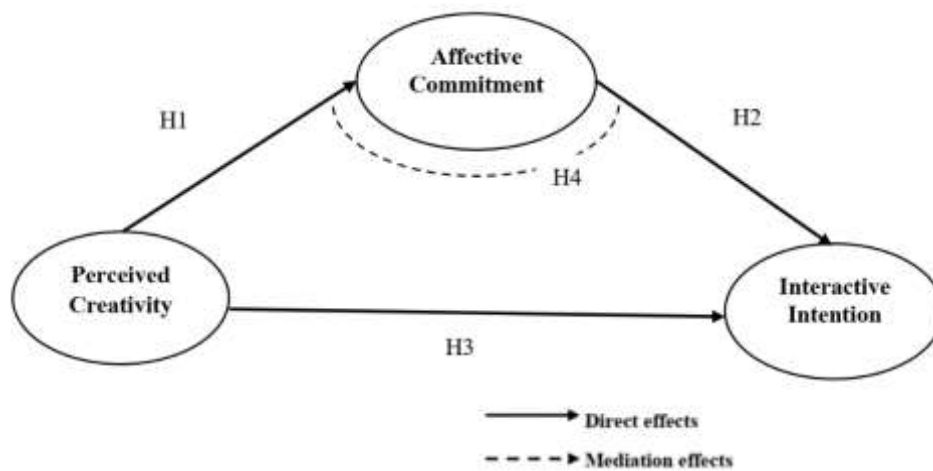


Figure 1. Research Model

## Materials and Methods

The present study is applied in purpose, and data collection is descriptive research from the field studies branch. And in terms of the relationship between the research variables, the type of correlation.

A questionnaire was used to measure the three variables of the research. Perceived creativity was measured by Andrews & Smith (1996) questionnaire, which had three questions. the affective commitment was measured by Belanche et al. (2013) four-question questionnaire. A three-item questionnaire was used to measure the interactive intention variable taken from Casaló et al. (2017a). The questionnaires were arranged on a 5-degree Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The Content validity of the

questionnaires was assessed and confirmed by seven expert experts in sports management. The reliability of the questionnaires in an experimental study (n.30) using Cronbach's alpha correlation coefficient was 0.81, 0.83 and 0.90, respectively, and since the alpha coefficient of all variables was more than 0.7, the reliability of the questionnaires was confirmed.

The statistical population of this study consisted of all the followers of the nike\_shopping sports store in Sabzevar (3200 followers). G Power software was used to determine the sample size.

According to research by Akter et al. (2011); Erdfelder et al. (2009), considering the maximum effective independent variable and error percentage of 0.01, test power of 0.90 and effect size of 0.15, 135 samples were considered by the

software as the minimum sample size for the research. After determining the minimum sample size, the questionnaire link was placed by the manager of the page of this store in a few days and various posts on the Instagram page of this page. Additionally, the questionnaire link was sent to page members' IDs by researchers, and finally, 140 followers of this page completed the questionnaire. After deleting the questionnaires that were not finished correctly and had uncertain data, Analysis was performed on 135 questionnaires. To extract the demographic status

of the data, SPSS software version 28 was used. Then, the structural equation modeling approach and PLS software version 3 were used to investigate and test the hypotheses.

### Results

The results of descriptive analysis showed that based on gender, the largest sample size was related to females, 87 (64.4%). Most of the single samples were 70 (51.19%), and based on their membership history, most of the subjects had less than one year's history of 98 (72.6%) (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics

Demographic variables		Number	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	48	35.6
	Female	87	64.4
<b>Marital status</b>	single	70	51.19
	Married	65	48.1
<b>Page membership history</b>	Less than a year	98	72.6
	More than a year	37	27.4

The research model and hypotheses were investigated by fitting the measurement and structural models.

For model validity, convergent and divergent validity criteria were used. The factor loads of each question must be above 0.4 (Abdolahnezhad et al., 2021; Ghasemy et al., 2020). As is evident in Table 2, all questions have a higher factor load than 0.4. Thus, other tests can be examined. Table 2 showed that the combined reliability and alpha coefficient of Cronbach was higher than 0.7 for all

variables (Ghasemy et al., 2020).

Hence, it can be said that the measurement model has acceptable reliability. To investigate the convergent validity of the model, the mean-variance extracted from 0.5 should be larger (Ghasemy et al., 2020). The results of table (2) showed that all convergent narrative conditions are established. Hence there is a convergent validity for the measurement model. Besides, all relationships between hidden and overt variables were significant (Fig. 2).

**Table 2.** Factor loads, reliability and convergent validity

Construct	Item	Loading	CA	CR	AVE
<b>Perceived Creativity</b>	PC1	0.84	0.84	0.9	0.76
	PC2	0.89			
	PC3	0.86			
<b>Affective Commitment</b>	AC1	0.86	0.89	0.92	0.75
	AC2	0.91			
	AC3	0.87			
<b>Interactive Intention</b>	II1	0.93	0.91	0.94	0.85
	II2	0.90			
	II3	0.93			

Note: CA= Cronbach's Alpha

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) index was used to investigate discriminant validity. This new indicator is only available in the third version of SmartPLS. The cut-off point of this index is 0.85

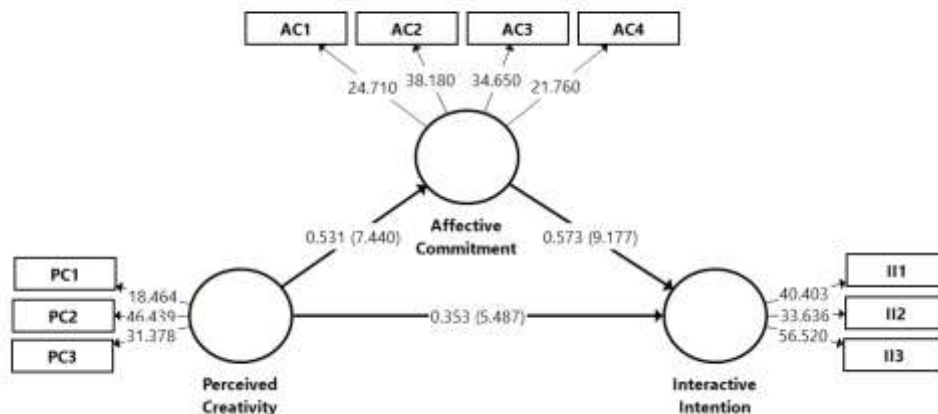
to 0.9. If the values of this criterion are less than 0.9, discriminant validity is acceptable (Ghasemy et al., 2020).

**Table 3.** Discriminant Validity Based on HTMT

Construct	Perceived Creativity	Affective Commitment	Interactive Intention
<b>Perceived Creativity</b>			
<b>Affective_Commitment</b>	0.61		
<b>Interactive Intention</b>	0.75	0.84	

As evident in Table 3, the obtained values in the table are less than 0.9. For this reason, the divergent validity of the model is confirmed. With the confirmation of convergent and discriminant validity, the overall validity of the measurement

model is accepted.



**Figure 2.** The final model with path coefficients and significance

The structural model used criteria, coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) of the softened fitness index. Stone and Geisser (Q<sup>2</sup>) indexes were used to assess the quality of the model, and T values were used to investigate the significance of the hypotheses. R<sup>2</sup> is a criterion that indicates the effect of exogenous variables on the endogenous variable. In this study, the coefficient of determining the interaction intention as the primary dependent variable is 0.66, which shows that 66% of the changes in the interaction intention variable are based on perceived

creativity and affective commitment variables, which are substantial. Regarding the affective commitment variable, the coefficient of determination is 0.28, indicating that 28% of the changes in the affective commitment variable are related to the perceived creativity variable, which is beside the medium. The effect size criterion was used to determine how much of the coefficient of determination is related to which independent variables. The results showed that the effect size of perceived creativity and affective commitment variables were 0.27 and 0.71, respectively.

**Table 4.** Results of research model fit indices

Model fit indicators	SRMR	NFI
Values obtained	0.07	0.91
Criterion	<0.1	>0.9

The third and fourth indicators, the SRMR, changes between 0 and 1. in this study, the value of this index is 0.07, which is less than 0.1 indicating an acceptable fit of the model. The amount of NFI in this model is 0.91, which is acceptable for values above 0.9 and indicates the model's fitness (Table 4).

Then, Q2 was used to assess the quality of the structural model. This index examines the quality of the model and compares it with three values: 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35. This study's value for endogenous variables of interaction intention and emotional commitment was 0.53 and 0.19, respectively, which shows that the model has strong predictive quality.

**Table 5.** Investigating research hypotheses

Hypothesis	Path coefficient	T Values	Support
1. Perceived Creativity -> Affective Commitment	0.53	7.45	✓
2. Affective Commitment -> Interactive Intention	0.57	9.28	✓
3. Perceived Creativity -> Interactive Intention	0.35	5.56	✓
4. Perceived Creativity -> Affective Commitment -> Interactive Intention	0.3		✓

Fitting the structural model with T coefficients is that these coefficients should be greater than 1.96 to confirm the significance of the hypotheses at the confidence level of 95%. If these coefficients are higher than 2.58, at the confidence level of 99%, the significance of the hypotheses is confirmed. As is evident in Table 5 and Figure 2, the perceived creativity of sports store Instagram posts has a positive and significant effect on users' affective commitment at a 99% confidence level. Perceived creativity positively and significantly affects customer interaction intention at a 99% confidence level. Along with, affective commitment has a positive and significant effect at a 99% confidence level on the interaction intention of page members. The Bootstrapping from command was used to investigate the mediator of the affective commitment variable. As shown in Table 5, this variable has a mediating role in the relationship between perceived creativity and page members' interaction intention at a 99% confidence level.

## Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the effect of perceived creativity of Instagram posts on the interaction intention of sports store pursuers with the mediating role of affective commitment. Instagram page users are one of the most influential followers and buyers of online stores. Instagram can showcase sports store products in a satisfying and attractive way for users due to its nature visually.

The first hypothesis showed that the perceived creativity of sports store Instagram posts had a positive and significant effect on page members' affective commitment at a 99% confidence level ( $t=7.45$ ,  $\beta=0.53$ ). The results of this study are in line with the results (Casaló et al., 2017, 2021, 2018; Jones & Lee, 2021).

Casaló et al. (2021) concluded in their research that perceived creativity had a positive and significant effect on affective commitment. Subsequently, the organic reactions of followers to the creativity of the content published on Instagram are essential in strengthening their affective bonds with online sports stores;

Therefore, they have exciting implications for managing Instagram accounts to develop creative content and try this way to attract more followers. (Casaló et al., 2017) reported that the creativity of the published materials is an essential factor in strengthening the emotional bonds of followers with brand stores. Therefore, it can be concluded that the perceived creativity of Instagram posts in sports stores is essential to creating the affective commitment of users. For this reason, sports stores should use creative ways to present their products in their marketing programs on Instagram to achieve a sense of affective commitment in their users. In addition, the perceived creativity dimension of question 2, "The content published on this Instagram account is conventional", had the highest average (3.47). Therefore online sports stores using conventional and attractive filters for photos and uploading conventional content on Instagram can lead to more users' understanding of the perceived creativity of their product posts. Page admins can request followers to provide creative content to promote the brand if they wish and use them in Instagram posts with the same names as people. In addition, by requesting in their page stories, they have the users' comments about the posts so that they can create new creations in their posts according to the user's comments.

The results of the second hypothesis showed that the affective commitment of users of sports store pages had a positive and significant effect on the interaction intention of the followers at the confidence level of 99% ( $t=9.28$ ,  $\beta=0.57$ ). Further, considering the effect size of affective commitment of this variable, the most critical factor among the variables of this model is the intention of users' interaction, which indicates the importance of this factor on the intention of the followers' interaction. The results are in line with the research results by Amin et al. (2021); Casaló et al. (2021); Cheung et al. (2021); Jones & Lee, (2021). The results showed that when followers have an affective commitment to an online community (such as an Instagram account), they are more susceptible to interaction on that

platform. Thus, strengthening emotional bonds with followers is of particular importance to brands. Online sports stores require to create a sense of affective commitment for their users and reinforce the factors influencing them To achieve the purchase intentions and the intention to interact with users and generate advertising networks using users and gain a more competitive advantage over competitors. Because emotional commitment leads to the motivation to purchase follows in online stores. Users who have emotional attachments have a higher degree of commitment. As a committed follower, it also provides opportunities for new customers with strong emotional bonds and helps the online store through conversations with other customers (Shukla et al., 2016). Question 2 This variable, "emotionally I depend on this Instagram account", has the highest average (3.81) among the questions of this variable itself.

The results of the third hypothesis showed that the perceived creativity of sports store pages had a positive and significant effect on the interaction intention of followers at a 99% confidence level ( $t=5.56$ ,  $\beta=0.35$ ). The results align with the results of Casaló et al. (2021, 2018); Jones & Lee (2021); Liu et al. (2021); Shukla et al. (2016). In their research, Liu et al. (2021) concluded that the usefulness of the perceived creativity of Instagram posts has a positive impact on users' attitudes and user attitudes have a positive effect on interactive intention. As a result, online sports marketplace vendors should focus on the creativity of presenting their products to achieve better sales by attracting more users.

The significance coefficient of the variables is higher than 1.96, which indicates the significance of the direct and indirect effect at the confidence level of 99 percentage and confirms hypothesis number 4. So, the followers' affective commitment has a mediating role in the relationship between the perceived creativity of sports store pages and user interaction intention. It shows that from another indirect path, user interaction intention can be influenced, the results of which are in line with the results of the research by Casaló et al. (2021);



Jones & Lee, (2021); Yavarigohar & Koraghli (2019). The results of this research showed that all aspects of online marketing stimuli, including perceived creativity, have significant effects on user interaction, thus affecting affective commitment and online purchase intention. Likewise, the creative use of captions, emojis, images, and mega influencers on Instagram can significantly affect the increase in user interaction and contribute to users' emotional commitment to the brand, purchase, promotion, and marketing.

### Conclusion

Online sports stores should take the most significant marketing issues in the Instagram space, especially creativity and through it, the interaction and commitment of users seriously and operationalize the ways to achieve higher sales of their products than other competitors and to make their brand famous and prestigious in this new marketing space.

Most of the subjects were women, and most of the participants had less than one year's history on this page. Focusing on the behavior of this group of people in the community is crucial. Understanding the behavioral intentions of these people can assist the marketing store and ultimately have better interaction with buyers. One of the critical limitations of this research is the lack of resources and backgrounds related to the subject variables and the conditions of data collection and distribution of questionnaires due to the difficulty of accessing users. However, with the efforts of the research group and the necessary coordination with page management, the distribution of questionnaires and data collection were done carefully.

Moreover, to compensate for the low resources of the research group, it has tried to collect more accurate and up-to-date materials by studying the relevant articles and materials. One of the critical points of this study was the acceptable coefficient for determining the variables of interaction intention and affective commitment, which showed that most of the variables affecting the dependent variables were selected correctly. It is also suggested that future researches consider the

key role played by perceived creativity in the effective development of brand activities in other social networks and sites. Besides, It is suggested that managers of the store page hold annual conferences virtually and in-person for their users and consider gifts, subscriptions, and special discounts on important occasions for the followers who have more activities on their page. Finally, online sports stores can create creations such as putting journal and non-journal photos of products, mentioning the names of sports teams that have used these products, mentioning the colouring and size of products in post captions, and categorizing each product in an Instagram highlight page, poll and Q&A activities, using limited-time discounts for products and countdown to products. The launch of new products can be used to stimulate consumers and hope to engage more of their followers to purchase from the store and page.

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