

Facebook Users' perceptions of the paid “Meta Verified” Blue Tick Policy

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

Perception
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Facebook introduced significant changes to its verification policies in August 2022. These changes allow the possibility to obtain a blue tick, referred to as Verified Meta, through payments. This decision creates a paradigm shift in the perception and significance of the blue tick, which was previously considered an exclusive form of recognition for individuals or entities that have had a significant impact on the platform. The aims of this research is to find out how Facebook users perceive the paid "Verified Meta" Blue Check Policy. The type of research used in this research is quantitative research with descriptive methods. The sample size in this study was 100 respondents. Respondents in this research were Facebook users who were directly affected by the paid Meta Verified policy. The data collection method uses a questionnaire. Data analysis was carried out descriptively. The research results show that most Facebook users understand the concept of the “Meta Verified” policy, but some require further explanation. Attention to the policy tends to be low, and emotional responses are largely neutral. The majority of users are neutral regarding tolerance of the policy, while trust in the information provided is high. The majority were neutral about reconsidering their perceptions, but most were willing to do so.

1. Introduction

Initially, giving a blue tick on a Facebook account was a special sign of recognition and verification given only to truly qualified users. This process is designed to ensure that the account represents a figure or entity of significant authority, popularity or public interest. Account verification with a blue tick is not carried out haphazardly, and strict criteria must be met before being awarded the mark (Luttrell & Wallace, 2024).

Users applying for a blue tick must have an established and significant presence on the platform. This involves a substantial number of followers, a high level of engagement, and measurable impact within a specific community or field. In addition, accounts submitted for verification must be authentic and comply with the ethical guidelines and rules applicable to Facebook (Sedlmeir et al., 2021). Furthermore, the verification process involves manual review by a trained internal Facebook team. This team will evaluate the claims and information submitted by the account owner, ensuring that the qualified identity meets the established criteria. Facebook also takes into account the potential risk of misuse or falsification of identity in this process, thus making the blue tick a sign of trust worthy of being given (Braghieri et al., 2022).

Exponential growth in the number of users and changes in the dynamics of social media platforms, Facebook then made several adjustments to their verification policies (Lavilles et al., 2023). In August 2022, Facebook introduced significant changes to its account verification policy with the introduction of the possibility to obtain a blue tick, known as Meta Verified, through payments. This decision

creates a paradigm shift in the perception and significance of blue ticks, which were previously considered an exclusive form of recognition for individuals or entities that have had a significant impact on the platform. By introducing a payment option worth 140,000 rupiah, Facebook is changing a dynamic that has long existed.

In some views, this move resulted in the view that the blue tick was no longer an exclusive privilege that reflected qualifications and prestige. Instead, becoming Meta Verified is now an option available to anyone with a willingness to pay the set fees. This policy has attracted criticism from some who argue that it devalues and authenticates the blue tick, which was previously considered a form of honor and validation for significant contributions and influence in a particular community or field.

This change or new policy sparked widespread debate among Facebook users. Some welcomed it as a move to improve accessibility and provide an opportunity for more people to build their presence on the platform, while others felt that it reduced the integrity of the blue tick itself. Facebook's decision to commercialize this verification also raises questions regarding its impact on the credibility and relevance of Meta Verified in providing recognition in cyberspace. As such, these changes reflect the evolving dynamics of social media and the constant changes in the value and meaning attached to elements such as blue ticks.

With the new policy that allows anyone to get a blue tick just by paying, the essence and exclusivity of the blue tick as a sign of account verification is being eroded. Kraus et al., (2022) outlines that previously, the blue tick was recognized as a symbol of prestige, identifying individuals or entities that had special impact or relevance in cyberspace. However, by introducing a monetary factor in earning a blue tick, the value of the mark decreases as it no longer represents extraordinary achievement, popularity, or influence.

The importance of the blue tick as a verification tool may be questioned, as it has now become a commodity accessible to anyone willing to pay (Allam et al., 2022). Additionally, this move opens up the potential for abuse, where accounts with no real impact or relevance can earn the blue tick in an inauthentic way (Veeraiyah et al., 2022). This can be detrimental to the integrity of the platform, as users may start to doubt the legitimacy of the blue tick and its significance as a sign of recognition. Therefore, this policy change raises concerns about the potential decline in the credibility and value of the blue tick as a verification tool on social media platforms which was originally used to confirm a truly qualified identity.

The purpose of this research is to determine Facebook users' perceptions of the paid "Meta Verified" Blue Tick policy?.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Perception

According to Kotler (2007: 198) in Trustrum (1989), perception is a person's process of knowing, interpreting and remembering and organizing objects or things around them with the senses. Perception does not only depend on physical stimuli but also on stimuli related to the surrounding environment and the state of the individual concerned. According to Supranto (2007: 165) in Gedik & Cosar (2020), basically perception is the process of how stimuli or stimuli are selected, organized and interpreted or given a name or meaning. Meanwhile, according to Ali (2009: 142) in Cooper (2023), perception is the process of individuals (consumers) selecting, organizing and interpreting information input which can create an image of an object that has subjective (personal) truth, has a certain meaning, can be felt. through attention, whether selective, distortion or retention.

From the definitions above, it can be concluded that perception is a psychological process that is preceded by sensing in the form of observing, remembering and identifying an object. In order for each individual to be aware and carry out perception, there are several conditions that must be met, namely: a) the existence of an object or stimulus that is perceived. b) the presence of sensory organs/receptors. c) attention.

According to Robbin (2003) in Broadbent, (2004), there are two types of perception indicators, namely: (a) Reception. Reception refers to the way an individual accepts the information or stimulus they receive. Individuals can receive this information in various ways, and this is reflected in various

indicators. The following are several indicators of acceptance according to Broadbent (2004): (1) Comprehension: Individuals can understand the information provided, both verbally and visually. This understanding can be measured by looking at the extent to which individuals can interpret the information provided correctly and in accordance with the intent intended by the sender of the information. (2) Attention: Individuals can show attention to the information provided. This can be reflected in the individual's level of focus and concentration on the information presented, as well as his ability to capture this information well. (3) Emotional Acceptance: Apart from cognitive acceptance, acceptance can also be emotional. Individuals may respond to information with various emotions such as happy, sad, angry, or afraid. This indicator measures the extent to which individuals receive information emotionally. (4) Tolerance: Tolerance refers to an individual's ability to accept information that conflicts with his or her views or beliefs. This indicator measures the extent to which individuals are open to new information that is different from what they previously believed. (5) Sensory Reception: Individuals may receive information through various senses such as hearing, sight, or touch. This indicator measures the extent to which individuals can receive information through their senses well.

Evaluation. This evaluation includes an assessment of the value, truth, importance and relevance of the information in the context of the individual concerned. The following is a description of the evaluation indicators: (1) Value Assessment: Individuals assess the value of the information they receive. They consider whether the information is useful, important, or valuable to them. This indicator reflects the extent to which individuals consider the information to be valuable in the context of their personal needs or interests. (2) Evaluation of Truth: Individuals evaluate the truth or validity of the information provided. They may question the source of the information, the accuracy of the data, or the validity of the arguments presented. This indicator measures the extent to which individuals are confident or doubtful of the truth of the information received. (3) Consideration of Interest: Individuals consider the extent to which the information is relevant or important to their own interests. They may judge the information to be relevant to their current or long-term goals or needs. This indicator reflects the extent to which the information influences individual choices or decisions. (4) Credibility Evaluation: Individuals assess the credibility or trustworthiness of information sources. They may consider the reputation, authority, or reliability of the information source in conveying accurate and trustworthy information. This indicator measures the extent to which individuals believe the information conveyed by the source. (5) Re-Acceptance: Individuals may re-evaluate information they have received based on new experiences, additional information, or changes in context or circumstances. This indicator reflects an individual's flexibility in changing or updating their perception of information.

2.2. Active Audience

According to Burton & McQuail (2021) audiences are generally heterogeneous in that they consist of a large number of people from various social strata and demographic groups, but homogeneous in terms of their choice of particular objects of interest and according to the reception of those who wish to manipulate them. The development of media studies shows that there is greater attention to activities in interpreting messages and audiences rather than just actively selecting news. In reception studies, the theory of active audiences is not something new. Active in this context means the audience's role in the process of constructing the meaning of news content. The study of audiences active in producing meaning is intended as a reconceptualization of the concept of audience which is often used to differentiate reception analysis from the tradition of media research (Deuze, 2021).

According to Hagen and Wasko in Weimann & Masri (2020) that active audiences have a relationship with the media, but so far the role of audiences has been ignored in the study of the political economy of the media. Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model maintains that the majority of audiences change or reject dominant ideologies reflected in media content on a regular basis. According to Marxist thinking Deuze (2021) that reporting in the mass media is not providing information, providing education and providing entertainment, but rather selling information, selling education and selling entertainment. It can be seen in the news in the mass media that issues that are popular can provide benefits and will receive pressure and issues that are considered unimportant will be ignored.

2.3. Active Audience Typology

In media studies, there are two views regarding how audiences interpret audiences. The first view considers the media as an autonomous and active party. So, what the audience imagines is determined by single information from the media. Apart from that, audiences who are in the passive group will have the same perception as the media when they read news from that media. Meanwhile, the second view views audiences as active and dynamic because audiences not only actively choose media, but also interpret media content and interpretation of news rather than being determined by the media (Robertson, 2018). Emilien et al., (2017) divides the typology of active audiences into three groups, as follows: (a) The first type of audience is interpretive. Individual interpretation comes from everyday life and does not require specific skills. The meaning of media messages is not rigid but is constructed by the audience. This construction comes from the relationship between media texts, which is carried out through routine activities in interpreting, such as how media can provide pleasure, comfort and excitement. Producers construct media texts in complex ways, often with clear ideas intended to convey something, but the message is not simply accepted in the minds of the audience because the audience interprets it into various components. (b) Interpretations originating from social context. Here the audience actively interprets the message socially. Audiences do not simply see, read or hear media texts, but media has become part of social life. For example, watching television with family or friends and then the audience discussing what they watched with family or friends. (c) Interpretation activities are influenced by collective thinking and require producers to change media texts, such as protests or demands from parents who are concerned about the influence of television shows on their children.

3. Method

The paradigm of this research is the Constructivist paradigm. The Constructivist Paradigm bases research on the idea that reality is a social construction shaped by individual perceptions and interpretations. Research in this paradigm tends to use qualitative methods and focuses on an in-depth understanding of the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2015).

This research falls into the constructivist paradigm because it assumes that reality (Facebook users' perceptions of the "Meta Verified" policy) is a social construction formed by individual perceptions. Researchers may want to explore how Facebook users construct their understanding of the policy and how this understanding shapes their interactions with the platform.

The type of research used in this research is quantitative research with descriptive methods. Sugiyono (2018) explains that descriptive quantitative research is a research method that aims to describe or identify certain phenomena, characteristics or conditions using numerical data. This research focuses on collecting data that can be measured quantitatively, such as numbers, percentages, or scores, and does not attempt to test hypotheses or infer causality. In descriptive quantitative research, researchers collect data from a representative sample of a specific population or use existing data. Collected data Very likely, a novelty from a study is in the method section, even though the topic is the same as previous studies. New methods that are simpler but have the same ability to answer research questions are superior so that they can be replicated or applied by subsequent researchers. In addition, if the equipment has accuracy tolerance in reading data such as thermocouple, transducer, air flow meter, etc., it must also be stated clearly and honestly in the method section. then analyzed statistically to produce an objective summary or description of the phenomenon under study. Common analytical methods used in descriptive quantitative research include descriptive statistics such as mean, median, mode, and frequency distribution. The subjects of this research are Facebook users. The object of this research is the paid "Meta Verified" policy. Sugiyono (2018) revealed that the sample is part of the number and characteristics of the population. The sampling method used in this research is non-probability sampling, (unknown population), namely a sampling technique that provides equal opportunities or opportunities for each element (population member) to be selected as a sample (Shufford et al., 2021). Then the Simple Random Sampling method was used, namely sampling of population members was carried out randomly without paying attention to the strata in the population (Simkus, 2023). This method is used because members of the population are considered homogeneous. Because the population size is not known with certainty, to determine the sample size the unknown population formula was used (Simkus, 2023). Therefore the sample size in this study

was 100 respondents. Respondents in this study were Facebook users who were directly affected by the paid Meta Verified policy.

In this context, the research focuses on the use of Facebook, and to collect data, the data collection method used is a questionnaire. Questionnaires are research instruments commonly used in quantitative studies to collect responses from respondents on a measurable and structured scale (Odinka et al., 2020). Data analysis techniques used include: (a) Descriptive statistics: This technique is used to provide an objective description of the data collected. This includes the use of mean (average), median (middle value), mode (most frequently occurring value), and standard deviation to describe the characteristics of the sample of Facebook users who participated in the study, such as age, gender, education level, and so on. (b) Frequency Analysis: This technique is used to calculate the frequency of occurrence of various responses or responses to questions in research, such as how many respondents agree, disagree, or are neutral about the paid "Meta Verified" blue check policy.

4. Result and Discussion

Results The perception questionnaire statement items in this research were prepared using perception indicators which consist of two indicators, namely acceptance and evaluation. Acceptance indicators consist of aspects of understanding, attention, emotional acceptance, tolerance and sensory acceptance. Meanwhile, evaluation indicators consist of value assessment, truth evaluation, interest consideration and credibility evaluation.

The perceptions of respondents on paid "meta verified" policies are served on the following tables:

Table 1. Insight of respondents

Question	Answer	%
To what extent do you feel you understand the concept of paid "meta verified" blue tick policies on facebook?	Very don't understand	0
	Don't understand	26%
	Neutral	0
	understand	63%
	Very much to understanding	11%
	Total	100%

Source: Primary Data Processing, 2024

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents, as many as 63%, claim that they feel understood the blue check "meta verified" policy. As many as 11% of respondents even claim that they know very well. Only a fraction, which is 26%, expresses a lack of understanding of the policy. No respondents stated that they were either totally unaware of or neutral about the concept.

A good understanding of the traditional blue-checked "meta verified" policy concept on facebook can be considered as an indication that the user has a sufficient level of awareness of that feature. However, there was still a small percentage of those who did not understand, who may need further information or information that was easier to access in order to understand the concept.

Table 2. Attention of Respondents

Question	Answer	%
How often do you focus and concentrate on reading or hearing about policy Checked blue "meta verified" On facebook?	Very rarely	0
	Rarely	76%
	Sometimes	24
	Often	0
	Very often	0
	Total	100%

Source: Primary Data Processing, 2024

Table 2 shows the level of attention of respondents to information regarding the paid "meta verified" blue tick policy on facebook. It appears that the majority of the respondents, as much as 76%, say that they rarely focus and concentrate on reading or hearing about the policy. 24% of respondents said that they are sometimes focused and focused, while no one said that they are often or very often focused and focused. These results indicate that most of the respondents had low

attention to information regarding the paid "meta verified" blue tick policies on facebook. This may be caused by a variety of factors, such as information complexity, lack of interest, or lack of relevance to the everyday life of respondents.

Table 3. Respondent's emotional acceptance

Question	Answer	%
How did you feel when you first heard about policy Checked blue "meta verified" pay on facebook.	Happy	10%
	Sad	0
	Angry	8%
	Afraid	0
	Neutral	82%
	Total	100%

Source: Primary Data Processing, 2024

Table 3 gives an idea of the respondent's emotional response to the paid "meta verified" blue tick policies on facebook. It appears that the majority of respondents, 82%, said that they felt neutral when they first heard about the policy. A small percentage of respondents, as many as 10% and 8% each, say that they feel happy or angry when they first hear about the policy. No respondents stated that they felt sad or scared.

Dominant sense of neutrality can be interpreted as a sign that most of the respondents may not have a strong emotional reaction to the policy. However, a few of the respondents were happy or angry. It demonstrates a variation in the emotional response to the policy, which may be affected by factors such as previous experiences, personal values, or perceptions about the policy's impact on facebook users.

Table 4. Tolerance of respondents

Question	Answer	%
To what extent are you open to the concept of a paid "Meta Verified" blue check policy on Facebook even though it may conflict with your previous views or beliefs?	So intolerant	0
	Not Tolerant	10%
	Neutral	88%
	Tolerant	2%
	Very tolerant	0
	Total	100%

Source: Primary Data Processing, 2024

Table 4 gives an idea of the respondents' tolerance level of paid "meta verified" policy concept on facebook, though it may contradict their previous views or beliefs. It appears that the majority of respondents, 88%, claim that they are neutral of the concept. As many as 10% of respondents stated that they were intolerant of the concept, while only 2% said that they were tolerant of it. No respondents claimed that they were either extremely intolerant or extremely tolerant of the concept.

The result indicates that the majority of respondents tended to be neutral of the policy concept, although some were intolerant of it. Tolerance of the concept also appears low, with only 2% of respondents saying that they are tolerant of the concept.

Table 5. Sensory Reception

Question	Answer	%
How well do you receive information about Facebook's "Meta Verified" blue check policy through your senses such as reading, hearing, or seeing?	Very bad	0
	Bad	10%
	Enough	15%
	Good	75%
	Very good	0
	Total	100%

Source: Primary Data Processing, 2024

Table 5 gives an idea of the responders' degree of sensory acceptance of information on the blue "meta verified" tick policies on facebook through their senses, such as reading, hearing, or seeing. It appears that the majority of the respondents, by 75%, claim that they receive the information well. 15% of respondents claim that they receive enough information, while 10% states that they receive it poorly. No respondents claim that they receive such information very bad or very good.

These results indicate that most of the respondents have the good ability to receive information on the blue "meta checked" policy on facebook through their senses, such as reading, hearing, or seeing. However, there were also a few of the respondents who had difficulty receiving such information.

Table 6. Value Assessment

Question	Answer	%
How useful do you find Facebook's paid "Meta Verified" blue check policy in the context of your personal needs or interests?	Very Useless	0
	Useless	15%
	Neutral	71%
	Useful	12%
	Very useful	0
	Total	100%

Source: Primary Data Processing, 2024

Table 6 gives an idea of the respondents' value assessment of the paid "meta verified" blue tick policies on facebook in the context of their needs or personal interests. It appears that the majority of respondents, as many as 71%, claim that they are neutral of the policy in the context of their needs or personal interests. 15% of respondents declared that they did not consider the policy to be useful, while 12% said they did. No respondents claim that they view such policies as totally useless or totally useless.

These results indicate that the majority of respondents tend to have a neutral view of paid "meta verified" blue tick policies on facebook in the context of their needs or personal interests. However, there are also a few respondents who do not consider such a policy to be beneficial, while a few others see it as useful.

Table 7. Evaluation of Truth

Question	Answer	%
How certain are you of the truth or the validity of the "meta verified" blue tick policy on facebook after reading information about it?	Very uncertain	0
	Unsure	0
	Neutral	8%
	Confident	82%
	Very sure	0
	Total	100%

Source: Primary Data Processing, 2024

Table 7 gives an idea of an evaluation of truth or validity of the respondents' "meta verified" check policy on facebook after reading information about it. It appears that the vast majority of respondents, as of 82%, claim that they believe in the truth or the validity of the policy after reading information about it. As many as 8% claim they are neutral of the truth or validity of the policy, while no one is suggesting that they are unconvinced or strongly unsure, or strongly convinced.

These results show that the majority of respondents have strong confidence in truth or in the validity of the "meta verified" blue tick policy on facebook after reading information about it. It may reflect that the information they receive strengthens their confidence in the policy.

Table 8. Consideration of interests

Question	Answer	%
To what extent do you feel the blue-	Very irrelevant	0

checked "meta verified" policy on facebook is relevant or critical to your own interests?	Irrelevant	17%
	Neutral	62%
	Relevant	9%
	Very relevant	12%
	Total	100%

Source: Primary Data Processing, 2024

Table 8 gives an idea of the respondents' interest in the "meta verified" blue checkbook policy on facebook. The majority of respondents, 62%, claim that they are neutral of the policy as to its relevance or importance to their own interests. By 17% of respondents said that the policy was irrelevant for their benefit, while as much as 9% said that the policy was relevant, and 12% stated that it is.

These results indicate that the majority of respondents tend to have a neutral view of the relevance or importance of verified blue check policies on facebook for their own benefit. However, there are also a few of the respondents who consider the policy to be relevant or very relevant for their benefit. There is a variation in the respondents's perception of the relevance or importance of the policy for their own benefit. This may be affected by a variety of factors, including the use and benefits they get from such features in their activities on the facebook platform.

Table 9. Credibility evaluation

Question	Answer	%
How much trust do you have in the sources of information that gives information about the blue-checked "meta verified" policy on facebook?	Very disbelieving	0
	Don't believe	0
	Neutral	0
	Believe	87%
	Strongly believes	13%
	Total	100%

Source: Primary Data Processing, 2024

Table 9 provides an idea for the evaluation of respondents's credibility of the information source that gives information on the blue-checked "meta verified" policy on facebook. The majority of respondents, as much as 87%, said that they believe in sources of information that gives information about the policy. As many as 13% of respondents stated that they strongly believe in the source of the information, while no one claims that they do not believe, strongly believe, or are neutral. These results indicate that the vast majority of respondents have a high level of trust in sources of information that gives information on the blue-checked "meta verified" policy on facebook. This reflects that the source of the information is considered credible by the majority of users. User belief in the source of information that provides information about the policy can affect their perception and acceptance of the policy as a whole. It is important, therefore, to ensure that the source of information used to convey information about the policy is credible and trustworthy to the user.

Tabel 10. Readmission

Question	Answer	%
To what extent are you willing to reconsider your perception of the "meta verified" blue tick policy on facebook based on experiences or additional information you have in the future?	Very unwilling	0
	Not willing to	0
	Neutral	68%
	Ready	32%
	Very willing	0
	Total	100%

Source: Primary Data Processing, 2024

Table 10 provides an overview of respondents' re-acceptance rate of the "Meta Verified" blue tick policy on Facebook based on their experiences or additional information they obtain in the future. From the results of primary data processing in 2024, it can be seen that the large majority of respondents, namely 68%, stated that they were neutral about reconsidering their perceptions of the policy based on experience or additional information in the future. As many as 32% of respondents stated that they were willing to reconsider their perceptions, while no one stated that they were very willing, not willing, or very unwilling. These results indicate that the vast majority of respondents have a neutral attitude toward reconsidering their perception of Facebook's "Meta Verified" blue tick policy based on experience or additional information in the future. However, there was also a large proportion of respondents who were willing to reconsider their perceptions. Most respondents were open to the possibility of updating or changing their perceptions of the policy based on experience or additional information in the future. This shows the importance of continuity of communication and providing relevant and accurate information to users to support better understanding and acceptance of the policy.

5. Conclusion

The majority of Facebook users have a fairly good understanding of the concept of the "Meta Verified" policy, with most of them stating a good or very good understanding. However, there is a small portion of Facebook users who still do not fully understand, indicating a need for further explanation or easier access to information. When it comes to policy attention, the majority of Facebook users have a low level of attention, perhaps due to the complexity of the information or lack of relevance to daily life. Emotional responses to the policy tend to be neutral, with the majority of Facebook users not showing a strong emotional reaction to it. In terms of tolerance for policies, the majority of Facebook users tend to be neutral, although there are a small number who are intolerant of the concept. In receiving information about policies, the majority of Facebook users have good abilities, although there are a small number who experience difficulties. In terms of evaluating the credibility of information sources, the majority of Facebook users have a high level of trust in them. When asked about their readiness to reconsider their perceptions, the majority of Facebook users were neutral, however, there was also a large proportion who were willing to reconsider their perceptions.

Based on the results of this research, several suggestions can be proposed: (a) Social media platforms like Facebook need to increase openness and education regarding new policies, such as "Meta Verified", by providing information that is clearer and easier to understand. A more detailed and simpler explanation can help users who still don't fully understand the concept. (b) In designing new policies or introducing new features, it is important to ensure relevance to user needs and interests. Platforms must actively engage with users to understand their preferences and obtain feedback that can help improve the user experience. (c) Clear and consistent communication about policies, including their benefits and how they work, can help overcome any confusion or uncertainty some users may experience. Structured and easy to understand messages can reduce confusion and increase acceptance of the policy. (d) Social media platforms must continue to pay attention to the quality of information presented to users, including the authenticity and accuracy of information regarding new policies or features. This can help build user trust in the platform and the policies introduced.

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