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碩士學位論文

**Instagram 影響者行銷：自我與代言人一致性、品牌  
與代言人一致性及品牌體驗的影響**

**Influencer marketing on Instagram: The effects of self-influencer  
congruence, brand-endorser congruence, and brand experience.**

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## 謝辭

在研究所的兩年裡時間總過得特別快，如今我也如期完成了論文研究，真沒想的這天終於來臨了。回想過去對於要撰寫論文一事的未知與擔憂，一路上過關斬將，受到許多人的幫忙與協助，才有今日豐厚的成果。首先要特別感謝指導教授陳冠儒老師這段期間以來的指導，從題材的選擇、文獻回顧、問卷設計與發放、以及成果的分析等等在各個階段給予了非常實用的建議和能夠自由發揮的空間，讓我可以順利的在沒有太多外在壓力的情況下完成這份研究，非常感謝老師盡心盡力的指導。同時也感謝口試委員彭志宏老師與江藍龍老師給予的寶貴建議，讓這篇研究論文能更臻完善。

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最後要謝謝一直以來這麼努力的自己，請再多相信自己一些，你能夠做得很好的！

王姿雯 謹誌于政治大學  
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## 摘要

影響者行銷作為一種行銷傳播策略，在近年來被廣泛使用且發展非常迅速。許多品牌行銷人員的主要工作之一便是挑選與合適的社群媒體平台和影響者合作，藉此來帶動品牌產品的曝光或提升營收。然而如何挑選合適的影響者對於行銷人員來說無疑是一大挑戰。本研究旨在揭開Instagram上消費者、影響者和品牌之間關係的神秘面紗，以配適假說文獻作為基礎，探究品牌代言在影響者行銷領域中的有效性。分別檢視了自我與代言人一致性、品牌與代言人一致性以及品牌體驗對於品牌承諾與品牌親密的影響。除此之外，本研究也深入探討操縱意圖在此過程中是否具有調節的作用。研究結果顯示，自我與代言人一致性及品牌與代言人一致性對於品牌體驗和其他消費者相關的行為反應，例如：品牌承諾和品牌親密皆會產生正面的影響。品牌體驗在品牌與代言人者一致性和品牌承諾及品牌親密之間的關係中具有完全中介的效果，而操縱意圖也在此研究中證實會於此中介效果上進一步產生調節效果。研究成果應用於實務上能協助品牌及行銷人員制定出合適的影響者行銷策略。

關鍵字：影響者行銷、自我與代言人一致性、品牌與代言人一致性、品牌體驗、品牌承諾、品牌親密、操控意圖。

## Abstract

As a widely-used communication strategy, influencer marketing has been growing fast in recent years. Collaborating with suitable social media channels and influencers has become one of the primary tasks for many marketers. Building on the literature in the match-up hypothesis, this research investigates the effectiveness of brand endorsement, in the context of influencer marketing, aiming at demystifying the relationships between consumers, influencers, and brands on Instagram. The effects of self-influencer congruence, brand-endorser congruence, and brand experience on brand commitment and brand intimacy, respectively, are examined. This research further delves into the moderating role of inferences of manipulative intent in the process. The research findings suggest that both kinds of congruence positively affect brand experience and other relevant consumer responses, such as brand commitment and brand intimacy. Brand experience is observed to mediate the relationships between brand-endorser congruence and brand commitment as well as brand intimacy, while inferences of manipulative intent are found to moderate the effects of brand-endorser congruence on brand commitment through brand experience. Theoretical and managerial implications are discussed.

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# Introduction

Influencer marketing, also known as influencer endorsement, has been one of the fastest-growing communication strategies used by brands all shapes and sizes in recent years (Mediakix, 2020). It is a form of marketing communication that brands and marketers cooperate with suitable influencers to promote branded content to their target consumers or followers in order to build brand awareness or to arouse consumer's purchase intention (Yodel, 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019). According to Mediakix's (2020) survey of nearly 200 professionals in marketing, 80% of them deemed influencer marketing as an effective way of promoting brands and products. In 2021, the market size of influencer marketing is expected to reach \$13.8 billion U.S. dollar, as more and more brands continuously invest and increase their marketing budget in such a strategy (Geyser, 2021).

Among the endorsers or spokesperson the brands choose to collaborate with, social media influencers play an important role in being the key opinion leader in their own online social groups (Lou & Yuan, 2019). While celebrities commonly seen on traditional media owns great fame and reputation, social media influencers who share self-generated content through social media are more like “micro-celebrities” (Senft, 2008). In other words, they are often “normal people” who have knowledge, authority, or expertise in certain areas such as traveling, fashion, sport, food, or living, and gradually become famous in the niche market later on. By sharing self-generated content such as posts, videos, or articles online, social media influencers often have accumulated a group of followers across one or more social media platforms (Agrawal, 2016; Varsamis, 2018; Lou & Yuan 2019). Through the

message communicated on the platforms, social media influencers have the ability to affect consumers' attitudes on product evaluation and their buying decisions, which is highly valued by brands.

While brands were developing various kinds of marketing communication strategies to create brand buzz and increase market share, consumers nowadays, living in a world full of stimuli, have learned how to selectively paying attention to the information and content they only felt interested or trusted in. Comparing to content generated by brands, the branded content produced by influencers is often seen as more authentic, organic, and trustworthy to the followers (Talavera, 2015). Consumers are much more easily persuaded by the key opinion leaders instead of brand-owned content alone. Hence, the considerable impact of social media influencers on consumers has become increasingly crucial to marketers, providing brands with perfect opportunities to reach out to the target audience efficiently.

More specifically, Instagram, as a thriving social media platform, has become another important channel other than Facebook for influencer marketing recently (Mediakix, 2020). Over the past 10 years, Instagram has gained over 1 billion users worldwide, and gradually rolled out new functions such as live video, filter, Instagram story, and shoppable post, accumulating massive popularity throughout the world with 500 million daily users (Mediakix, 2020). The platform has high potential in communicating and engaging with consumers since they tend to search for trending stuff and product information, or involve with other consumers' post-purchase activities on Instagram nowadays.



It is thus important for brands to make the most of the platform to interact with consumers at each stage of consumer journey on Instagram.

For brands and marketers, the primary goal is to develop and deliver effective marketing strategies to satisfy consumer needs. Yet, how to ensure the influencer marketing does work effectively is a complicated matter, since there are various factors jointly affecting consumers' decision-making process. The discussion of the brand endorsement effectiveness of prior studies provides conceptualization with different perspectives. On the one hand, the source credibility model (Hovland, Jannis, and Kelley, 1953; Ohanian, 1991; Munnukka, Uusitalo, and Toivonen, 2016) suggested that whether the consumers would generate favorable responses toward brands are determined by the expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and similarity of the endorser. On the other hand, the studies of match-up hypothesis (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990; Kamins & Gupta, 1994; Choi & Rifon, 2012) focused on the congruence of consumer-endorser, brand-endorser, and consumer-brand relationships, suggesting that the match-up of each relationship determines consumers' attitude toward brands, subsequently affecting the purchase decisions. Drawing on both theoretical frameworks, this study will investigate the effects of consumer-endorser and brand-endorser relationships on brand experience and other relevant consumer responses by surveying consumers who have experiences interacting with Instagram influencers and their branded content.

This research is expected to have theoretical contributions to the body of literature on the endorsement effectiveness by specifically examining the effects of self-influencer congruence, brand-endorser congruence, and brand experience on consumers' responses in the areas regarding consumers' engagement with branded content on Instagram. Practically, this research aims to provide empirical evidence and insights for brands and marketers to value the interactive dynamics among consumers, endorser, and brands; and therefore, to develop appropriate marketing communication strategies in the context of influencer marketing on Instagram.

## **Theoretical Background**

### **Brand endorsement effectiveness**

The study of whether the brand endorsement has its effectiveness in marketing can be traced back to 1953 when Hovland, Jannis, and Kelley brought up the source credibility model. They proposed two dimensions of source credibility: expertise and trustworthiness. Source expertise refers to the knowledge or skills of the source in certain fields, allowing them to make valid assertions on specific topics (Hovland, Jannis, & Kelley, 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Source trustworthiness is the perception of the receiver of whether the message provided by the source is honest and objective (Giffin, 1967; Erdogan, 1999). With more and more researchers delve into the studies of the endorsement effectiveness by applying it, the source credibility model has gradually become rigorous. For example, Ohanian (1991) identified the third component of the source credibility model:

attractiveness, which refers to the physical attractiveness of the source to the receivers (Ohanian, 1991).

Munnukka, Uusitalo, and Toivonen (2016) later on adapted the fourth dimension of the source credibility model: source similarity, due to the influencer marketing practice of the peer influencer.

The source similarity is the perceived resemblance of the source to the receivers (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

The earlier studies of the brand endorsement effectiveness believed that the celebrity endorsement can bring greater influence to the consumers compared to the non-celebrity endorsement (Erdogan, 1999; Ohanian, 1991; Sternthal, Phillips, & Dholakia, 1978) because of the celebrity credibility embedded in consumers' minds. Studies also found out that the perceived product quality can be affected by the credible source (Weiner & Mowen, 1985); therefore, the celebrities are able to change consumers' attitude towards certain brands/products, and consequently affect their purchase intention (McGuire, 1968; Sternthal, Phillips, & Dholakia, 1978).

In addition to the source credibility, other researchers focused on the extent to which the endorser and brand/product congruity can affect brand endorsement effectiveness. According to Kamins and Gupta (1994), the believability of the celebrity-endorser was less convincing in some cases compared to the other aspects: "empirical studies have found the celebrity spokesperson to be more likable and attractive, but less believable than non-celebrity counterparts (Atkin & Block, 1983; Freiden, 1984; Friedman, Termini, & Washington, 1976)" (p. 573). And they considered the low believability

possibly came from the low match-up between the endorser and the product. Low believability may lead to weak persuasion of endorsers' message, less effectiveness of influencing consumers' brand/product attitude, and less purchase intention. Therefore, endorser-brand/product congruence, the previously ignored factor, became important in the later studies.

Moreover, the discussions of the match-up hypothesis were well documented in the literature (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990; Kamins & Gupta, 1994; Choi & Rifon, 2012). The literature indicated that if the image of the endorser has a perfect fit to the image of the brand/product, consumers are inclined to relate the brand/product to positive evaluations (Kamins, 1990). That is, “a good match-up” between the endorser and the brand/product will drive more effective consumer responses (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990; Kamins & Gupta, 1994). There were studies indicating that the high congruence between the endorsers' physical attractiveness and physical beauty related product may convey more powerful and persuasive messages to the consumers (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990) and generate more positive responses and actions towards brands comparing to the endorsers with no such match-ups. Hence, the importance of the endorser-brand/product congruence in research on the effectiveness of brand endorsement, especially for influencer marketing, should not be overlooked.

Nowadays, consumers gradually transfer their sources of information from traditional media such as TV, newspapers, and radios, to social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, where people start to build relationships and share information (Hair, Clark, and Shapiro, 2010). Subsequently, more and more research on brand endorsement effectiveness began to focus on the effectiveness of influencer marketing on these social media channels. Social media influencers, similar to traditional celebrities, were suggested to have social impacts on consumers as Freberg et al. (2011) depicted social media influencers as “a new type of independent third-party endorser who shapes audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media” (p. 90). Being a new type of endorser, social media influencers were believed to be more relatable and credible comparing to the traditional celebrities; therefore, led to effective influence on young consumers’ buying decisions (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017). While the characteristics of the endorsers and media contexts were both novel, the extant theoretical frameworks seem to be applicable to probe into the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Previous research also investigated the effectiveness of influencer endorsement based on the source credibility model and match-up hypothesis. For instance, based on the source credibility model, Lou & Yuan (2019) suggested influencers’ trustworthiness, attractiveness, and similarity to consumers secure consumers’ trust and lead to brand awareness enhancement and purchase intention whereas Lee & Kim (2020) investigated the impacts of influencer credibility, brand credibility, and sponsorship disclosure on the effectiveness of Instagram’s branded post. According to the match-up hypothesis, Choi and Rifon (2012) studied the relationship between endorser-consumer

congruence and consumer attitudes and purchase intention while the study of Shan, Chen & Lin (2020) examined the effects of self-influencer congruence on consumers' attitudes and engagement with the brand content. Considering the widely adopted match-up hypothesis, the consumer-endorser and brand-endorser relationships will be further elaborated in the next paragraph.

### **Self-influencer congruence**

Besides the relationship between the endorser and the brand/product, Choi and Rifon (2012) argued that the endorser-consumer relationship also plays an important role in determining brand endorsement effectiveness. In the study, Choi and Rifon (2012) proved that the endorser-consumer congruence indeed has a significant impact on consumers' positive attitudes towards the ad and their purchase intention. The study of Shan, Chen & Lin (2020) also found out that the higher self-influencer congruence can lead to a favorable attitude and more engagement with the brand content.

To explain the self-influencer congruence, this research starts by introducing the self-esteem of the self-concept and the social influence theory. Self-concept is conceived as “the sum of an individual's thoughts and feelings about herself or himself with respect to others (Onkvisit & Shaw, 1987; Choi & Rifon, 2012, p. 640).” The self-concept could be divided into two parts: the actual self and the ideal self, and was empirically proved to have a great influence on consumer behavior (Choi & Rifon, 2012). The actual self refers to the way an individual actually perceives him/herself, while the ideal self

represents the way an individual wishes to perceives him/herself (Higgins, 1987; Sirgy, 1982). According to the extant literature, an individual would try to consistently sustain their self-concept (i.e., self-consistency motive), and would gradually attempt to fulfill the condition where their actual self could meet their ideal self to enhance the self-concept (i.e., self-esteem motive) (Graeff, 1996; Higgins, 1987).

While the self-esteem motive of the self-concept explained the consumers' psychological status of "wishing to be better," the identification of Kelman's (1961) social influence theory explained the relationship between the consumer and the endorser. The social influence theory consists of compliance, identification, and internalization; whereas the compliance suggests that individual would adopt behavior only to reach pleasant outcomes or to avoid punishments; the identification refers to the process of an individual adopting the influencer's attitude or behavior because of the satisfaction he/she felt during the process of alternation; and the internalization is the process that an individual adopts certain behaviors based on the consistency of the content of the behavior and one's own value system (Kelman, 1961; Choi & Rifon, 2012; Xu & Pratt, 2018).

Taken together, the self-esteem motive and the identification of the social influence theory both explained the congruence between the consumers' ideal self-images and influencers' images. Namely, based on the self-esteem motive, consumers would take actions to achieve and enhance their ideal-self;

at the meanwhile, they believe that the influencers they have been following would lead them to reach the ideal self during the “identification” process. By buying and using the product the influencers endorsed, imitating the influencers’ lifestyle, or adopting the influencers’ behavior and attitude, the consumers believe that they will gradually become the “better self.”

Hence, when the influencers’ images are highly coherent or consistent with the consumers’ ideal self-images, there will be a high possibility for consumers to make favorable decisions towards the brand/product that the influencers endorsed. As antecedents of positive word-of mouth, brand loyalty, and purchase intention, which can augment brand awareness and sales volume, brand commitment (Osuna Ramírez et al., 2017) and brand intimacy (Almubarak et al., 2018) are two important consumer responses that worth examined in the study of brand endorsement effectiveness. Considering the promising influences of brand commitment and brand intimacy on marketers’ ultimate goals, this study will conceive these consumer responses as the outcomes of influencer marketing. The favorable responses result from high level of self-influencer congruence may include brand commitment, “the emotional or affective attachment to a brand (Kim et al., 2008), and brand intimacy, the special meaning of brands, or detailed knowledge that consumers have toward brands (Fournier 1994; 1998). Therefore, a reasonable assumption can be made that the higher the degree of the congruence between the consumers’ ideal self-images and influencers’ images, the greater brand commitment and brand intimacy towards the brand consumers will generate, and the hypothesis is suggested as below:



H1a: A high degree of self-influencer congruence will lead to a high degree of (i) brand commitment and (ii) brand intimacy.

### **Brand-endorser congruence**

Imaging the endorsement process as a triangle, the three components: brand, endorser, and consumer each have their connection to one another. Apart from the consumer-endorser congruence, the relationship between the endorser and brand/product also has its significance in determining the brand endorsement effectiveness.

Based on the match-up hypothesis, extant studies (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990; Kamins & Gupta, 1994; Misra & Beatty, 1990; Till & Busler, 1998, 2000; Till, Stanley, & Priluck, 2008; Choi & Rifon, 2012) suggested that when the endorser is congruent with the brand/product, consumers will have a more favorable attitude towards the brand/product; therefore, the effectiveness of endorsement is higher. Researchers have explained the match-up hypothesis by the social adaptation theory (Kahle and Homer 1985; Kamins 1990): consumers tend to apply the source of information to assist in adapting to their environments. When a fitness of brands and endorsers' images exist, consumers can categorize the information into their knowledge structure easily, and therefore, the value of the information increases and affects consumers' evaluations (Wright, 2016). Previous research on the

congruence between an endorser's physical attractiveness and the feature of an endorsed product (i.e., physical beauty related product) proved its significant influence on the endorsement effectiveness (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990). This is because the source of information (i.e., the attractiveness congruence) allows consumers to relate that they can also enhance their physical attractiveness by using the endorsed product as the endorser did (Kamins, 1990). Besides attractiveness, other researchers (Misra & Beatty, 1990; Kamins & Gupta, 1994) suggested that there are abundant of factors jointly affecting the level of the brand-endorser congruence and measured the endorsement effectiveness by focusing on the "consumers' perception" of the congruity as a whole rather than a single factor. Kamins & Gupta (1994) found out that the low product-endorser congruence will negatively affecting endorsers' credibility and the effectiveness of the ad, which corresponded to the findings of Choi & Rifon (2012) that the match-up of the brand-endorser relationship will directly lead to positive attitudes towards the advertising. These studies thus suggested that the brand-endorser congruence significantly influences consumers' assessment of advertisement and brand since a high degree of perceived congruence may lead to favorable brand evaluations (Choi & Rifon, 2012). Along this logic, this research assumes the positive evaluations of brands will lead to consumers' brand commitment and brand intimacy. Thus, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H1b: A high degree of brand-endorser congruence will lead to a high degree of (i) brand commitment and (ii) brand intimacy.

## **Brand experience**

For brands and marketers, it is important for them to understand consumers' feelings, thoughts, and experiences related to product, service, and brand in order to better conduct effective marketing strategies. Prior to the study of brand experience, research has been done to examine the experience constructs that sparsely represent each stage in the consumer journey, with an emphasis on the utilitarian attributes of products. For instance, product experience studied the experiences that occurred when consumers engaged with brands or products (e.g., search for product information) (Hoch & Deighton, 1989; Hoch & Ha, 1986; Huffman & Houston, 1993); shopping and service experience focused on the experiences of consumers getting in touch with stores, its personnel, and policies (Hui & Bateson, 1991; Kerin, Jain, and Howard, 1992).; consumption experience referred to the consumer experiences of purchasing and using the products (Arnould & Price, 1993; Holt, 1995; Joy and Sherry 2003).

Besides the abovementioned “utilitarian product attributes” that engender experiences, Brakus et al. (2009) believed that consumers also experienced the marketing stimuli as a whole evoked by brands during entire trajectory of the consumer journey. For example, the color of the brand identity, shapes of the logo, slogan, packaging, advertisement, store atmosphere, and so on. Thus, combined the utilitarian product attributes and brand-related attributes, Brakus et al. (2009) conceptualized the brand experience as “subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and

behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments" (p. 53). Based on the literature (Nysveen, Pedersen, & Skard, 2013), brand experience is composed of four dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral. Sensory experience refers to the five senses of consumers triggered by the stimuli; affective experience represents the emotional connection between consumers and the brand; intellectual experience allows consumers to conduct intellectual thinking; behavioral experience refers to the actions taken by the consumers while getting in touch with the brand (Brakus et al., 2009; Nysveen, Pedersen, & Skard, 2013).

Applied to the current research, self-influencer congruence and brand-endorser congruence, as mentioned earlier, may lead to favorable consumer responses when the congruence is high. Along this logic, the consistency in the self-influencer and brand-endorser relationships may also lead to positive brand experience of the consumers. That is, when consumers interact with the branded content posted by the influencers, they will encounter the brand-related stimuli such as brand and product image, feature and benefit of the product, brand's value and identity, and so on. Building on the literature, consumers tend to adopt influencers' attitude and behavior when the level of self-influencer congruence is high; and they can easily adapt the information into their own knowledge construct when the level of brand-endorser congruence is also high. Both of which affect consumers' evaluations for brands and may lead to favorable brand experience in terms of sensory, affective, intellectual, and

behavioral responses. Still, being a part of consumer responses (sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral responses), brand experience was not a primary topic to discuss in relations to the self-influencer congruence and brand-endorser congruence, as no studies have explored the effects of self-influencer congruence and brand-endorser congruence on brand experience. To fill up the gap, this article will examine the effects of self-influencer congruence and brand-endorser congruence on brand experience. And the following hypothesis is suggested:

H2: A high degree of (a) self-influencer congruence and (b) brand-endorser congruence will lead to a high degree of brand experience.

Apart from the direct effect of self-influencer congruence and brand-endorser congruence on brand experience, this research also examines the mediating role of brand experience in the relationships between self-influencer congruence, brand-endorser congruence, brand commitment, and brand intimacy. For brand commitment, similar to human relationships, an individual's commitment towards a brand corresponds to their prior experiences in consumer-brand relationships (Clark & Reis, 1988; Fournier, 1998). Researchers subsequently argued that consumers' brand commitment is enhanced when brands provide positive brand experiences. The extant literature also suggested the significant impact of brand experience on brand commitment (Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014). Considering the positive relationship of brand experience and brand commitment, this research assumes the mediating

role of brand experience may exist when self-influencer congruence and brand-endorser congruence also have a significant impact on brand experience.

On the other hand, brand intimacy refers to the feeling of connection stemmed from the pleasant consumer-brand relationship (Almubarak et al., 2018). According to Turri et al. (2013), brands that can build intimate relationships with consumers often have a better chance to survive. Moreover, it requires “frequent, close, and cherished interactions” of both brands and consumers to form brand intimacy, and social media platforms and key opinion influencers turn out to be the optimal instruments for brands to have instant and close connections with the consumers (Turri et al., 2013). When consumers interact with influencer’s branded content, the perceived high degree of congruence will lead to favorable consumer responses, which may generate a positive brand experience. And the positive brand experience of the consumers, especially the affective responses, may positively influence brand intimacy. Consequently, based on the meditational hypothesis route, this research assumes that consumers perceive high self-influencer congruence and brand-endorser congruence are likely to engender their favorable outcome of brand experience, and, in turn, lead to their brand commitment and brand intimacy in a positive way. Thus, the hypotheses are posited as following:

H3a: Brand experience will mediate the relationship between self-influencer congruence and (i) brand commitment and (ii) brand intimacy.

H3b: Brand experience will mediate the relationship between brand-endorser congruence and (i) brand commitment and (ii) brand intimacy.

### **Inferences of manipulative intent**

According to the persuasion knowledge model, consumers are able to dynamically develop the persuasion knowledge and use it to deal with people, advertisements, and messages that tried to influence them (Friestad & Wright, 1994). This persuasion knowledge is personal knowledge about the goals and tactics of the marketers, how the tactics can influence consumers psychologically, and how consumers can cope with the persuasion attempts effectively (Friestad & Wright, 1994; Wentzel, Tomczak & Herrmann, 2010). In addition, persuasion knowledge also allows consumers to distinguish whether the persuasion tactics are fair or appropriate. Once the consumers have perceived the unfairness, inappropriateness, and manipulation of the persuasion attempts, they tend to make negative inferences toward the advertisers and the brands; the phenomenon is called the inferences of manipulative intent (Campbell, 1995). Such unfairness or inappropriateness were believed to come from the comparison of an individual to others; that is, the differences between the rate of personal investment and benefits comparing to the rate of others (i.e., marketers) investment and benefits (Adams, 1965).

Prior studies also suggested that the increase of the inferences of manipulative intent will lead to lower brand trustworthiness, decrease the persuasiveness of brands' message, (Guo & Main, 2012; Xie & Peng, 2009), and negatively affect the brands' reputation consequently (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Walsh et al., 2009). This was result from the fact that promotional communication from brands would activate consumers' persuasion knowledge, and their suspicion and doubt to the advertising or branded contents, which may further raise the inferences that brands might be exaggerating or manipulating. Thus, such inferences would lead to negative inferences on brands and consumers would oppose the persuasion messages (Campbell & Kirmani, 2000; Carlson, Bearden, & Hardesty, 2007). However, not all the messages conveyed by the brands may raise consumers' inferences of manipulative intent. Previous studies suggested that the activation of consumers' persuasion knowledge happens only when the manipulative intent of the brands/marketers are obvious enough (Campbell and Kirmani, 2000). Based on the fact that the inferences of manipulative intent result in low brand trustworthiness and invalid persuasion messages of brands, this research suggests that consumers' inferences of manipulative intent may serve as a moderating role that negatively influences consumers' experiences and responses towards brands as a result of self-influencer congruence and brand-endorser congruence. Hence, the hypothesis is posited as below:

H4a: Inferences of manipulative intent will negatively moderate the indirect effect of self-influencer congruence on (i) brand commitment and (ii) brand intimacy via brand experience.



H4b: Inferences of manipulative intent will negatively moderate the indirect effect of brand-endorser congruence on (i) brand commitment and (ii) brand intimacy via brand experience.

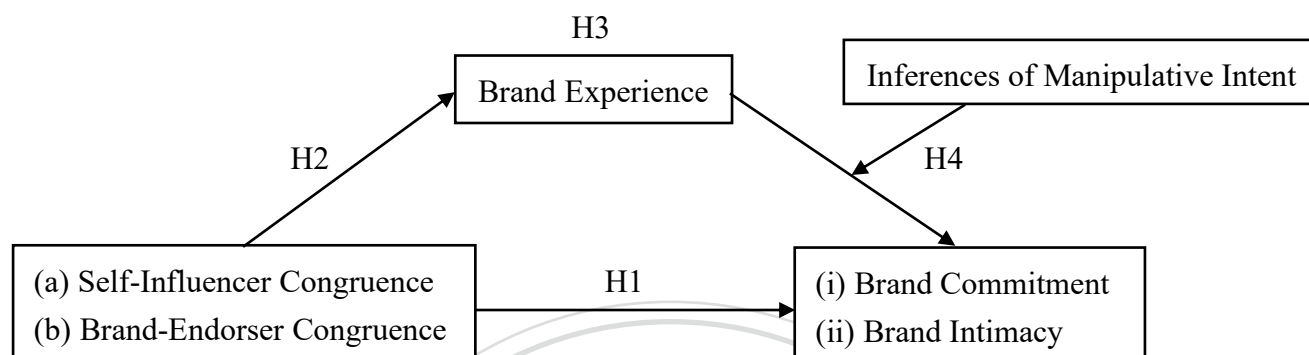


Figure 1. Overall hypothesized relationships.

## Methods

### Data Collection

To test the proposed hypotheses, an online survey was conducted. The questionnaire was distributed among the adult Instagram users through several channels: student Facebook groups of different universities, Dcard, an anonymous social network platform whose users are mainly 15 to 30 years old (Taiwan Internet Report, 2019), and Instagram. Through these channels, the representative sample can be best recruited and may reflect the actual usage of Taiwanese Instagram users (majorities are 12 to 34 years old) by incorporating respondents from different groups of age, gender, disposable income, geographic region, and educational level.

The questionnaire was first developed in English, and translated into Chinese. Two screening questions were listed in the questionnaire so as to screen out the unqualified respondents and collect the data only from target respondents. These questions included 1) How long do you spend on using Instagram every week; 2) Do you follow Instagram influencers? The respondent who answered “never” to the former questions or who does not follow Instagram influencers were excluded from the data. If the respondents passed the screening questions, they were first asked to upload an Instagram post screenshot from their favorite Instagram influencer; the post must contain a brand or product introduced by the influencer regardless of the sponsorship. Those who failed to upload the correct format of Instagram posts would be excluded from the analysis as well.

Next, the respondents were instructed to fill out the questionnaire based on the content of the post they uploaded. The questionnaire is divided into three parts: firstly, participants answered questions about their Instagram usage. Then, they answered questions about self-influencer congruence, brand-endorser congruence, brand experience, brand commitment, brand intimacy, and manipulative intent in the second part. Lastly, respondents were asked to fill in the demographic questions at the end of the questionnaire.

# Measures

## Independent Variables

*Self-Influencer Congruence.* Adopted from Choi and Rifon's method (Choi & Rifon, 2012), self-influencer congruence was assessed by asking respondents to rate the image of both the Instagram influencer and themselves on a 5-point, 15 items, bipolar scale. The image dimensions were as following: "rugged-delicate," "excitable-calm," "uncomfortable-comfortable," "submissive-dominating," "indulgent-thrifty, unpleasant-pleasant," "non-contemporary-contemporary," "unorganized-organized," "emotional-rational," "youthful-mature," "informal-formal," "orthodox-liberal," "complex-simple," "colorless-colorful," and "vain-modest." After collecting the score of Instagram influencers' images and consumers' self-images, the congruity index could therefore be calculated by using the absolute-difference method introduced by previous literature (Erickson, 1997; Sirgy, 1985). That is to say, by comparing the two scores, the congruity index that equals the summation of the differences between the perceived Instagram influencer image and consumer self-image is obtained.

$$I_{\text{index}} = \sum_{i=1}^n |I_{\text{Instagram influencer}} - I_{\text{self}}|$$

*Brand-Endorser Congruence.* To assess the brand-endorser congruence, the perceived fit between the image of an Instagram influencer and the image of the brand he/she endorsed, Lee and Thorson's (2008) instrument was adopted. Participants were asked to indicate their perception on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. These statements included: 1) I consider the

influencer's endorsement of the brand very appropriate in the post; 2) I consider the image of the Instagram influencer and the brand consistent in the post; 3) I think the image of the Instagram influencer and the brand are very relevant in the post; 4) I think the image of the Instagram influencer and the brand matches very well in the post; 5) I think the image of the Instagram influencer and the brand goes together in the post.

*Inferences of Manipulative Intent.* Campbell's (1995) instrument is adopted to test the inferences of manipulative intent. In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate their attitudes towards the post of their favorite influencer they have chosen based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). These statements were: 1) The way the social media influencer tries to persuade people seems acceptable to me; 2) The social media influencer tries to manipulate the audience in ways I don't like; 3) I'm annoyed by the social media influencer because he or she seems to try to inappropriately manage or control the consumer audience, and 4) The social media influencer is fair in what he or she says and shows.

## **Dependent Measures**

*Brand Experience.* According to Brakus et al. (2009), Brand Experience was composed of sensory experience, affective experience, intellectual experience, and behavioral experience. Measures of four dimensions of the brand experience are as following: 1) This brand makes a strong impression on my senses; 2) Getting in touch with "Brand" gives me interesting sensory experiences; 3) This brand

appeals to my senses; 4) This brand induces my feelings and sentiments; 5) I have strong emotions for this brand; 6) This brand often engages me emotionally; 7) I often engage in action and behavior when I access the brand's posts; 8) I am rarely passive when I see the brand's posts; 9) The brand engages me physically; 10) I engage in a lot of thinking as a viewer of the brand's posts; 11) This brand often challenges my way of thinking; 12) Being a customer of this brand stimulates my curiosity and problem-solving. Participants were asked to indicate their feelings towards these statements by a five-point Likert scale with 1 as strongly disagree to 5 as strongly agree.

*Brand Commitment.* Brand commitment was measured according to the brand that appeared in the posts, which was posted by each respondent, by the following statements based on a five-Likert scale: 1) I feel like I know the background of the brand; 2) I feel like I know what this brand stands for; 3) I know more about this brand than the average person (Kim et al., 2008).

*Brand Intimacy.* Adopted from Fournier (1994), brand intimacy was measured, using a five-point Likert scale, by asking participants to evaluate their feelings towards the brand based on the statements: 1) I feel like I know the background of the brand; 2) I feel like I know what this brand stands for; 3) I know more about this brand than the average person.

# Results

## Sample Characteristic

This study aims to target Taiwanese Instagram users who have been following influencers on the platform. A total of 446 responses were collected from the online questionnaire. Among the respondents, 439 of them have the experience of using the Instagram, and only 374 of them have been following influencers on the platform. In the data cleaning process, respondents with identical IP, extremely short answering time, or who failed the screening question were removed from the data. According to the Taiwan Network Information Center, Taiwanese Instagram users are mainly composed of people from 12- to 34-year-old (Taiwan Internet Report, 2019). To reflect the actual status of the major Instagram users in this study, this research also excluded eight respondents who were over-35-year-old from the data, generating 327 valid responses consequently.

Among the sample collected, the percentage of the female respondents were particularly high (272, 83.2%), and most of the respondents were between 18 to 25 years old (261, 79.8%). The possible reason for having more female respondents is that female users follow or interact with Instagram influencers more commonly than male users. In addition, the age of the respondents corresponds to the age of the Instagram's main users in Taiwan (Taiwan Internet Report, 2019). The education level of the majority is in bachelor's degree (199, 60.9%), following the postgraduate degree as the second biggest group (118, 36.1%). To better understand the Instagram user usage, this study further asked the questions about how long do they usually spend on Instagram every week, whether they have

learned from the Instagram influencers about products/brands, and whether they have purchased any products introduced by the Instagram influencer. As shown in table 1, over half of respondents (175, 53.5%) spend over 6 hours every week on Instagram. Among all the sample collected, 92% of them did learn from influencers about brand/product-related information and over half of the respondents (194, 59.3%) have the experience of buying products introduced by the influencer, which shows the potential ability of the social media influencers affecting buying decisions of their followers.

Table 1. Demographic profile.

	Percentage	Frequency
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	16.8%	55
Female	83.2%	272
<b>Age</b>		
18-25	79.8%	261
26-35	20.2%	66
<b>Education</b>		
High School	3.1%	10
Bachelor's degree	60.9%	199
Postgraduate degree	36.1%	118
<b>How long do you spend on Instagram every week?</b>		
1 hour below	7.3%	24
1-3 hours	19.6%	64
4-6 hours	19.6%	64
6 hours above	53.5%	175
<b>Did you learn more about a brand/product through the content of Instagram influencer?</b>		
Yes	92.0%	301
No	8.0%	26
<b>Have you ever purchased any products introduced by the Instagram influencer?</b>		
Yes	59.3%	194
No	40.7%	133

## Self-Influencer Congruence Index

The mean of the self-influencer congruence index is 13.17, with a minimum score of 0, a maximum score of 34, and a standard deviation of 5.52 among the 327 responses. The result of the self-congruence index can show us the respondents' "perceived distances" between themselves and their favorite Instagram influencers, which is evaluated based on the respondents' ideal self-image and Instagram influencers' image (Lou & Yuan, 2019) across the characteristics as mentioned earlier. Prior literature suggested that the higher the self-influencer congruence index score, the less congruence the respondent considers his/her ideal self-image compared to the Instagram influencers' image.

## Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis 1a and 1b were tested with a multiple regression analysis for each, whereby the first regression model evaluated the effects of self-influencer and brand-endorser congruence on (i) brand commitment, while the second regression model examined the effect of self-influencer and brand-endorser congruence on (ii) brand intimacy. The results (Table 2) of the first regression model indicated that self-influencer congruence and brand-endorser congruence have significant influence toward brand commitment ( $R^2 = .067$ ,  $F = 11.555$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Though having negative coefficient  $\beta$ , brand commitment was actually positively associated with self-influencer congruence ( $\beta = -.168$ ,  $p < .01$ ), as it was positively associated with brand-endorser congruence ( $\beta = .224$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The results (Table 3) of the second regression model suggested that self-influencer congruence and brand-endorser congruence also have significant influence toward brand intimacy ( $R^2 = .041$ ,  $F = 6.953$ ,  $p < .05$ ).



Brand intimacy was positively associated with both self-influencer congruence ( $\beta = -.120, p < .05$ ) and brand-endorser congruence ( $\beta = .184, p < .01$ ). As previously mentioned, a high self-influencer congruence index score represents a low congruence between the image of the respondent and the Instagram influencer. And a low congruence leads to less brand commitment and brand intimacy of the consumer. Therefore, H1a and H1b were supported.

Table 2. Results of the multiple regression analysis for predicting brand commitment.

<b>H1a. Brand commitment</b>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Self-Influencer Congruence	-.025	.008	-.168	-3.085	<.01
Brand-Endorser Congruence	.316	.077	.224	4.129	<.001
Constant	2.068	.331	-	6.255	<.001

Table 3. Results of the multiple regression analysis for predicting brand intimacy.

<b>H1b. Brand intimacy</b>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Self-Influencer Congruence	-.020	.009	-.120	-2.175	<.05
Brand-Endorser Congruence	.290	.087	.184	3.335	<.01
Constant	2.133	.376	-	5.675	<.001

A multiple regression analysis was also conducted to test hypothesis 2, whereby brand experience was regressed by self-influencer congruence and brand-endorser congruence. The result (Table 3) of the regression model indicated the significant influence of self-influencer congruence and brand-endorse congruence towards brand experience ( $R^2 = .146, F = 37.804, p < .05$ ). Both self-influencer congruence ( $\beta = -.183, p < .001$ ) and brand-endorser congruence ( $\beta = .366, p < .001$ ) were positively associated with brand experience. Hence, H2 was supported.

Table 4. Results of the multiple regression analysis for predicting brand experience.

<b>H2. Brand experience</b>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Self-Influencer Congruence	-.022	.006	-.183	-3.517	<.001
Brand-Endorser Congruence	.413	.059	.366	7.05	<.001
Constant	1.821	.253	-	7.196	<.001

### Tests of mediating effects

Hypothesis 3 was tested through Model 4 of the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2017) to evaluate the mediating role of brand experience in the relationships between the respective independent variables, self-influencer congruence and brand-endorser congruence, and the respective dependent variables, brand commitment and brand intimacy. In order to test all the relationships, 4 mediation models for each independent variable and brand outcome were estimated.

Hypothesis 3a assumed that the brand experience of the consumer will mediate the relationship between self-influencer congruence and (i) brand commitment and (ii) brand intimacy. For H3a, the direct effect of self-influencer congruence on (i) brand commitment (Table 5) was insignificant ( $\beta = -.007$ , 95% CI =  $-.02$  to  $.004$ ), and the indirect effect through brand experience ( $\beta = -.012$ , 95% CI =  $-.023$  to  $.0001$ ) was insignificant as well.

Table 5. Results of the mediation analysis (IV= Self-Influencer Congruence).

Antecedent	Consequent					
	(M) brand experience			(Y) brand commitment		
	$\beta$	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
(X) self-influencer congruence	-.0149	.006	<.05	-.007	.006	.225

(M) brand experience	-	-	-	.808	.052	<.001
Constant	3.496	.094	<.001	.523	.205	<.05
	R-sq = .0156			R-sq = .43		
	F = 5.141, p < .05			F = 122.164, p < .001		
Indirect effect of X on Y through M	$\beta = -.012$ , $SE = .006$ , 95% CI = -.023 to .0001					

For (ii) brand intimacy (Table 6), the model indicated that both direct effect of self-influencer congruence on brand intimacy ( $\beta = -.005$ , 95% CI = -.021 to .011) and indirect effect through brand experience ( $\beta = -.01$ , 95% CI = -.02 to .0002) were insignificant. Hence, H3a was not supported.

Table 6. Results of the mediation analysis (IV= Self-Influencer Congruence).

Antecedent	Consequent					
	(M) brand experience			(Y) brand intimacy		
	$\beta$	$SE$	$p$	$\beta$	$SE$	$p$
(X) self-influencer congruence	-.015	.007	<.05	-.005	.008	.525
(M) brand experience	-	-	-	.668	.069	<.001
Constant	3.496	.094	<.001	.975	.267	<.001
	R-sq = .016			R-sq = .232		
	F = 5.141, $p < .05$			F = 48.935, $p < .001$		
Indirect effect of X on Y through M	$\beta = -.01, SE = .005, 95\% CI = -.02 \text{ to } .0002$					

Hypothesis 3b assumed that the brand experience of the consumer will mediate the relationship between brand-endorser congruence and (i) brand commitment and (ii) brand intimacy. For H3b, the direct effect of brand-endorser congruence on (i) brand commitment (Table 7) was insignificant ( $\beta = -.036$ , 95% CI = -.16 to .088), but the results showed that the indirect effect through brand experience ( $\beta = .315$ , 95% CI = .206 to .436) was significant. Therefore, a full mediation effect of brand experience was observed.

Table 7. Results of the mediation analysis (IV= Brand-Endorser Congruence).

Antecedent	Consequent					
	(M) brand experience			(Y) brand commitment		
	$\beta$	$SE$	$p$	$\beta$	$SE$	$p$
(X) brand-endorser congruence	.381	.059	<.001	-.036	.063	.566
(M) brand experience	-	-	-	.827	.056	<.001
Constant	1.674	.254	<.001	.514	.272	.059
	R-sq = .114			R-sq = .428		
	F = 41.775, p < .001			F = 121.165, p < .001		
Indirect effect of X on Y through M	$\beta = .315$ , $SE = .059$ , 95% CI = .206 to .436					

Lastly, for (ii) brand intimacy (Table 8), the model indicated that the direct effect of brand-endorser congruence on brand intimacy ( $\beta = .005$ , 95% CI = -.156 to .166) was insignificant, while the indirect effect through brand experience ( $\beta = .256$ , 95% CI = .158 to .373) was significant. A full mediation of brand experience was found in both the relationships between brand-endorser congruence and (i) brand commitment and (ii) brand intimacy; hence, H3b was supported.

Table 8. Results of the mediation analysis (IV= Brand-Endorser Congruence).

Antecedent	Consequent					
	(M) brand experience			(Y) brand intimacy		
	$\beta$	$SE$	$p$	$\beta$	$SE$	$p$
(X) brand-endorser congruence	.381	.059	<.001	.005	.082	.956
(M) brand experience	-	-	-	.672	.073	<.001
Constant	1.674	.254	<.001	.873	.353	<.05
	R-sq = .114			R-sq = .231		
	F = 41.775, p <.001			F = 48.673, p <.001		
Indirect effect of X on Y through M	$\beta = .256, SE = .055, 95\% CI = .158 \text{ to } .373$					

## Tests of moderating effects

To further test H4, the moderating role of manipulative intent in the indirect effect of brand-endorser congruence on brand commitment and brand intimacy respectively, Model 14 of the PROCESS macro was conducted (Hayes, 2017). Based on the results of previous tests of mediation effect, only the effects of brand-endorser on brand outcomes through brand experience were significant. Therefore, only two moderated mediation models with brand-endorser congruence as the independent variable with each brand outcomes as the dependent variables (H4b) were estimated.

For H4b, the results (Table 9) indicated that interaction between brand experience and manipulative intent on (i) brand commitment was significant ( $\beta = .186$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Further, all three 95% confidence intervals did not include zero, showing that the estimates of the indirect effect were significant when the moderator was low, moderate, and high ( $\beta_{low} = .286$ , 95% CI = .182 to .406;  $\beta_{moderate} = .321$ , 95% CI = .211 to .445;  $\beta_{high} = .357$ , 95% CI = .231 to .497). Most importantly, the index of moderated mediation indicated that the indirect effect on the moderator was significant (Index = .071, 95% CI = .0006 to .153), and thus a moderated mediation was found on (i) brand commitment for H4a.

Table 9. Results of the moderated mediation analysis (IV= Brand-Endorser Congruence).

Antecedent	Consequent					
	(M) brand experience			(Y) brand commitment		
	$\beta$	$SE$	$p$	$\beta$	$SE$	$p$
(X) brand-endorser congruence	.381	.059	<.001	-.081	.072	.261
(M) brand experience	-	-	-	.518	.153	<.001

(W) Manipulative Intent	-	-	-	-.676	.302	<.05
M x W	-	-	-	.186	.084	<.05
Constant	1.674	.254	<.001	1.835	.66	<.01
	R-sq = .114			R-sq = .437		
	$F = 41.775, p < .001$			$F = 62.405, p < .001$		
Indirect effect of X on Y at values of W	$\beta_{low} = .286, SE = .057, 95\% \text{ CI} = .182 \text{ to } .406$					
	$\beta_{moderate} = .321, SE = .059, 95\% \text{ CI} = .211 \text{ to } .445$					
	$\beta_{high} = .357, SE = .067, 95\% \text{ CI} = .231 \text{ to } .497$					

On the other hand, the results showed (Table 10) that interaction between brand experience and manipulative intent on (ii) brand intimacy was insignificant ( $\beta = .19, p > .05$ ). Though the indirect effect was significant when manipulative intent was low, moderate, and high ( $\beta_{low} = .219, 95\% CI = .114 \text{ to } .346$ ;  $\beta_{moderate} = .256, 95\% CI = .154 \text{ to } .376$ ;  $\beta_{high} = .292, 95\% CI = .176 \text{ to } .428$ ), the index of moderated mediation showed that the indirect effect was insignificant (Index = .072, 95% CI = -.025 to .187). Thus, the moderated effects on (ii) brand intimacy of H4b was not supported.

Table 10. Results of the moderated mediation analysis (IV= Brand-Endorser Congruence).

Antecedent	Consequent					
	(M) brand experience			(Y) brand intimacy		
	$\beta$	SE	p	$\beta$	SE	p
(X) brand-endorser congruence	.381	.059	<.001	.01	.094	.912
(M) brand experience	-	-	-	.338	.199	.089
(W) Manipulative Intent	-	-	-	-.58	.394	.141
M x W	-	-	-	.19	.11	.083
Constant	1.674	.254	<.001	1.865	.86	<.05
	R-sq = .114			R-sq = .24		
	$F = 41.775, p < .001$			$F = 25.455, p < .001$		
Indirect effect of X on Y at values of W	$\beta_{low} = .219, SE = .059, 95\% \text{ CI} = .114 \text{ to } .346$					
	$\beta_{moderate} = .256, SE = .056, 95\% \text{ CI} = .154 \text{ to } .376$					
	$\beta_{high} = .292, SE = .065, 95\% \text{ CI} = .176 \text{ to } .428$					

## Discussion

As a trending marketing strategy, influencer marketing has been widely used by brands and marketers to promote products, reach target consumers, and raise purchase intention. Such brand communication and investments can also be frequently found on Instagram, as the influencer marketing budgets spent on Instagram are continuously increasing (Techjury, 2021). Some of the previous literature explained the influencer endorsement effectiveness by suggesting that influencers are more authentic and trustworthy comparing to the traditional celebrities based on the source credibility model (Atkin & Block, 1983; Freiden, 1984; Friedman, Termini, & Washington, 1976; Lyons & Henderson 2005; Gräve, 2017); while other literature of match-up hypothesis explained the influencer endorsement effectiveness by investigating the effects of consumer-endorser, brand-endorser, and consumer-brand congruity (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Shan, Chen & Lin, 2020).

Table 11. Results of the hypotheses.

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1a	A high degree of self-influencer congruence will lead to a high degree of (i) brand commitment and (ii) brand intimacy.	Supported
H1b	A high degree of brand-endorser congruence will lead to a high degree of (i) brand commitment and (ii) brand intimacy.	Supported
H2	A high degree of (a) self-influencer congruence and (b) brand-endorser congruence will lead to a high degree of brand experience.	Supported
H3a	Brand experience will mediate the relationship between self-influencer congruence and (i) brand commitment and (ii) brand intimacy.	Not Supported
H3b	Brand experience will mediate the relationship between brand-endorser congruence and (i) brand commitment and (ii) brand intimacy.	Supported

H4a	Inferences of manipulative intent will negatively moderate the indirect effect of self-influencer congruence on (i) brand commitment and (ii) brand intimacy via brand experience.	Not Supported
H4b	Inferences of manipulative intent will negatively moderate the indirect effect of brand-endorser congruence on (i) brand commitment and (ii) brand intimacy via brand experience.	Partially Supported

The findings of this research (Table 11) suggested that the perceived fit between the image of an Instagram influencer and the image of the endorsed brand as well as the consistency of influencers' image and consumers' ideal self-images have significant influences on brand experience, brand commitment, and brand intimacy. Namely, the higher the brand-endorser and self-influencer congruence, the more favorable psychological and behavioral outcomes, such as affectional attachment, and special meanings and knowledge toward brands would occur. Such results correspond to the findings of previous literature that the higher self-influencer and brand-endorser congruence will lead to positive attitudes of consumers and their engagement with the brand content (Choi & Rifon, 2012).

Furthermore, brand experience, being an important criterion affecting consumers' purchasing decisions, was not included in the previous discussion of match-up hypotheses in the context of influencer marketing. To fill this gap, this research provides further investigation of self-influencer congruence and brand-endorser congruence's effects on brand experience, and how brand experience affects other relevant consumer responses. As such, this research delves into the mediating role of



brand experience in the relationships between self-influencer congruence, brand-endorser congruence, brand commitment, and brand intimacy. Based on the results, firstly, a full mediation effect of brand experience was observed in both relationships between brand-endorser congruence and brand commitment as well as brand-endorser congruence and brand intimacy. That is, when the images of brands and endorsers are highly relevant, how will such congruence enhance consumers' brand commitment and brand intimacy is fully determined by their brand experience. As a part of brands' communication, the branded contents posted by Instagram influencers conveyed not only the attitude and opinion of their own but also the brands' identity and atmosphere as a whole; together influenced how consumers perceive the brands and generate corresponding responses in both psychological and behavioral ways. And these responses will enhance the level of consumers' emotional and affective attachment and special meanings or knowledge towards the brands. However, the brand experience wasn't found crucial in the effects of self-influencer congruence on brand commitment and brand intimacy. This may derive from the fact that self-influencer congruence focus on the fitness of consumers' and Instagram influencers' images, which was not perceptually a part of brand-related stimuli. Thus, the brand experience would not influence how self-influencer congruence affects brand commitment and brand intimacy.

Secondly, a moderating effect of inferences of manipulative intent is observed in the relationship between brand-endorser congruence and brand commitment through brand experience. Namely, when

consumers have observed the potential unfairness, inappropriateness, or manipulation of the branded content that tried to engage consumers in an unpleasant way, they will make negative inferences toward the branded content, brands, or the Instagram influencers and the positive effect of brand-endorser congruence on brand commitment will be diminishing. This result echoed previous studies that the occurrence of inferences of manipulative intent will lead to negative consumer responses toward brands (Campbell & Kirmani, 2000; Carlson, Bearden, & Hardesty, 2007).

In the increasingly competing world of influencer marketing, brands and marketers endeavor to develop proper strategies in choosing the social media influencers who can attract consumers' attention, building tight relationships, and transfer the merits towards the brands effectively. Practically, the research provided insights on how to select suitable endorsers. While conducting influencer marketing via Instagram, brands must carefully evaluate the level of congruity in the consumer-influencer & brand-endorser relationships to gain the positive result of brand experience, brand commitment, and brand intimacy. Upon the selection of the endorser, marketers usually have a thorough list of social media influencers in hand. In addition to making decisions based on the quantitative data regarding the influencers' statistics such as number of followers, engagement rate, conversion rate and so on, the perceived image, the persona demonstrated by the influencers should also be taken into consideration. To develop proper and consistent marketing communication strategies, it is recommended to choose the social media influencer who have a persona that is in line with the positioning and image of the

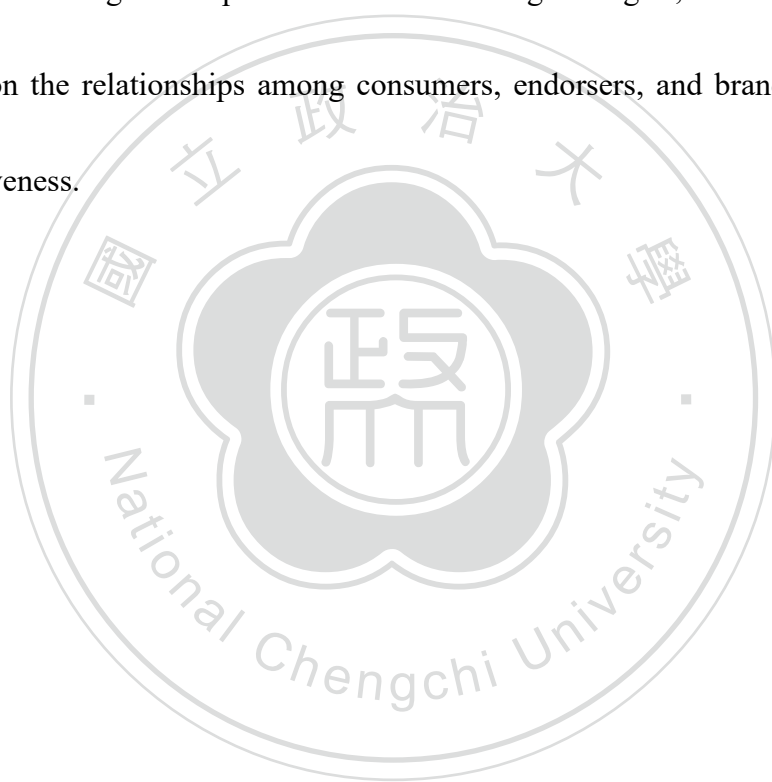
brand/product. Furthermore, while building the branded content, marketers should also ensure that the claims or the messages conveyed through the influencer are appropriate and fair, avoiding the arousal of consumers' inferences of manipulative intent that will lead to unpleasant attitudes towards brands. In 2017, the influencer marketing failure of Estée Lauder having Kendall Jenner as the endorser of its newly released millennial-targeted cosmetic collection, The Estée Edit, was considered an important reminder for other brands and marketers in selecting appropriate influencers (Fishman, 2017). As a world-famous social media influencer, Kendall Jenner had 58 million followers on Instagram and over 17 million followers on Twitter back in 2016 (Hello Beauty, 2016), which was believed to be an impactful endorser for The Estée Edit by the company. However, Kendall Jenner has once revealed the fact that she was not fond of using cosmetic in her daily life (Fishman, 2017), such discrepancy between the endorser and the endorsed brand/product has led to weak persuasion message of the endorsement. Given that, the Estée Edit collection was discontinued by the company after 16-month of its launch. Hence, brands and marketers should be more careful when developing the influencer marketing strategies.

Despite the important findings, this research has its limitations. Firstly, the study only investigated the consumers and influencers on Instagram rather than other social media platforms; differences in terms of user demographics, type of influencers, and format of the branded content may exist among these channels that create a research discrepancy. Secondly, this study encourages brands to seek high

congruity in the brand-endorser relationships to enhance the brand endorsement effectiveness; still, the exact congruity (e.g., images and impression) marketers pursue may have huge variations across industries. According to the Instagram post screenshots uploaded by the respondents in the questionnaire, most of the brands and products in these posts are fast-moving consumer goods, such as cosmetics products and packaged foods and beverages; while other few posts introduced the restaurants and tourist spots. Future research can focus on various industries other than these product categories to increase the generalization of the research results.

Thirdly, this study did not limit the type of Instagram influencers the respondents chose to upload in the survey. According to Campbell & Farrell (2020), influencers can be categorized into five different types based on their number of followers, perceived expertise, cultural capital, accessibility, and authenticity: Celebrity Influencer (over 1 million followers, “The rich & famous”), Mega-Influencer (over 1 million followers, “The everyday celebrity”), Macro-Influencer (100 thousand to 1 million followers, “The sweet spot”), Micro-Influencer (10 thousand to 100 thousand followers, “The rising star”), and Nano-Influencer (0 to 10 thousand followers, “The newcomers”) (p. 471). It is recommended that future research can delve into the effects of each type of influencer specifically. Last but not the least, this study measured self-influencer congruence based on the perceived influencers’ images and consumers’ ideal self-images. As suggested by Choi & Rifon (2012), there are other domains of self that can be investigated. Future studies can further examine the effect of the

congruence between influencers' image and consumers' other domains of self. In conclusion, this research provides a contribution to the body of literature on influencer endorsement effectiveness by investigating the effects of consumer-influencer and brand-endorser relationships on brand experience, brand commitment, and brand intimacy. The moderating role of inferences of manipulative intent is also identified in the effects of brand-endorser congruence on brand commitment via brand experience. With the everlasting evolving media platforms and marketing strategies, research efforts should be continued to work on the relationships among consumers, endorsers, and brands in the context of endorsement effectiveness.



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## Appendix A- Questionnaire

<b>第一部分：Instagram 使用習慣</b>
<p>1. 每週使用 Instagram 約多久時間？  <input type="checkbox"/> 不曾使用   <input type="checkbox"/> 1 小時以下/週   <input type="checkbox"/> 1~3 小時/週   <input type="checkbox"/> 4~6 小時/週   <input type="checkbox"/> 6 小時以上/週   <input type="checkbox"/> 其他</p> <p>2. 是否有追蹤 Instagram 網紅？  <input type="checkbox"/> 是   <input type="checkbox"/> 否</p> <p>3. 是否曾因為 Instagram 網紅的介紹而認識或更了解某些品牌？  <input type="checkbox"/> 是   <input type="checkbox"/> 否   <input type="checkbox"/> 其他</p> <p>4. 是否曾因為 Instagram 網紅的介紹而購買過某些產品？  <input type="checkbox"/> 是   <input type="checkbox"/> 否   <input type="checkbox"/> 其他</p> <p>5. 若曾購買過，請問您對該為 Instagram 網紅的熟悉程度為何？  <input type="checkbox"/> 非常不熟悉   <input type="checkbox"/> 不熟悉   <input type="checkbox"/> 普通   <input type="checkbox"/> 熟悉   <input type="checkbox"/> 非常熟悉</p>
<b>第二部分：上傳截圖</b>
<p>請上傳貼文截圖檔案：請先選擇一篇您最喜愛的 Instagram 網紅與品牌合作的貼文，並截圖備用。截圖範圍須涵蓋網紅的 Instagram 帳號、照片貼文及部分文字。問題內容會與貼文相關，建議開始作答前可以先仔細閱讀貼文！貼文截圖案例請參考附圖。上傳限制：10MB。</p>
<b>第三部分：自我與代言人一致性</b>
<p>1. 請選擇與該位 Instagram 網紅相符的描述。(1 分表示越符合左邊描述，5 分表示越符合右邊描述)</p> <p>粗獷的-----細緻的   <input type="checkbox"/> 1   <input type="checkbox"/> 2   <input type="checkbox"/> 3   <input type="checkbox"/> 4   <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>易激動的-----冷靜的   <input type="checkbox"/> 1   <input type="checkbox"/> 2   <input type="checkbox"/> 3   <input type="checkbox"/> 4   <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>令人感到不舒適的-----令人感到舒適的   <input type="checkbox"/> 1   <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2   <input type="checkbox"/> 3   <input type="checkbox"/> 4   <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>順從的-----擁有主導權的   <input type="checkbox"/> 1   <input type="checkbox"/> 2   <input type="checkbox"/> 3   <input type="checkbox"/> 4   <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>放縱的-----節儉的.   <input type="checkbox"/> 1   <input type="checkbox"/> 2   <input type="checkbox"/> 3   <input type="checkbox"/> 4   <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>令人討厭的-----令人喜歡的.   <input type="checkbox"/> 1   <input type="checkbox"/> 2   <input type="checkbox"/> 3   <input type="checkbox"/> 4   <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>非現代的-----現代的.   <input type="checkbox"/> 1   <input type="checkbox"/> 2   <input type="checkbox"/> 3   <input type="checkbox"/> 4   <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>散漫的-----有條理的.   <input type="checkbox"/> 1   <input type="checkbox"/> 2   <input type="checkbox"/> 3   <input type="checkbox"/> 4   <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>感性的-----理性的.   <input type="checkbox"/> 1   <input type="checkbox"/> 2   <input type="checkbox"/> 3   <input type="checkbox"/> 4   <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>年輕的-----成熟的.   <input type="checkbox"/> 1   <input type="checkbox"/> 2   <input type="checkbox"/> 3   <input type="checkbox"/> 4   <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>不拘禮節的-----拘謹的.   <input type="checkbox"/> 1   <input type="checkbox"/> 2   <input type="checkbox"/> 3   <input type="checkbox"/> 4   <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>保守的-----開明的.   <input type="checkbox"/> 1   <input type="checkbox"/> 2   <input type="checkbox"/> 3   <input type="checkbox"/> 4   <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>複雜的-----簡單的.   <input type="checkbox"/> 1   <input type="checkbox"/> 2   <input type="checkbox"/> 3   <input type="checkbox"/> 4   <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>無趣的-----有趣的.   <input type="checkbox"/> 1   <input type="checkbox"/> 2   <input type="checkbox"/> 3   <input type="checkbox"/> 4   <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>2. 請選擇與你自身相符的描述。(1 分表示越符合左邊描述，5 分表示越符合右邊描述)</p> <p>粗獷的-----細緻的   <input type="checkbox"/> 1   <input type="checkbox"/> 2   <input type="checkbox"/> 3   <input type="checkbox"/> 4   <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p> <p>易激動的-----冷靜的   <input type="checkbox"/> 1   <input type="checkbox"/> 2   <input type="checkbox"/> 3   <input type="checkbox"/> 4   <input type="checkbox"/> 5</p>



令人感到不舒適的-----令人感到舒適的 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

順從的-----擁有主導權的 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

放縱的-----節儉的. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

令人討厭的-----令人喜歡的. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

非現代的-----現代的. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

散漫的-----有條理的. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

感性的-----理性的. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

年輕的-----成熟的. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

不拘禮節的-----拘謹的. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

保守的-----開明的. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

複雜的-----簡單的. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

無趣的-----有趣的. ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

#### 第四部分：品牌與代言人一致性

1. 針對您所上傳貼文中 Instagram 網紅與代言品牌的適配程度，請選擇相符的描述。

我認為貼文中 Instagram 網紅與品牌的合作是非常恰當的。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

我認為貼文中 Instagram 網紅與品牌給人的感受是具有一致性的。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

我認為貼文中 Instagram 網紅與品牌的形象是非常相關的。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

我認為貼文中 Instagram 網紅與品牌的形象是相配的。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

我認為貼文中 Instagram 網紅與品牌的合作是協調的。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

#### 第五部分：品牌體驗、品牌承諾、品牌親密、及操控意圖

1. 依據貼文中的品牌，請選出符合的描述。

這個品牌為我的感官帶來強烈的印象。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

接觸該品牌的貼文使我在感官上享有有趣的體驗。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

這個品牌對我的感官有吸引力。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

這個品牌使我產生了感覺與感情。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

我對於這個品牌有強烈的情感。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

這個品牌在情感上經常能夠吸引我。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

在接觸這個品牌的相關貼文時，我總是在行為上有所行動，並非只有想著。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

看見該品牌的貼文使我經常主動接觸品牌。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

這個品牌經常吸引我做出行動。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

接觸該品牌的相關貼文使我需要投入大量的思考。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

這個品牌經常挑戰我的思考方式。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

作為該品牌的顧客能引起我的好奇心並想要解決問題。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

2. 依據你對自己的了解，請選擇相符的描述。以下問題請依據上傳貼文中的品牌回答。

我對於品牌的背景是了解的。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

我知道這個品牌所代表的涵意。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

我對於這個品牌的了解比一般人來得多。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

我對於該品牌有心理上的依附。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

我希望這個品牌能夠一直成功。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

我認為使用這個品牌是重要的。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

我是這個品牌的忠誠客戶。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

4. 此題請選擇 "同意" 再進行後續填答。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

5. 針對 Instagram 網紅的貼文內容，你的想法為何？以下問題請依據上傳的貼文回答。

這位 Instagram 網紅說服他人的方式對我說是可以接受的。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

這位 Instagram 網紅嘗試用我不喜歡的方式來操弄貼文的觀看者。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

我對於這位 Instagram 網紅試圖用不恰當的方式操控消費群眾感到生氣。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

這位 Instagram 網紅在貼文中所表達的意思是誠實、合理的。

☐ 非常不同意 ☐ 不同意 ☐ 普通 ☐ 同意 ☐ 非常同意

#### 第六部分：基本資料

1. 性別

☐ 生理男性 ☐ 生理女性 ☐ 其他

2. 年齡

☐ 18 歲~25 歲 ☐ 26 歲~35 歲 ☐ 36 歲~45 歲 ☐ 46 歲(含)以上

3. 教育程度

☐ 博士 ☐ 碩士 ☐ 學士 ☐ 高中職 ☐ 國中 ☐ 國小 ☐ 其他

4. 每月可支配所得

☐ 10000 元以下 ☐ 10001 元~20000 元 ☐ 20001 元~30000 元 ☐ 30001 元~40000 元

☐ 40001 元~50000 元 ☐ 50001 元(含)以上