Social Media Influencer Endorsement and Events: An Integrated Framework of Congruence

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SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER ENDORSEMENT AND EVENTS: 
AN INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK OF CONGRUENCE

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ABSTRACT
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In today’s digital world, marketing practitioners have increasingly started to reach out to their audiences by integrating social media influencer (SMI) into their marketing plans. The purpose of this dissertation was to explore the factors influencing SMI endorsement effectiveness in the context of event. Based on relevant theories (congruity theory, match-up hypothesis model, self-congruity theory, and vicarious self-perception) and a thorough review of existing literature in the SMI endorsement, the present study developed an integrative research model which included follower’s prior attitude toward SMI, attitude toward the event, pass-on behavior intention, event participation intention, SMI-event congruence, event-follower congruence, and SMI-followers congruence.

A total of 335 usable online survey was collected. The results showed that follower’s attitude toward SMI had both direct and indirect effects on attitude toward the event, which in turn affected follower’s pass-on behavioral intention and event participation intention. Besides, the direct effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event was moderated by all congruence effects, including SMI-event congruence, event-follower congruence, and SMI-followers congruence. This study improves congruity theory by including the
congruence effects and extending it to the context of SMI endorsement. In addition, this study extends SMI endorsement research to the event industry. Practically, this study provides event marketers with implications for selecting an appropriate SMI and strategies to achieve a more effective outcome of SMI endorsement.
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents. Without the love from them, this work would never have been completed.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes four sections. The first section introduces the background of the study. Second, research gaps are identified, and research questions are raised. A discussion of the significance of the study is discussed in the third section. Finally, the definitions of key terms are given in the last section.

Background of the Study

Largely driven by the rapid expansion of social media channels, hundreds of millions of people around the world began to look for information and content on the Internet (Booth & Matic, 2011). A fundamental shift is happening among marketing practitioners. They started to reach out to their audiences by integrating social media influencer (SMI) into marketing plans. SMI, a new form of third-party endorsement, shapes followers’ attitudes via social media platforms such as blogs, vlogs, tweets, and so on (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2010). Social media offers its ordinary users, who were not famous before, with the opportunity to self-brand and gain fame (Khamis, Ang, & Welling, 2017). The “nobody” of the past becomes “somebody” who gains a large share of voice in the market (Booth & Matic, 2011). These ordinary individuals with access to a large audience on social media platforms can be considered SMIs (Bakshy, Hofman, Mason, & Watts, 2011).

SMIs’ voices can yield as much power as well-known celebrities. For example, a joint report conducted by Twitter and an analytics firm, Annalect, revealed that nearly half of customers look for purchase suggestions from SMI, and one-fifth of respondents said that a
tweet from SMI motivated them to share their own comments on a product. This report also highlighted that almost 40 percent of Twitter users said they had followed at least one SMI’s purchasing guidance and then made a purchase (Swant, 2016). The rapid growth of SMI’s influence provides event marketers with another effective marketing and promotion tool for events. Properly using this tool can improve the awareness and reputation of an event and boost the attendance.

Event planners are a part of this revolution created by SMI marketing. Currently, numerous event planners employ SMIs to endorse the event by inviting SMIs to share the event with their followers. This expands the event’s radius of reach and increases the likelihood of resonating with target attendees. For example, the famous Burj Al Arab Jumeirah Hotel in Dubai and Beautiful Destination organized an event called “The World’s Ultimate Instameet” in 2014. This event invited 10 of the world’s most influential Instagrammers as SMIs. With a total of 18 million followers, these SMIs visited the city, enjoyed all of the hotel’s 5-star activities, and shared their experience on Instagram. The outcome was massive: this event generated 25,000 comments and 3.2 million new social media followers (Perez, 2016).

However, SMI endorsement is a high-cost marketing method. For instance, Kristina Baza, an SMI with 2.4 million followers on Instagram, earned approximately 1 million USD for her endorsement deal with L’Oréal (Chafkin, 2016). This is not a special case. Figure 1 describes SMIs’ average earning per post (The Economist, 2016). As shown in the chart, SMIs on YouTube with more than 7 million followers on average earn 300,000 USD on one
post. For SMIs on Facebook and Instagram with over 7 million followers, at least 150,000 USD is needed. Even for the tweeters who have 100,000 to 500,000 followers, approximately 2,000 USD is paid for one post.

Figure 1. Average earning for influencer posts on selected social media platforms.

Note. Adapted from *The Economist* (2016).

Given the high cost of SMI endorsements and the risk of selecting an inappropriate influencer, it is necessary to identify a right SMI for the event. Currently, it seems that once an SMI becomes favored by numerous followers, he or she immediately starts to endorse or advertise for some products or brands. It will be interesting to learn whether followers’ prior positive attitude toward a specific SMI is enough to ensure the effectiveness of this SMI endorsement and whether event marketers should consider other factors when selecting an SMI.

According to a recent SMI study (TapInfluence, 2016), approximately 42% of SMIs feel that the congruence between themselves and a target’s core values is the most important factor on SMI endorsement effectiveness. The term *congruence* refers to the degree of
similarity or consistency. In this study, “congruence” means the similarity of personality traits between two parties. The notion of congruence was often used in a variety of forms, such as match-up effect, fit, similarity, and relevance, but the general concept is the same (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Fleck, Korchia, & Le Roy, 2012). Therefore, testing the congruence effect between the SMI and the event scientifically is a must. In addition, social media allows followers to choose how they want to receive the messages and encourages them to interact. This means followers in the SMI endorsement play a more active role compared with audience in the traditional marketing channels. Therefore, in addition to investigating the congruence effect between the SMI and the event, the effects of event-follower congruence and SMI-follower congruence are worth being studied as well.

**Problem Statement**

Although the use of SMIs has grown dramatically over the past decade and traditional mass media is slowly replaced by SMI marketing (Gillin, 2007), the research in SMI marketing is still in its early stage. Many topics, such as consumers’ attitude and behavioral responses toward SMI posts, have rarely been examined (Lu, Xie, Kong, & Yu, 2014).

To some extent, SMI endorsement is similar to a marketing phenomenon known as celebrity endorsement, since both of them involve marketing a product, service, or a brand through a popular and highly influential individual. However, as a new type of endorsers, SMIs differ from celebrities in the following aspects: reach, engagement and interaction, content creation, and expertise.
Celebrity endorsers were defined as individuals who take advantage of their public recognition to represent and advocate a product or service by appearing with the product or service in the advertisement (McCracken, 1989). A celebrity can be a famous movie star, pop star, model, musician, athlete, etc. Generally, the reach of celebrities expands across various demographics. SMIs are self-built stars. Most of them build their fame through social media platforms. Their reach usually focuses on a particular niche audience (García-Rapp, 2016).

The second significant difference between celebrity endorsement and SMI endorsement is engagement and interaction. Traditional celebrity endorsement is a one-way communication. When a celebrity endorses a product on TV, it is hard for fans to interact with him or her. In contrast, SMI endorsement is a two-way communication. SMIs are motivated to continuously interact and communicate with their followers to maintain their followership size (Khamis et al., 2016; Marwick & Boyd, 2010) because SMIs’ fellowship size is crucial to maintain their influencer status and thus keep on arousing marketers’ interest (Khamis et al., 2016).

Different from celebrities, SMIs create content on their own (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2015). They write brand-relevant information and regularly post content through social media sites (Freberg et al., 2011; Sharma & Ranga, 2014). In traditional celebrity endorsement, marketing agencies design the advertisement or marketing campaign. The celebrity only performs and contributes their influence on the campaign.

SMI endorsement is considered professional and relevant because SMIs usually have expertise in the type of products they promote, and they are experts in their respective niches.
However, as for the celebrity endorsement, it is not necessary for celebrities to be experts in the type of products they endorse. Movie stars can promote toothpaste on TV, and although they are not experts in this area, their endorsements are effective because they are famous.

As many differences exist between celebrity and SMI endorsement, it is risky to simply generalize the findings of previous celebrity endorsement research to the field of SMI endorsement. A review of the literature reported that the mechanism underlying SMI endorsement is poorly understood (Lu et al., 2014). Therefore, these research gaps offer scholars opportunities to investigate the critical values of SMI endorsement.

Congruity theory is used as the primary theory to build the conceptual model of this study. This theory contains three basic elements: source, object, and perceiver. It predicts that a perceiver’s attitude changes toward the object depending on two variables: (1) the perceiver’s attitude toward the source, and (2) whether source praises or criticizes the object. However, one of its major shortcomings is that it overlooks the effect of congruence between any two elements (source-object, object-perceiver, and source-perceiver). Additionally, even for studies that examine congruence effect, most of them treated the congruence of source-object, object-perceiver, and source-perceiver separately (Pradhan, Duraipandian, & Sethi, 2016). While a handful of studies have empirically tested the congruence effect between source and object on the perceiver’s attitude and behaviors, the other two pairs of congruence effects (object-perceiver and source-perceiver) have received relatively limited attention.

In the field of SMI endorsement, social media followers (perceiver) can easily interact and communicate with SMI (source) and express their feelings toward the endorsed object.
Therefore, the role of social media follower should not be neglected by researchers. However, the extant literature search highlights a dearth of literature in presenting an integrated framework that reflects both the role of followers’ prior attitude toward SMI and three pairs of congruence effects on the influential relationship on SMI endorsement effectiveness.

In order to fill these gaps, this dissertation will answer the following research questions:

1. Are followers’ prior attitude toward SMIs able to change followers’ attitude toward the event, which, in turn, changes followers’ behavioral intentions?

2. Are followers’ prior favorable attitude toward SMIs enough to ensure the effectiveness of SMI endorsement?

3. Could the congruence effect play a role in SMI endorsement effectiveness?

**Purpose of the Study**

The primary purpose of current study is to explore the factors influencing SMI endorsement effectiveness in the context of event. As a result, the research intends to investigate the effect of followers’ prior attitude toward SMI on followers’ attitude toward the event and their behavioral intentions.

Additionally, social media shapes mass communication from a “one-to-many” model to a “many-to-many” model (Solis & Breakenridge, 2009). When influencers upload posts, they create a two-way conversation between influencers and followers. Social media followers can respond to the posts uploaded by influencers by replying, liking, or sharing. Thus, in addition to studying the influential relationship between the SMI and the event, the
inclusion of followers in the research could provide a more comprehensive picture of the influential relationships on social media. Therefore, the congruence effects of all three pairs of relationships and their impact on the effectiveness of SMI endorsement are tested in this study, including SMI-event congruence, event-follower congruence, and SMI-follower congruence.

Specifically, the present study concentrates on building and testing a conceptual framework that:

(1) examines the main effect of followers’ attitude toward SMI on followers’ attitude and behavioral intentions.

(2) investigates the effect of congruences among SMI, event, and followers.

**Significance of the Study**

As one of the first studies to investigate the factors influencing SMI endorsement effectiveness in event marketing setting, the current study provides contributions to both academia and the advertising industry. Although the importance of the prior attitude toward the source and the role of congruence was supported by the extant celebrity endorsement literature (e.g., Choi & Rifon, 2012; Kamins & Gupta, 1994; Kirmani & Shiv, 1998), little research has investigated whether the effect of followers’ prior attitude toward SMI and congruence relationships among SMI, event, and followers are related to the effectiveness of SMI endorsement in the event sector.

Theoretically, the present study combines four theories (congruity theory, match-up hypothesis model, self-congruity theory, and vicarious self-perception) and applies them in
the SMI endorsement. After a thorough review of the relevant theories and existing literature, the study develops an integrative model, which includes followers’ prior attitude toward SMI, three pairs of congruence effects, and followers’ attitude and behavioral intentions. In particular, this model postulates the relationships among followers’ prior attitudes toward SMI, SMI-event congruence, event-follower congruence, SMI-follower congruence, social media followers’ attitude toward the social media post and the event, and followers’ intention to pass on the social media post and intention to participate in the event. This integration offers meaningful insights to extant theories and literature in explaining social media followers’ attitude change and their behavioral intentions toward SMI endorsement by explicating the underlying mechanism. Specifically, the findings of this dissertation are expected to improve congruity theory by addressing the congruence effect that is ignored by congruity theory (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996).

Another theoretical contribution is the notion that all three pairs of congruence effects are included and tested in this study. The current research intends to test the influence of all three pairs of congruence, including SMI-event congruence, event-follower congruence, and SMI-follower congruence, on followers’ attitude and behavioral intentions in the context of the event SMI marketing, thereby expanding the current literature on SMI endorsement. In doing so, the present work contributes to the extant literature by shedding light on the overlooked aspects of event-follower and SMI-follower congruence.

Practically, the expected findings of this study provide event planners with in-depth knowledge of SMI endorsement on social media and strategic insights on SMI selection.
Currently, marketers usually select SMI endorsers who have a large audience and are favored by their followers. The results of this dissertation could help to answer questions that have practical significance: (1) whether considering only followers’ prior attitude toward SMI is sufficient; and (2) whether event marketers should take the perceived congruence effects among SMI, event, and follower into account to maximize the effectiveness of SMI endorsement.

**Definitions of Key Terms**

The following are the definitions of key terms that were employed in this research.

**Congruence**: The term “congruence” means the degree of similarity or consistency (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Fleck et al., 2012).

**Event**: Event is conceptualized as “an organized occasion such as a meeting, convention, exhibition, special event, gala dinner and so on” (Fenich, 2014, p. 5).

**Event participation intention**: An individual’s intention to take part in an event.

**Social media follower**: A follower is someone who subscribes to others’ post on a social media platform (Kwak, Lee, Park, & Moon, 2010).

**Social media influencer (SMI)**: Social Media Influencer is an independent third party on social media that changes audience attitude via the use of social media platforms (Freberg et al., 2011).

**Social media influencer (SMI) endorsement**: In order to influence social media followers’ attitude and behaviors toward products or services, SMIs utilize existing social
media platforms to share posts with their followers about their personal information, products, and services that they have used (Freberg et al., 2011).

**Pass-on behavioral intention:** An individual’s intention to forward the social media post to others using the Internet (Huang, Lin, & Lin, 2009, p. 46).
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to review the relevant literature and develop the conceptual research model of the current study. It contains five sections: (1) attitude toward the source, (2) behavioral intentions, (3) source-object congruence, (4) object-perceiver congruence, and (5) source-perceiver congruence. In the first section, congruity theory is presented and applied to predict the effect of perceivers’ prior attitude toward the source on perceivers’ attitude change toward the object. The second section presents major propositions of perceivers’ behavioral intentions. According to congruity theory, there are three elements comprising the attitude change model: source, perceiver, and object. When these elements are paired together, it produces three pairs of association (source-object, perceiver-object, and source-perceiver). Thus, in next three sections, the relevant theories and existing literature regarding congruence effect of all three pairs have been reviewed. In each of these three sections, a theory is presented as the theoretical support, followed by relevant empirical studies. This chapter concludes a conceptual research model.

Attitude Toward the Source

Congruity Theory

Congruity theory is developed by Osgood and Tannenbaum (1955) to improve on the first consistency theory—Heider’s balance theory. Congruity theory suggests that a perceiver’s attitude change toward that object relies on two aspects: (1) perceiver’s prior attitude toward the information source, and (2) whether the information source praises or
advocates for the object (an associative assertion) or disparages or condemns the object (a dissociative assertion) (Walther, Liang, Ganster, Wohn, & Emington, 2012).

Specifically, prior to being exposed to such a message, the individual can maintain any type of attitude toward any number of potential sources and objects, as long as these are not associated with one another (Tannenbaum, 1968). When a source is linked to an object that is not evaluated identically to the source, there is some degree of incongruity. The basic rule of congruity theory is that individuals prefer harmony and consistency and always strive for balance/congruence/consistency between cognitive elements (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955). Therefore, incongruity motivates people to change their minds to restore the congruity (consistency). When a change occurs, it is always toward greater congruity with prevailing frames of reference (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955).

Similar to other consistency theories, congruity theory studies the relationship of the thoughts and cognitions in people’s minds (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996). Despite the fundamental characteristics in common, different consistency theories have their own areas of emphasis (Tannenbaum, 1968). In particular, congruity theory was known being a precise model in that it includes quantification of the variables and relationship involved, and hence, the magnitude of the adjustment to an inconsistency (Tannenbaum, 1968).

In addition, the model of congruity theory was regarded as being among the narrowest of the models because it was limited to situations accounting for attitude change resulting from specific communication conditions. Since congruity theory focuses on two elements, source and object, and one relationship, the assertion made by the source for the object (Petty
& Cacioppo, 1996). The model addresses the simple and common communication situations in which an identifiable source makes an assertion for or against a particular object (Tannenbaum, 1968). The object of persuasion is perceiver. Source persuades perceiver to like or dislike the object. Congruity theory suggests that the perceiver’s attitude change toward the object and source are the results of the source-object relation. Therefore, persuasion, such as celebrity endorsement, best falls within the domain of congruity theory (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996).

The Attitude Change Model. The model proposed by congruity theory is shown in Figure 2. In congruity theory, Osgood and Tannenbaum (1955) depict relationships in a triangle, with the perceiver (P) at the top, the source (S) on the bottom left, and the object (O) on the bottom right. A typical situation of congruity theory is that the source “S” makes a statement about an object “O,” which can be either associative (positive) or dissociative (negative), and the perceiver “P” has attitude toward both the source “S” and the object “O.” What the “S” states about the “O” is the only element that cannot change in this model. The theory predicts that a perceiver’s attitude toward the source and the object are influenced by how well the perceiver initially evaluates the source and object (Walther et al., 2012) and the direction of source-object (S-O) relationship (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996). Besides, congruity theory asserts that a perceiver’s perception of elements and relations is more important than is the objective state of the elements and relations (Feather, 1965; Petty & Cacioppo, 1996).
The perfect congruity is achieved only when a source is associated with an object that is evaluated identically to the source (e.g., both the source and object are rated +1) or when a source is dissociated from an object that is evaluated exactly opposite (e.g., the source is rated +1 and the object is rated -1). In most instances, there is some degree of incongruity when a source is linked to an object.

Unlike the balance theory, which does not include the degree of attitude and predicts only the direction of attitude changes, congruity theory predicts both direction and amount of attitude change. Osgood and Tannenbaum (1955) measured the perceiver’s attitude toward the source and the object using semantic differentials scale to quantify the degree of attitude. Congruity theory is tested by asking a perceiver to rate his or her attitude toward the source and the object on semantic differentials scale. This provides the researchers with information about each perceiver’s initial attitude toward each element. Later, the perceiver receives the information from the source to either support or oppose the object. Following this S-O relation, the perceiver is asked to rate the source and object on semantic differentials scale again, and comparisons are then made between the attitudes toward each element as predicted by congruity theory and as actually observed (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955; Tannenbaum,
To calculate the amount of attitude change, Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957) developed a mathematical formula as follows:

\[ R_o = \frac{|A_o|}{|A_o| + |A_s|} A_o + (d) \frac{|A_s|}{|A_o| + |A_s|} A_s \]

Where \( R_o \) is the point of resolution of the object, \( A_o \) represents the prior attitude toward the object, \( A_s \) is the prior attitude toward the source, and \( d \) is the direction of assertion (+1 if favorable and -1 if unfavorable). The point of resolution for the source \( (R_s) \) is obtained from the following formula (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996):

\[ R_s = R_o(d) \]

With these two formulas, researchers and practitioners are able to predict the changes in attitude toward a source and object when an assertion between them causes incongruity.

**Limitations.** Congruity theory has several limitations. First, congruity theory overlooks the impact of message content. According to the theory, it only differentiates whether the information source makes a positive or negative statement about the object. The theory does not take content of the message into consideration (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996). As shown in Figure 2, the S-O relation has only the + and – sign, which means congruity theory did not take the strength of this relation into consideration. However, the strong or weak messages will have a different impact on the perceiver’s attitude. Generally, a stronger message produces more incongruity and therefore, more attitude change than messages with weak arguments.

Second, congruity theory does not consider some special cases—for example, if the perceiver does not care about the source of information at all. No matter whether this source
praises or criticizes the object, the perceiver’s attitude may not change. Another example could be if the source of information makes an untrustworthy statement about the object, people may ignore that statement and maintain their previous attitude.

Third, congruity theory ignores the effect of congruence between source and object (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996). The notion of congruence was often used in a variety of forms, such as match-up effect, fit, similarity, and relevance (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Fleck et al., 2012). In the model of congruity theory, the term congruence is conceptualized as the degree of similarity or consistency between any two elements of the model, including the similarity between S-O, O-P, and S-P (See Figure 2). For example, in an advertisement, Gordon Ramsay, a celebrity chef, advocates for people to attend a tennis tournament. In another advertisement, Roger Federer, a top tennis player, endorses the same tennis tournament. Both of them form an associative assertion between themselves (source) and the tennis tournament (object). Based on congruity theory, if the perceiver holds an identical prior attitude toward Gordon Ramsay and Roger Federer, it will change the perceiver’s attitude toward the tennis tournament at the same amount. Congruity theory will conclude that these endorsements are equally effective, but empirical evidence indicate that if a source has a stronger and more positive bond to the object, it would lead to a more positive attitude toward the object (e.g., Till & Shimp, 1998). In this example, the endorsement by Roger Federer is more likely to generate favorable outcomes because he has a strong bond to the tennis tournament. As a result, integrating congruence effect into the congruity model can better predict perceivers’ attitude change.
The Effect of Attitude Toward the Source on Attitude Toward the Object

Attitude refers to one’s relatively stable opinions and perceptions toward an object (Wade & Tavris, 1996). It reflects an individual’s positive or negative assessment of performing the behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and contains both cognitive and emotional elements (Wade & Tavris, 1996). For event organizers and marketers, obtaining an in-depth understanding of attendees’ attitude toward the event (e.g., festival, conference, trade show) is important because attendees’ attitude is regarded as a strong indicator of attendees’ overall satisfaction, positive word-of-mouth, intention to make purchases at the event, and future intention to participate in the event (Dees, Bennett, & Tsuji, 2006; Hill & Green, 2000; Sandler & Shani, 1989).

Three essential elements that constitute the congruity model of attitude: source, object, and perceiver. According to the congruity theory of attitude change (Osgood et al., 1957; Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955), the value of attitude change toward the object is determined by the prior attitude toward the object, the prior attitude toward the source, and the direction of assertion (+1 if favorable and -1 if unfavorable). When the attitude change model of congruity theory is applied to the event SMI endorsement context, three elements in the original congruity model (source, object, and perceiver) are equivalent to SMI, event, and followers (Figure 3). Therefore, under the condition of SMI endorsement, since event marketers are not able to change followers’ prior attitude toward the event and the direction of assertion is always favorable (+1), the direction of attitude change toward the event
(positive or negative) merely occurs as a result of prior attitude toward the SMI. Therefore, this study proposed that:

\[
\text{Perceiver} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{Followers}
\]

**Figure 3.** Application of congruity model in event SMI marketing context.

H1: A more favorable prior attitude toward SMI will lead to a more favorable attitude toward the event.

**Behavioral Intentions**

Behavioral intention refers to “individual’s intention to perform a given behavior” (Ajzen, 1991). In this study, behavioral intentions were examined in terms of pass-on behavioral intention and event participation intention.

**Attitude Toward the Social Media Post as a Mediator**

Attitude toward the social media post in social media marketing is equivalent to attitude toward the advertisement in traditional marketing. Adopting the definition of attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the social media post can be defined as “a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion” on social media (Lutz, 1985, p. 46).

Based on attitude-toward-the-ad models, consumers’ favorable perception and reaction to advertising are the determinants of attitude toward the product/brand and behavioral
intentions. Moreover, four alternative causal models were built to explain the mediating roles of attitude toward the advertisement on attitude toward the brand and purchase intention. The first model is called affect transfer hypothesis, which suggests that attitude toward the advertisement has a one-way impact on attitude toward the brand. The second model, dual mediation hypothesis, illustrates that in addition to a direct effect of attitude toward the advertisement on attitude toward the brand, attitude toward the advertisement exerts an indirect impact on attitude toward the brand via brand cognition. The third model, reciprocal mediation hypothesis, assumes a reciprocal association between attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the brand. The fourth model, the independent influences hypothesis, specifies that causal relationship does not exist between attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the brand. Instead, attitude toward the advertisement is the independent determinant of purchase intention (Huang, Su, Zhou, & Liu, 2013; MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986).

Furthermore, an increasing body of academic studies demonstrate that attitude toward the ads may be influential in the formation and maintenance of attitude toward brand and purchase intention. Therefore, regardless of how attitude toward the advertisement influences the attitude toward the brand and purchase intention, the mediating role of attitude toward the advertisement on the relationship between antecedents on attitude toward the brand and purchase intention was proven.

Based on this logic, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H2: Attitude toward the social media post mediates the positive relationship between the follower’s prior attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event.
Specifically,

H2a: A more favorable attitude toward SMI will lead to a more favorable attitude toward the social media post.

H2b: A more favorable attitude toward the social media post will lead to a more favorable attitude toward the event.

**Pass-on Behavioral Intention**

The Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB, 2009) indicated that advertising on social media sites is different from advertising on other channels, since social media users can choose the ads and decide whether they pass along the messages to their followers. This provides an opportunity for advertisers to rapidly and easily spread positive brand or product messages. By creating interesting and attractive advertising posts, marketers encourage users to pass on these posts in their online social networks (Berger & Iyengar, 2013). Therefore, the success of social media marketing largely relies on the amount of people passing on the message to their social connections and their followers (Kalyanam, McIntyre, & Masonis, 2007).

Attitudinal factor was identified as one of the antecedents of people’s pass-on behavior. A number of research studies found that the likelihood to pass on online messages increased when individuals had a favorable attitude toward the online advertising messages (e.g., Chu, 2011; Dobele, Toleman, & Beverland, 2005; Phelps, Lewis, Mobilio, Perry, & Raman, 2004). For example, Ketelaar et al. (2016) found that the social media followers’ pass-on behavior was positively associated with their attitude toward the brand, attitude
toward the advertisement, and attitude toward social media advertising in general. According to previous research, the following hypothesis was formulated.

H3: A more favorable attitude toward the social media post will lead to a higher intention to pass on that social media post.

H4: A more favorable attitude toward the event will lead to a higher intention to pass on social media post.

**Event Participation Intention**

The number of attendees is one of the most common ways to measure event success. According to the theory of planned behavior, individuals’ behavioral intentions can be accurately predicted from their attitude toward that behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991).

In addition, one’s attitude toward the object (e.g., product, service, brand or activity) and behavioral intentions have long been examined in the existing marketing and advertising literature. Consumers’ perceptions and attitude toward the object were thought to have a greater impact on their behavioral intentions and actual behaviors (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), because consumers with strong attitude toward products or brands were increasingly motivated (Mackenzie & Spreng, 1992). In other words, if an individual had a favorable attitude toward a product or service, his or her subsequent behavioral intentions and actual behaviors toward the object might also follow a positive direction, which could lead the individual to recommend and/or even purchase the product or service. For example, Lee, Xiong, and Hu
(2012) found that Facebook users’ positive emotions and attitude toward a Facebook event page could enhance an individual’s likelihood to attend the actual event.

When applying the theory of planned behavior to SMI endorsement, the current study asserts that if a social media follower has positive attitude toward the event, he or she tends to have a greater intention to participate in the event.

H5: A more favorable attitude toward the social media post will lead to a higher intention to participate in the event.

H6: A more favorable attitude toward the event will lead to a higher intention to participate in the event.

Source-object Congruence

As mentioned above, one major shortcoming of congruity theory is that it ignores congruence effects between any two elements of the attitude change model, including source-object congruence, object-perceiver congruence, and source-perceiver congruence. In order to overcome this shortcoming of congruity theory, this study aims to test the joint effects of attitude toward the source and congruence effects. The following sections of this chapter explained why the different levels of congruences can influence the effect of attitude toward the source on attitude toward the object. Source-object congruence refers to the similarity of personality traits between the source and the object. In the context of event SMI endorsement, source-object congruence is equivalent to SMI-event congruence.
Match-Up Hypothesis Model

Source-object congruence is theoretically supported by the match-up hypothesis model in celebrity endorsement. The match-up hypothesis model suggests that celebrity endorsement effectiveness is associated with the match between the celebrity and the endorsed product (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990; Solomon, Ashmore, & Longo, 1992). The degree of match between the celebrity and the product is determined by the perceived level of congruence between the images of both the celebrity and the product (Misra & Beatty, 1990). In general, the match-up hypothesis model suggests that the perceived celebrity image and the perceived product image should be consistent in an effective celebrity endorsement.

Before celebrity endorsement starts, customers normally have pre-existing knowledge and attitude toward the celebrity because of his or her popularity. Thus, consumers will accept celebrity endorsement even before the celebrity is selected, and the endorsement might be effective only when the celebrity is favored by consumers. However, the attractiveness and popularity of celebrity cannot determine the success of endorsement alone.

Based on the match-up hypothesis model, a celebrity is also required to be relevant to the endorsed product since a higher level of match-up effect leads to greater effectiveness of celebrity endorsement (Kamins & Gupta, 1994; Levy, 1959). Specifically, when a celebrity’s image is congruent or matches up with the product image, the celebrity’s favorable image can create and strengthen the positive association for the endorsed product (Till, 1998). In this case, the match-up hypothesis model would predict that the congruence between the images
of the celebrity and the product results in a positive impact on customers’ attitude and behaviors. However, if a celebrity is less congruent with the endorsed product, or totally irrelevant to the endorsed product, the positive impact upon endorsement effectiveness will be minimized and might not occur at all (Kahle & Homer, 1985). Therefore, the match-up hypothesis model highlighted a need for endorser-product congruence for a successful and effective endorsement marketing.

The match-up hypothesis model is theoretically supported by social adaptation theory (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kahle & Timmer, 1983). Social adaption theory indicates that “the adaptive significance of information will determine its impact” (Kahle & Homer, 1985, p. 954). In the context of celebrity endorsement, social adaption theory predicts that consumers’ attitude and behaviors toward the product rely on the adaptive significance of information given by the celebrity endorser. For example, when Gisele Bündchen, a supermodel, endorses a fashion week, she performs as a source of information for the fashion week. The presence of Gisele in an advertisement may generate hope for some customers by providing adaptive information. Customers may imagine that they will become as fashionable as Gisele after taking part in this fashion week. On the other hand, if the information source (in this case, it is the supermodel) cannot facilitate adaptation, customers will stop paying attention to this information source and will seek a new source of information (Kahle & Homer, 1985).

The match-up hypothesis model of celebrity endorsement also fits well with an attribution/correspondent inference theory (Folkes, 1988; Jones & Davis, 1965; Kamins, 1990; Smith & Hunt, 1978). Generally, attribution theory illustrates the process of how
individuals assign the causes to their behavior (Moskowitz, 2005). Correspondent inference theory, as one of the sub-theories and models of attribution theory, systematically explains how a perceiver makes attribution about a particular action (Jones & Davis, 1965). It particularly concentrates on the situations under which an individual will assign either an "internal" attribution (a correspondent attribution) or an "external" attribution (a non-correspondent attribution) to an event. Individuals compare their behaviors with other behaviors to make a judgement about the choices that they have made, and by various factors they can decide if their behavior is caused by an internal disposition. As the theory states, when a perceiver attributes the motivation of the action to the internal disposition of the actor who performs the behavior, a perceiver will make an internal attribution. When a perceiver infers that there is external pressure imposed upon the actor to perform that particular behavior, he or she will ascribe an external attribution to the event. Back to the previous example, a supermodel endorses a lipstick. Since the celebrity image (attractive) is congruent with product image (attractive-related), customers may believe that the lipstick makes the supermodel more attractive and thus, that the celebrity endorsement is truly driven by the merits of the product (an internal attribution) rather than monetary incentive (an external attribution).

Till and Busler (2000) identified associative learning theory as another potential explanation of the match-up hypothesis model in celebrity endorsement context. Associative learning theory illustrates an underlying mechanism by which associations between different concepts and ideas can be created (Klein, 1991; Martindale, 1991). The associative network
is made up of patterns of dots (concepts). These dots are connected (Anderson, 1976, 1983). As for celebrity endorsements, both the celebrity endorser and product can be considered as different dots in the network. These dots link to other dots on the basis of customers’ perceptions and experiences with the product and the celebrity endorser. The associations between the dots represent the associative network structure of memory for the endorsed product and the celebrity endorser. Attitudes and perceptions toward the product and the celebrity endorser can be viewed as a node of our associative network as well. By repeated relationships and associations of the product and the celebrity endorser, the product and celebrity endorser serve as a part of each other’s association set. Early research suggested that a greater level of congruence between two concepts leads to an increased likelihood that these two concepts integrate within one associative network structure of memory (Hamm, Vaiti, & Lang, 1989; Rozin & Kalat, 1971). Therefore, critical factors in forming an associative network between two concepts (e.g., a product and a celebrity endorser) are consistency, congruence, match, relatedness, or similarity. In the celebrity endorsement context, an associative link between a product and a celebrity endorser drives expected endorsement effectiveness.

**Empirical Studies in Source-object Congruence**

In celebrity endorsement, a number of authors have studied the congruence effect between the images of celebrity endorser and the product. Prior research supported the statement that the better fit or more congruent the source-object pair is regarded to be, the greater the favorable response to the message in terms of perceivers’ attitude or behaviors
(Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990; Walther et al., 2012). As a result, celebrities who endorse cosmetic products are typically perceived as physically attractive in an attempt to transfer a credible message to the target audience and create favorable product attributes. In contrast, for a message to be perceived as credible, persuasive, and viable, celebrities who endorse high-tech products must be somebody perceived as having expertise with these high-tech products they endorse (Jagre, Watson, & Watson, 2001). On the other hand, when there is not a specific relationship or congruence that exists between the celebrity endorser and the product, it generates a so-called vampire effect. According to Evans (1988), “celebrities suck the life-blood of the product dry; the audience remembers the celebrity but not the product” (p. 35).

Most of the early empirical work on examining this congruence effect concentrated on the demographic features and attractiveness of the celebrity endorser, including gender (Kanungo & Pang, 1973), skin color (Huston, d’Ouville, & Willis, 2003), and physical attractiveness (Kamins, 1990). In particular, these studies proved the source-object congruence effect in the context of celebrity endorsement and predicted that attractive celebrities generate better outcomes when the function of endorsed products is to improve one’s physical attractiveness.

For example, Kanungo and Pang (1973) performed three experiments to pair male, female, and male-female endorser with different types of products. The study found that a particular product with one specific gender model was viewed favorably, whereas another product with the same model was viewed unfavorably. In detail, the study revealed that an
overall favorable attitude toward the product was created in both male and female subjects when a male model was used for the car and when a female model was used for the sofa. On the other hand, a female model for the car and a male model for the sofa created more unfavorable attitude toward the product. Authors attributed the cause of this phenomenon to “fittingness” between the endorser and the product. It was proposed that the fittingness of a male model was greater for a product with a masculine image than for a product with a feminine image. Likewise, the fittingness of a female model was greater for a product with a feminine image. In addition to the gender congruence effect, Huston et al. (2003) indicated that the congruence between race or skin color of the celebrity and product image affected consumers’ ability to recall the association between the product and the endorser. Their empirical studies also found that racial congruence resulted in a stronger effect compared with the gender congruence effect.

Kahle and Homer (1985) examined the congruence effect between the source (celebrity) and the object (product). The results of their study suggested that consumers had a more favorable brand attitude toward disposable razors (attractiveness-related products) when they were endorsed by an attractive celebrity endorser rather than an unattractive one. Although the work of Kahle and Homer (1985) did prove the congruence effect between the physically attractive endorser and attractiveness-related product, their study was regarded as incomplete by other researchers (Till & Busler, 1998) because the authors tested only one product that used to improve one’s physical attractiveness—disposable razors. The authors did not perform any test to explore perceivers’ attitude change when there was an incongruity
between endorser image and product image. For example, a good-looking celebrity was endorsing a product that was not used to improve one's attractiveness, while for the attractiveness-unrelated products, the authors did not collect any data to investigate the different effects of attractive or unattractive celebrities. To address these problems, Kamins (1990) conducted a full-test of the source-object congruence effect by pairing either a perceived attractive celebrity endorser or a perceived unattractive endorser with either an attractiveness-related or an attractiveness-unrelated product. The results of this study supported the effect of source and object congruence on endorsement effectiveness. In addition to the findings of Kahle and Homer’s (1985) study, Kamins (1990) study uncovered the fact that an attractive endorser was less effective when he or she was endorsing an attractiveness-unrelated product. However, both studies (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990) identified physical attractiveness as the only match-up factor in the context of the attractiveness-related product.

Till and Busler (2000) expanded the research scope of these two studies and considered expertise as another possible match-up factor driving the source-object congruence effect. Two similar studies were conducted to test hypotheses. The first study investigated the congruence effect of physical attractiveness on the endorsement effectiveness, while the second study employed expertise as the match-up factor. Unlike previous research (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990), this study did not detect the interaction effect of physical attractiveness by product type. Additionally, the second study demonstrated the role of expertise as a match-up factor. The study found that the perceived expertise of an endorser
was more important than the perceived attractiveness for matching a product to achieve satisfactory advertising effectiveness.

The source-object congruence effect was also detected in the hospitality and tourism context. Magnini, Garcia, and Honeycutt (2010) studied celebrity endorsement effect on restaurants’ merchandising promotions. This study identified the good match between a celebrity endorser’s image/values and a restaurant brand’s image/values as the top indicator for an effective restaurant chain endorsement. By performing a novel demographic analysis, the research discovered that it was more likely for parents to consider the congruence between the images of restaurant brand and an endorser, female and young respondents focused more on an endorser’s appearance and attractiveness. Older people and less frequent guests relied more on the credibility of a celebrity endorser. In the field of tourism, Van der Veen and Song (2013) found that local celebrities from the destination led to more positive responses among the tourists than the non-local ones. The authors thought that the higher rating of perceived endorser’s believability and perceived congruence with the destination image were the main reasons for selecting a native celebrity to promote the tourist destination was more effective.

For events, existing research mainly focused on the congruence effect between an event (source) and sponsors (object). For example, Clark, Cornwell, and Pruitt (2009) examined the effect of title sponsorship on sponsors’ brand/product awareness and image improvement. This study analyzed the impact of over one hundred title sponsorship programs on the sponsoring firms’ stock prices. The result of regression analysis revealed that the
congruence between sporting events and sponsors was associated with perceived sponsorship success. A recent study conducted by Kim and Jun (2016) tested the effect of event-hosting city congruity. It indicated that the congruence between the special event and hosting city in event advertisement positively affected peoples' attitude toward the event-hosting city.

In conclusion, the match-up hypothesis model and existing literature indicated that when a source matched up with the endorsed object, favorable image of this source can be built. The enhanced image of source further led to a more positive attitude toward the endorsed object (Till, 1998). On the other hand, previous studies also showed that when the profile of source was unmatched with the endorsed object, the perceived trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness of that source were sharply decreased (Yoo & Jin, 2015). The reduced credibility and favorability of source deteriorated the perceiver’s attitude toward the object.

Thus, based on the match-up hypothesis model and previous literature, this study assumed that the positive effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event changes at different levels of SMI-event congruence. At a high level of SMI-event congruence, the SMI would be regarded as more trustworthy, professional, and attractive, which will multiply the positive effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event. At a low level of SMI-event congruence, the perception of SMI would be considered as less favorable, which can decrease the positive effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated in the context of event SMI endorsement.
H7: SMI-event congruence moderates the positive relationship between followers’ prior attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event.

Specifically,

H7a: The positive relationship between follower’s prior attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event will be stronger when SMI and event are congruent.

H7b: The positive relationship between followers’ prior attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event will be weaker when SMI and event are incongruent.

**Object-perceiver Congruence**

Object-perceiver congruence refers to the similarity of personality traits between the object and the perceiver. In the context of event SMI endorsement, object-perceiver congruence is equivalent to event-follower congruence.

**Self-congruity Theory**

Self-congruity is defined as the level of customers’ self-concept match with a given brand/product typical user’s image (Kressmann et al., 2006; Sirgy, Grewal, & Mangleburg, 2000). In the extant literature, the concept of self-congruity is often labeled as “self-congruity,” “self-congruence,” “self-image congruence,” and “image congruence” (Kressmann et al., 2006). In this paper, “self-congruity” will be employed throughout the paper.

The definition of self-congruity is the comparison of customers’ self-concepts and the image of a product’s typical users. In this definition, the image of typical product users is viewed as the reference of evaluation of self-congruity. The degree of self-congruity also

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depends heavily on the self-concepts. Therefore, to comprehensively explain the self-congruity theory, it is necessary to introduce two major elements of self-congruity: self-concept and product image.

**Self-concept.** The notion of self-concept refers to “the totality of individual’s thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object” (Rosenberg, 1979, p. 7). Moreover, self-concept can be defined as a set of self-schemas made up of generalizations about the self (Barone, Shimp, & Sprott, 1999). Although most researchers consent to the general definition of self-concept, different opinions concerning the extent of self-concept still exist. Specifically, previous researchers hold different views regarding the underlying dimensions of self-concepts (Sirgy, 1982).

Earlier, investigators treated self-concept as actual self-concept, a unidimensional variable. Actual self-concept refers to the way one perceives himself or herself (Sirgy, 1982). It can be used interchangeably with actual self, basic self, extant self, real self, or simply “self.” According to Malhotra (1988), the conceptualization of self-concept was later progressed to two dimensions. The ideal self-concept was included as the additional dimension, which is conceptualized as an individual’s ideal expectation of oneself (Sirgy, 1982). The ideal self-concept is also labeled as the ideal self, desired self, and idealized image. Sirgy (1982) further developed this dual-dimension construct and made it to a four-dimensional construct. For the new four-dimensional construct, in addition to actual self-concept and ideal self-concept, social self-concept and ideal social self-concept were included. The social self-concept refers to the image that one expects others to have, while
the ideal social self-concept means the self-image that one wishes other individuals to have (Sirgy, 1982).

**Product Image.** Products, services, and brands are postulated to have their own images as well. The product image is “the sum of the meanings it communicated, often unconsciously to others when they look at it or use it” (Newman, 1957, p. 100). The image of the product is determined by its physical characteristics, such as form, size, color, and functions (Newman, 1957), and a collection of other factors, including packaging, pricing, and advertising (Sirgy, 1982). Product image is also formed by the image of its typical user (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Levy, 1959).

Sirgy (1982) indicated that the product image can be divided into two categories: functional product image and symbolic product image. Functional product image refers to the utilitarian attributes and physical benefits of the products, while symbolic product image is conceptualized as the customers’ perceived personality image of a particular product, such as high status versus low status, traditional versus modern, etc. Other researchers argued that the product image, in essence, is the stereotypic image of this product’s typical users who are often assessed by a semantic differential scale.

**The Evolution of Self-congruity Theory.** The research of self-congruity was started from the work of Gardner and Levy (1955) and Levy (1959). Levy’s (1959) work found that consumer behavior is remarkably influenced by the product’s symbolic characters rather than functional product image. Individuals tend to perceive products in terms of symbolic meaning.
(Dolich, 1969) and attribute symbolic value to products. Based on the symbolic product image, people are able to make a purchasing decision (Levy, 1959).

In the consumer research, self-concept was considered a critical construct for understanding consumers’ purchasing motivation and behavior. Earlier studies empirically demonstrated that consumers favor products which are match up with their own self-concepts and similar to how they see or would like to see themselves (Landon, 1974). Additionally, other earlier studies (e.g., Birdwell, 1968; Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967) uncovered the fact that consumers can reinforce their self-concepts, express themselves, and even gain social recognition by consuming these self-congruity products, services, and brands.

Sirgy (1982) agreed with the findings of these previous researches and developed an integrated self-concept theory, which is named as self-congruity theory (1982). Self-congruity theory mostly obtains its empirical supports in the field of business and commercial areas. According to Sirgy et al. (1997), the extent of congruity between consumers’ self-concepts and product image is defined as self-image/product image congruity, which is usually called “self-congruity” for short.

Self-congruity theory illustrates the process that motivates consumers to make a purchase when they feel that the symbolic characteristics of the product are similar to what they perceive in themselves. In the marketplace, self-concept affects consumers’ behaviors (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967). Purchasing and consuming products that are perceived to be match up with one’s self-concept help that customer to achieve self-consistency and allows him or her to reinforce his or her self-concept (Graeff, 1996). In particular, consumers whose
self-concepts are congruent with a product’s image are more likely to be influenced by advertisements reminding them of their own self-concepts, whereas consumers whose self-images are incongruent with the product image consider only functional product image (Graeff, 1996). Therefore, the greater the self-congruity, the higher likelihood a consumer will positively evaluate the product and the greater intention to purchase the product. Moreover, self-congruity theory assumes that individuals have a tendency to express themselves by purchasing or consuming a specific product, service, and brand when the product’s image is similar to their own self-image (Sirgy, Johar, Samli, & Claiborne, 1991).

As discussed above, the notion of self-concept has been developed to a multi-dimensional construct including four sub-dimensions. Correspondently, self-congruity is considered as a four-dimensional construct. Four sub-dimensions of self-congruity are actual self-congruity, ideal self-congruity, social self-congruity, and ideal social self-congruity (Sirgy, 1982). Actual self-congruity refers to congruity between the actual self-concept and the product image. Ideal self-congruity is the congruity between the ideal self-concept and product image. Social self-congruity is the congruity between the social self-concept and product image. Ideal social self-congruity refers to the congruity between the ideal social self-concept and the product image (Sirgy, 1982).

According to Sirgy and Johar (1992), the main purpose for consumers to achieve self-congruity is to meet the needs of self-esteem, self-consistency, social consistency, and social approval. The self-esteem motive indicates one’s tendency to improve self-concept by being discriminatory in selecting experiences. The self-consistency motivates an individual to
change his or her behavior to maintain consistency with one’s actual self-concept (Sirgy, 1982). The need for social consistency can be met by achieving the congruence between product image and social self-concept. The social approval needs can be met when the image of a product is congruent with the ideal social self-image. Epstein (1992) explained the reason for seeking out self-congruity with only one motive, which is “maintaining the coherence of a personal conceptual system” (p. 35). Due to this belief, individuals make efforts to preserve it. They will not only modify their behavior to reinforce their self-concept, but also encourage behavior in others that will confirm their beliefs about themselves (Epstein, 1992). Thus, consumers have a tendency to maintain their self-concept and will purchase and consume products that promote its maintenance.

Generally, self-congruity theory serves as a valuable predictor of consumers’ purchasing motivation and behavior. This theory is empirically important since it encourages marketing professionals to develop customized marketing strategies to target customer with diverse self-concepts.

Empirical Studies in Object-perceiver Congruence

Supported by self-congruity theory, a number of studies proved that the congruence between an object’s image and a perceiver’s self-concept (self-congruity) can significantly affect consumer preference (Jamal & Goode, 2001), customer satisfaction (Jamal & Al-Marri, 2007), intention to purchase (Ericksen, 1997), brand loyalty (Kressmann et al., 2006; Sirgy, Lee, Johar, & Tidwell, 2008), store loyalty (He & Mukherjee, 2007) and positive word of mouth (Bosnjak, Sirgy, Hellriegel, & Maurer, 2011).
Most empirical support of the object-perceiver congruence has been found in the field of business and commerce. The positive impact of this congruence effect has been proven in a wide range of product categories, such as automobiles (Kressmann et al., 2006), houses (Malhotra, 1988), and clothing (Ericksen & Sirgy, 1992).

For example, Kressmann et al. (2006) tested the impacts of self-congruity on brand loyalty. Since automobiles were high in conspicuousness and were easily assessed by their symbolic product image, they were selected as the objects of this study. By collecting the survey from 600 car owners, their study confirmed the role of object-perceiver congruence in predicting brand loyalty. Jamal and Al-Marri (2007) also discovered a significant object-perceiver congruence effect on brand satisfaction, brand preference, and brand satisfaction in the automobile market.

Malhotra’s (1988) research explored the self-congruity effect on consumers’ house choice. The findings supported that self-congruity was a strong indicator of consumer house purchasing choice. This study also found that the actual, ideal, and social self-congruity played various roles. Specifically, cognitively complex individuals generally achieved a significantly better consistency between preference and self-concept than cognitively simple ones.

Ericksen and Sirgy (1992) tested the effects of actual self-congruity and ideal self-congruity on predicting the clothing preference and career anchorage of employed females. They found that employed females tended to wear outfits, which was congruent with their actual self-concept and ideal self-image. Also, actual self-congruity served as a better
predictor for the business-like dress compared with the ideal self-congruity, while the ideal self-congruity was found to be more important than the actual self-congruity among the feminine dress. Moreover, self-congruity positively affected career anchorage exclusively among the business-like dress.

Previous studies also investigated the role of object-perceiver congruence on store loyalty (He & Mukherjee, 2007) and store image (Sirgy & Samli, 1985). For example, He and Mukherjee (2007) examined the effect of self-congruity on store loyalty among Chinese consumers. The findings of this study supported that both actual self-congruity and social self-congruity were key drivers of consumer attitude and store loyalty. However, the effect of ideal self-congruity and ideal social self-congruity had not been demonstrated.

Sirgy and Samli (1985) discovered the indirect effect of object-perceiver congruence on store loyalty. In their study, a path model was developed to describe the relationship among the factors that lead to store loyalty. Two studies were used to test this path model. The results showed that store-image evaluation was significantly affected by self-congruity, which, in turn, combined with shopping-complex loyalty, determined the store loyalty.

By using meta-analysis, Aguirre-Rodriguez, Bosnjak, and Sirgy (2012) analyzed over one hundred conceptual and empirical articles related to object-perceiver congruence on consumer decision-making. The findings suggested that object-perceiver congruence was the robust foundation for current and new consumer identity and symbolic consumption studies.

Other researchers extend the research of self-congruity to the service industry, especially the hospitality and tourism industry. Chon (1992) first proved the object-perceiver
congruence in the context of a tourism destination. A total of 225 respondents were requested to finish a mail survey after their recent trip to Norfolk, Virginia. The questionnaire included questions related to their trip satisfaction and the similarity they perceived between themselves and typical visitors to Norfolk. Results suggested that self-congruity positively correlated to trip satisfaction. Specifically, those tourists who considered their self-image to be very congruent with typical visitors of Norfolk were more satisfied with the travel destination. Litvin and Goh (2003) repeated Chon’s (1992) research and reexamined whether self-congruity correlated to satisfaction of tourists who recently traveled to Singapore. The findings of their study supported that a higher level of tourists’ actual self-congruity and ideal self-congruity led to tourists’ greater overall satisfaction.

Sirgy and Su (2000) proposed a theoretical framework to illustrate the associations among self-congruity, destination image, and travel behavior. Their integrative research model proposed that travel behavior was affected by both self-congruity and functional congruity, which refers to the consistency between the destination’s functional features and visitors’ expectations. Sirgy and Su (2000) also postulated that functional congruity was affected by self-congruity. However, these two authors did not offer any empirical evidence to support their model.

The study conducted by Ekinci and Riley (2002) examined the object-perceiver congruence in the context of restaurants and hotels. The results of two studies found that both the actual and ideal self-congruity influence consumer attitudes and behaviors. However, the effects of these two self-congruity were situational. The first study indicated that the ideal
self-congruity imposed more impacts upon customers’ overall attitude, satisfaction, and perception toward service quality, while the second one found that the actual self-congruity had more relevance. Kang, Tang, Lee, and Bosselman (2012) also found that object-perceiver congruence was the antecedent of consumers’ attitudes and behavioral intentions in the context of Korean coffee shops.

Limited work has been devoted to testing the self-congruity effect in event research. The existing literature applied only self-congruity theory in event sponsorship. For example, Sirgy et al. (2008) applied the concept of self-congruity to examine the sponsorship effectiveness of Nextel mobile communication at NASCAR Nextel Cup Series. They discovered that attendees’ self-congruity with a sponsored event positively related to their loyalty toward the sponsoring brand, especially when a customer noticed that the firm was sponsoring the sports event, and they were actively engaged and interacted with this event.

Similarly, Mazodier and Merunka (2012) also tested the concept of self-congruity in event sponsorship. Results showed that both self-congruity and event-brand fit were important factors influencing sponsorship effectiveness. Therefore, the study suggested that when selecting a sponsored event, sponsors should consider whether the event attendees are congruent with the brand’s target users and whether the event fits with the brand image.

In brief, based on self-congruity theory and findings of earlier studies, when celebrity endorsement message was delivered to customers, customers first compared the product image with their self-concepts. If product image was consistent to their self-concepts, consumers intended to favor the endorsed product. Conversely, inconsistency between
product image and customers’ self-concepts negatively affected their attitudes and behaviors toward the endorsed product. For example, the SMI endorsement of tennis tournament will be more effective on followers who are tennis fans compared with those who have no interest in tennis. Therefore, in the context of event SMI endorsement, this study hypothesized that different levels of event-follower congruence could either strengthen or weaken the positive effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event. In particular, individuals tend to have more favorable attitude toward the event when they have a positive attitude toward SMI and a high level of event-follower congruence. However, a lower level of event-follower congruence would deteriorate followers’ interest and perception toward that event. This would reduce the positive effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event. Thus, the following hypotheses were established.

H8: Event-follower congruence moderates the positive relationship between followers’ prior attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event.

Specifically,

H8a: The positive relationship between followers’ prior attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event will be stronger when event and follower are congruent.

H8b: The positive relationship between followers’ prior attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event will be weaker when event and follower are incongruent.
Source-perceiver Congruence

Source-perceiver congruence refers to the similarity of personality traits between the source and the perceiver. In the context of event SMI endorsement, source-perceiver congruence is equivalent to SMI-follower congruence.

Vicarious Self-perception

Self-perception theory indicates that individuals sometimes perform as outsiders to observe their own behaviors and define themselves on the basis of their observations (Bern, 1967, 1972). In a twist on self-perception theory, the concept of vicarious self-perception was proposed by Goldstein and Cialdini (2007). Vicarious self-perception posits that:

When observing a behavior carried out by a merged other, the attributes one infers from that person’s behavior should carry over to inferences about one’s own attributes—almost as if one had observed oneself performing that behavior. This change in self-perception should drive one to behave consistently with these attributes, often leading one to behave in line with the behavior he or she witnessed the other performing. (Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007, p. 403)

Over a century ago, Cooley (1902) found that people always describe themselves by observing how other people respond to them. He named this phenomenon as the looking glass self. From the vicarious self-perception viewpoint, when people are “exposed to the behavior of psychological merged others (p. 403), ” individuals define themselves not only through others’ appraisal of their behavior (a looking glass), but also through appraising the
behavior they observed from psychologically merged others.” Therefore, vicarious self-perception is also called *the spyglass self*.

The concept of vicarious self-perception is formed based on the research findings of perspective-taking and self-other overlap (Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007). Perspective-taking entails an individual perceiving a concept from another person’s point of view (Galinsky, Maddux, Gilin, White, 2008), as if putting oneself in the shoes of another (Galinsky & Ku, 2004). The act of perspective-taking lets “an individual to anticipate the behavior and reactions of others, therefore facilitating smoother and more rewarding interpersonal relationships” (Davis, 1983, p. 115), and increases one’s likelihood to act the same as others, which, in turn, creates more favorable relationships with others (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). Findings of existing research uncovered the fact that perspective-taking also has positive impacts on intergroup relations by reducing stereotyping, prejudice, and intergroup bias (e.g., Batson, Early, & Salvarani, 1997; Galinsky & Ku, 2004; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). Davis, Conklin, Smith, and Luce (1996) indicated that increased self-other overlap is the driver of these effects. Under the condition of self-other overlap, the perceived boundaries between oneself and others are not clear in the mind (Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007). Much previous research concerning perspective-taking indicates that the self-other overlap is caused by seeing the self in the other, which means perceiving another person as possessing characteristics of oneself. For example, Galinsky and Moskowitz (2000) pointed out that perspective-taking resulted in less stereotyping.
Goldstein and Cialdini (2007) went a step further. They posited that when an individual observes another person’s behavior, he or she is likely to include others’ attributes into one’s own self-concept, which is including the other in the self, making oneself more other-like. The detailed process of vicarious self-perception to change one’s behavior will be explained in the next section.

Vicarious self-perception is a comparatively new concept, but it is consistent with the idea that individuals shift their own behavior to achieve a higher level of consistency with their own beliefs, values, image, self-concepts, and attitudes and expectations of others.

The Vicarious Self-perception Model. To better explain the concept of vicarious self-perception, Goldstein and Cialdini (2007) visualized the process of how vicarious self-perception drive one’s behavior (See Figure 4). As we can see at the first step of the proposed model, an individual observes the other person performing a specific behavior. Then that individual (the perceiver) will assess whether the other person (the actor) performing that behavior is a result of external constraints or controlling forces. If the observer infers the occurrence of that behavior is free of external constraints, the observer will infer that an internal attrition is the cause of the behavior, which means he or she is likely to perceive that the behavior is motivated by the internal attributes of the actor, such as one’s own values, attitudes, or attributes. However, if the perceiver infers that external pressure makes the actor perform that behavior, the observer will be more likely to conclude that the behavior is driven by an external attribution rather than an internal attribution.
The second step depicts the consequences of the perceiver’s internal or external attributions for the actor’s behavior. If, at the first step, the perceiver infers that behavior is the result of an internal attribution, he or she is anticipated to experience a shift in their self-perception related to inferred internal attributions when the perceiver is aware of the shared identity with the actor. However, if the perceiver feels that he or she does not share any identity with the actor, no changes in self-perception will happen. On the other hand, there will be no such change that occurs in self-perception if the perceiver infers an external attrition for the behavior. Under this situation, the perceiver will not consider whether he or she shared identity with the actor.

Finally, in the last step, the perceiver, whose relevant self-perception has been shifted due to the observation of the actor’s behavior, will correspondently change their behavior on the basis of their emerging self-perception. Goldstein and Cialdini (2007) also pointed out that the newly changed behavior will be aligned with the originally observed behavior in most cases. For those perceivers whose self-perceptions have no change, their behavior will not change either.
Figure 4. The vicarious self-perception model.

Note. Adapted from Goldstein and Cialdini (2007).

**Empirical Studies in Source-perceiver Congruence**

People tend to alter themselves to achieve greater congruence with their beliefs and attitudes of others with shared merged personal identities (Baldwin, Carrell, & Lopez, 1990). The congruence in the identity contributed to an individual (perceiver) closely relating oneself to the other one (source), which, in turn, increases one’s inclination to mimic the other’s behavior (Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007). Compared with the aforementioned two pairs of congruence, the role of congruence between the source-perceivers received relatively less attention, but the empirical support of existing studies covers various fields.

For example, when examining the physician-patient relationship, Street, O’Malley, Cooper, and Haidet (2008) found that the congruence between patient and physician was correlated to a higher level of trust, satisfaction, and intention to adhere to physician’s advice.
Therefore, the relationship between physicians and patients can be strengthened when patients perceive that they are similar to their physicians.

The study of Hefner, Klimmt, Vorderer (2007) examined the role of congruence between player and game protagonist in a video game context. Based on an empirical test, the interplay between identity, interactive game use, and game enjoyment was confirmed. Players who felt merged identity with the game protagonist tended to act more efficiently and interacted more with the game. The popular combat game “Battlefield 2” was selected for the study. Those players who perceived shared identity with a soldier in the video game also reported a greater level of game enjoyment.

In consumer behavior research, existing studies have demonstrated that the presence of others in the same service setting affected the attitudes and behaviors of focal customers. For example, Ariely and Levav (2000) conducted three studies to track consumers’ orders of lunch, beer, and wine in three experiments. Results of all three studies supported that consumers’ choices were influenced by the group peers. Brocato, Voorhees, and Baker (2012) developed Other Customer Perception (OCP) Scale to measure ones’ perceptions toward other customers in the service settings. In this scale, “other customers” refers to “customers who are in the service facility simultaneously with—and who are unacquainted with—a focal customer” (Brocato et al., 2012, p. 385). Other customers and focal customers can present together, but they do not need to interact with each other (Argo, Dahl, & Manchanda, 2005; Brocato et al., 2012). Within this scale, “similarity” was identified as one dimension of OCP, which refers to the degree to which focal customers feel that other customers presenting in
the same service setting are similar to themselves. In the context of service setting, customers’ preference of other customers with similar characteristics has been widely supported. Individuals tend to feel more positive and comfortable when they are surrounded by other customers with whom they feel similar to themselves. For example, Thakor, Suri, and Saleh (2008) found that young adults’ satisfaction with services was affected by the age of other customers. They feel negative if older people present in the same service setting, especially at health clubs and restaurants. Earlier research also demonstrated that the similarity and congruence between the focal customer and other customers can significantly affect focal customers’ approach/avoidance behavior (Brocato et al., 2012), satisfaction, loyalty (Hwang & Han, 2015), and positive word-of-mouth (Brocato et al., 2012).

Since others’ behavior can determine the social norm (Goldstein, Martin, & Cialdini, 2008), people may observe other people and use others’ behavior to define the prevailing social norm where they are confused with the appropriate way of behaving (Gino & Galinsky, 2012). In order to achieve their emerging self-image, consumers tend to follow the behaviors performed by others when the others’ image is considered to be consistent with their own (Choi & Rifon, 2012). Thus, the emerging self-concepts can guide observers to match their behavior with others with shared identity (Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007).

Choi and Rifon (1992) used a student sample to explore the joint effect of celebrity-consumer congruence and celebrity-product congruence on celebrity endorsement effectiveness. The celebrity-consumer congruence was found to be a strong predictor of consumer behavior toward celebrity-endorsed advertisement. When a consumer perceives a
celebrity endorser shared a similar identity and image with himself or herself, the customer tended to obtain a more favorable attitude toward the advertisement and a greater intention to make a purchase.

In the hospitality setting, Goldstein, Cialdini, and Griskevicius (2008) performed two field experiments to test the effectiveness of signs. The signs were designed to encourage hotel guests to take part in an environmental conservation program. Their study showed that hotel guests who found that the majority of other guests had reused their towels were more likely to reuse their towels compared with those guests who read only a general environmental-protection message.

It needs to be noticed that the effect of congruence between the perceiver and the source can be moderated by other factors, such as social class and belongingness. Stephens, Markus, and Townsend (2007) found that working-class individuals reported a higher level of preference for similarity to others compared with people from the middle-class who showed a stronger desire for difference from others. Results also showed that participants from the working-class tend to choose products similar to, rather than different from, peers. The work of Mead, Baumeister, Stillman, Rawn, and Vohs (2010) discovered that the feeling of belongingness also moderates the role of perceiver-source congruence. Socially-excluded individuals had a higher chance to sacrifice their spending preferences to conform to peers’ preferences in making a purchase.

To sum it up, the notion of vicarious self-perception suggested that source-perceiver congruence was likely to change the perceiver’s self-perception, which in turn made his or
her behavior conform to the source’s behavior. Based on this, we assumed that if an SMI with a similar background is endorsing an event on the social media, followers are expected to have more favorable attitudes and behaviors toward that event. This is because they tend to change their perceptions and behaviors in line with this SMI. Moreover, earlier studies reported that individuals had a more pleasing feeling toward others with a similar background, while they felt uncomfortable with those people who were incongruent with them (e.g., Brocato et al., 2012, Hwang & Han, 2015). For example, when an SMI, who is a college student, is endorsing an event, followers who are also college students tend to have more positive responses toward the endorsed event. This is because they prefer the SMI with similar background and are likely to change attitudes and behaviors in order to match this SMI.

Therefore, this study postulated that there is a significant joint effect of attitude toward the source and source-perceiver congruence on attitude toward the object. Specifically, this study hypothesized that individuals tend to have a more positive attitude toward the event when they have a positive attitude toward SMI and a higher degree of SMI-follower congruence. On the other hand, a lower level of SMI-follower congruence would impair followers’ favorable attitude toward that SMI, which in turn would weaken the positive effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event. As a result, the following hypotheses were formulated in the context of event SMI endorsement.

H9: SMI-follower congruence moderates the positive relationship between follower’s prior attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event.
Specifically,

H9a: The positive relationship between followers’ prior attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event will be stronger when SMI and follower are congruent.

H9b: The positive relationship between followers’ prior attitude toward SMI and attitudes toward the event will be weaker when SMI and follower are incongruent.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the research design and methodology used to test the proposed research model. In this chapter, a discussion of research design, including sampling and survey instruments, is first presented, followed by the explanation of the data collection procedure and statistical methods employed in this study.

Conceptual Research Model

By applying the aforementioned theories and models, a conceptual framework was established to predict followers’ attitude and behavior change as results of followers’ prior attitudes toward SMI and the three-pair congruence effects (see Figure 5). The effectiveness and outcome of SMI endorsement will be measured by the attitude toward the event, attitude toward the social media post, followers’ pass-on behavioral intention, and event participation intention. When examining this conceptual model, this study firstly tested the main model (without moderators). Then, it tested three moderators one at a time.
Figure 5. Proposed research model.
Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative approach with the survey instrument. Building on congruity theory, this study tested the effect of followers’ prior attitude toward the SMI on followers’ attitude and behavioral intentions toward the endorsed event. In addition, this study combined the match-up hypothesis model, self-congruity theory, and the concept of vicarious self-perception to investigate the moderating roles of SMI-event congruence, event-follower congruence, and SMI-follower congruence.

Sampling

Sampling is the process whereby a researcher selects a subset (sample) from a population of interest (study population) to estimate the characteristics of the whole population (Babbie, 2015). A study population can be conceptualized as the gathering from which a sample is actually chosen (Babbie, 2015). Units in the population share common traits that fall within the interest of the researcher and the purpose of the study (Zikmund, 2002). This research aimed to investigate the antecedents that affect event SMI endorsement effectiveness. Therefore, the population of the study comprised the social media followers who were recently exposed to at least one social media post in which an SMI endorsed an event.

A panel sample from Qualtrics.com was used as the sampling frame for this study. Qualtrics is an online platform that enables researchers to create and publish sophisticated surveys and collect and analyze data for various research purposes. In addition, it cooperated
with panel providers worldwide to recruit respondents and offer online sample services.

Qualtrics also attracted respondents via social media and web publishers.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to test the proposed hypotheses and research model. Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010) indicated that SEM analysis is to some extent more sensitive to sample size compared with other multivariate analyses. Some SEM statistical algorithms cannot provide trustworthy results with small samples. It needs to be noted that a large sample size is always accompanied by high monetary and time cost. Therefore, to determine how large a sample should be is a critical issue. Previous studies offered guidelines regarding the suggested sample size for SEM. As the most popular SEM estimation procedure, maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) requires a large sample size (Hair et al., 2010). Many researchers suggested that a minimum sample size of 200 is needed to build a sound foundation for estimation (Boomsma & Hoogland, 2001; Kline, 1998; Tanaka, 1993). However, when the sample is over 400, the MLE method becomes increasingly sensitive, and it can detect almost any difference. This makes a poor fit suggested by the good-of-fit indices (Tanaka, 1993). Therefore, this study planned to collect a usable sample size of 300 to ensure reliable results.

**Survey Instrument**

The online survey (Appendix A) made up of three major parts. The first part contained an informed consent and screening questions. The second part included the scales to measure followers’ prior attitude toward SMI, attitude toward the social media post, attitude toward the event, pass-on behavioral intention, event participation intention, two
attention check questions, and personality traits of SMI, event, and follower. The third part included the demographic questions.

**Common Method Bias**

Common method variance is the “variance that is attributable to the measurement method rather than to the constructs the measures represent” (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003, p. 879). Resulting from common method variance, common method bias refers to “the magnitude of discrepancies between the observed and true relationships between constructs” (Doty & Glick, 1998, p. 376).

Common method bias can result in systematic measurement errors (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The occurrence of measurement error threatens the validity of empirical findings by either inflating or deflating the observed relationships between constructs (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Therefore, common method bias can create both Type I and Type II errors (Chang, van Witteloostuijn, & Eden, 2010).

Four major sources of common method bias were identified by Podsakoff et al. (2003): (1) a common rater or source, (2) item characteristics, (3) item context, and (4) measurement scale. Thus, common method bias arises when self-reported questionnaires are collected at the same time from the same respondents (Chang et al., 2010).

Podsakoff et al. (2003) suggested two strategies to control the common method biases: (1) procedural remedies, and (2) statistical remedies. Procedural techniques were applied before data collection. These techniques focused on minimizing the common method bias by
designing research procedures. The second type of control techniques were the statistical remedies, which were applied after data collection and at the data analysis stage.

In order to control and eliminate common method bias, both procedural and statistical remedies were employed in this study. First, respondents were informed that there is no preferred answer in this questionnaire and that their anonymity would be protected. Second, this survey utilized various types of measurement scales. Third, a statistical technique, Harman’s single-factor test, was used to address the issues of common method bias. The results of Harman’s single-factor test showed that the total variance of a single factor was not in excess of 50%. Thus, common method bias did not affect the data of the main study.

Screening Questions and Informed Consent

At the beginning of the online questionnaire, two screening questions were asked to filter out unqualified respondents. The first screening question was designed to exclude respondents who did not follow any SMI. The purpose of second screening question aimed to screen out respondents who were never exposed to any post in which an SMI endorsed an event. The survey would be terminated if “no” was selected for either of the first two questions.

An informed consent was presented after screening questions. It contained a description of the research including the purpose of this study, the expected duration of respondents’ participation, and the procedures to be followed. The informed consent also included a description of any foreseeable risks and benefits to the respondents. By providing this information, the informed consent enabled an individual to voluntarily decide whether or
not to participate in the study. Lastly, a question was provided to confirm that participants were older than 18 years of age. If they were younger, the survey was terminated.

**Attention Check**

At the beginning of the second part of the questionnaire, a simple warning was presented to all respondents. The warning read: “We check responses carefully in order to make sure that people have read the instructions for each question and responded carefully. We will only accept participants who clearly demonstrate that they have read and understood the survey. Again, there will be some very simple questions in what follows that test whether you are reading the instructions. If you get these wrong, you will not be eligible for participation.”

Moreover, an attention check was asked at the middle of the survey. For that question, respondents were asked to choose “other” as the correct answer for the question, and they had to fill in “survey” in the textbox next to the choice. If either the option “other” was not selected or the text of “survey” was not properly input, the survey would be terminated.

**Attitude Toward SMI**

Before rating any items, respondents were required to recall a particular social media post in which a social media influencer endorsed an event. They were also asked to describe this situation, what they read, how they felt, and recall the names of the social media influencer and the event.

The measurement instrument of followers’ prior attitude toward the SMI was adopted from the study of Fleck et al. (2012). It was a four-item, seven-point scale, including “I like
this social media influencer”; “I appreciate this social media influencer”; “I am favorable to this social media influencer”; “This social media influencer is somebody I like.” The statement “Please check the number that best describes your feelings toward this social media influencer” was given as an instruction.

**Attitude Toward the Social Media Post**

The measurement scale of attitude toward the social media post was a seven-point semantic differential scale adopted from Mitchell and Olson’s (1981) study. Four items including “good/bad,” “likeable/not likeable,” “irritating/not irritating,” and “interesting/not interesting” were used to assess follower’s attitude toward the social media post. The statement “Please check the number that best describes your feelings about this social media post” was given as an instruction.

**Attitude Toward the Event**

Followers’ attitude toward event was measured based on a four-item, seven-point scale including “I think visiting this event is a positive behavior,” “I think visiting this event is a valuable behavior,” “I think visiting this event is a beneficial behavior,” and “I think visiting this event is a necessary behavior.” The measurement items for attitude toward the event were adopted from the study of Song, Lee, Kang, and Boo (2012). The statement “Please check the number that best describes your feelings toward this event” was given as an instruction.
Pass-on Behavioral Intention

The measurement of followers’ pass-on behavioral intention included four items: “I will consider passing on this social media post to someone I know,” “I think this social media post is worth sharing with others,” “I will recommend this social media post to others,” “I will share this social media post to my friends through Internet.” These items were adopted from work of Hsieh, Hsiehb, and Tang (2012) and Chu (2011). Respondents were required to rate these items on a seven-point scale. The statement “Please check the number that best describes your pass-on behavioral intention toward this social media post” was given as an instruction.

Event Participation Intention

Social media followers’ event participation intention was assessed by a three item, seven-point scale, which was adopted from Lee et al. (2012). The three items were “I will frequently attend events I learn about from a social media influencer in the future,” “I am most likely to go to this event after having seen the event posted by a social media influencer,” and “The post of social media influencer solidified my decision to go to this event.” The statement “Please check the number that best describes your participation intention toward this event” was given as an instruction.

Congruence Measures

This study intended to investigate three pairs of congruence effects. In order to avoid the methodological flaw in using different scales, a scale that can be used to measure SMI, event, and follower was employed, followed by the calculation of congruence score.
Previous research suggested that a product or brand has its own personality just like human (Aaker, 1997; Govers & Schoormans, 2005) and can be described by personality traits using adjectives (Berry, 1988). Therefore, early studies not only used standardized human-like characteristics to evaluate the personality of products and brands, but also developed product/brand personality scales on the basis of human personality scales (e.g., Aaker, 1997; Kassarjian, 1971; Malhotra, 1988; Mugge, Govers, & Schoormans, 2009; Sirgy, 1982). Since events are the products planned and organized by event organizers, human personality characteristics also can be applied to depict events such as sporting events (Lee & Cho, 2007) and cultural festivals (d'Astous, Colbert, & d'Astous, 2006).

On the other hand, the scale developed by Aaker (1997) was the most widely used measurement instrument in assessing brand and product personalities. Moreover, extant research demonstrated the validity and reliability of using this construct (Pervin & John, 1999). Therefore, Aaker’s scale (Aaker, 1997) was selected to measure the SMI, event, and follower personalities. The original scale of Aaker (1997) contained 42 personality trait items. In order to keep respondents’ attention, this study employed the short form of Aaker’s (1997) scale, which included the 15 most salient items that Aaker (1997) identified (see Figure 6). This brief version of Aaker’s (1997) personality scale was used by numerous prior research (e.g., Albert, Ambroise, Valette-Florence, 2017; Batra, Lenk, & Wedel, 2010). Respondents were required to rate these personality items on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).
At the second step, the congruence score was calculated by applying squared Euclidean distance model. This approach was in line with previous studies in operating the congruence calculation (Pradhan et al., 2016; Sirgy & Danes, 1982). The squared Euclidean distance models used for calculation of congruence scores among SMI, event, and follower were shown below. According to these formulas, the lower the attained score was, the higher level of congruence between the two elements.

SMI-event congruence:

\[ \sum_{i=1}^{n} (S_{ij} - E_{ij})^2 \]

Event-follower congruence:

\[ \sum_{i=1}^{n} (E_{ij} - F_{ij})^2 \]

SMI-follower congruence:

\[ \sum_{i=1}^{n} (S_{ij} - F_{ij})^2 \]

For these formulas, \( S_{ij} \) represents the ith SMI personality item as rated by the jth respondent; \( E_{ij} \) represents the ith event personality item as rated by the jth respondent; \( F_{ij} \) represents the ith follower personality item as rated by the jth respondent.
Figure 6. Congruence measurement model.

Demographics

Demographic questions were placed at the last section of the questionnaire. The answers of demographic questions help researchers have a better understanding about the characteristics of the sample population. The questions included age, gender, ethnicity, income level, education level, and frequency of social media use.
Measurement Refinement

Measurement scales in this study, including attitude toward SMI, attitude toward the event, attitude toward the social media post, pass-on behavioral intention, and event participation intention, were adopted from previous literature and modified to fit the context of this study. In order to validate the measurement scales of this study, the adopted items were first reviewed by several scholars in the same academic area to check the content validity of the measurement scales. Before they started to review the scales, an explanation of this study and its purpose were given. Then, a thorough review of all measurement scales was required. Based on their comments and feedback, the measurement item wording was modified to improve the understandability and clarity.

At the second step, a pre-test was launched at Qualtrics.com. The purpose of this pilot study was to check the face validity and reliability of the measurement items as well as the question flow and wording of the survey before the final data collection. The results of the pre-test are presented in Chapter 4. The wording and flow of all question items were further refined when any problem was found in the pre-test.

Data Collection

The data of the main study were collected through an online survey targeting social media followers who were recently exposed to at least one social media post in which an SMI endorsed an event. The final survey was launched at Qualtrics.com on April 23, 2018.

As discussed above, unqualified respondents were filtered out by the screening and attention check questions. In addition, respondents were excluded if they used less than 1/3 of
the median survey time to finish the entire questionnaire or if any two respondents had identical IP address. Finally, the straight liners, who clicked the same answer for each option in a matrix question, were screened out as well.

**Data Analysis**

The analysis used in this study consists of two major stages: (1) data screening and preparation, and (2) hypotheses testing. The results of hypotheses testing are presented in Chapter 4.

**Data Screening and Preparation**

The procedure of data screening included three steps. It was performed by SPSS 24.0. The first step was to identify missing data. Since the “force response” function of Qualtrics online survey was enabled, respondents could not skip any question in the survey. The collected data did not contain any missing value.

At the second step, outliers were checked. Outliers are “observations with a unique combination of characteristics identifiable as distinctly different from the other observations” (Hair et al., 2010, p. 64) and can affect results by pulling the mean away from the median. Hair et al. (2010) summarized four causes of outlier occurrence: (1) a mistake in data entry or coding; (2) an unordinary event occurs and results in a unique observation; (3) an extraordinary observation that researchers cannot explain; (4) an observation is not unique on each of the variable, but the combination of values over the variable is extraordinary. Outliers need to be identified in both the univariate and the multivariate situation (Hair et al., 2010). In the univariate situation, descriptive and frequency analyses were applied to all
measurement items. At the multivariate level, Mahalanobis’ $D^2$ was employed to identify the outliers. In this study, no univariate and multivariate level outlier was detected.

In addition, Hair et al. (2010) indicated that assumptions of univariate normality and multivariate normality need to be tested prior to SEM. Therefore, screening the data for both univariate and multivariate normality is the last step of data purification. To examine the normal distribution shape of the data, the Normal P-P Plot was used. An eye inspection of the Normal P-P Plots of each measurement item showed that the points lay in a reasonably straight line with no major deviations from normality, which indicated that the assumption of univariate normality was met. The critical ratio (c.r.) of multivariate normality was less than 5. Therefore, the assumption of multivariate normality was met (Bentler, 2005).

**Hypotheses Testing**

The first six hypotheses were tested by employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM is “a family of statistical models that seek to explain the relationships among multiple variables” (Hair et al., 2010, p. 616). It can be perceived as a combination of factor analysis and regression or path analysis (Hair et al., 2010; Hox & Bechger, 1998). Different from other statistical methods such as factor analysis, discriminate analysis, and multiple regression, SEM can examine a series of dependent relationships at the same time (Hair et al., 2010). It enables scholars to test both measurement properties and theoretical relationships by one technique (Hox & Bechger, 1998). Therefore, it is widely employed in the social and behavioral research.
Hox and Bechger (1998) indicated that there are two objectives to conduct SEM. The first purpose of running SEM is to get estimates of the parameters of the model, including factor loadings, variances, covariance of the factor, and residual error variances of the observed variables. Second, it aims to evaluate the fit of the model. In other words, the results of SEM provide the evidence whether the model offers a good fit to the data. Therefore, the statistical analysis of this study comprised two main stages: the measurement model and the structural model.

Measurement model specifies “the rules of correspondence between measured and latent variables” (Hair et al., 2010, p. 618). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement model. By using CFA, researchers were able to compare the theoretical measurement against the reality model (Hair et al., 2010) and assess the construct validity. Construct validity is conceptualized as “the extent to which a set of measured items actually reflects the theoretical latent construct those items are designed to measure” (Hair et al., 2010, p. 686). The statistical values obtained from CFA, such as factor loadings, the average variance extracted (AVE), and construct reliability, were used to evaluate the construct validity of the measurement model of this study.

If the results of CFA indicated the fit of each construct was acceptable, overall goodness-of-fit (GOF) was examined. The incremental fit index includes comparative fit index (CFI), normative fit index (NFI), goodness-of-fit Index (GFI), and adjusted the goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), etc. The badness of fit index contains Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) and
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), etc. Table 1 illustrates the thresholds for determining the model fit.

Table 1

*Thresholds of Fit Indices*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fit index</th>
<th>Acceptable Threshold Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square/df</td>
<td>&lt;3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI)</td>
<td>&gt; .90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted Goodness-of-fit Index (AGFI)</td>
<td>&gt; .90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative Fit Index (CFI)</td>
<td>&gt; .90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative fit index (NFI)</td>
<td>&gt; .90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)</td>
<td>&gt; .90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increment Fit Index (IFI)</td>
<td>&gt; .90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Fit Index (RFI)</td>
<td>&gt; .90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)</td>
<td>&lt; .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)</td>
<td>&lt; .08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Adapted from Hair et al. (2010).

Once the measurement model was satisfactory, the next step of data analysis was to test the structural model, which refers to “a set of one or more dependence relationships linking the hypothesized model’s constructs” (Hair et al., 2010, p. 708). The structural model of this study (without moderators) was tested through SEM. At this step, SEM analysis concentrated on testing (1) the structure model fit using the same fit indices as the
measurement model, and (2) the statistical significance and direction of the path coefficient of each hypothesized dependence relationship among attitude toward SMI, attitude toward the social media post, attitude toward the event, followers’ pass-on behavioral intention, and followers’ event participation intention. AMOS 23.0 was used to test both measurement model and structural model.

Finally, the effect of three moderator variables was tested in the research model. This study intended to test three moderators: SMI-event congruence, event-follower congruence, and SMI-follower congruence. These three moderators were tested one at a time. Therefore, a moderation test was performed three times to examine the effects of all three moderators. The objective of the moderation test was to measure the causal effect of the independent variable (attitude toward SMI) on the dependent variable (attitude toward the event) for a different level of three moderators (SMI-event congruence, event-follower congruence, SMI-follower congruence). The regression coefficient of the interaction effect between independent variable and moderator was calculated. If it is significant, the moderating effect exists. The moderation tests were conducted by employing the PROCESS Macro V3 for SPSS Statistics 24 developed by Hayes (2017).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis. First, the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) results and construct reliabilities of pre-test are reported. Second, demographic characteristics of the respondents are provided. The third section discusses
Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results to assess the measurement model. The fourth section tests the structural model and presents the results of the hypothesis tests. The results of moderating effects of three pair congruences are reported in the last section.

**Pre-test**

A pre-test was launched at Qualtrics.com. The primary purpose of the pre-test is to assess validity and reliability of measurement scales used in this study. In this section, measurement constructs, including attitude toward SMI, attitude toward the event, attitude toward the social media post, pass-on behavioral intention, and event participation intention were analyzed by an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with a principle component analysis (PCA).

The analysis first performed the Kaise-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s test of sphericity to ensure the appropriateness of factor analysis. The measure of sampling adequacy is measured by using the KMO statistics. The KMO predicts whether data are likely to factor well based on correlation and partial correlation. The KMO also compares the magnitude of observed correlation coefficients to partial correlation coefficient. According to Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2006), KMO scores of more than .90 are considered as marvelous, >0.80 as meritorious, >0.70 as middling, >0.60 as mediocre, >0.50 as miserable, and scores less than 0.50 as unacceptable. A statistically significant Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity \( (p < .05) \) indicates that sufficient correlations exist among the variables. Moreover, each construct evaluated by EFA needs to be unidimensional, and each measurement item loads only on one factor. The measurement item was removed if
it had a factor loading cut off value of lower than 0.40 (Hair et al., 2010). The Cronbach’s alpha value was employed to examine the reliability of each construct. According to Nunnally (1978), the Cronbach’s alpha value of .70 and higher indicates acceptable internal consistency.

**Pre-test Sample**

A total of 150 completed surveys were collected via Qualtrics. The results of this pre-test analysis were employed to refine the initial measurement items and develop the final online questionnaire. As for gender and age, 50% of respondents were male, and the other 50% were female. Fifty-four percent were younger than 35. With regard to ethnicity, 65.3% of the respondents were White or Caucasian; 14% were Black or African-American; 10.7% Hispanic or Latino; and 6.7% Asian and Pacific Islander. In term of education level, 32% respondents were with a high school degree, 48.7% had either a two- or four-year college degree, and 13.3% had a master’s, doctorate, or professional degree. 53.9% of the respondents indicated an annual personal income of $50,000 or more. In addition, 88% of the respondents reported that they were frequent social media users.
Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of Pre-test Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and older</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to disclose</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/White</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>65.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American or American Indian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to disclose</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than High school</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-year college degree (Associate)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year college degree (B.S., B.A.)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s, Doctorate, Professional degree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $29,999</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 - $39,999</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 - $59,999</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 - $69,999</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,000 - $79,999</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 - $89,999</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90,000 - $99,999</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 - $149,999</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000 or above</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Results of the Pre-test**

**Attitude Toward SMI.** The attitude toward SMI test was designed with four indicators. Both the KMO measure of sampling adequacy test (0.86) and the Bartlett’s test of sphericity \( p < 0.0001 \) indicated that the use of PCA was appropriate. PCA with Varimax rotation was performed. The results showed that all four indicators loaded on one dimension (Table 3). This single dimensional factor explained 87.67% of the total variance. The Cronbach’s alpha value for this was 0.95.

**Table 3**

*Principle Component Analysis of Attitude Toward SMI*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like this social media influencer</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I appreciate this social media influencer</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am favorable to this social media influencer</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This social media influencer is somebody I like</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This social media influencer is somebody I like</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue</td>
<td>3.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance explained (%)</td>
<td>87.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy = 0.86; Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity = 628.49 (6 df, \( p < 0.0001 \)).

**Attitude Toward the Social Media Post.** Attitude toward the social media post was initially comprised of four measurement items. The result of first PCA showed that items loaded well, except for the third item “Not irritating/Irritating.” Therefore, this item was removed from the second PCA analysis. After dropping this item, all remaining items loaded
on one dimension. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy test was 0.72, and the Bartlett’s test of sphericity was $p < 0.0001$, indicating adequate use of principle component factor analysis (PCA). The results of PCA with varimax rotation showed that only one dimension was extracted. This unidimensional factor explained 85.39% variance in the construct. The PCA results of the attitude toward the social media post construct is presented in Table 4. The reliability for this construct (Cronbach’s alpha) was 0.91.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bad/Good</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not likeable/Likeable</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not interesting/Interesting</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>2.56</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variance explained (%)</td>
<td>85.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy = 0.72; Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity = 355.60 (3 df, $p < 0.0001$).*

**Attitude Toward the Event.** Four items were designed to measure followers’ attitude toward the event. Both KMO (0.82) and Bartlett’s test of sphericity ($p < 0.0001$) indicated that the use of factor analysis was appropriate. By conducting PCA with varimax rotation, one dimension was extracted, which explained 77.41% of the total variance. Table 5 shows the detailed results of PCA of attitude toward the event. The Cronbach’s alpha value of this unidimensional factor was 0.90, which implied an acceptable reliability.
Table 5

Principle Component Analysis of Attitude Toward the Event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Toward the Event</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think visiting this event is a positive behavior</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think visiting this event is a valuable behavior</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think visiting this event is a beneficial behavior</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think visiting this event is a necessary behavior</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Results
- Eigenvalue | 3.10
- Variance explained (%) | 77.41
- Cronbach’s alpha | 0.94

Note. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy = 0.82; Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity = 413.56 (6 df, $p < 0.0001$).

Pass-on Behavioral Intention. Four items were used to measure social media followers’ pass-on behavioral intention. The results firstly showed that the KMO measure of sampling adequacy test is 0.85 and the Bartlett’s test of sphericity is $p < 0.0001$, which implied that data were acceptable for factor analysis. Moreover, the PCA with Varimax rotation extracted one factor, which explained 83.85 % of the total variance of the scale (Table 6). The Cronbach’s alpha value for this construct was 0.94.
Table 6

*Principle Component Analysis of Pass-on Behavioral Intention*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pass-on Behavioral Intention</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will consider passing on this social media post to someone I know</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think this social media post is worth sharing with others</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will recommend this social media post to others</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will share this social media post to my friends through Internet</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall Results**
- Eigenvalue: 3.35
- Variance explained (%): 83.85
- Cronbach’s alpha: 0.94

*Note*. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy = 0.85; Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity = 522.78 (6 df, \( p < 0.0001 \)).

**Event Participation Intention.** A similar procedure was performed to assess three measurement items of social media followers’ event participation intention. Both KMO (0.76) and Bartlett’s test of sphericity (\( p < 0.001 \)) indicated adequate use of factor analysis. The results of PCA with varimax rotation showed unidimensionality of the construct. Thus, no item was excluded in this construct. The single factor explained 85.65% of the total variance. The Cronbach’s alpha value was 0.94.
Table 7

Principle Component Analysis of Event Participation Intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will frequently attend events I learn about from a social media</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>influencer in the future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am most likely to go to this event after having seen the event</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>posted by a social media influencer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The post of social media influencer solidified my decision to go to</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>this event</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance explained (%)</td>
<td>85.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronbach’s alpha</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy = 0.76; Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity = 309.69 (3 df, $p < 0.0001$).

**Respondent Characteristics**

A total of 450 questionnaires via Qualtrics. After data preparation and screening, the final sample for further data analysis was 335. Table 8 exhibits the demographic profile of respondents. With regard to gender, 46% of the respondents were male and 54% female.

With regard to age, approximately 46% were younger than 34. As for ethnicity, 77% of the respondents were White or Caucasian. In term of education levels, 31.3% respondents were high school graduates, 52.8% had either a two- or four-year college degree, and 13.4% of the respondents had a master’s, doctorate, or professional degrees. 48.5% of the respondents indicated an annual personal income of $50,000 or more. In addition, 87.1% of the respondents reported they are frequent social media users.
### Demographic Characteristics of Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and older</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/White</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American or American Indian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than High school</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-year college degree (Associate)</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-year college degree (B.S., B.A.)</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s, Doctorate, Professional degree</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $29,999</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 - $39,999</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 - $59,999</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 - $69,999</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,000 - $79,999</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 - $89,999</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90,000 - $99,999</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 - $149,999</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000 or above</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Measurement Model

Prior to the hypotheses testing, the measurement model was tested by using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The measurement model contains five latent constructs (attitude toward SMI, attitude toward the social media post, attitude toward the event, pass-on behavioral intention, and event participation intention) and 18 observed variables. The overall fit of the measurement model was good, $\chi^2 (125) = 329.035$, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.632$, GFI = 0.901, AGFI = 0.864, SRMR = 0.0448, NFI = 0.950, CFI = 0.969, RMSEA = 0.070 (90% CI: 0.061 - 0.079). Table 9 depicts the results of CFA, including standardized regression weights, standardized error, and t value.

As shown in Table 10, the composite reliabilities in the measurement model ranged from 0.910 to 0.955, above the threshold value of 0.7 suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). This implied the measurement constructs were internally consistent. The averaged variance extracted (AVE) values of each construct were used to examine construct validity. AVE values of the measurement model ranged from 0.741 to 0.840 (Table 10), over the minimum criterion recommended by Bagozzi and Yi (1988). Therefore, convergent validity was met. In the measurement model, all standardized regression weights were over 0.5 and statistically significant (Table 9), which also established construct validity. As displayed in Table 10, discriminant validity was demonstrated because AVE values for each construct were higher than the squared correlation coefficient between a pair of constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). To sum it up, construct validity and reliability of the measurement model were met.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude toward SMI (ASMI)</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>( t )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASMI 1: I like this social media influencer</td>
<td>0.922</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASMI 2: I appreciate this social media influencer</td>
<td>0.935</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>30.888***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASMI 3: I am favorable to this social media influencer</td>
<td>0.911</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>28.509***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASMI 4: This social media influencer is somebody I like</td>
<td>0.898</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>27.312***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude toward the social media post (ASMP)</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>( t )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASMP 1: Good/bad</td>
<td>0.913</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASMP 2: Likeable/not likeable</td>
<td>0.945</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>27.984***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASMP 3: Interesting/not interesting</td>
<td>0.771</td>
<td>0.046</td>
<td>18.616***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude toward the event (AE)</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>( t )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AE 1: I think visiting this event is a positive behavior</td>
<td>0.888</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE 2: I think visiting this event is a valuable behavior</td>
<td>0.931</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>26.314***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE 3: I think visiting this event is a beneficial behavior</td>
<td>0.898</td>
<td>0.045</td>
<td>24.325***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE 4: I think visiting this event is a necessary behavior</td>
<td>0.708</td>
<td>0.073</td>
<td>15.697***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pass-on behavioral intention (PBI)</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>( t )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PBI 1: I will consider passing on this social media post to someone I know</td>
<td>0.886</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBI 2: I think this social media post is worth sharing with others</td>
<td>0.911</td>
<td>0.037</td>
<td>25.529***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBI 3: I will recommend this social media post to others</td>
<td>0.952</td>
<td>0.036</td>
<td>28.482***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBI 4: I will share this social media post to my friends through Internet</td>
<td>0.869</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>22.953***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Participation Intention (EPI)</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>( t )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPI 1: I will frequently attend events I learn about from a social media influencer in the future</td>
<td>0.893</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPI 2: I am most likely to go to this event after having seen the event posted by a social media influencer</td>
<td>0.932</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>26.546***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPI 3: The post of social media influencer solidified my decision</td>
<td>0.896</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>24.418***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: ***p < 0.001, β = estimates of standardized regression weights, S.E. = standardized error, \( t \) = t value.*
Table 10

Correlations of Measurement Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ASMI</th>
<th>ASMP</th>
<th>AE</th>
<th>PBI</th>
<th>EPI</th>
<th>CR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASMI</td>
<td>0.840</td>
<td>0.501</td>
<td>0.442</td>
<td>0.326</td>
<td>0.257</td>
<td>0.955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASMP</td>
<td>0.708</td>
<td>0.774</td>
<td>0.413</td>
<td>0.460</td>
<td>0.359</td>
<td>0.910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE</td>
<td>0.665</td>
<td>0.643</td>
<td>0.741</td>
<td>0.477</td>
<td>0.464</td>
<td>0.919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBI</td>
<td>0.571</td>
<td>0.678</td>
<td>0.691</td>
<td>0.819</td>
<td>0.624</td>
<td>0.948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPI</td>
<td>0.507</td>
<td>0.599</td>
<td>0.681</td>
<td>0.790</td>
<td>0.823</td>
<td>0.933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* All correlation coefficients were significant (*p* < 0.001), ASMI = attitude toward SMI, ASMP = attitude toward the social media post, AE = attitude toward the event, PBI = pass-on behavioral intention, EPI = event participation intention, CR = composite reliability.

a. AVE values are along the diagonal.
b. Correlations between constructs are below the diagonal.
c. Squared correlation coefficients between constructs are above the diagonal.

The Structural Model

The primary objective of this dissertation was to test an integrated framework that investigates the effect attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event and behavioral intentions. As shown in Figure 7, this hypothesized structural model includes one exogenous construct (attitude toward SMI) and four endogenous constructs (attitude toward the social media post, attitude toward the event, pass-on behavioral intention, and event participation intention). Eighteen observed indicators were employed to measure these constructs.
Figure 7. Structural model.
Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to examine the hypothesized model. The goodness-of-fit (GOF) indices assessed how well this structure model fits into the data. The GOF indices of initial structure model indicated a marginal fit to the data, $\chi^2 (128) = 417.303, p < 0.001$, $\chi^2/df = 3.260$, GFI = 0.871, AGFI = 0.828, SRMR = 0.0684, NFI = 0.937, CFI = 0.955, RMSEA = 0.082 (90% CI: 0.074 - 0.091). The results of SEM analysis of initial structural model are presented in Figure 8.

![Figure 8](image)

**Figure 8.** Results of the initial structure model.

*Note.*** $p < 0.001$

Modification indices were employed to improve the model fit of the structural model. According to the AMOS output (modification indices) and theoretical rationale from the literature, the initial structural model was modified by adding an additional path from event participation intention to pass-on behavioral intention. Two motivations of pass-on behavioral intention can explain the rationale of this additional path: self-expression and life documenting (Huang, Shen, Lin, & Chang, 2007). Individuals with self-expression
motivation tend to express their interests, feelings, values, beliefs, and self-concepts through their behaviors. As a result, by passing on the post regarding the events in which they intend to participate, individuals can express their interests and reinforce their identities in the virtual community (Zappen, 2005). For individuals with life documenting motivation, they are motivated to record important moments of their lives on social media platforms (Huang et al., 2007). Those events, which people have a higher tendency to attend, are more important to them. Therefore, people are more likely to forward an event message when they have a higher intention to attend that event. Findings of previous studies also supported the impact of behavioral intention on pass-on behavioral intention. For example, Leung, Bai, and Stahura (2015) found that customers were more likely to spread positive word-of-mouth online, if they exhibited a greater tendency to book a hotel brand.

Figure 9. Results of the modified structural model.

Note. ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001
The modified structural model and its results are presented in Figure 9. The GOF indices of the modified structural model indicated a good fit to the data, $\chi^2 (124) = 294.357, p < .001, \frac{\chi^2}{df} = 2.374$, GFI = 0.911, AGFI = 0.877, SRMR = 0.043, NFI = 0.956, CFI = 0.974, RMSEA = 0.064 (90% CI: 0.055 - 0.074).

The results of the SEM revealed that attitude toward SMI explained 50.1% of the variance in attitude toward the social media post. Attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the social media post explained 49.6% of the total variance in attitude toward the event. Attitude toward SMI, attitude toward the social media post, and attitude toward the event explained 59.4% of the total variance in pass-on behavioral intention. Furthermore, 52.9% of the variance in event participation intention was predicted by attitude toward SMI, attitude toward the social media post, and attitude toward the event.

By analyzing this structural model, six hypotheses were tested (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, and H6). The path estimates were examined to determine whether to accept or reject each hypothesis.

H1 assumed that a more favorable prior attitude toward SMI leads to a more favorable attitude toward the event. The path estimates showed that attitude toward SMI had a significant positive direct effect on attitude toward the event ($\beta = 0.408, t = 6.001, p < 0.001$). Therefore, H1 was supported.

H2 proposed that attitude toward the social media post mediates the association between attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event. Specifically, a more positive attitude toward SMI will lead to a more positive attitude toward the social media post (H2a),
which, in turn, will result in a more favorable attitude toward the event (H2b). The results of SEM analysis revealed that the path from the construct of the attitude toward SMI and construct of attitude toward the social media post was significant and positive (β = 0.708, t = 14.393, p < 0.001), supporting H2a. The path from attitude toward the social media post to attitude toward the event was also significant and positive (β = 0.354, t = 5.247, p < 0.001). Thus, H2b was supported.

H3 postulated a positive relationship between attitude toward the social media post and social media followers’ pass-on behavioral intention. The findings of SEM analysis suggested that there was a positive and significant relationship between these two constructs (β = 0.238, t = 4.880, p < 0.001). Therefore, H3 was supported.

H4 stated that attitude toward the event is positively associated with followers’ pass-on behavioral intention. The path estimate from attitude toward the event to pass-on behavioral intention was positive and significant (β = 0.160, t = 2.817, p < 0.01). Therefore, H4 was supported.

H5 assumed that attitude toward the social media post positively affects social media followers’ event participation intention. The results of SEM analysis showed the path from the construct of the attitude toward the social media post and construct of event participation intention was positive and significant (β = 0.260, t = 4.413, p < 0.001), supporting H5.

H6 assumed that a more favorable attitude toward the event leads to a higher intention to participate in that event. The path estimate indicated that attitude toward the event had a significant positive direct effect on event participation intention (β = 0.544, t = 8.313, p <
Therefore, H6 was supported. Since all standardized regression coefficients of modified structural model were statistically significant, all six hypotheses were supported.

**Testing Moderation Effects**

In addition to the unconditional structural model, this dissertation further hypothesized that the direct relationship between attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event is moderated by three-pair congruences, including SMI-event congruence, event-follower congruence, and SMI-follower congruence. These three moderators were tested one at a time. Therefore, moderation test was repeated three times.

The moderation tests were conducting by employing the PROCESS Macro V3. The model used for testing moderators.

To test the proposed moderating effects, this study separately fits three moderation models (See Figures 10, 12, and 14) by using the PROCESS Marco model 5 (Hayes, 2013). Each model had attitude toward SMI as the independent variable, attitude toward the social media post as the mediator, attitude toward the event as the dependent variable, and one moderator. Pass-on behavioral intention and event participation intention were not included in this model based on two reasons. First, this study only hypothesized the moderating role of three congruences on the direct path of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event. Second, as depicted in the structural model (see Figure 5), behavioral intentions were directly affected by attitude toward the social media post and attitude toward the event. As a result, the presence of moderators cannot change the significance of paths toward pass-on behavioral intention and event participation intention.
A bias-corrected and accelerated 95% bootstrap confidence interval based on 5,000 resamples, was used to assess the statistical significance of the direct and indirect effects (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Also, conditional direct effects of the independent variable listed at values of the moderator (one standard deviation above or below the mean) were generated. Mathematically, all resulting paths, direct effects, and indirect effects were estimated simultaneously (Hayes, 2013). The estimates of effects are considered significant if the confidence interval does not contain zero. In order to run a moderation test by using PROCESS Macro, the average scores of each latent construct (attitude toward SMI, attitude toward the social media post, and attitude toward the event) were used in the moderation tests.

**The Moderating Role of SMI-event Congruence**

Hypothesis 7 proposed that SMI-event congruence moderates the direct relationship between the attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event (Figure 10). Specifically, this direct effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event would be stronger for individuals with a high level of SMI-event congruence (H7a). It would be weaker when the personality traits of SMI and event are not congruent (H7b).
To examine whether SMI-event congruence moderates direct effects of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event, a bias-corrected bootstrapping analysis was performed. Attitude toward the event was used as the dependent variable, attitude toward SMI as the independent variable, and SMI-event congruence as the moderator. In addition, attitude toward SMI also influences attitude toward the event indirectly through attitude toward the social media post. Regression results (Table 11) suggested a significant interaction effect ($\beta = -0.0049$, $t = -3.3287$, $p < 0.005$). Thus, the positive impact of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event is moderated by SMI-event congruence. H7 was supported.

*Figure 10. Moderated direct effect of SMI-event congruence.*
Table 11  

*Regression Results by SMI-event Congruence*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV=Attitude toward the social media post</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.9260</td>
<td>0.2209</td>
<td>13.2477</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward SMI</td>
<td>0.3675</td>
<td>0.0356</td>
<td>10.3172</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV=Attitude toward the event</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.2809</td>
<td>0.4125</td>
<td>0.6810</td>
<td>0.4963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward SMI</td>
<td>0.7086</td>
<td>0.0632</td>
<td>11.2182</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward social media post</td>
<td>0.2632</td>
<td>0.0678</td>
<td>3.8819</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMI-event congruence</td>
<td>0.0144</td>
<td>0.0091</td>
<td>1.5763</td>
<td>0.1159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward SMI × SMI-event congruence</td>
<td>-0.0049</td>
<td>.0015</td>
<td>-3.3287</td>
<td>0.0010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* With 5,000 bootstrap samples

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the measurement of congruence consisted of two steps. At the first step, the brief version of Aaker’s (1997) scale was employed to measure the personality traits of SMI, event, and follower separately. At the second step, the congruence score was calculated by applying squared Euclidean distance model. The squared Euclidean distance models used for calculation of congruence scores among SMI, event, and follower were shown below.

SMI-event congruence:

\[
\sum_{i=1}^{n} (S_{ij} - E_{ij})^2
\]
Event-follower congruence:

\[ \sum_{i=1}^{n} (E_{ij} - F_{ij})^2 \]

SMI-follower congruence:

\[ \sum_{i=1}^{n} (S_{ij} - F_{ij})^2 \]

For these formulas, \( S_{ij} \) represents the ith SMI personality item as rated by the jth respondent; \( E_{ij} \) represents the ith event personality item as rated by the jth respondent; \( F_{ij} \) represents the ith follower personality item as rated by the jth respondent.

According to these formulas, a higher attained score refers to a high degree of difference between two elements. Therefore, a high attained score represented a low level of congruence, while a low attained score represented a high level of congruence. The negative sign of the unstandardized coefficient of the interaction effect (attitude toward SMI × SMI-event congruence) indicated that this interaction positively influenced attitude toward the event.

The results suggested that SMI-event congruence altered the strength of the direct causal relationship between attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event. Specifically, among individuals with a low level of SMI-event congruence, the strength of the direct effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event was 0.4617 (SE = 0.0621) with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval of 0.3396 to 0.5834. For those with a high level of SMI-event congruence, the direct effect had a 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval of 0.5844 and 0.8329 with an estimate of 0.7086 (SE=0.0632). Because both confidence intervals did
not include zero, the direct effect was statistically significant among individuals with both low SMI-event congruence and high SMI-event congruence. However, the magnitude of the conditional direct effect increased as SMI-event congruence increased. Therefore, H7a and H7b were supported. Figure 11 displays the interactions.

![Graph showing interaction effects of attitude toward SMI and SMI-event congruence on attitude toward the event.](image)

*Figure 11. Interaction effects of attitude toward SMI and SMI-event congruence on attitude toward the event.*

**The Moderating Role of Event-follower Congruence**

In order to further explore the moderating effect of event-follower congruence (Figure 12), a similar test was repeated using PROCESS Macro Model 5. This study hypothesized that event-follower congruence moderates the effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event. In particular, this direct effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event would be stronger for individuals with a high level of event-follower congruence (H8a). It would be weaker when the personality traits of event and follower are incongruent (H8b).
To investigate the moderating role of event-follower congruence, a similar conditional process modeling with bias-corrected bootstrap was used. As Figure 12 shows, attitude toward SMI was used as the independent variable in this research model. It has both a direct and indirect effect on attitude toward the event. Additionally, event-follower congruence moderates the positive relationship between attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event. Table 12 presents the regression results by event-follower congruence, which suggested a statistically significant interaction between attitude toward SMI and event-follower congruence ($\beta = -0.0019, t = -3.2763, p < 0.005$). Therefore, H8 was supported.
**Table 12**

Regression Results by Event-follower Congruence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV=Attitude toward the social media post</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.9260</td>
<td>0.2209</td>
<td>13.2477</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward SMI</td>
<td>0.3675</td>
<td>0.0356</td>
<td>10.3172</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV=Attitude toward the event</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.0071</td>
<td>0.4202</td>
<td>2.3970</td>
<td>0.0171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward SMI</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.0628</td>
<td>10.3619</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward social media post</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.0698</td>
<td>2.9038</td>
<td>0.0039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event-follower congruence</td>
<td>-0.0009</td>
<td>0.0032</td>
<td>-0.2895</td>
<td>0.7723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward SMI × Event-follower congruence</td>
<td>-0.0019</td>
<td>0.0006</td>
<td>-3.2763</td>
<td>0.0012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* With 5,000 bootstrap samples

In particular, individuals with a low level of event-follower congruence, the strength of the direct effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event was 0.5111 (SE = 0.0520) with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval of 0.4088 to 0.6134. For individuals with a high level of event-follower congruence, the direct effect was 0.6507 (SE=0.0628) with a 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval of 0.5272 and 0.7742. Neither confidence intervals included zero, which revealed that the direct effects were statistically significant for both high event-follower congruence individuals and low event-follower congruence individuals. On the other hand, the magnitude of the conditional direct effect increased as event-follower congruence increased. This suggested that event-follower congruence altered the strength of the direct causal relationship between attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event.
Therefore, H8a and H8b were supported. Figure 13 shows the interaction effect of SMI × event-follower congruence.

![Interaction effects of attitude toward SMI and event-follower congruence on attitude toward the event.](image)

**Figure 13.** Interaction effects of attitude toward SMI and event-follower congruence on attitude toward the event.

### The Moderating Role of SMI-follower Congruence

In order to understand how the direct effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event at different levels of SMI follower congruence, the proposed moderation model was tested by repeating PROCESS Macro Model 5 (Figure 14). According to Hypothesis 9, this study assumed the moderating role of SMI-follower congruence. Specifically, the direct positive effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event would be stronger for individuals with a high level of SMI-follower congruence (H9a). It would be weaker when the personality traits of SMI and follower are incongruent (H9b).
An analogous moderation test was performed to study the moderating effect of SMI-follower congruence. In this moderation analysis, attitude toward the event was used as the dependent variable, attitude toward SMI as the independent variable, and SMI-follower congruence as the moderator. In addition, attitude toward SMI also indirectly affects attitude toward the event via attitude toward the social media post. Regression results were presented in Table 13, which indicated a significant interaction effect between attitude toward SMI and SMI-follower congruence (β = -0.0020, t = -2.5967, p < 0.01). Therefore, the moderating role of SMI-follower congruence and H9 were supported.

Figure 14. Moderated direct effect of SMI-follower congruence.
Table 13

*Regression Results by SMI-follower Congruence*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DV=Attitude toward the social media post</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.9260</td>
<td>0.2209</td>
<td>13.2477</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward SMI</td>
<td>0.3675</td>
<td>0.0356</td>
<td>10.3172</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DV=Attitude toward the event</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.8694</td>
<td>0.4595</td>
<td>1.8923</td>
<td>0.0593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward SMI</td>
<td>0.6410</td>
<td>0.0687</td>
<td>9.3351</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward social media post</td>
<td>0.2388</td>
<td>0.0726</td>
<td>3.2904</td>
<td>0.0011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMI-follower congruence</td>
<td>-0.0008</td>
<td>0.0044</td>
<td>-0.1744</td>
<td>0.8617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward SMI × SMI-follower congruence</td>
<td>-0.0020</td>
<td>0.0008</td>
<td>-2.5967</td>
<td>0.0098</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* With 5,000 bootstrap samples

To probe the interaction between attitude toward SMI and SMI-follower congruence, the strength of direct effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event was examined. Results of analysis indicated that individuals with a low level of SMI-follower congruence, the strength of the direct effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event was 0.5170 (SE = 0.0543) with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval of 0.4101 to 0.6238. For individuals with a high level of SMI-follower congruence, the direct effect was 0.6410 (SE=0.0687) with a 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval of 0.5059 and 0.7761. The direct effect of both groups was statistically significant since their confidence intervals did not include zero. The magnitude of the conditional direct effect increased as SMI-follower congruence increased. This revealed that SMI-follower congruence altered the strength of the direct causal relationship between attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event.
Therefore, both H9a and H9b were supported. The interaction effect of SMI × SMI-follower congruence was shown in Figure 15.

*Figure 15.* Interaction effects of attitude toward SMI and SMI-follower congruence on attitude toward the event.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

This chapter aims to summarize major findings and contributions of this dissertation. It begins with a summary of the results and findings. Based on these results and findings, both theoretical and practical implications are provided. In the last section, limitations of the current study and suggestions for a future study are discussed.

Overview of the Study Results

The study developed and empirically tested an integrated framework that explores influencing factors of SMI endorsement effectiveness in the context of the event. Specifically, it investigated (1) the direct and indirect effects of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event, (2) the effect of attitude toward the social media post and attitude toward the event on social media followers’ behavioral intentions, including pass-on behavioral intention and event participation intention, and (3) the moderating effects of three-pair congruences, including SMI-event congruence, event follower congruence, and SMI-follower congruence.

In this study, measurement scales, including attitude toward SMI, attitude toward the event, attitude toward the social media post, pass-on behavioral intention and event participation intention, were adopted from previous literature and modified to fit the context of this study. In order to further improve the validity and reliability of the measurement scales, a pre-test was conducted. Data collected in the pre-test were analyzed by EFA. According to the results of EFA, the third measurement item of attitude toward the social media post was excluded. All other measurement items remained to form the final measurement scales.
Data of the main study were collected via Qualtrics. The respondents of this study were the social media followers who were able to recall at least one social media post in which an SMI endorsed an event. After data purification, a total of 335 responses were employed for further analyses. First, CFA was performed. The results of CFA indicated that all constructs had satisfactory validity and reliability. Nine relationships were hypothesized based on previous literature. Next step of this study was to test the first six hypotheses (H1-H6) by using SEM. The hypothesized structural model fit the data well. The path estimates indicated that none of these six hypothesized relationships were rejected. The last step was to test the moderating roles of three-pair congruences, including SMI-event congruence, event-follower congruence, and SMI-follower congruence (H7-H9). The results of moderation tests indicated that all three-pair congruences moderated the direct effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event. The following section provides a more detailed discussion of major findings.

**The Effect on Attitude Toward the Event**

The congruity theory of attitude change indicated that attitude toward the source affects attitude toward the object (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955). When applying congruity theory in the context of the event SMI endorsement, this study hypothesized that social media followers’ attitude toward SMI positively influences his or her attitude toward the event (H1). This study also proposed that in addition to the direct effect, attitude toward SMI has an indirect effect on attitude toward the event via attitude toward the social media post (H2). The results of analyses supported both hypotheses. Specifically, attitude toward SMI had a
significant and positive direct effect on attitude toward the event ($\beta = 0.408$). Attitude toward SMI also positively affects attitude toward the social media post ($\beta = 0.708$), which, in turn, affects attitude toward the event ($\beta = 0.354$). These findings implied that social media followers will have a more favorable attitude toward the event when they obtain a more positive attitude toward SMI. These empirical findings support the congruity theory in the field of SMI marketing. Moreover, they are consistent with previous research in celebrity endorsement, which indicated that a celebrity’s image is associated with the product image. As a result, positive attitudes toward celebrities are transferred to the endorsed products directly (McCracken, 1989) and indirectly through attitude toward ads (MacKenzie et al., 1986).

**The Effect on Behavioral Intentions**

Social media followers’ behavioral intentions were tested as one of the SMI endorsement outcomes in this study. Specifically, this dissertation examined behavioral intentions in terms of pass-on behavioral intention and event participation intention. According to previous literature and the theory of planned behavior, the current study postulated that attitude toward the social media post positively influences social media followers’ pass-on behavioral intention (H3) and event participation intention (H5). Similarly, attitude toward the event was also hypothesized to have a positive influence on both pass-on behavioral intention (H4) and event participation intention (H6).

The results of the structural model indicated that the direct paths from attitude toward the social media post to pass-on behavioral intention ($\beta = 0.238$) and event participation
intention ($\beta = 0.260$) were positive and significant. In addition, attitude toward the event served as an antecedent of followers’ pass-on behavioral intention ($\beta = 0.160$) and event participation intention ($\beta = 0.544$). These findings suggested that if followers have a more favorable attitude toward the social media post and the event, they will have a higher intention to pass along this social media post and attend that event. These findings align with previous studies that identify attitudinal factor as one of the antecedents of an individual’s pass-on behavioral intention (Chu, 2011; Dobele et al., 2005; Phelps et al., 2004) and event participation intention (Lee et al., 2012). Therefore, in the context of event SMI endorsement, positive attitude toward the post and the endorsed event is beneficial. Followers tend to pass along the endorsement post and attend the endorsed event when they like the event or the social media post.

**The Moderated Effect of Congruences**

Three-pair congruences were tested as moderators between attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event. Theoretically supported by match-up hypothesis model in celebrity endorsement, the consistency and similarity between SMI and the event (SMI-event congruence) was assumed to moderate the direct effect of attitude toward SMI on attitude toward the event (H7). The results of moderation tests revealed that the direct effect of attitude toward SMI increased from 0.4617 to 0.7086 as the value of SMI-event congruence increased. Similar significant interaction effects were also found for event-follower congruence and SMI-follower congruence. Particularly, for event-follower congruence that is supported by self-congruity theory, the direct effect of attitude toward the SMI on attitude
toward the event increased from 0.5111 to 0.6507 when social media followers have a high degree of event-follower congruence. As for SMI-follower congruence, which is supported by the concept of vicarious self-perception, the direct effect of attitude toward the SMI on attitude toward the event increased to 0.6410 at a high level of SMI-follower congruence.

These findings are consistent with the main stream of existing studies, which suggested that congruence between two parties on certain attributes, such as demographic variables, perceived beliefs, and lifestyle, produce more favorable outcomes of persuasion and endorsement compared with incongruity. It is also interesting to note that several empirical studies drew an opposite conclusion (e.g., Dimofte, Forehand, & Deshpande, 2003; Lee & Schumann, 2004), which is not consistent with the findings of this dissertation. These studies argued that incongruent information can trigger people to a deliberate processing of input information (Lee & Schumann, 2004). In this case, people may respond more positively to incongruent information than congruent information. However, these studies emphasized that the moderate incongruent message, rather than the extreme incongruent message, would produce more favorable responses.

**Theoretical Implications**

This study provides theoretical contributions to the existing body of literature in several ways. First, it is one of the first studies that focuses on SMI endorsement in the context of event marketing. Marketing of events and physical products involves different strategies due to the dissimilarities in their characteristics. For instance, people can touch and feel the physical products because they are tangible in nature. However, since events are
intangible in nature before purchase, individuals can only experience it when events are taking place. Additionally, physical goods are durable and can be inventoried. In contrast, the production and consumption of events are simultaneous; they cannot be stored. As a result, marketing events is more difficult since event marketers need to smooth demand via promotion, pricing, and registration (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007). It also needs event marketers to build a good relationship with the potential attendees and gain their trust. Furthermore, event marketers are also recommended to use concrete metaphors and vivid images in SMI marketing activities, which can guide their potential attendees to make good choice (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007). However, existing studies devoted limited attention to investigating SMI endorsement in the event setting. Therefore, this dissertation fills a research gap in the event literature by revealing empirical evidence that explores the influencing factors of SMI endorsement effectiveness.

Furthermore, the findings of this study are expected to broaden the application of congruity theory by extending the congruity theory to the context of SMI endorsement. The model of congruity theory is considered the narrowest of the models because it was limited to situations accounting for attitude change resulting from rather specific and simple communication conditions (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996; Tannenbaum, 1968). As a result, congruity theory of attitude change has been applied to the context of persuasion, such as celebrity endorsement (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996). This dissertation demonstrates that congruity theory is not only valid for “offline” persuasion but also for “online” persuasion that is SMI endorsement.
This study also improved congruity theory by including the congruence effects that are ignored by congruity theory (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996). This dissertation developed an integrated model to explain social media followers’ attitude change and their behavioral intentions toward SMI endorsement in the event context. This model combines congruity theory, match-up hypothesis model, self-congruity theory, and vicarious self-perception together and applies them in the event SMI endorsement setting. Derived from these theories, concepts, and findings of existing research, this model postulates the relationships among followers’ prior attitude toward SMI, SMI-event congruence, event-follower congruence, SMI-follower congruence, social media followers’ attitude toward the social media post and attitude toward the event, and followers’ intention to pass on the social media post and intention to participate in the event. This integration provides a more comprehensive explanation of SMI endorsement in the event setting.

Another theoretical contribution is that all three pairs of congruence effects are included and tested in this study. As mentioned above, congruity theory of attitude change ignores the effect of congruence between any two elements of the attitude change model, including source-object congruence (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996), object-perceiver congruence, and source-perceiver congruence. In order to overcome this shortcoming of congruity theory, this study treated three congruence effects as moderators. The joint effects between attitude toward SMI and each of these congruences were also empirically tested. In the celebrity endorsement literature, several studies investigated the role of congruences (e.g., Choi & Rifon, 2012; Kamins & Gupta, 1994). However, most previous studies concentrated on testing the
effect of source-object congruence on the perceiver’s attitude and behaviors. The other two pairs of congruence effects (object-perceiver congruence and source-perceiver congruence) have received relatively limited attention. Even for studies that examined the overlooked congruences, the majority of them treated the congruence of source-object, object-perceiver, and source-perceiver separately (Pradhan et al., 2016). The current research studied the effects of all three pair of congruences in the event SMI endorsement setting, including SMI-event congruence, event-follower congruence, SMI-follower congruence, on followers’ attitude and behavioral intentions, thereby expanding the current literature on SMI endorsement.

**Practical Implications**

The present dissertation has several important contributions for event marketers. Findings of this study provide event marketers in-depth knowledge of SMI endorsement on social media and strategic insights on SMI selection.

First, this study showed that social media followers’ attitude toward SMI is a strong predictor of their attitude change and behavioral intentions toward the event. The positive relationship between attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event is significant at any value of the congruences. It indicates that followers’ attitude toward SMI is a strong predictor to determine the effectiveness of SMI endorsement. Therefore, when selecting SMI for endorsing an event, marketers should first use followers’ attitude toward SMI a key indicator.

However, attitude, as a cognitive response, is very abstract and relatively hard to observe directly (Stiff & Mongeau, 2016). Results of previous studies suggested event marketers use several indicators as references to understand followers’ attitude toward a
specific SMI. For example, the number of social media followers and the number of “likes” are strong predictors of attitude toward SMI and endorsement effectiveness (Hall-Phillips, Park, Chung, Anaza, & Rathod, 2015; Rutter, Roper, & Lettice, 2016). The larger these numbers are, the more positive attitude a follower has toward SMI. Previous studies found that followers’ attitude toward SMI also depends on the degree of openness that an SMI expresses in one’s own social media profile. An SMI is thought to be trustworthy and more favored by followers if he or she often shares private information (Brorsson & Plotnikova, 2017) and actively interacts with followers on the social media platform (Rutter et al., 2016). Additionally, event marketers should avoid selecting an SMI who endorses too many other brands because this may deteriorate his or her trustworthiness (Brorsson & Plotnikova, 2017).

Second, the findings of this study also discovered that attitude toward the social media post mediates the positive relationship between attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event. Therefore, a more favorable attitude toward the social media post can lead to a more effective SMI endorsement. Earlier research showed that the content and type of social media post, rather than a large number of messages, determine followers’ attitude toward the social media post (Rodriguez, Peterson, & Krishnan, 2012; Rutter et al., 2016). With regard to the content of the post, event marketers should cooperate with SMI closely. For example, event marketers could request an SMI to post a much more natural picture or text or to add an exclusive hashtag and linkage, making the post look like SMI’s personal recommendation about this event. In addition, event marketers and SMI can tell a story about the event to followers by developing a series of posts.
Although three-pair congruence effects do not fully moderate the positive path relationship between attitude toward SMI and attitude toward the event, they still can alter the strength of it. As shown in Chapter 4, the interaction effects between attitude toward SMI and one of the three-pair congruences were significant. The magnitude of the conditional effect increases as any of the three-pair congruences increases. Therefore, event marketers need to take into account of the perceived congruence effects among SMI, event, and follower to achieve a more effective outcome of SMI endorsement.

In order to enhance the level of SMI-event congruence, event marketers should choose an SMI who shares similar characteristics with the event. For example, event marketers are recommended to select a wine influencer to endorse a wine tasting event. It is also important to note that compared with event-follower congruence and SMI-follower congruence, SMI-event congruence has a stronger effect on attitude toward the event. Therefore, when considering congruence effects, event marketers should treat SMI-event congruence as the priority.

For some events, it may be hard to find an SMI with a large number of followers, and his or her background is very suitable to the event. Additionally, event-follower congruence revealed that people also can select an SMI based on whether his or her social media followers share a similar identity with the event. For instance, an event marketer plans to hire an SMI to endorse a luxury housing event on a social media platform, but selecting an SMI who not only specializes in the luxury real estate business but also has a large following is a difficult task. To avoid using too much time to figure out if one fits the event, the event
marketer can select an alternative SMI whose followers fit the event. For this example, the event marketer can hire an SMI who is a professional in the field of luxury wine. Apparently, this SMI is not congruent with the luxury housing event, but his or her audience is congruent to the event because the typical attendees for the luxury housing event are rich people, while many followers of a luxury wine SMI are wealthy as well.

As for SMI-follower congruence, selecting an SMI who shares similar personality traits with their potential attendees could improve SMI endorsement effectiveness. For example, asking a famous singer to endorse a music event is not cheap. As a result, instead of using a big budget to hire a celebrity to endorse an event, hiring several “ordinary” SMIs who share identities with its target attendees may generate similar outcomes. To sum it up, in order to select an appropriate SMI, event marketers must refer to characteristics of the event, the profile of social media followers, and personal attributes and characteristics of an SMI.

**Limitations and Future Research**

This dissertation has several limitations that affect the generalizability of results. Limitations of this study also provide scholars with opportunities for future research.

SMI endorsement in the event setting is a complex concept that needs further research. First, “event” is a very broad concept; it includes meetings, conventions, exhibitions, special events, gala dinners, etc. However, this study asked respondents to recall a particular social media post in which a social media influencer endorsed an event. It did not specify the type of event. The effect of attitude toward SMI and its joint effects with three-pair congruences are likely to differ for various types of events (e.g., industrial conferences vs. sports-themed or
recreational festivals). Among the respondents of this study, nearly half of them recalled Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival as the event. Therefore, it might be risky to generalize the results of this study to other types of event. For future studies, it would be interesting to examine SMI endorsement effectiveness in the context of a particular type of event. For example, future research can divide the data of this study into two sub-data sets (music festival and others) and compare the effects of SMI endorsement in the different event settings.

Second, the current study used behavioral intention as a proxy instead of followers’ real behavior as outcome variables. For further research, directly measuring the social media follower’s real behavioral change will generate more insights on SMI endorsement effectiveness. Third, although the questionnaire explicitly asked respondents to recall their prior attitude toward SMI, their response to this question might not be accurate because data were collected after they were exposed to the social media post. Therefore, future studies should collect followers’ attitude toward SMI before followers are exposed to the endorsement post. Fourth, the effects of other influencing factors on attitude toward the event and followers’ behavioral intentions was not examined in current study. For example, followers’ prior attitude toward the event (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955) and whether SMI’s endorsement is driven by external forces (Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007) may affect followers’ attitudes and behavioral intentions toward the event. Investigating the impacts of these variables may be interesting directions for the future research.
From a methodological perspective, congruence was calculated by applying squared Euclidean distance model. Future study can develop a formative measurement instrument for congruence as a second-order construct. Lastly, this study used a cross-sectional design, which means data were collected at a specific point in time. Since the predictive variables and outcome variables were tested simultaneously, the study did not treat time as a predictive factor. Without longitudinal data, it is not easy to establish a true causal and effect relationship. As a result, future research should consider a longitudinal approach to test SMI endorsement effectiveness.
APPENDIX A

Section 1:

1. Are you following any social media influencer? A social media influencer is a user who has a large following on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and Snapchat.
   - Yes
   - No

2. Can you recall at least one particular social media post in which a social media influencer endorsed an event? An event refers to an organized occasion such as a meeting, convention, exhibition, festival, special event, gala dinner and so on.
   - Yes
   - No

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to examine social media followers’ responses toward social media influencer endorsement. You are being asked to participate in the study because you have been exposed to at least one social media post in which a social media influencer endorsed an event in the past 6 months. If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will complete a survey in which you will view and evaluate the social media influencer and the event. No answer is preferred in this questionnaire. There may not be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. There are risks involved in all research studies. This study may include only minimal risks. You may feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions. You may choose not to answer any question and may also discontinue participation at any time. There may not be financial cost to you to participate in this study. The study will take 10 minutes of your time. You will receive compensation from your panel provider. Confidentiality, all information gathered in this study will be kept confidential. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for 3 years after completion of the study. After the storage time the information gathered will be deleted from the hard drive of the computer and all documentation will be shredded. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with UNLV. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study. I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age.

3. Click the box below to indicate your consent.
   - I agree to participate
   - I do not agree to participate
4. Are you over the age of 18?
   o Yes
   o No

Section 2:

5. We check responses carefully in order to make sure that people have read the instructions for each question and responded carefully. We will only accept participants who clearly demonstrate that they have read and understood the survey. Again, there will be some very simple questions in what follows that test whether you are reading the instructions. If you get these wrong, you will not be eligible for participation.” Please click “Yes” as the correct answer.
   a. Yes
   b. No

6. Please recall a particular social media post in which a social media influencer endorsed an event. Please describe your experience. For example, what social media post did you read and how did you feel.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

7. For the situation you have just recalled, please check the number that best describes your feelings toward the social media post.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<td>Bad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Likeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not likeable</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Irritating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not irritating</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interesting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not interesting</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Please check the number that best describes your pass-on behavioral intention toward this social media post.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will consider passing along this social media post to someone I know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think this social media post is worth sharing with others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will recommend this social media post to others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will share this social media post to my friends through Internet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. For the situation you have just recalled, who is the social media influencer?

___________________________________________________________________________

10. Please check the number that best describes your prior feelings toward this social media influencer before you read this social media post.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I like this social media influencer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I appreciate this social media influencer</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am favorable to this social media influencer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This social media influencer is somebody I like</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Listed below are some personality traits that might be associated with the social media influencer you just mentioned. Please indicate to what extent these personality traits accurately describe this social media influencer. Check the appropriate box for each personality trait.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Down-to-earth</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Honest</td>
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<td>Wholesome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imaginative</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up-to-date</td>
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<td>Reliable</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intelligent</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charming</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoorsy</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tough</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. For the situation you have just recalled, which event did the social media influencer mention in his or her post?

___________________________________________________________________________
13. Please check the number that best describes your feelings toward **this event**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think visiting this event is a positive behavior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think visiting this event is a valuable behavior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think visiting this event is a beneficial behavior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think visiting this event is a necessary behavior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. Please check the number that best describes your participation intention toward **this event**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will frequently attend events I learn about from a social media influencer in the future</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am most likely to go to this event after having seen the event posted by a social media influencer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The post of social media influencer solidified my decision to go to this event</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. This question is used to check your attention. Please click “Other” and fill in “survey” in the textbox next to the choice.

   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Other _____________
16. Listed below are some personality traits that might be associated with the event you have just recalled. We would like you to think of this event as if it were a person. Please indicate to what extent these personality traits accurately describe this event. Check the appropriate box for each personality trait.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Down-to-earth</td>
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<td>Honest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wholesome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daring</td>
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<td>Spirited</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imaginative</td>
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<td>Up-to-date</td>
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<td>Upper class</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
17. Please indicate to what extent these personality traits accurately describe yourself. Check the appropriate box for each personality trait.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 3:**

18. What is your gender?
   - Male
   - Female

19. What is your age?
   ___________
20. Please specify your ethnicity.
   - White or Caucasian
   - Hispanic or Latino
   - Black or African American
   - Native American or American Indian
   - Asian or Pacific Islander
   - Other

21. What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?
   - Less than high school
   - High school graduate
   - 2-year college degree (Associates)
   - 4-year college degree (B.S., B.A.)
   - Master's, Doctorate, Professional degree

22. What is your household income before tax?
   - Less than $10,000
   - $10,000 - $19,999
   - $20,000 - $29,999
   - $30,000 - $39,999
   - $40,000 - $49,999
   - $50,000 - $59,999
   - $60,000 - $69,999
   - $70,000 - $79,999
   - $80,000 - $89,999
   - $90,000 - $99,999
   - $100,000 - $149,999
   - More than $150,000

23. How often do you use social media?
   - Always
   - Very often
   - Fairly often
   - Sometimes
   - Almost never
   - Never
24. Please share any of your thoughts and comments on the use of social media influencer in marketing.
UNLV Social/Behavioral IRB - Exempt Review
Exempt Notice

DATE: April 17, 2018
TO: Billy Bai
FROM: Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects

PROTOCOL TITLE: [1223363-1] Social Media Influencer Endorsement and Events: An Integrated Framework of Congruence

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
EXEMPT DATE: April 17, 2018
REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # 2

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this protocol. This memorandum is notification that the protocol referenced above has been reviewed as indicated in Federal regulatory statutes 45CFR46.101(b) and deemed exempt.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence with our records.

PLEASE NOTE:

Upon final determination of exempt status, the research team is responsible for conducting the research as stated in the exempt application reviewed by the ORI - HS and/or the IRB which shall include using the most recently submitted Informed Consent/Assent Forms (Information Sheet) and recruitment materials.

If your project involves paying research participants, it is recommended to contact Carisa Shaffer, ORI Program Coordinator at (702) 895-2794 to ensure compliance with the Policy for Incentives for Human Research Subjects.

Any changes to the application may cause this protocol to require a different level of IRB review. Should any changes need to be made, please submit a Modification Form. When the above-referenced protocol has been completed, please submit a Continuing Review/Progress Completion report to notify ORI - HS of its closure.

If you have questions, please contact the Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects at IRB@unlv.edu or call 702-895-2794. Please include your protocol title and IRBNet ID in all correspondence.

Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects
4505 Maryland Parkway. Box 451047. Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-1047
(702) 895-2794. FAX: (702) 895-0805. IRB@unlv.edu
REFERENCES


Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error: Algebra and statistics. *Journal of Marketing Research, 18*(3), 382-388.


CURRICULUM VITAE

Graduate College University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Jie Sun

Degrees
Bachelor of Science, Tourism Management (International Event Management), 2007
Shanghai University of International Business and Economics, Shanghai, China

Master of Science, Recreation and Leisure Studies, 2009
Florida State University, Tallahasee, FL

Publications


Dissertation Title
Social media influencer endorsement and events: An integrated framework of congruence.

Examination Committee
Chairperson, Billy Bai, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Choongbeom Choi, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Hyelin Kim, Ph.D.
Committee Member, Xi Yu Leung, Ph.D.
Graduate Faculty Representative, Michael Mejza, Ph.D.