HOW INFLUENCER-PRODUCT GENDER CONGRUENCY IMPACTS INFLUENCER'S ENDORSEMENT EFFECTIVENESS: A CROSS-NATIONAL COMPARISON BETWEEN DOUYIN AND TIKTOK USERS IN CHINA AND THE USA

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ABSTRACT

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This cross-cultural comparison study between China and the U.S. aimed to examine the short video-sharing social media platform, TikTok/Douyin, particularly its use in the two countries. Other than analyzing how people use the short video app platform and their influencer video use, the study further explored how cultural values influenced user behaviors on TikTok/Douyin. Using Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions as a theoretical framework, this study investigates the impact of cultural differences on the gender fit expectation and influencers' endorsement effectiveness (product attitude and purchase intention) between China and the U.S. An online survey was conducted in each country. In general, Chinese participants were more likely to be persuaded by influencers to make purchase decisions than US participants. Unexpectedly, Chinese participants claimed a higher individualism score and a lower power distance score than US participants, which contradicts with Hofstede's original cultural scores for each country. The findings supported that participants' gender fit expectations positively predicted influencers' endorsement effectiveness, and Chinese users were more influenced than the U.S. users. Besides, the influencer's expertise-product congruency and gender congruency impacted people's product attitudes and purchase intentions independently for the gendered product, and expertise congruency was less influential than gender congruency. The impact of influencers varies by consumers gender, influencers' gender, and consumers' age. In both countries, old users were more easily persuaded than young users. Male influencers more influenced the US TikTok users, both male and female. In China, female influencers were more persuasive than male influencers among male and female Douyin users. Therefore, marketing

practitioners should consider the demographic characteristics and user preferences of TikTok and Douyin for their marketing practices. In addition, the study confirmed that cultural values influenced users' TikTok/Douyin use in some conditions, especially their gender values. Hence marketers should consider consumers' gender expectations and gender influence as well. This is the first study to compare TikTok/Douyin use between the U.S. and China. The study enhances our understanding of Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. Furthermore, it demonstrates helpful and detailed information on the general platform use and how it is influenced by the cultural differences between the two countries.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION: OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

Influencer marketing has become a prominent way for marketers to achieve marketing goals. It refers to the collaboration between a brand and a social media influencer to achieve brand marketing (de Veirman et al., 2017). Comparing to traditional marketing communication strategies, such as TV advertising and celebrity endorsement, the collaboration between a social media influencer and a brand in influencer marketing is perceived by users to be more authentic, genuine, and credible because social media influencers are content creators, and they are native on social media (Ha & Yang, 2021). According to Statista research (2020), in the first quarter of 2019, the investment in Instagram influencer marketing in the United States and Canada achieved 265 million U.S. dollars, while the figure was only 163 million U.S. dollars in the first quarter of 2018. A Hootsuite (2021) report revealed that over two-thirds of US retailers utilized some forms of influencer marketing, and almost half of the US digital marketers spent at least 10% of their marketing communication budgets in influencer marketing. In addition, the influencer marketing industry has been seeing a stable growth even under the global impact of COVID. The market grew from $1.7 billion in 2016, to $9.7 billion in 2020, and is expected to expand to a $16.4 billion industry by the end of 2022 (Santora, 2022).

The Trend of Social Media Influencer and Influencer Marketing

In response to the popularity of social media, social media influencer marketing has been playing a more and more significant role in advertising. One of the reasons is that the vast number of social media users and the massive number of followers of popular influencers. As reported by Statista, as the most popular social media platform worldwide, Facebook currently has more than 2.6 billion monthly active users (Clement, 2020). Popular influencers such as the most-followed U.S. travel influencer on Instagram photographer Chris Burkard, as of June 2020,

his followers reached 3.6 million, while the most-followed U.S. food influencer on Instagram was Ree Drummond with approximately 3.4 million followers (Clement, 2020).

Another reason for the rise of influencer marketing is the increasing consumer avoidance of traditional forms of advertising. According to research by Pew Research Center (2020), the newspaper advertising revenue has dropped 42% in the second quarter of the year of 2020 comparing to the second quarter of the year of 2019. Meanwhile, young audiences are skeptical to traditional advertising as a one-way communication, and they are prone to the interactive social media advertising (Fertik, 2022). Past research suggested that consumers trusted other consumers more than trusting in advertisers and mass media, and also their purchase decisions were heavily influenced by reading the product review online (Gordon, 2017). Specifically, the Gen Z consumers, who have grown up with the Internet, have less interest in traditional celebrities than older generations. Hence, they are less impacted by television advertising than previous generations (InfluencerMarketingHub, 2020).

The self-generated content of products or companies is considered by consumers as more trustworthy than marketer/brand-generated content (Jin & Phua, 2014). Social media influencers are also more persuasive than traditional celebrities regarding their endorsement effectiveness because of their perceived credibility, relatability, and accessibility (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Torres et al., 2019). The effectiveness of influencer marketing is attributed to social media's features of interactivity and giving each user the equal opportunity to be content creators. Social media influencers are easy to relate to because as other social media users, they share their personal lives and interact with consumers directly (Schau & Gilly, 2003). Everyone can share the self-generated content and also reposts other users' opinions. Meanwhile, they can interact with each other's posts by liking, commenting, tagging or @mention other users.

Consumers' comments on brands or products are crucial for marketers. The positive comments about brands or products will enhance the brand image, increase consumer confidence on the brand and promote the sales of products (McLoughlin, 2016; Lee at al., 2020). However, consumers' negative comments will damage brand reputation and brand image and further reduce the profits of brands. Consumers' reviews or opinions about brands or products are called word-of-mouth (WOM). In the Internet age, consumers' posts about brands on social media or other product/service review sites facilitate electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication. According to Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004, p.39), eWOM refers to "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet." Therefore, the positive eWOM becomes a common goal for brands' social media marketing, and the social media influencer is a vital intermediary between brands and consumers as an influential source of word of mouth, which enhances consumers' positive or negative eWOM on social media.

Research Models on Social Media Influencer Research

Many models and theories can explain why social media influencers are important for brand promotion purposes. For instance, the meaning transfer model of McCracken (1989) suggests that consumers associate specific meanings with celebrities, and when celebrities endorse any brand or product, that meaning will be transferred from celebrities to brands or products. And finally, the meaning will be transferred to consumers through their purchase and consumption of the product (Torres et al., 2019). For example, Kobe Bryant endorsed Nike products. Bryant is famous for his legacy in basketball and his love and persistence for basketball. Also, he represented the Los Angeles Lakers. So, Nike utilized Kobe Bryant's positive image as a Basketball player as well as a sports celebrity to communicate with and

influence the consumer. Consumers associated Bryant's identities and values with Nike, and the association further influenced their purchase of Nike products. Therefore, consumers' purchase decision matches their personal identities and their perceived or ideal self-images.

The source credibility model explains three dimensions that contribute to the credibility of a source—physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise (Ohanian, 1990). Although it is not always the case that a credible source has to be physically attractive, prior studies suggest that endorsement effectiveness is usually linked with endorsers' physical attractiveness, especially when the products/brands are attractiveness-related (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016).

A credible endorser is crucial for consumers' trust in brands. Social media influencers are usually perceived as credible sources because they are not seen to be profits-driven (de Veirman, 2017). Instead, as content creators, they are seen as sharing their genuine thoughts about any product or social issue. Also, different from traditional celebrity endorsers, social media influencers are co-consumers similar to other social media users as their peers. Hence, they are believed to express authentic eWOM in their online communities.

In addition, the endorsement effectiveness of social influencers is explained by the parasocial relationship between a social media influencer and consumers. Parasocial relationship is a pseudo friendship between two parties and usually it is one-way, not mutual. Audiences build an intimate relationship with social media influencers by their one-way imagination, and the social media influencer can be unaware of it. Once the intimate relationship is formed, audiences can easily be persuaded by the social media influencer because this is a trusted relationship. Prior research suggests that the parasocial relationship can be built by the repeated exposure to the social media influencers' posts on social media (Chung & Cho, 2017).

Cross-cultural Studies in Social Media Influencer

The existing advertising literature has paid more attention to single-country studies rather than cross-country studies. Especially in the social media influencer literature, there is insufficient research focusing on cross-country comparison (Ha & Yang, 2021). A common approach in past cross-national advertising comparison is by applying Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Hofstede's cultural dimension theory has guided many studies to investigate cultural differences in many aspects for more than thirty decades. For example, Pergelova and Angulo-Ruiz's survey (2017) examined the advertising effectiveness in Peru and Canada by applying Hofstede's (1981) and Inglehart's (2000) cultural dimensions. Mathiyalakan et al. (2018) used Hofstede's cultural dimensions to explain how gender and culture impact the management of Facebook privacy setting and Facebook trust in Guam, where cultural differences exist domestically; and Shinnar et al. (2012) investigated individuals' perceptions of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intensions in China, the United States, and Belgium, within Hofstede's cultural dimensions and gender role framework. Hofstede proposed five dimensions in cultural comparison: masculinity/femininity, individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and long-term orientation. However, not every study compares all five dimensions across countries. Scholars can choose one or more appropriate dimensions to compare based on their research foci (Griffith & Rubera, 2014). Hofstede's cultural dimensions are important in the advertising area because cultural values influence consumers' purchase decisions. For example, in a collectivism-dominating country, individuals' decision-making depends on other individuals' behaviors or opinions in their groups. While in an individualism-dominating country, individuals prefer to make decisions based on their personal desires (Brewer & Venaik,

2011). Content analysis has been widely used in the cross-country comparison for TV and print media advertising using Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Cho et al., 1991; Matthes et al., 2016).

Some studies have applied the masculinity/femininity dimension in advertising. Gender value is a vital factor that decides how genders are portrayed in mainstream media advertising. Past studies found that the perceived gender difference is greater in a masculine country than in a feminine country (De Mooij, 1998; Cheng, 1997). That is to say, in masculine country, females are perceived to take domestic roles, and they are caring, patient, and good at relationship maintenance. Whereas males are perceived to be fitting in leadership positions, they are assertive, ambitious, agentic, and goal-driven (An & Kim, 2006).

Statement of the Research Problem

China and the U.S. have distinct cultures. The prominent cultural difference between the two countries comes from the dimension of individualism and long term orientation. According to the cultural dimension score from Hofstede Insights (2020), the U.S. is highly individualistic (individualism score of 91) while China is highly collectivist (individualism score of 20). China scores much higher than the U.S. in the long-term orientation dimension (87 vs. 26), which means, compared to the U.S., the Chinese culture value the effort putting in the future rewards. Yet, the masculinity score is relatively similar between China and the U.S. (66 vs. 62). Hence, the current study will focus on the commonly high masculinity between the U.S. and China and use the dimension to examine how gender value interact with individualism/collectivism and power distance in influencing social media influencers' endorsement effectiveness in the two countries. Gender is a crucial factor when considering the appropriate social media influencer for influencer marketing since individuals hold different perceptions about the endorser-product gender congruency: certain products should only be endorsed by certain gender only. For

example, consumers may expect female influencers should endorse domestic and beauty products (feminine products), and male influencers should endorse sports and alcoholic products (masculine products).

Besides, the value of gender roles is greater in masculine value-dominant culture than in feminine value-dominant culture because research has shown that the difference of the perception about the endorser-product gender congruency is greater in masculine culture than in feminine culture (Wiles et al., 1995). As both the U.S. and China are high masculinity cultures, the effect of gender congruence should be similar in both cultures. However, China and the U.S. are very different in the cultural dimension of power distance and individualism (HofstedeInsights, 2020), and Mathiyalakan et al's (2018) survey of Guam Facebook users found that the three cultural dimensions (masculinity, individualism, power distance) were significantly related to gender differences. Moreover, males are more identified by masculine characteristics, and females are more driven by feminine characteristics.

China and the U.S. are both important markets for influencer marketing. China is the second-largest economic entity globally; however, many foreign brands have not entered the Chinese market yet. One of the most efficient approaches for these brands is to target Chinese audiences by collaborating with Chinese social media influencers (Dudarenok, 2020). Dudarenok (2020) also noted that the 2017 Digital Commerce Trends Report indicated that 63% of interviewed brands in China would focus on influencer marketing to achieve the goal of brand and product promotion. The Chinese influencer marketing industry is forecasted to reach 98 billion yuan in 2021(Thomala, 2022). According to a Statista report conducted in early 2019, 39% of U.S. marketers indicated they would increase influencer marketing investment in 2019. Moreover, in a report among U.S. marketers in late 2019 (Statista, 2020), 60% of respondents

said they had one to five influencer marketing programs running, while another 15% of them revealed they ran 6 to ten programs during the year of 2019. A Hootsuite report revealed that over two-thirds of U.S. retailers utilized some forms of influencer marketing, and almost half of the U.S. digital marketers spent at least 10% of their marketing communication budgets in influencer marketing (2019).

Short-video Sharing Platform, TikTok and Douyin

There are many social media platforms for social influencers to endorse products. Short video platforms are gaining popularity in both U.S. and China. Interestingly, TikTok, known as Douyin in China, is a comparable social media platform for China-U.S. comparison because TikTok is the non-Chinese or international version of Douyin in China and is gaining high popularity in the U.S. Douyin and TikTok use almost the same algorithm and format. So it becomes the only common popular social media platform that researchers can use to compare consumers in the U.S. and China. It is the fastest-growing social media video platform with more than 800 million active users worldwide (Kemp 2020). In the U.S., TikTok now has over 130 million active users (Walloroo, 2021) and Douyin enjoyed 400 million users in China (TikTok 2020). The Chinese online media giant, ByteDance launched Douyin in China in 2016. And then, TikTok was launched in 2017 and attracted global attention (Mohsin, 2020). ByteDance acquired Musical.ly, another China-based social media service, which is considered a would-be rival for TikTok, in 2017, and then merged with Musical.ly in 2018 (Lee, 2018). Since Musical.ly had its office in California and already had a larger U.S. user base, merging with Musical.ly is seen as the way how TikTok entered the U.S. market (Lee, 2018). TikTok is unavailable to mainland China, so its users are not subject to the Communist Party's censorship; moreover, the user data are stored in Virginia and Singapore (Zhong, 2020).

TikTok and Douyin share the same features and technical capabilities but target different geographic markets to comply with Chinese censorship. Douyin serves only users in mainland China, and TikTok is available to the rest of the world (Kemp, 2020). In March 2019, TikTok announced that there were more than 500 million monthly active users worldwide, which is a sizeable lucrative audience for advertisers (Chen 2019), and the active daily Douyin users in China has exceeded 400 million as of January 2020 (AsiaTravelClub, 2020). In 2017, only 17% of advertisers had the intention to try short video social media platforms such as TikTok, and this number jumped to 65% in 2018 (Chen 2019); since then, the marketing value of TikTok is seen by more and more marketers and advertisers. However, few studies have examined TikTok user behaviors.

According to *Jing Daily* (2020), a Penguin Intelligence report in April 2020 showed a shift of Douyin users' demographics in China. Namely, 54.7% of Douyin users were in third and fourth-tier cities, and 45.3% of users were in first and second-tier cities (*Jing Daily*, 2020). Douyin 2019 Report found different ages create (shoot) and watch different type of content ：1) born between 1960 and 1969 (shooting: dance; watching: wedding); 2) born between 1970 and 1979 (shooting: food; watching: handcraft); 3) born between 1980-1989 (shooting: parent-children; watching: landscape); 4) born between 1990-1999 (shooting: landscape; watching: shop/restaurant scouting; 5) born after 2000 (shooting: ACGN (Anime, Comic, Game, Novel); watching: pet). A 30-day influencer e-commerce report between Douyin and Kuaishou (another Chinese video-sharing and live-streaming app) by Martian Culture and CAAS Data in 2019 revealed that during the 30-day data collection period, more trendy menswear, mobile phone/digital hardware, and automotive supplies than personal care products and beauty products were on Douyin top popular goods list, which means men's consumption power was rising in

Douyin; the research suggested that categories focusing on men's consumption are increasingly interested in using Douyin (CBNdata, 2019). Moreover, the report found that influencers' innovative and explosive videos could increase the number of views and attention to the brand or product, but it was not equal to the sales, and it took a while from seeing the promotion to purchase the product (CBNdata, 2019).

Douyin and Kuaishou are both Chinese video-sharing and live-streaming apps, and Kuaishou used to be is the fourth largest social media platform in China and more popular than Douyin (Zhai, 2017). By 2020, according to a report from QuestMobile (2020), the number of daily active users on Douyin was 305 million, and the number on Kuaishou was 225 million, which made Douyin the top one short-video platform with the most active daily users in China. By allowing different types of micro-celebrities being popular, Kuaishou is transmitting the message that the platform is available to ordinary people and lowering the barriers for entertaining stars to be known by a large number of audiences where traditional media tightly control the exposure of entertaining stars (Tan et al., 2020). The micro-celebrities or influencers in Kuaishou also make money by doing live-streaming. Audiences can reward the influencer's performance by sending them digital presents, such as "arrows" (the most expensive gift costing 288.8 RMB), and the Kuaishou influencers split their earnings with the company fifty-fifty (Tan et al., 2020). Their live-streaming sometimes embeds the advertisement of products or brands, and sometimes is pure performance or interaction with audiences. Kuaishou is seen to change the nature of labor in China. While the economy mainly relies on industrial production and agriculture, Kuaishou and other social media platforms let users produce the cultural product, allowing tons of ordinary people to become millionaires (Tan et al., 2020).

TikTok, the most successful China-based app, became the most popular app in 2020, with 850 million downloads worldwide (Iqbal, 2022), and 200 million downloads were from the U.S. alone (Wallaroo, 2022). Even though India and Iraq banned this app in 2021, it is still the fastest-growing app worldwide (Iqbal, 2022). There were 80 million active monthly TikTok users in the U.S. in 2022 (Wallaroo, 2022). As of January 2022, TikTok had 1 billion active monthly users globally (Geyser, 2022). With its tremendous popularity and achievement in advertising, TikTok was selected as Marketer of the Year in 2020 in the U.S. (Ad Age, 2020). TikTok was estimated to hit $500 million in revenue in 2020 from the U.S. market alone (Zhang & Dotan, 2020). In addition, it was the most popular iPhone app in the U.S. in 2021 (Geyser, 2022) and continued growth in the U.S. even after the TikTok sanction last year. According to a Statista (2022) report regarding TikTok user growth in the U.S., TikTok had 66.5 million users in the U.S. in 2020, and the number increased to 78.7 million in 2021 and is expected to reach 89.7 million in 2023. Advertisers reached 22.9% of global adults outside of China each month on through TikTok (Hootsuite, 2022). A recent industry measurement revealed that , in the second quarter of 2022, TikTok raked more than $39.4 million in the U.S. from iOS (Statista, 2022).

Research Objectives

As TikTok and Douyin are the leading short video services and house many social media influencers there, this dissertation examines influencer marketing effectiveness on these platforms. In order to fill the literature gap of influencer marketing in gender congruency theory and cultural dimension theory, this dissertation research has three objectives:

1) To examine whether consumers' attitudes toward the gender fit between influencer endorsers and product categories are different in the U.S. and China. Although both countries are high in masculinity, there is a big difference in the power distance and individualism dimensions

between them. Besides, all three cultural dimensions are significantly associated with gender differences (Mathiyalakan et al., 2018). The study also aims to examine whether the gender stereotyping is related to the endorsement effectiveness of the influencer? The researcher will investigate whether individual masculinity values among consumers affect influencers' effectiveness by gender congruency expectation. Individuals' individualism and power distance will be examined as control variables.

2) To investigate how the perceived expertise fit between influencer and product categories moderates the relationship between gender fit and endorsement effectiveness (product attitude and purchase intention),

3) To study the role of influencer trust, which means consumers' trust toward the influencer endorser, as the mediator between the gender congruence and consumers' brand attitudes and purchase intentions. In addition, influencer trust can be a result of the parasocial relationship between influencers and consumers. Hence, this study also tries to use influencer trust and parasocial relationship to explain influencers' effectiveness.

Significance of Study

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the influence of individuals' cultural value on influencers' endorsement effectiveness. Specifically, the dissertation focuses on one of Hofstede's cultural dimensions—the masculinity dimension, standing for the preference for the gender role difference in society. Also, the other two cultural dimensions, individualism and power distance, are also examined as factors that may explain the influence of congruence between the influencer gender and product on endorsement effectiveness. This dissertation will offer significant theoretical, methodological, and practical implications by offering a beneficial understanding of the mechanism of endorsers' persuasive effectiveness in a social media context.

Although many researchers have paid attention to the cross-cultural comparison by applying Hofstede's cultural dimensions, less effort has been devoted to cross-country research in social media advertising and influencer marketing. Also, few studies have compared the cultural differences in online advertising between China and the USA. By connecting Hofstede's cultural dimensions, congruence theory, and parasocial relationship, the dissertation will provide a new model to explain individuals' attitude and behavior change for the endorsed products by social media influencers. Notably, the parasocial relationship is examined as a crucial determinant of trust and endorsement outcomes.

Many existing studies using Hofstede's cultural dimensions have focused on the method of content analysis and assume the cultural values of each country based on Hofstede's scores. This dissertation will use an online survey as the research method and measure the cultural values of the consumers. The data will be collected by the third-party sample recruitment company, Amazon MTurk, and Survey Star, which means the sample will be more diverse than the commonly used college students. This dissertation will also be the first one to directly compare the effectiveness of influencer endorsement between China and the U.S. because TikTok/Douyin is the only social media application available worldwide. This dissertation contributes to the literature of influencer effectiveness on a common social media platform within and across cultures and product types and considering gender congruence and expertise congruence between the influencers and the consumers.

The dissertation is organized in six chapters: Introduction, Literature Review, Hypotheses, Methodology, Results, and Discussion and Conclusion. The primary theories examined in this study are congruity theory, match-up hypothesis, Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions theory, and parasocial relationship theory. There are eight topics reviewed in the

literature review section: Opinion Leadership and Social Media Influencer, Social Influence, Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, Social Media Use and Cultural Differences, Short-Form Video Sharing Platform –TikTok and Douyin and Cultural Differences, Gender Congruity Theory, Match-up Hypothesis, and Influencer Trust and Parasocial Relationship. The hypotheses were examined by two survey studies among Chinese Douyin and the U.S. TikTok users conducted on Survey Star (China) and Amazon MTurk (the U.S.). All analysis results are reported in the Results section, and finally, the interpretation and explanation of the results, as well as the limitation of the current study and suggestions for future research are discussed in the Discussion and Conclusion section.

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Opinion Leaders and Social Media Influencers

Lazarfeld and Hovland proposed the two-step flow theory to explain the role of opinion leaders in a persuasion process (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). According to the two-step flow theory, mass media messages may not have the direct influence on the public, and opinion leaders mediate the transmission of information (Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014). The group of people who create or disseminate the information from media are the opinion leaders. Those who seek the advice from opinion leaders and whose attitudes and behavior intentions are influenced by opinion leaders, are regarded as opinion seekers (Turcotte et al., 2015). However, not every individual has the same perceived opinion leader. Their reasons to trust opinion leaders are different based on their individual differences, such as personal experience, existing knowledge, personalities, personal needs, their belonged social groups, as well as the expertise of the opinion leader on the topic under discussion. According to Tsang and Zhou (2005), opinion leaders are a crucial element in marketing communication due to their contribution on new product diffusion. Dye (2000) has also admired opinion leaders' high influence on consumers' product adoption processes as well as their decision making. Opinion leaders are seen to have abilities to influence how information flows. They frame the information and message to others, and influence people's perceptions of the information.

In both online and offline communities, opinion leaders are seen as significant sources to provide consumers with advice and also influence consumers' decision making on their purchasing behaviors (Godey et al., 2016). There are four types of opinion leaders: 1) Peers of the consumer, 2) authoritative experts in the topic, 3) celebrity endorsers, 4) social media influencers. The first type of opinion leader is the peers. The definition of peers is not very clear,

and scholars from different disciplines normally define peers with different characteristics according to their research focus. According to Merriam-Webster (2011), peers are "belonging to the same societal group, especially based on age, grade, or status." Reitz et. al (2014) added socioeconomic status and ethnicity to the shared characteristics of peers and pointed out that peers played an important role in the formation of people's identity because identities were constructed through the negotiation process between individuals.

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2019), an expert is defined as "a person who has a comprehensive and authoritative knowledge or skill in a particular area." Experts in advertising refer exclusively to the product endorsers with subject knowledge, such as dentists in the Colgate toothpaste TV advertisements who wear white doctoral coats, using their authoritative knowledge in that area and promote Colgate as a trustworthy brand. Authoritativeness is the outstanding attribute of expert endorsers, which makes expert endorsers have the superior social status than the average people. Also, the attribute of authoritativeness distinguishes expert endorsers from the other types of opinion leaders. In addition, expert endorsers share a common feature with other opinion leaders—trustworthiness, which is a basic qualification of an opinion leader. There is no direct interaction between expert endorsers and consumers, and they communicate through traditional media, such as TV. Consumers receive information from TV advertisements, and their attitude or purchasing behavior may be influenced by the expert endorser. However, the expert endorser will not get the feedback from the consumer, which is one of the disadvantages of traditional one-way communication media, and it is difficult to involve the audience.

A celebrity is generally understood as a well-known individual who receives strong media attention from their success in sport, entertainment and film industries. Celebrity opinion

leaders are celebrity endorsers for a specific product on traditional media. McCracken (1989) defined celebrity endorsers as "individuals who enjoy public recognition and who use this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement" (p. 310). Celebrity endorsement is a common marketing strategy for product promotion because people are attracted to celebrities and celebrities have strong impact on consumers' attitude and purchasing intention towards products. Park and Yim (2020) compared the endorsement effectiveness between non-celebrity and celebrity endorsers to luxury brands. The results suggested that celebrity endorsers generated more favorable attitudes toward the ad than non-celebrity endorsers. Erdogan's (1999) literature review on celebrity endorsement illustrated the theoretical background, critical concepts, applicable methodologies, and strategic pros and cons of celebrity endorsement and also presented the unique characteristics of celebrities. Source credibility model (Hovland et al., 1953), the source attractiveness model (McGuire, 1985), and meaning transfer model (McCracken, 1989) were also mentioned as theoretical justification in selecting proper celebrity endorsers.

Social media influencers are the newest type of opinion leaders who are native to social media. They are originally regular Internet users before becoming stars in online communities. Besides, social media influencers are seen as online celebrities with specializations or niches in specific areas. They are "a new type of independent third-party endorser who shapes audience attitudes through blog, tweets, and the use of other social media" (Freberg et al. 2011, p.90). According to Dhanesh and Duthler (2019), "A social media influencer is a person who, through personal branding, builds and maintains relationships with multiple followers on social media, and has the ability to inform, entertain, and potentially influence followers' thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors" (p.3). Followers of the influencers consider influencers to be trustworthy and

credible sources because they are authentic, approachable, and ordinary (Chapple & Cownie 2017). Social media influencers act like peers of the consumer. According to Harris' (1995) group socialization theory, peers play an important role in individuals' personality development. Peers tend to be similar with their group members regarding the shared individual characteristics, and this is called homophily (Reitz et. al., 2014). Peer opinion leaders share the common life experiences with their opinion seekers. Their interactions with each other depend on interpersonal and face to face communication. Moreover, peers are seeking a reciprocal relationship, and they expect a balance of their relationships (Clark & Mills, 1979). So, peers are regarded as authentic and trustworthy opinion leaders, and their relationship with opinion seekers is communal-oriented. The immense trust that social influencers gained was primarily due to their homophily or perceived similarity with their followers, who are of similar age, with similar interest. The status of social media influencers as co-consumers or peers of the consumers is also due to their similar experience and interest. They are considered as genuine similar to the followers' own friends (Kolo & Haumer, 2018).

Social media influencers are individuals who are knowledgeable and have expertise in a specific area. They share knowledge, experience, and skills on social media, and facilitate the welfare of their communities. An increasing number of marketing and advertising professionals expect to use influencer endorsers to enhance their communication and engagement with consumers. Before the influencer becomes a star, he/she draws people's attention by their original and unique content on their social media accounts. Audiences like their content or the online persona. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter are the leading social media platforms in the world. Because of their feature of targeting audience in specific segments, they are becoming advertising and marketing tools to help brands reach their desired consumers.

Influencers on these social media sites have a great impact on their followers. Their relatable role to consumers makes them the trusted individuals for their followers, and meanwhile, they are expected to be authentic and maintain their positive and professional image on social media. Social media influencers and their followers are connected through social media. Even though they have a communal-oriented relationship, there is no interaction between them in a real-life setting.

Most research classified social media influencers by grouping their follower size and how many non-competing products they endorse such as micro-influencers and macro-influencers, the platforms they were on (such as Instagrammers and YouTubers) and their specialty such as fashion or beauty influencers. Micro-influencers were defined as followers with less than 10,000 followers but more than 1000 followers. Meso-influencers were defined as those between 10,000 to 100,000 followers (Boerman, 2020). Macro-influencers were defined as those with 100,000 to one million followers. Mega-influencers were defined as those with more than one million followers (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2020). Such follower size classification varies by country and population size. Marketers seek different types of influencers for collaboration to fulfill different marketing purposes. For example, if the purpose of influencer marketing is to enhance brand awareness or reach as many people as possible, working with a macro/mega influencer is the best choice. Meanwhile, micro-influencers are perceived to maintain an intimate relationship with their followers, and they are more engaged and connected with their audience than macro/mega influencers (Boerman, 2020). In their investigation of the impression management of A-list bloggers, Trammell and Keshelashvili (2005) first identified bloggers as opinion leaders who shared their thoughts, experiences, and politics on blogs. Based on Goffman's (1971) idea of impression management, they contended that bloggers acted as actors online to attract readers.

The image they wanted audiences to see was called the online persona. Some bloggers who were good at creating an attractive persona were more well-known than others, which made them "celebrities" among the blogger community.

Followers of the influencers consider influencers to be trustworthy and credible sources because they are authentic, approachable, and ordinary (Chapple & Cownie, 2017). Recent studies found that a product recommendation is perceived as more credible when it is promoted by an influencer on Twitter rather than by the brand itself in advertising and promotional messages (Jin & Phua, 2014). Further, the literature on source credibility suggests that the credibility of an endorser has positive effects on consumers' content acceptance (Shan, 2019). Furthermore, source credibility is evaluated in three dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and physical attractiveness. Social media influencers are seen to be trustworthy because they provide user-oriented product reviews and recommend products in a real-life setting (Schouten et al., 2019). Influencers are seen to devote themselves to a specific domain to establish their careers, and they are perceived to be more knowledgeable if the endorsed products fit their expertise (Schouten et al., 2019). Physical attractiveness is not always the key. It matters when the endorsed or promoted products by the influencer are attractiveness related (Kapitan & Silvera 2016), such as beauty products and fashion items.

Many researchers believe social media influencers were only influential in their areas of expertise (e.g., Kolo & Haumer, 2018; Lee & Eastin, 2020; Peres, 2020). However, social media influencers are not as limited to their own area of expertise. Their intimate social relationships and trustworthiness made them influential on other social issues. Beta's (2019) ethnography of the Internet explored female influencers' persuasion power over young Muslim women in Indonesia. Instead of emphasizing influencers' persuasion power for commercial purposes, the

article addressed young female influencers' participation in politics in Indonesia, in particular their influence on their followers regarding Muslim identity and subjectivity of Muslim womanhood. Bi, Zhang and Ha's (2018) content analysis of Chinese verified account Weibo influencers' influence on the expired vaccine scandal in China showed that the influencers' negative opinion of the scandal greatly influenced the public's perception on the scandal. In the content analysis and network analysis study of Xu et al. (2014), the authors explored the topic of opinion leaders in a political activism network on Twitter. Users with higher connectivity were perceived to have a greater influence on the information flow on Twitter. Perceived homophily, authenticity and parasocial relationships between influencers and their followers have been identified by researchers as the three factors explaining the persuasiveness of influencers.

Social Influence

Marketers utilize social media influencers to influence consumers' purchase decisions (Gashi, 2017). Their influence comes from the relationship they build with their followers. In the literature of social influence, other individuals' influence is perceived to be the most impactful factor that determines consumer decisions (Torres et al., 2019). Youn and Jin (2017) define social influence within the social networking context as "system- generated, which is quantitatively aggregated over time, including the number of followers, likes, and comments" (p. 565). Therefore, the more followers, likes, or comments a brand or an influencer gains on social media, the more influential he/she is.

Social influence is an important concept examined by scholars in social media (influencer) research. Social media refers to "Internet-based applications that built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Advertisers utilize social

networking sites' power of influence on users, especially for specific target audiences such as teens and young adults (Jin & Phua, 2014). Social influence is shown when consumers publicize their eWOM towards some products or brands on social networking sites, and their comments and reviews may influence other people's opinions or purchase behaviors towards the reviewed products. Their power of influence positively relates to the number of their online contacts or friends because the social tie is crucial for information distribution (Tong et al., 2008).

Influence in social media differs across social media channels due to the unique features each platform provides to its users; for example, on Pinterest, a high number of pins and followers indicate the high social influence of a brand (Youn & Jin, 2017). Social influence in social networks can be reflected by the number of online connections or the number of comments or likes a brand's post receives (De Vries et al., 2012). Such engagements enhance online popularity. In this regard, there are three types of information identified by scholars to evaluate social influence on social media: "a) self-generated information (e.g. users' profile); b) other-generated information (e.g. comments), and c) system generated information (e.g. the number of friends)" (Youn & Jin, 2017, p. 568). Jin and Phua (2014) empirically suggest that celebrities with a high number of followers are seen as more credible and persuasive and having a greater influence on consumers' buying intention. The number of contacts an individual maintains is also an indicator of one's online popularity or how well liked he/she is (Tong et al., 2008). Past research further finds that physical attractiveness is relevant to an individual's popularity—attractive individuals are considered more popular than unattractive individuals among both adults and children (Jackson et al., 1995). A similar result is suggested in terms of the social media setting: those popular on Facebook are seen to be more physically attractive and

possess more favored personalities (Tong et al., 2008). Hence popularity (social influence cues) of the social media influencers can affect their effectiveness in endorsing products.

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Hofstede's cultural dimensions were proposed in his pioneer book regarding cultural differences, *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*, in 1980. Later in 2001, Hofstede published an updated version entitled *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations*. The author's cultural value dimensions have inspired thousands of cross-cultural research studies and much of subsequent culture research has been based on the core concepts of culture developed by Hofstede (Venaik et al., 2013). The original study investigates the cultural value in the context of work, but extant studies have been conducted in many fields such as management, psychology, sociology, marketing, and communication (Kale, 1991). Hofstede defined the concept of cultural dimension as "an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures" (Hofstede, 1980, p. 14). In the 1980 book, Hofstede identified four dimensions: uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity, and power distance. Later, the study conducted by Hofstede and Bond (1984) added a fifth dimension: long-term orientation (LTO). Then the sixth value of indulgence was added as an additional dimension (Hofstede et al., 2010). However, this theory is still not complete and has been examined and developed by different researchers from different angles for decades (An & Kim, 2006).

According to Hofstede, individualism is "a loosely knit social framework in which people are supposed to take care of themselves and of their immediate families only," while collectivism "is characterized by a tight social framework in which people distinguish between ingroups and outgroups, they expect their ingroup to look after them, and in exchange for that they feel they

owe absolute loyalty to it" (Hofstede, 1980, p. 45). Moreover, Hofstede (1994) defined the individualism-collectivism dimension as "the degree to which people in a country prefer to act as individuals rather than as members of groups" (p.6), which indicated a preference for group or individual orientation (An & Kim, 2006). "Power distance" is defined as "the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 1980b, p. 45), which indicates the societal desire for a power hierarchy (An & Kim, 2006). "Uncertainty avoidance" is defined as "the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations and tries to avoid these situations by providing greater career stability, establishing more formal rules, not tolerating deviant ideas and behaviors, and believing in absolute truths and the attainment of expertise" (Hofstede, 1980b, p. 45), which refers to the societal preference for the avoidance of uncertainty (An & Kim, 2006).

Masculinity is defined as "the extent to which the dominant values in society are 'masculine'—that is, assertiveness, the acquisition of money and things" (Hofstede, 1980b, p. 46), whereas femininity is opposed to masculinity and is seen to prioritize feminine traits (Hofstede, 2001) such as being kind, caring for others, and maintaining relationships. The masculinity-femininity dimension relates to the cultural preference for masculine or feminine values and notes the distinctions in gender roles across countries (An & Kim, 2006). Numerous studies suggest that the difference in gender roles is smaller in feminine cultures than in masculine cultures (Cheng, 1997; De Mooij, 1998). Moreover, feminine cultures are ambiguous in terms of expectations from gender roles (Odekerken-Schroder et al., 2002). Men in feminine cultures do not mind taking on female roles, while women in masculine cultures are rarely portrayed as taking on men's roles (De Mooij, 1998). Masculine cultures embrace the idea that for certain jobs, men can always perform better than women (Yoo et al., 2011).

The fifth dimension is term orientation, whch refers to “long-term versus short-term orientation toward the future” (Yoo et al., 2011, p. 194). Long term orientation (LTO) “stands for the fostering of virtues oriented towards future rewards, in particular perseverance and thrift,” while short-term orientation (STO) “stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and the present, in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of face and fulfilling social obligations” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 359). People look towards the future in LTO cultures and do not expect immediate social success and gratification. Contrary to the other four dimensions, which were developed based on Western cultures, Hofstede’s LTO dimension was formulated through a survey study in China, which aimed to examine Chinese cultural values (Venaik et al., 2013).

Finally, the sixth dimension is Indulgence versus restraint (IVR), which refers to the extent to which society responds to the fulfillment of human desires, and this dimension is adopted from the World Values Survey (Hofstede et al., 2010). A high indulgence society embraces the individuals’ primitive needs of recreation and having fun with less control for individuals pursuing those gratifications, while in a low indulgence society, individuals’ gratification needs are constrained by social norms (Guo et al., 2018).

Advertising utilizes or evokes cultural values inherent in products and consumers (Pollay, 1983). Hofstede’s cultural dimensions are thus credited as one of the most widely used theories in a cross-nation setting, examining cultural impacts on marketing or advertising (Pergelova & Angulo-Ruiz, 2017). Cross-cultural comparison plays a profound role for advertisers and marketers in terms of understanding international markets and global audiences; international advertisers benefit from this approach from the perspective for both practical and theoretical implications (An & Kim, 2006). Although Hofstede provided several cultural dimensions,

Griffith and Rubera (2014) suggest that scholars should identify the appropriate dimension to achieve the specific goals of different studies.

In advertising studies, masculinity-femininity and individualism-collectivism are widely examined cultural dimensions. Gender is a primary factor in developing strategic marketing plans and targeting favorable audiences (An & Kim, 2006). On one hand, the cultural value in society influences the gender roles portrayed in advertising. On the other, the gender roles portrayed in advertising have an impact on how people perceive gender value in real life (Odekerken-Schroder et al., 2002). Many studies suggest that gender role depiction in advertising varies by culture (Moon & Chen, 2002). However, previous research regarding gender role portrayals is limited to TV and print media, and few studies concern the most recent or other types of media (An & Kim, 2006). Additionally, most existing research on gender differences in TV advertising has focused on single-country studies; hence, there is a need for cross-country comparisons in the field (Matthes et al., 2016).

In the feminine-value-dominant country, there are fewer differences in the roles played by male and female figures in advertising, whereas in the masculine-value-dominant country, there tends to be a large difference between gender roles portrayed in advertising (Wiles et al., 1995). Besides, past research finds that women are often unfavorably represented in advertising and they are depicted as playing less important roles compared to men (An & Kim, 2006). Cultural values thus not only impact people's perception of gender differences in society but also influence people's behavior and consumption decisions (Pergelova & Angulo-Ruiz, 2017).

Advertisers and marketers will display males and females in the advertisement to be consistent with the local gender values and cultural norms to maintain advertising effectiveness. Tan et al.'s (2013) content analysis study analyzed 636 ads from men's lifestyle magazines in

China, Taiwan, and the USA to examine the different masculinity types portrayed in the three markets. The result showed that the ads in China displayed far fewer male models than in other countries. Although cultural differences regarding the masculinity types were proposed in the hypothesis, the result showed that the difference was insignificant. Besides, the portrayed role of models in the magazine ads, such as professional roles (model engaged in a specific profession), differed across countries. Gregory et al.'s (2019) content analysis and experiment studies examined the humor mechanism and humor types of advertising in China and the USA. They explored how humor appeals impact the advertising effectiveness across culture and the audience responses toward the humor appeals in advertisements. In general, they found more US ads used humor appeals than Chinese ads.

Moreover, to understand the two advertising markets with distinct cultures, the study applied Hofstede's cultural dimensions. The finding supported the link between individualism and aggressive humor (the USA) and collectivism and non-aggressive humor (China). A survey was used by Ferle et al. (2008) to investigate the cultural orientation, attitudes toward advertising, and media use in China, Taiwan, and the USA. The study found that China and Taiwan were more collectivist than individualistic, and the USA is more individualistic than collectivist. Also, China and Taiwan were found to have more favorable attitudes towards advertising than the USA. Moreover, in terms of media use patterns, Chinese spent more time on radio than Americans and Taiwanese; Americans spent more time on TV than Taiwanese and Chinese, and Chinese and Taiwanese reported more time consumption on print media than Americans. Hence there are many more similarities between Taiwan and China as the same Chinese culture markets than between Taiwan and the U.S.

Social Media Use and Cultural Differences

Research finds that culture impacts how social media are perceived and used (Balakrishnan et al. 2017). Besides, cultural norms can be reflected on social media profiles and influence how people express and describe themselves online (DeAndrea et al. 2010; Sheldon et al. 2017). Different generations and genders have different motivations to use social media; it is more evident in the younger generation, born after the twentieth century and seen as "digital natives" than in the older generation (Fietkiewicz et al. 2018). However, most information we can access on social media about its users is what they do instead of who they are. Mancosu and Bobba (2019) are concerned about the insufficient information about social media users' personal and demographic characteristics for social and political research in the current literature. Several studies confirm the importance of personal information, such as demographics and personal traits, and social characteristics like the number of intimate friends, on our understanding of social media use and users' attitudes and behaviors on social media (Grieve 2017; Hargittai 2007; Scott et al. 2020). Kim et al. (2013) indicate that the current social media research emphasizes the general trends instead of individual differences among social media users and those differences influence users' social media use patterns. Hence, there is a need for social media research on the information about users' characteristics. Social media use differs in different cultures; for example, people in individualistic and collectivist cultures use social media differently (Cho 2010). Jackson and Wang (2013) find that people in collectivist societies like China spend more time in real-life relationships, such as with their families and friends, less time on social media use. They also have fewer online friends than their counterparts from individualistic cultures like the US because they value group membership rather than self-

promotion. Hence, social media is more important to US users than Chinese users, and US users are more likely to use social media than Chinese users (Jackson and Wang 2013).

The predominant difference in the key cultural dimensions, such as individualism/collectivism and high/low power distance between China and the US, makes the two countries ideal for cross-cultural comparison (Lu 2018). The dominant cultural values in a society are perceived to influence people's way of communication, social interaction, and online behavior (Choi et al. 2011; Chu and Choi 2011). Balakrishnan et al. (2017) raise the concern of the shortage of literature TikTok/Douyin Use and its influencer video use on cultural impacts on social media. Su et al. (2021)'s study compares the difference between traditional mainstream media (TV) and new media (Internet) in China. They point out that television (state-controlled) shapes collectivism because it promotes patriotism and national value. In contrast, the Internet shapes individualism because of the particular level of free speech on the Internet. Moreover, state-controlled media play an essential role as the government's mouthpiece, and the Internet allows people to create and disseminate their self-generated content, which strengthens their personal freedom and interest. Research confirms that individuals who spend more time expressing themselves on Facebook are seen to connect with more freedom of speech (Swigger 2012).

Short-video Sharing Platform, TikTok and Douyin, and Cultural Differences

The short video refers to "video content that is shorter than 5 minutes distributed via digital media platforms" (Kaye et al. 2021, p. 230). Most short video platforms are mobile applications intended for use on smartphones, and they are convenient for users to create, edit, and share self-generated video content and view other short videos online (Zhou, 2019). TikTok and Douyin are the leading short video-sharing social media platforms, which is different from other video-sharing platforms featuring relatively long videos, such as YouTube. TikTok became

the most downloaded non-game mobile app of 2020, mainly for short and entertaining video production and dissemination (Cuesta-Valiño et al., 2022). Besides its business value in advertising and influencer marketing, Douyin is perceived to be the No. 1 short video-sharing app for the younger Chinese generation to socialize online (Ge et al. 2020).

When you open up TikTok/Douyin, there will be a "for you" page instead of friends' posts feed, promoting trendy videos or videos you may like based on your prior interactions with videos. Those short video-sharing platforms that are easy to use and allow users to get access to the full, up-to-date video content in a short period bringing fast culture to social media (Campaign 2019). The video content on TikTok/Douyin also reflects the representation of the specific location's life, culture, and value; in particular, the cultural characteristics of videos from different geographic regions are expected to be set apart from each other (Sun et al., 2020). Sun et al. (2020) find that static and indoor subjects are more common in Douyin videos, and TikTok users capture more diverse and outdoor items. More family and fewer individual events are shown in Douyin than in TikTok videos; moreover, Douyin videos are more attached to family members. TikTok videos have more interaction with friends and strangers, which is inconsistent with Chinese and US culture's individualism/collectivism literature. Scherr and Wang's (2021) study of Douyin use in China identifies the gender and age differences in social media use. They argue that females use social media for social and communication purpose, and males use it for entertaining and functional purposes.

In terms of different generations, younger users embrace social media's entertaining gratification more than older users, and the motivations for social media use are diverse and changing all the time. Douyin has become the most famous music video application in China, especially among users under the age of 30 (Patrick, 2018). Future research needs to study users'

personal and cultural characteristics on the two platforms. It will either optimize the platform itself or provide important information to advertisers and marketers about who are involved in their marketing practices because TikTok and Douyin are easy to access and use similar formats, yet users are from different cultural backgrounds.

Gender Congruity Theory

Traditionally, women and men have been divided to accomplish different labor activities and play different social roles. This perceived difference in terms of gender is not caused by biological differences but is rather a result of gender stereotypes inherent in the cultural environment. Usually, people observe the particular roles women and men play in society and subsequently assume the appropriate characteristics each gender must possess in order to be qualified to perform those roles (Clow et al., 2015). When one gender becomes associated with a range of social roles due to the societal labor division they are categorized into, people of the other gender come to be considered incongruent with those roles and are more likely to be viewed as less favorable candidates for those roles (Eagly, 2004). Men are associated with high agentic and low communal traits, such as independence, assertiveness, and competitiveness, while women are considered to have high communal and low agentic traits, such as kindness, sensitiveness, caring, and dependence (Diekman & Goodfriend, 2006).

According to Cialdini and Trost (1998), the term “role” has two layers: The first layer refers to descriptive norms, indicating the expectation regarding what a group of people actually do; the second layer pertains to injunctive norms, indicating the shared expectation regarding what members of each group should do. Gender role refers to the consensual perception about the attributes of each gender, and social role denotes the shared beliefs regarding what social positions each group of people ought to occupy (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Gender role is also

explained by Ritter and Yoder (2004) as “expectations about what is desirable for each sex, taking both descriptive (i.e., what actually is) and prescriptive or injunctive (i.e., what ought to be ideally) norms” (p. 187). Based on the traits each gender possesses, men are expected to take on social roles related to leadership and power, whereas women are associated with social roles that involve caring for others and assuming positions such as a nurse or a housewife.

Role congruity theory claims that the attitudes toward a group is more positive if the characteristics of the group members are consistent with the requirements and expectations of the group’s distinctive social roles (Diekman & Goodfriend, 2006). Moreover, individuals who transgress the boundary of their assigned gender roles are punished; for example, women occupying typically men-dominant positions will be less favorable and likable (Heilman et al., 2004). Eagly and Karau (2002) discuss the role congruity theory with particular reference to the leadership prejudice against women in society. Women are excluded from high-level leadership positions. This gender prejudice or discrimination occurs due to the incongruity between people’s expectation of the characteristic leaders should have and their perception of the characteristics women actually possess.

The prejudice can emerge at two levels: first, the belief regarding what men and women’s strengths and weaknesses are and, second, the evaluation of the manner in which women and men should behave. Leadership positions in working environments, or society in general, are predominantly occupied by men, and women are rarely responsible for executing leadership roles. They are viewed as less likable candidates as leaders or potential leaders compared to their male counterparts (Eagly & Karau, 2002). However, this is not to say that the prejudice only occurs when women attempt to take on roles usually dominated by men, such as political leadership and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) careers. People

tend to believe that women and men should exhibit a distinct difference from each other, particularly when the behaviors are associated with differences in sex (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Men are also devalued when they attempt to enter women-dominant careers such as nursing (Clow et al., 2014).

During the past decades, general attitudes toward gender roles have changed. People have especially become much more tolerant toward women's occupation of leadership roles since 1984, and women have begun to enter male-dominant roles since the mid-20th century. However, their perceptions regarding the kind of occupations men should opt for almost remain stable, still being closely associated with masculine or agentic attributes. The scope of men's occupation has remained stable as well (Diekman & Goodfriend, 2006; Ritter & Yoder, 2004;). The definition of leadership role relies on the consensus regarding the masculine attributes associated with the position, which requires the candidate to be "ambitious, capable, goal-oriented, daring, independent, successful" (Chang, 2006, p. 315). Since these are more agentic than communal, if women occupy leadership roles, they are automatically viewed negatively, as they fail to maintain their stereotypical representation in the eyes of traditional gender-role perceivers. In this respect, if the definitive aspects related to the role of a leader could be less masculine, women's gender role would be more congruent with that position and they would be more likely to be accepted by society (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

The perception of gender roles may differ due to individual differences. One of the significant variables is the perceiver's sex. Particularly in terms of the relationship between leadership and gender roles, men hold a more masculine perception of leadership compared to women (Goodwin et al., 1998). Hence, in comparison with women, men tend to present a stronger tendency to perceive women as less competent than men to be leaders. Additionally,

men's preference of using the gender stereotype for holding this preference comes from their greater social power (Goodwin et al., 1998).

The concept of "masculine" and "feminine" is part of Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1980; 2001). Among the five dimensions he proposed for cross-cultural comparison, past research in understanding communication style and advertising effectiveness focused on the individualism–collectivism dimension. However, the masculinity–femininity dimension has been found to be an effective indicator to explain the mechanism underlying the way in which people process advertising messages (Chang, 2006). Masculinity refers to the preference for the agentic characteristics, while femininity refers to the preference for the communal characteristics (De Meulenaer, 2018).

Match-up Hypothesis

The concept of congruence in marketing has been studied and examined for decades. In their study, Misra and Beatty (1990) described congruence as "the highly relevant characteristics of the spokesperson are consistent with the highly relevant attributes of the brand" (p. 61). Furthermore, congruence has been defined as a concept with two dimensions: relevancy and expectancy (Heckler & Childers, 1992). The former refers to the degree to which there is a close association between an endorser and a brand/product. For example, an endorser's expertise in a specific field is linked with relevancy, which indicates why he/she is capable of endorsing the product. Expectancy, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which an endorser is expected to behave in a specific manner or impart information about the endorsed brand to the public. These two dimensions are weighted differently in terms of their impact on the endorser's congruence level with the brand—expectancy is observed to be much more influential than relevancy (Fleck

et al., 2012). Empirical research further suggests that the expected endorser-product association is important to enhance the persuasiveness of brand endorsement (Shan et al., 2019).

Within the field of congruence research, researchers have investigated the fit between the endorser and product. The concept of congruency in the celebrity endorsement literature refers to the consistency or similarity between a celebrity and a brand (Bergkvist et al., 2016). One of the most significant studies in this regard is the "match-up hypothesis" proposed by Kamins (1990). Early research on the "match-up hypothesis" focused on an endorser's physical attractiveness and products related to appearance and physical attractiveness; in particular, a physically attractive endorser was found to be more persuasive and credible than an unattractive endorser for attractiveness-relevant products such as beauty products or cosmetics (Choi & Rifon, 2012). It is observed that with a high degree of congruence, a more favorable evaluation or effect will be produced (Misra & Beatty, 1990; Choi & Rifon, 2012).

Past research primarily focused on the match-up hypothesis in the domain of celebrity endorsement (Lee & Koo, 2015). Further, the match-up hypothesis is credited as one of the most important ideas related to celebrity endorsement studies. Celebrity endorsement in turn is defined by Fleck et al. (2012) as "a phenomenon where celebrities lend their images to brands" (p. 651). Traditional advertising often emphasizes collaboration with celebrities who are famous in mainstream media, such as movie stars, athletes, and models. Similar to the match-up hypothesis, which posits that celebrities' unique qualities will pass onto the product, McCracken's meaning transfer model notes that celebrities are seen as more influential than other types of endorsers because of a natural match between the cultural meanings they represent and the product (1989). According to the meaning transfer model, congruence can be related to different aspects of meaning that are transferred from celebrities to products, such as gender fit and expertise fit

(Eislend & Langner, 2010). Endorsers' expertise is also perceived as an important factor for endorsement effectiveness.

Negative consequence can incur when a brand uses an unsuitable celebrity endorser for advertising; hence, advertisers should understand consumers' responses to celebrity endorsements and develop an effective approach for selecting endorsers. The celebrity-product congruence is a determining factor of celebrity endorsement effectiveness and has been investigated often in the literature (Choi & Rifon, 2012). An incongruent product-endorser match reduces consumers' positive evaluation toward the endorser and the advertising in general (Kamins & Gupta, 1994). In this context, Koernig and Page (2002) examine the match-up hypothesis in their service marketing study, and their results suggest that the significant effect of match-up only occurs when the attractiveness level of a service provider matches with consumers' expectations for that type of service. Although the celebrity-target audience match is ranked as the most important criterion in the process of celebrity endorser selection, the relationship between endorser and audience has been overlooked in the past literature (Choi & Rifon, 2012). While most studies examine the congruence between the endorser and the product, Choi and Rifon's (2007) research investigates the match-up hypothesis from the endorser-consumer relationship perspective. The results of the study suggest that the congruence between the endorser's image and the consumer's perceived ideal self-image enhances the formation of a parasocial identification, which is an imaginary one-way intimate relationship with the endorser.

In the era of social media, advertisers' focus on celebrity endorsement has been transferred to social media influencer endorsement. In 2015, 84% of marketing and advertising professionals expressed the expectation to launch at least one social media campaign involving one social media influencer in a year (eMarketer, 2005). However, compared to other forms of

media, research focusing on advertising in social media is limited (Ha, 2017). It is known that influencer endorsements result in effective brand promotion and audience engagement. However, 75% of marketers said that identifying the right influencer presents the most significant challenge for them (eMarketer, 2015). Therefore, marketers should pair the brand with influencers who suit the purpose of the brand's strategic plan. Moreover, some features of celebrity endorsement can also act as inspiration for social media influencer endorsement. For instance, celebrity endorsers are similar to influencer endorsers in that their online personas should be congruent with the brand endorsed, according to the product match-up hypothesis.

Influencer Trust and Parasocial Relationship

The opinion leader is demonstrated by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) in the Two-step Flow Hypothesis as early adopters who are knowledgeable and trusted on the topic under discussion. Social media influencers, as online opinion leaders, are also perceived as knowledgeable and trusted sources. Gaining consumers' trust is crucial to an influencer's endorsement effectiveness. Stubb and Colliander (2019) suggested that to improve consumer trust, social media influencers should always disclose their sponsorship. Also, consumer's trust is a determinant of endorser's credibility, referring to "the extent to which the source is perceived as possessing expertise relevant to the communication topic and can be trusted to give an objective opinion on the subject" (Goldsmith et al., 2000, p. 43). Besides, an endorser's credibility will transfer to the brand and enhance brand credibility because consumers associate endorsers' characteristics and associations with brands (Spry et al., 2011). Martensen et al.'s (2018) focus group and interview study confirmed that trustworthiness was the primary contributor to citizen influencer's persuasive power. Hence, pairing a trustworthy influencer with the brand is key to the success of influencer marketing.

Trust is defined as “a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence” (Moorman et al., 1992, p. 315). Brand trust is defined by Dwivedi and Johnson (2013) as “a consumer perception of a brand’s benevolence and integrity” (p. 37). It is a critical factor determining whether individuals purchase a product or not (Kauv & Blotnicky, 2020). Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemén (2001) argued that consumer satisfaction and brand trust work together would evoke a concrete commitment to consumers’ product purchase. Brand trust includes two facets, functional and emotional brand trust (Kauv & Blotnicky, 2020). The former refers to a brand's physical promises, such as product quality, and the latter refers to the value experienced by consumers, such as the brand’s social responsibility (Kauv & Blotnicky, 2020).

However, when the brand collaborates with an endorser, more factors need to be considered to improve brand trusts, such as the parasocial relationship between an endorser and consumers. Parasocial relationship is a pseudo-friendship (Lee & Watkins, 2016) and a kind of psychological association between an audience and a performer (Horton & Wohl, 1956). The intimacy is unreal and constructed through the audience’s imagination, and the performer could be totally unaware about the relationship. Indeed, homophily or the audience’s perceived similarity with the performer has been considered as the antecedents of parasocial interaction (Lee & Watkins, 2016).

Parasocial interaction is identified by Stever and Lawson (2013) as an appropriate theory to study the one-sided relationship between celebrities and audiences. Reinikainen et al.’s (2020) experiment study found the positive impact of the parasocial relationship on influencer credibility, which positively affects brand trust and purchase intention. Folkvord et al.’s (2020) experimental design identified the parasocial relationship's mediating effect on the positive

relationship between influencer type and product attitudes and purchase intention. Hwang and Zhang (2018) found the positive impact of the parasocial relationship between followers and influencers on followers' eWOM and purchase intention. Moreover, the celebrity's repeated exposure will enhance audiences' perceived intimacy with the celebrity and then make audiences feel they are close friends. Audiences trust and seek advice from the celebrity (Lee & Watkins, 2016).

CHAPTER III. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES AND MODEL

Product-Gender Congruity and Masculinity on Endorser Effectiveness

The existing research on gender role congruity theory or Hofstede's cultural dimension theory is used predominantly to investigate traditional advertising, and less attention has been paid to the emerging form of advertising, namely influencer marketing, which refers to the collaboration between a brand and a social media influencer for the purpose of achieving some brand marketing goals (de Veirman et al., 2017). The idea of gender congruity in social role can be expanded to the congruity between a social media influencer and the perceived appropriate product he/she should endorse. After all, the perceived congruity between the endorser and the product is an important factor that determines the effectiveness of influencer marketing as a type of endorsement. For example, beer and cars are two products, which typically associate with male models in the TV advertising because the advertising message they want to disseminate is about risk, challenge, freedom, danger, and other masculine characteristics. The gender code reflected in advertising, in turn, influences the audience' perception about what a man should be. The typical or ideal perception about men is that a man should be hegemonic, which means he is "strong, successful, capable and authoritative" (Feasey, 2009, p. 358). Furthermore, gender difference is greater in masculine society than in feminine society, and individuals in feminine society are more tolerant about gender incongruity than people in masculine society (Cheng, 1997; De Mooij, 1998; Odekerken-SchroÈder et al., 2011).

Similar to traditional advertising where advertisers take gender congruity into consideration while selecting endorsers, product gender congruity also has to be a factor when brands select social media influencers for influencer marketing. Studies have suggested that men and women are portrayed differently in advertising by the type of products associated with them;

for example, men are linked with technological products and sport cars, and women are associated with household items and beauty products (An & Kim, 2006). An and Kim (2006) categorize products by gender as 1) female products, which include personal care items, beauty products, clothing, jewelry, accessories, and home appliances; 2) male products, which include Internet/technology products, automobiles, insurance/finance products, sports, and alcohol; 3) gender neutral products, which include food/snacks/soda, travel products (i.e., restaurants and retail shops), entertainment products, transportations, medicine, and others. The product categorization above is also relevant to social media influencer endorsements. In a more masculine society, individuals embrace a sharp distinction of the gender role between men and women (De Mooij, 1998); for example, female endorsers should endorse different products than male endorsers.

Although, both genders have expectations of gender congruity for product endorsements, male consumers possess more masculine or agentic characteristics than female consumers (De Meulenaer et al., 2018). Women are linked with relational concerns, while men are associated with rule-based concerns; hence, men are more committed to cultural norms (Gilligan, 1982). As a result, men are stricter when it comes to gender congruity, and women are more flexible to their cultural value to maintain relationships, which means that when a female influencer endorses a male product or a male influencer endorses a female product, male consumers will not accept the influencer's endorsement and not purchase the product endorsed. However, female consumers are more tolerant toward female influencers endorsing male products than male consumers are. Moreover, gender value is part of individuals' social and cognitive schemata, and prior research suggested that the congruence between the gender norm and the gender role stereotyping in advertising enhanced the advertising effects (Orth & Holancova, 2003).

The first set of hypotheses is related to whether masculinity value of the individual impacts consumers' attitudes toward the gender fit between influencer endorsers and product categories, and whether this gender stereotyping perception affect the influencer's endorsement effectiveness?

H1a: The social media influencer's gender-product congruency positively impacts consumers' product attitude.

H1b: The social media influencer's gender-product congruency positively impacts consumers' purchase intention.

H1c: The positive effect of the social media influencer's gender-product congruency on consumers' product attitude is greater for people with higher masculinity score.

H1d: The positive effect of the social media influencer's gender-product congruency on consumers' purchase intention is greater for people with higher masculinity score.

Moderating Effect of the Expertise Fit on Influencer and Product Gender in Endorsement Effectiveness

The congruence theory also refers to different dimensions in addition to gender fit such as expertise fit (Eisland and Langner, 2010). Therefore, expertise congruity should be examined as a moderator in the relationship between gender congruity and influencer endorsement effectiveness. A celebrity endorser with highly relevant expertise is more persuasive than a celebrity endorser with low relevant expertise (Ohanian, 1991). It is valuable to investigate the interaction effect of expertise congruency in a cross-country setting.

Prior studies suggest that endorser expertise positively impacts product attitude and purchase intention (Schouten et al., 2019). Influencers are perceived as experts in their communities, and the congruency between the influencer and the product can build a high level

of audiences' trust toward the influencer (Chung & Cho, 2017). Moreover, influencers' self-claimed expertise makes them more knowledgeable and trustworthy than traditional celebrities in the domain of their interests (Schouten et al., 2019). Consumers value influencer endorsers as more trustworthy, authentic, and credible than traditional celebrities and advertisers; and expect to receive genuine advice about specific brands and products (Folkvord et al., 2020). Cultural values positively influence individuals' behaviors and decision makings (Pergelova & Angulo-Ruiz, 2017). So how do cultural values and product expertise interact in endorsement effectiveness is important to examine especially for global marketing due to the cultural differences across countries.

Recent research emphasizes the importance of the match-up between the endorser's expertise and the endorsed product (Till & Busler, 2000). Expertise is a cognition-based attribute (Eislend & Langner, 2010) and refers to the knowledge, experience, and skills an individual possesses in a specific field. It also refers to the extent to which a person is considered a valid source of information about a certain field/product (Choi & Rifon, 2012). Moreover, according to prior research, expertise is perceived to be more useful than an endorser's physical attractiveness when matching a brand with an appropriate endorser (Lynch & Schuler, 1994; Ohanian, 1991) as well as enhancing the positive effect on brand-level outcomes (Till & Busler, 2000).

The second hypothesis examines moderating effect of the expertise fit between influencer and product categories on the relationship between gender fit and endorsement effectiveness (brand attitude, and purchase intention)?

H2a: The perceived social media influencer's expertise-product congruency moderates the relationship between gender-product congruency and brand attitude.

H2b: The perceived social media influencer's expertise-product congruency moderates the relationship between gender-product congruency and purchase intention.

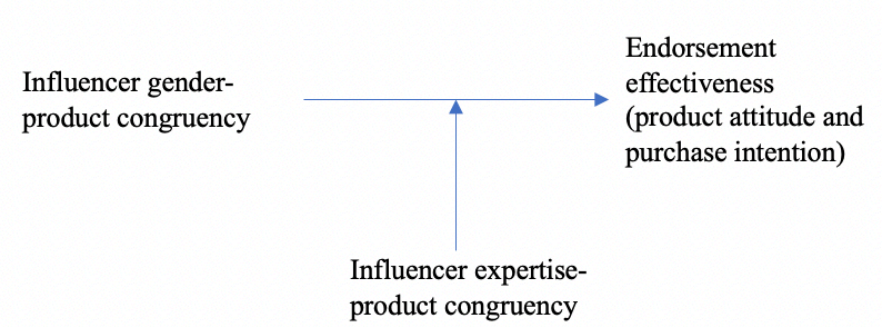

Figure 1. The moderation effect of expertise congruency on gender congruency and endorsement effectiveness (product attitude and purchase intention)

Mediation of Parasocial Relationship and Influencer Trust on Endorsement Effectiveness

Parasocial interaction (PSI) is a commonly used theory in social media influencer research. Due to the self-established intimacy between the consumer and the social media influencer, the consumer tends to see the social media influencer as credible sources. The positive affection generalized in the parasocial relationship advances consumer trust in the endorser, and then further persuades consumers' attitudes change towards the endorsed product. Yang and Ha's (2021) survey study among Chinese college students found the moderation effect of persuasion knowledge on the relationship between consumers' parasocial interaction with influencers and purchase intentions. The parasocial interaction even has a greater positive impact on consumers' purchase decisions when consumers have a high level of persuasion knowledge, which means when consumers have a parasocial relationship with influencers, they will buy the endorsed product even they realize the persuasion attempt.

According to Hofstede's cultural dimensions, a high power distance and a highly masculine country value gender inequality (Hofstede, 1980). Women are associated with communal characteristics should take care of families, homes, and people, while men men are

associated with agentic characteristics should be successful outside the home (Diekman & Goodfriend, 2006). The higher the masculinity and power distance a society is, the stronger perception of the gender difference. Past literature in congruency theory posits the endorser-product congruency encourages positive outcomes towards endorsement effectiveness (Shan et al., 2019). Gender congruity is one facet of congruency theory; hence the endorser gender-product congruity evokes positive attitudes toward the endorser (Orth & Holancova, 2003), and this researcher proposes this positive effect is moderated by the parasocial relationship and mediated by influencer trust toward the endorser.

The parasocial relationship is a perceived one-way intimate or reciprocal relationship between a follower and a social media influencer, and it is a long-lasting relationship even after the media exposure (Leite & Baptista, 2022). This relationship can be stronger with more influencers' self-disclosure or the personal information disclosed by the influencer (Leite et al., 2022). Besides, the positive influence of parasocial relationships on followers' purchase intentions is even stronger when followers have a higher level of persuasion knowledge (Yang & Ha, 2021). Hence, the parasocial relationship between followers and influencers is crucial to influencing influencers' persuasiveness. Moreover, Ha and Yang (2021) conclude that one of the outcomes of the parasocial relationship in explaining influencers' persuasiveness is that followers trust the influencer, and the trust finally causes the purchase intention. Therefore, the third hypothesis examines the moderating and mediating effect of parasocial relationship and trust of influencer.

H3a: Parasocial relationship moderates the relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and influencer trust (Figure 2).

H3b: Parasocial relationship moderates the relationship between influencer expertise-product

congruency and influencer trust (Figure 3).

H3c: Influencer trust mediates the relationship between influencer's gender-product congruency and product attitude (Figure 4).

H3d: Influencer trust mediates the relationship between influencer's gender-product congruency and purchase intention (Figure 4).

H3e: Influencer trust mediates the relationship between parasocial relationship and product attitude (Figure 5).

H3f: Influencer trust mediates the relationship between parasocial relationship and purchase intention (Figure 5).

H3g: Influencer trust mediates the relationship between influencer expertise-product congruency and product attitude (Figure 6).

H3h: Influencer trust mediates the relationship between influencer expertise-product congruency and purchase intention (Figure 6).

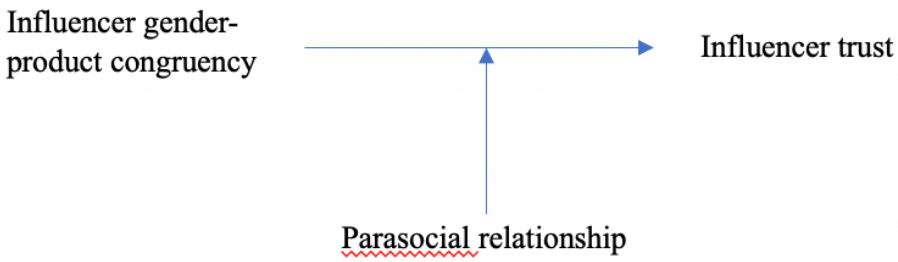

Figure 2. The moderation effect of parasocial relationship on gender congruency and influencer trust

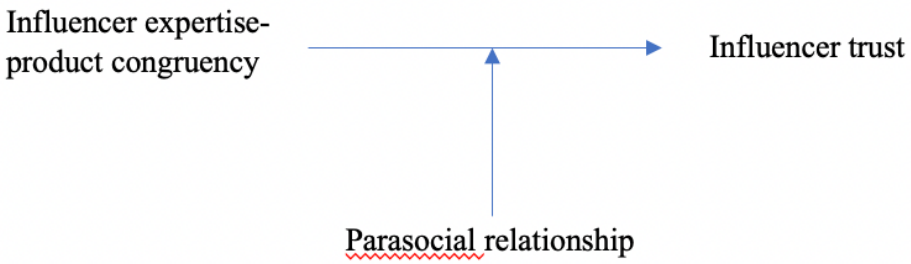

Figure 3. The moderation effect of parasocial relationship on expertise congruency and influencer trust

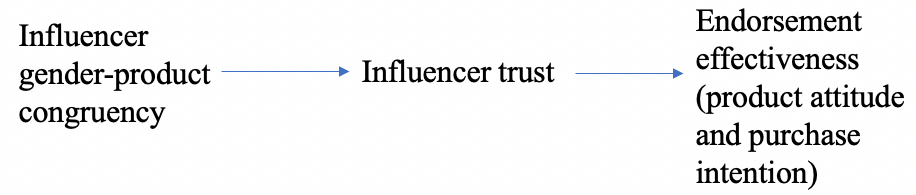

Figure 4. The mediation effect of influencer trust on gender congruency and endorsement effectiveness (product attitude and purchase intention)

Figure 5. The mediation effect of influencer trust on parasocial relationship and endorsement effectiveness (product attitude and purchase intention)

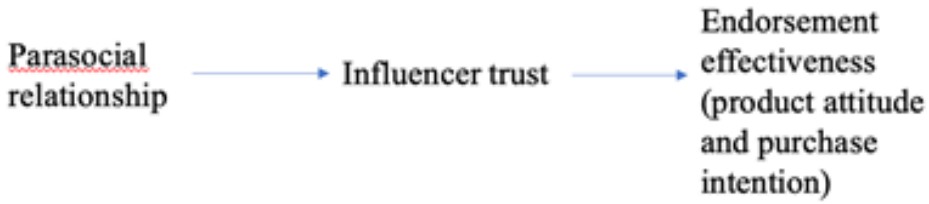

Figure 6. The mediation effect of influencer trust on expertise congruency and endorsement effectiveness (product attitude and purchase intention)

Difference between Chinese and US TikTok Users

China and the USA were identified in cross-country studies as being two distinct cultural clusters: the Confucian cluster (China) and the Anglo cluster (USA) (Gupta et al., 2002). The two countries are similar to the Masculinity dimension and differ mostly on the Individualism (IDV), Uncertainty Avoidance (UA), and Power Distance (PD) dimensions (Shinnar et al., 2012). Masculinity, Power Distance, and Individualism dimensions are significantly linked with gender differences (Mathiyalakan et al., 2018). Gender roles are more distinct in a masculine

culture than in a feminine culture (Hofstede & McCrae, 2004). Individuals prefer socially acceptable jobs to their sex and avoid jobs appropriate for the opposite sex (Heilman, 1983).

A high masculine culture embraces that men should be successful outside their families, and women should take care of the home and people (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Parboteeah et al. (2008) found that power distance is negatively associated with gender equality, which means that a high power distance culture predicts a high gender inequality. Gender role ideology refers to the belief that men and women should behave appropriately based on social norms and cultural values (Kalin & Tilby, 1978). A traditional argument about gender ideology posits that men and women are different and should behave differently and take different roles (Cota & Xinaris, 1993). Prior cultural studies suggested that a more traditional gender ideology was adopted in Chinese cultures than in western cultures (Marshall, 2008). Individuals in an individualistic culture care about themselves and are willing to subordinate the in-group goals to their personal goals. In contrast, individuals in a collectivist culture are interdependent and willing to give in their personal goals to in-group goals (Triandis et al., 1988). Hence we hypothesize the gender-congruency effect is higher in Chinese consumers than US consumers:

H4a: Chinese consumers have a higher level of expected influencer gender-product congruency than American consumers.

H4b: The gender fit between an influencer and the product will have a greater impact on consumers' product attitudes in China than in the USA.

H4c: The gender fit between an influencer and the product will have a greater impact on consumers' purchase intentions in China than in the USA.

Individuals' masculinity value, individualism value and power distance value will be examined as control variables.

Figure 7 summarizes the hypothesized relationships between gender value, influencer gender product congruency, parasocial relationship, influencer expertise congruency, influencer trust and endorsement effectiveness.

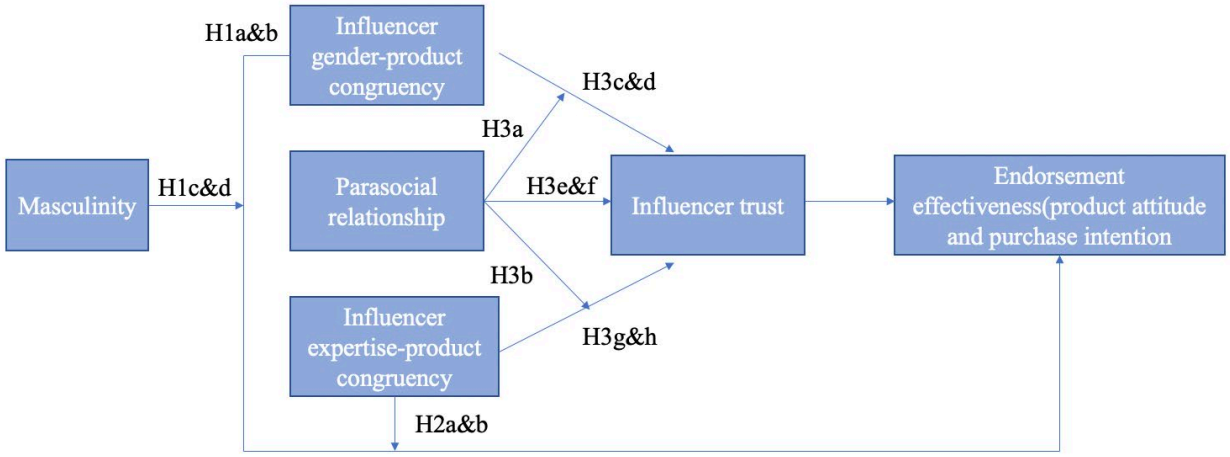

Figure 7. The overall model of social media influencer's endorsement effectiveness (product attitude and purchase intention)

CHAPTER IV. METHOD

A self-administrated online survey was adopted as the data collection method for this study. The survey is a common method used by positivists or post-positivists to investigate the research question empirically and test the hypothesis. Privitera (2017) defines the survey as "a series of questions or statements, called items, used in a questionnaire or an interview to measure the self-reports or responses of respondents" (p, 238). The survey is recognized to be efficient in getting a massive number of responses in a short amount of time (Privitera, 2017), and the Internet survey reaches many more respondents than any previous form of survey design, such as face-to-face survey, mail survey, and phone survey because of the wide accessibility of the Internet use and the reduced time and space constraints. The online survey is widely accepted and cost-effective, and is popular in empirical research in many fields, such as psychology, marketing, and communication.

By using the online survey design, the researcher attempts to examine the role of perceived congruency of the influencer's gender and the product category in the influencer's endorsement effectiveness. Since the research's primary goal is to investigate respondents' personal opinions and perceptions about the gender value and gender fit between endorsers and consumers instead of giving them a highly controlled condition and testing the cause-effect relationship between variables, an online survey is an appropriate method for this dissertation study compared to other primary research methods, such as experiment and content analysis. Moreover, survey is easier to get a more diverse and representative sample and can explore more variables at a time compared to experiments (Liu, 2017).

Surveys do have the disadvantages. For example, some questions require participants' memory recall, and they may not remember their past behaviors or some facts exactly (Öztaş

Ayhan & Işiksal, 2004). However, most questions in this study ask about participants' subjective perceptions regarding their TikTok/Douyin use, TikTok/Douyin influencers, brand attitudes and purchase intentions toward endorsed products, and their agreement with the statement in given scenarios as immediate responses, so this memory lapse disadvantage of the survey method will not affect the validity of the study.

Sampling

The population of this study is the US TikTok user and China Douyin users since the study aims to explore how cultural value and user difference of the two countries affect influencer endorsement effectiveness, and TikTik/Douyin is the most comparable social media platform between China and the USA. The regular TikTok/Douyin users who are over age 18 and have followed at least one TikTok/Douyin influencer who has/had endorsed or promoted commercial products were minimum qualifications to be participants for this study.

This study includes two equivalent versions of surveys, one Chinese language survey, and one English language survey, to cover users in both countries. The features of TikTok and Douyin are the same, but users and their cultures are different. Therefore, the survey mainly investigates users' personal perceptions about the platform use, the cultural value, and how those factors impact their purchase intentions and brand attitudes. Compared to college students, the survey sample recruited by the third-party panel sources, such as Survey Star (for Chinese sample) and Amazon MTurk (for US sample), are more diverse and makes the results more generalizable to the general population. In the crowdsourcing age, the third-party recruiting companies help researchers connect with a large sample pool with workers who are willing to take the online task in a cost-effective way. Amazon MTurk is one of the largest outsourcing platforms in the United States; in particular, it primarily helps social science researchers conduct

low cost online experimental and survey research (PewResearchCenter, 2016). According to Amazon MTurk (2021), it is a crowdsourcing marketplace, which makes easier for individuals and businesses to get access to a "global, on demand, 24*7 workforces." Amazon MTurk workers are human beings, hence subjective survey and online experiment studies use this platform as their major sample recruiting tool. Prior research has shown that Amazon MTurk participants in the United States represent social media users in the U.S. (Lou & Yuan, 2019).

A quota sample was used to ensure equal participation of men and women in the study. Nearly 110 male and 110 female participants were recruited from each country.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was originally designed in English. Then it was translated into Chinese by the researcher who is native Chinese. There are two ways to secure the equivalence of items in both versions: 1) back translation (the researcher translated the English version into Chinese and asked another Chinese English speaker to translate it back to English, and check if they transmit the similar/same meaning); 2) pretest (asking Chinese friends of the researcher who studied/is studying in the USA to answer questions in both versions and pointing out the translation problems in the two questionnaires).

The questionnaire consists of four sections. The survey questions asked about participants' social media use habits, perceptions about social media influencers they have followed and their responses to products the influenced endorsed, their cultural values, and demographic information. First, the respondent was asked to identify an influencer they follow. There were follow up questions regarding the identified influencer, such as 1) the name of the influencer; 2) the gender of the influencer; 3) the favorability level to your influencer, and 4) how did you discover the influencer. Besides, this identified influencer was used for the

following questions regarding the influencer's endorsement effectiveness. Then participants were offered three scenarios of the product their identified influencer endorsed. The three product categories: beauty products (female product)), food & drinks (gender neutral product), and alcoholic products (male product) were determined from Douyin's 30-Day Popular Goods List (CBNData, 2019). Participants answered the questions measuring perceived influencer gender-product congruency, influencer expertise-product congruency, influencer trust, and endorsement effectiveness (product attitude and purchase intention) under each scenario. Since influencers are important for new brands and to prevent participants from influenced by familiar brand names, the researcher only picked certain product categories but no brand names.

Research Procedures

After the researcher designed the questionnaire in both languages, the application form, questionnaires, and consent forms were submitted to Institutional Review Board (IRB) on November 14, 2020. The researcher made some revisions based on IRB's suggestions and the survey received approval on December 18, 2020. After that, the US sample was recruited through Amazon MTurk starting on January 20, 2021, and the China sample recruitment started on Mar 29, 2021 through Survey Star. The survey for US sample was created using the Qualtrics software with the researcher's university logo. A Qualtrics survey link was linked to Amazon MTurk. MTurk workers took the survey by clicking the Qualtrics survey link and submitted the survey using the completion code randomly generated by Qualtrics. Survey Star has its own recruitment system, and all data collection processes for Chinese sample were conducted on the Survey Star platform.

In the U.S., the valid respondent received 30 cents cash reward. However, the attention check question was not mentioned clearly in the original consent form, so some participants

complained about it to the IRB. Hence the study had been suspended and under IRB review for two months. Finally, the researcher paid the participant who contacted the IRB through Amazon MTurk and donated $11.70 (39 uncompensated participants x $0.30) to a US charity, and both the principal investigator and the advisor redid the CITI training in full. Then, IRB approved the revised consent form and the amended application on Mar 11, 2021.

The data collection for the US sample resumed on Amazon MTurk on March 26, 2021. The researcher approved or rejected each HIT based on the survey quality. In order to ensure the result quality, this survey was only available to Workers residing in the USA, with the approval rate greater than 90%, which means only small portion of their HITs were rejected before. Participants received payment if they took over 5 minutes to complete the survey. Due to the concern that some workers were fast readers, and some workers complained that they took the survey seriously, but lost money because the attention check question, the researcher decided that anyone who completed the survey in five minutes or more would get 50 cents. The compensation changed from 30 cents to 50 cents because of the low participation rate for 30 cents. Finally, the researcher manually checked the quality of the responses, and screened out the responses which answered the attention check question incorrectly. Moreover, the researcher paid some workers 50 cents even though their completion time was several seconds fewer than five minutes.

The data collection for the China sample started on Survey Star on March 29, 2021. Survey Star is a sample recruitment company and an online survey platform which is similar to Qualtrics (www.wjx.cn). The sampling pool of this survey company is large including participants in different gender, age, ethnicity, income, education level, and from different parts in China. The Survey Star provided the full service of data collection. Unlike MTurk, there was

no direct communication between the researcher and the respondents in China with Survey Star. The researcher only provided the questionnaire and requirement, such as gender quota, passing attention check question, as well as their survey completion time. Survey Star charged the researcher RMB 4.5(US$0.65) per participant for the participation.

Finally, the research added one more criterion in selecting the final data pool for both countries: the participant's age. Since TikTok and Douyin users are primarily young generation and who are addicted to the Internet and social media, the age group of qualified respondents were restricted to 18 to 49. Therefore, the final qualified responses for the US sample were 220, for Chinese sample were 221.

Measures

The items used in the questionnaire mostly consisted of a five-point Likert scales from strongly agree to strongly disagree, adopted from past research, to address the hypotheses of this study.

Expected influencer gender-product congruency

The researcher created the *expected* influencer gender-product congruency scale to compare the level of general gender-fit perception between Chinese and American consumers. Three items include: 1) Male endorsers and female endorsers should endorse different types of products; 2) The endorser gender should match with the endorsed product category (For example, female endorsers should endorse beauty products or domestic products while male endorsers should endorse alcoholic beverages or sports cars); 3) When the endorser gender matches the product category, then I will buy the product/like the brand. The example was given to the participants as well.

The Cronbach's Alpha for the expected influencer gender-product congruency was

reliable in the collected data in both China and the U.S., α= .82 (China), α = .77 (US).

Perceived influencer gender-product congruency

The researcher created three items in the *perceived* influencer gender-product congruency scale to measure individuals' perception about the gender fit between a specific TikTok influencer and the product he/she has ever endorsed/promoted. Items include: 1) The influencer gender fits the product category (For example, the female influencer endorses/promotes a beauty product; or a male influencer endorses/promotes an alcoholic product); 2) The influencer gender characteristic matches the product characteristic; 3) The influencer is fit to endorse/promote the product because of the gender fit between them.

The Cronbach's Alphas for the expected influencer gender-product congruency was reliable in the collected data in both China and the U.S. in each scenario: cream, α= .89 (China), α = .89 (US); soda, α= .83 (China), α = .86 (US); beer, α= .90 (China), α = .88 (US).

Perceived influencer expertise-product congruency

Five items in the influencer expertise-product congruency scale were adapted from Ohanian (1990). Items include: 1) The influencer is an expert in the product relevant field; 2) The influencer is experienced in the product relevant field; 3) The influencer is knowledgeable in the product relevant field; 4) The influencer is qualified in the product relevant field; 5) The influencer is skilled in the product relevant field.

The Cronbach's Alphas for the expected influencer expertise-product congruency was reliable in the collected data in both China and the U.S., in each scenario: cream, α= .92 (China), α = .92 (US); soda, α= .85 (China), α = .90 (US); beer, α= .88 (China), α = .94 (US).

Parasocial relationship

Nine items in the parasocial interaction scale were adapted from Rubin and Perse (1987)

including: 1) I feel sorry my favorite TikTok/Douyin influencer when he or she makes a mistake; 2) my favorite TikTok/Douyin influencer's personality makes me feel comfortable, as if I am with friends; 3) I see my favorite TikTok/Douyin influencer as a natural, down to earth person; 4) I look forward to watching my favorite TikTok/Douyin influencer on television; 5) I would watch programs that featured my favorite TikTok/Douyin influencer, even if I didn't regularly watch the program; 6) When my favorite TikTok/Douyin influencer is interviewed, he or she seems to understand the things that I want to know; 7) If there were a story about my favorite TikTok/Douyin influencer in a newspaper (either online or hardcopy), magazine, online forums, and online news platforms, I would read it; 8) I miss seeing my favorite TikTok/Douyin influencer when he or she is not in the media; 9) I would like to meet my favorite TikTok/Douyin influencer in person.

The Cronbach's Alphas for the parasocial relationship was reliable in the collected data in both China and the U.S., α= .72 (China), α = .82 (US).

Social media influencer trust

Four items in the social media influencer trust scale were adapted from the consumer trust measure of Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001). Items are 1) I trust this influencer; 2) I rely on this influencer; 3) He/she is an honest influencer; 4) The brand/product endorsed by this influencer is safe.

The Cronbach's Alphas for the expected influencer gender-product congruency was reliable in the collected data in both the U.S. and China in each scenario: cream, α= .77 (China), α = .82 (US); soda, α= .72 (China), α = .78 (US); beer, α= .77 (China), α = .82 (US).

Influencer marketing (endorsement) effectiveness

Influencer marketing effectiveness will be measured by the attitude toward the endorsed

product and purchase intention of the participants' identified influencer's endorsed product used in the study. Product attitude and purchase intention are considered two dimensions of influencers' endorsement effectiveness. One is an attitudinal response, and the other one is behavioral intentions. Attitude change is related to behavioral change, but attitude change does not directly predict consumers' purchase intentions. For instance, in the green purchase intention research, studies found that many factors are related to purchase intentions, and even though consumers' attitudes toward green products did not predict their green purchase behavior (Xu et al., 2020). Besides, purchase intention depends on consumers' product needs at the time, but product attitude applies to all products regardless of needs and purchase condition, such as price. Hence, the attitude towards product and product purchase intentions were both measured as dependent variables.

Product attitude

Six items in the brand attitude scale were adopted from Spears and Singh (2004). Participants indicate their attitudes toward the endorsed product by their favorite influencer by scoring on each item ranging from 1 to 7. Items include 1) "unappealing/appealing"; 2) "bad/good"; 3) "unpleasant/pleasant"; 4) "unfavorable/favorable"; 5) "boring/interesting"; 6) "unlikable/likable".

The Cronbach's Alphas for the expected influencer gender-product congruency was reliable in the collected data in both the U.S. and China in each scenario: cream, $\alpha = .89$ (China), $\alpha = .94$ (US); soda, $\alpha = .90$ (China), $\alpha = .95$ (US); beer, $\alpha = .94$ (China), $\alpha = .97$ (US).

Purchase intention

Five items in the purchase intention scale were adopted from Lu et al. (2014). Items include 1) "I would consider buying this product;" 2) "I have no intention to buy this product

(Reverse scored);" 3) "It is possible that I would buy this product;" 4) "I will purchase (this brand) the next time I need a (product);" 5) "If I am in need, I would buy this (product)."

The Cronbach's Alphas for the expected influencer gender-product congruency was reliable in the collected data in both the U.S. and China in each scenario: cream, α= .86 (China), α = .76 (US); soda, α= .82 (China), α = .73 (US); beer, α= .87 (China), α = .83 (US).

Control variables

The control variables that the researcher included in the study were demographics variables such as gender, age, income, education, working status and country, as well as time spent on TikTok, experience using TikTok, number of followers on TikTok, number of following on TikTok and time spent on social media. Individual's masculinity value, individual's individualism value and individual's power distance value, as three cultural dimensions, were also compared and controlled in the data analysis.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions at an individual level

Three out of six of Hofstede's cultural dimensions were chosen in this study measured at an individual level: masculinity, individualism and power distance, because they are most relevant to this study. Since the original scale items have been used for decades, and they were work-oriented, not appropriate for the current study. All the items are adopted from Yoo et al. (2011). Yoo et al. (2011) developed a 26-item scale to measure five cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede (1980): power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity, and long-term orientation for individuals. The scale "shows adequate reliability, validity, and across-sample and cross-nation generalizability" (Yoo et al., 2011, p. 193).

Individuals' masculinity value

Four items in the masculinity scale were adopted from Yoo et al (2011), which measures

the masculinity value at an individual level. Items include: 1) It is important for men to have a professional career than it is for women; 2) Men usually solve problems with logical analysis, and women usually solve problems with intuition; 3) Solving difficult problems usually requires an active, forcible approach, which is typical for men, and 4) There are some jobs that a man can always do better than a woman.

Individual's individualism value

Six items in the individualism scale were adopted from Yoo et al (2011), which measures the individualism value at an individual level. All items were reversed scored: 1) Individuals should sacrifice self-interest for the group; 2) Individuals should stick with the group even through difficulties; 3) Group welfare is more important than individual rewards; 4) Group success is more important than individual success; 5) Individuals should only pursue their goals after considering the welfare of the group; 6) Group loyalty should be encouraged even if individual goals suffer.

Individual's power distance value

Five items in the power distance scale were adopted from Yoo et al (2011), which measures the power distance value at an individual level. Items include: 1) People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions; 2) People in higher positions should not ask the opinions of people in lower positions too frequently; 3) People in higher positions should avoid social interaction with people in lower positions; 4) People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions by people in higher positions; 5) People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions.

The Cronbach's Alphas for the above individual cultural values were reliable in the collected data in both the US and China although US reliability overall is higher than China,

$\alpha_{individualism}$ = .82 (China), $\alpha_{individualism}$ = .89 (US), $\alpha_{powerdistance}$ = .82 (China), $\alpha_{powerdistance}$ = .92(US), and $\alpha_{masculinity}$ = .74 (China), $\alpha_{masculinity}$ = .85 (US).

CHAPTER V. RESULTS

Respondent Profile

There were 221 Chinese respondents: 111 males and 110 females, and 220 US respondents: 116 males and 104 females. The average age of Chinese and US respondents was 29.42 (SD = 5.87) and 33.17 (SD = 6.93), respectively. Most Chinese respondents had two or more years of experience of using Douyin (74.9%), and most of them spent 11 to 59 minutes on Douyin every day (70.9%). A total of 91.5% Chinese respondents lived in city areas, and 8.5% lived in suburban and rural areas. Most US respondents had less than two years of experience of using TikTok (68%), and most of them spent 11 minutes to 2 hours on TikTok per day (78.9%). About half of US respondents (54%) lived in the city, and 32.5% of them were from suburban areas, while 13.5% of them were from rural areas.

The study's primary purpose is to investigate the causal effect relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and influencers' endorsement effectiveness in the two countries, with a particular focus on the effect of consumers' cultural values, such as masculinity, individualism, and power distance. In addition, the impact of parasocial relationship and influencer trust are also explored in the analysis. Both moderation and mediation effects are examined. First, the hypothesis will be tested by using descriptive analysis and multiple regression models. The study first analyzed and compared the overall U.S. and Chinese sample, and due to some vital difference of the overall sample, everyone hypothesis was examined in three product scenarios, male-gendered, female-gendered, and gender-neutral products.

Demographic Comparison between the U.S. and Chinese Participants

Several descriptive and demographic frequency analyses were conducted in the two samples to examine the difference between the TikTok and Douyin users in China and the US

and how they consumed this short-video platform differently. First of all, concerning participants' marital status, the samples were almost identical. Most of them were married: 152 US participants and 152 Chinese participants were married, and they accounted for 69.1% and 68.8% of the total number of participants in each sample, respectively. Much fewer participants were single: Fifty-five US participants and 67 Chinese participants identified their marital status as single (never married), counting for 25% and 30.3% of the total participants in each sample, respectively. Very few US participants chose co-habitation or divorced/separated as their marital status. Only two Chinese participants (0.9%) chose co-habitation, and no Chinese participants chose divorced/separated as their marital status. No participants in both samples chose they were widowed.

Table 1. US-China participant comparison by marital status

	US Frequency N = 220	US Percent%	CH Frequency N = 221	CH Percent%
1. Single (never married)	55	25	67	30.3
2. Married	152	69.1	152	68.8
3. Co-habitation	5	2.3	2	0.9
4.Divorced/Separated	8	3.6	0	0
5. Widowed	0	0	0	0

The second comparable demographic information between Chinese and US participants was their highest education degrees. All possible highest education degrees were divided into, before high school, high school or equivalent, college but no degree, associate degree, bachelor's degree, and graduate degree (including masters' degree and doctorate degree). Most participants earned a bachelor's degree in both countries (60.3% China vs. 65.2% U.S.). About 17% of US participants earned a graduate degree, in the second place, followed by the associate degree (7.7%), in the third place. In China, a higher number of participants earned an associate (14.9%) than a graduate degree (11.4%), which were in the second and third place among the answer to

this question. There were 15.3% of US participants and 8.6% of Chinese participants not getting any higher education degree (See Table 2). According to a finding by U.S. Census Bureau (2022), among the population aged 25 and older, 23.5% of them had a bachelor's degree as their highest education degree, and 14.4% of them had a graduate degree as their highest degree, such as master's or Doctoral degree. On the other hand, according to the report of China's 7th National Census (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021), the Chinese population was 1.41 billion in 2020, and 24.4% of the population aged 15 or older had a bachelor's or graduate degree as their highest degree. Hence, Chinese Douyin users were generally more well-educated than U.S. TikTok users with fewer people not having a bachelor's degree. However, there are more graduate degrees in the U.S. sample. So, U.S. participants are more extreme in education levels than China.

Table 2. US-China participant comparison by highest degree attained

	US Frequency (N = 220)	US Percent%	CH Frequency (N=221)	CH Percent%
1. < High school	3	1.4	1	0.5
2. High school or equivalent	14	6.4	4	1.8
3. College but no degree	16	7.3	14	6.3
4. Associate degree	17	7.7	33	14.9
5. Bachelor's degree	132	60.3	144	65.2
6. Graduate degree	38	17.3	25	11.4

Most participants in both countries claimed they had a full-time job working 40 hours or more per week. The percentage in the US was 79, and the percentage in China was 84. Besides, only 3.2% of US participants were full-time students, and the rest did not have a job. Many more US participants (11.4%) work part-time than Chinese participants (1.8%). Meanwhile, 12.2 of Chinese participants were full-time students, and the rest did not have a job (See Table 3).

Table 3. US-China participants comparison by employment status

	US Frequency (N = 219)	US Percent%	CH Frequency (N=221)	CH Percent%
1. Part-time or work 1-39 hrs a week	26	11.9	4	1.8
2. Full time or work 40 or more hrs a week	173	79	186	84.2
3. Don't have a job and look for job	7	3.2	4	1.8
4. Don't have a job and not look for job	2	0.9	0	0
5. Full time student	7	3.2	27	12.2
6. Retired	0	0	0	0
7. Disabled, not able to work	4	1.8	0	0

Geographically, the result showed that most US TikTok users and Chinese Douyin users were from city areas, and more US TikTok users were from suburban and rural areas than Chinese Douyin users. Fifty-four percent of US respondents lived in the city. A total of 32.5% US participants were from suburban areas, while 13.5% of them were from rural areas. In China, 91.5% respondents lived in city areas. Five percent of them lived in suburban areas, and only 3.2% of them lived in rural areas (See Table 4).

Table 4. US-China participant comparison by living area

	US Frequency (N=216)	US Percent%	CH Frequency (N = 221)	CH Percent%
1. City	115	53.2	203	91.9
2. Suburb area	71	32.9	11	5
3. Rural area	30	13.9	7	3.2

The United States is an immigrant country and people are of different races. China is also known for its cultural diversity because there are 56 ethnic groups in China. However, there is no immigrant culture in China, and Chinese people are not divided by race. Instead, their identities are differentiated by their ethnic groups. Hence, the demographic information regarding

participants' ethnicity in the US and ethnic groups in China is different. Seventy-five percent of US participants were white, followed by black/African American (14.5%), Hispanic/Latino (5%), and Asia (4.5%). Han is the ethnic majority group among the 56 ethnic groups in China, including most Chinese. The other 55 ethnic groups are all called ethnic minority groups in China, including Hui, Man, Yi, Dai, Zhuang, etc. In this study, 95.9% of Chinese participants were from the Han ethnic group, and 4.1% were from the ethnic minority groups, such as Hui (1.4%) and Man (0.9%).

Table 5. US TikTok user ethnicity

N = 220	Frequency	Percent%
1. White	165	75
2. Hispanic/Latino	11	5
3. Black/African American	32	14.5
4. Asian	10	4.5
5. Hawalian	0	0
6. Other	2	0.9

Table 6. Chinese Douyin user ethnic groups

N = 221	Frequency	Percent%
1. Han	212	95.9
2. Hui	3	1.4
3. Man	2	0.9
4. Yi	0	0
5. Dai	0	0
6. Zhuang	2	0.9
7. Uyghur	0	0
8. Other	2	0.9

Income is a piece of popular demographic information in survey to measure the affluence of the consumers. However, how income is measured in the survey is different between China and the US. Annual income is common in the US culture, and monthly income is common in

China. Hence, in the Chinese survey, the answer to the income question was grouped by participants' individual monthly income, and in the US survey, the answer was grouped by their annual income. As shown in Table 7, there were seven categories under each income question, starting from a low to a relatively high income. For instance, in the Chinese survey, the lowest monthly income option was less than 1,000 RMB (≈ 157 US dollars), and the highest monthly income option was more than 20,000 RMB (≈ 3,144 US dollars). In the US survey, the lowest annual income option was less than $10,000, and the highest annual income option was more than $150,000. Most of US participants made $25,000-$49,999 a year (30.1%), following by $50,000-$74,999 a year (25.6%) and $75,000-$99,999 a year (19.2%). Most of Chinese participants made 7001-10,000 RMB a month, following by 10,001-20,000 RMB a month (25.8%) and 5,001-7,000 a month (19.9%). Most of US participants' annual income and Chinese participants' monthly income were in the middle range of each country, and only a few of them made the lowest or highest annual or monthly income. A higher proportion of higher income categories was found among Chinese participants than U.S. participants.

Table 7. US TikTok user annual income

N = 219	**Frequency**	**Percentage %**
1. < $ 10,000	11	14
2. $ 10,000-RMB 24,999	22	25
3.$ 25,000-$49,999	66	69
4. $ 50,000-$ 74,999	56	59
5. $ 75,000-$ 99,000	42	45
6. $ 100,000 10,001 $ 149,999	17	20
7. > $ 150,000	5	8

Note: missing data excluded.

Table 8. Chinese Douyin user monthly income

	Frequency	Percentage%
1. < RMB 1,000	12	5.4
2. RMB 1,001-RMB 3,000	20	9
3. RMB 3,001-RMB 5,000	19	8.6
4. RMB 5,001-RMB 7,000	44	19.9
5. RMB 7,001-RMB 10,000	59	26.7
6. RMB 10,001-RMB 20,000	57	25.8
7. > RMB 20,000	10	4.5

Note: missing data excluded.

TikTok Usage Comparison between Chinese and the U.S. Participants

There were also differences between Chinese Douyin users and US TikTok users regarding their average time consumption on social media in general and their time consumption on TikTok/Douyin in particular. In the questionnaire, six time intervals started from less than 10 minutes to over three hours to measure their average time consumption on social media and TikTok/Douyin. Overall, Chinese participants were heavier users of social media than American participants. Most US participants (28.4%) spent *one to two hours* on the social media platform, while most Chinese participants (34.4%) spent *two to three hours* per day on the social media platform. Up to 21.6% of US participants and 27.6% of Chinese participants spent over three hours on social media every day, which was in the second place. In third place, 20.6% of US participants spent 31-59 minutes on social media, and 26.2% of Chinese participants spent one to two hours on social media every day. Only two US participants (0.9%) spent less than 10 minutes per day on social media, and all Chinese participants spent more than 10 minutes on social media a day (See Table 9).

Table 9. Time spent on social media per day

	US Frequency (N = 220)	US Percent (%)	CH Frequency (N = 221)	CH Percent (%)
1. < 10 mins	2	0.9	0	0
2. 11-30 mins	19	8.7	4	1.8
3. 31-59 mins	45	20.6	22	10
4. 1-2 hrs	62	28.4	58	26.2
5. 2-3 hrs	43	19.7	76	34.4
6. > 3 hrs	47	21.6	61	27.6

Participants' time consumption distribution on TikTok and Douyin was also different between each country. The most popular time intervals in the US were 31-59 minutes (27.9%), 11-30 minutes (26.9%), and 1-2 hours (26.5%), while in China, the most common time spent was 1-2 hours (40.7%), followed by 31-59 minutes (30.8%) and 2-3 hours (12.2%). The distribution of each time interval was relatively even in the US, while the Chinese participants had much higher usage of TikTok with 53% using 1-2 hours a day or more. In both samples, less than 10 minutes and over three hours were the two time intervals that were least favorite, which indicated that TikTok/Douyin was an attractive social media platform for most users, and they were willing to spend a substantial amount of time on this platform.

The experience of using TikTok/Douyin was also different between the two samples. In the US, 100 participants (46.1%) claimed they had used TikTok for one to two years so far, followed by less than one year (24%), two to three years (18.4%), and more than three years (11.5%). In the Chinese sample, most participants claimed that they had two to three years of experience of using Douyin (39.4%), followed by more than three years (35.7%), one to two years (22.6%), and less than one year of experience of using Douyin (2.3%). The result showed Douyin users were more experienced than TikTok users in using the platform.

Table 10. Frequency and percentage of time spent on TikTok/Douyin per day and length of time as a TikTok/Douyin user

	US (N = 219)Time spent on TikTok /Douyin per day	CH (N = 221))Time spent on TikTok /Douyin per day		US (N = 217) Length of time as TikTok/Douyin user	CH (N = 221) Length of time as TikTok/Douyin user
1. ≤ 10 mins	9 (4.10%)	0 (0%)	**1. < 1 yr**	52 (24.00%)	5 (2.30%)
2. 11-30 mins	57 (26.90)	23 (10.40%)	**2. 1-2 yrs**	100 (46.10%)	50 (22.60%)
3. 31-59 mins	61 (27.90)	68 (30.80%)	**3. 2-3 yrs**	40 (18.40%)	87 (39.40%)
4. 1-2 hrs	58 (26.50)	90 (40.70%)	**4. > 3 yrs**	25 (11.50%)	79 (35.70%)
5. 2-3 hrs	21 (9.60)	27 (12.20%)	0	0	0
6. > 3 hrs	13 (5.90%)	13 (5.90%)	0	0	0

As a social media platform, socialization is a crucial feature of TikTok/Douyin. Hence, to comprehensively understand the difference between TikTok and Douyin users, the number of followers and the number of followings matter to this study. Table 11 shows the number of participants' followers on TikTok/Douyin in each country. Participants chose one interval of number of followers and followings. In the US sample, most participants reported they had 51-100 followers on TikTok (21.1%), followed by over 300 followers (20.6%) and 11-50 followers (17%). The Chinese sample had much fewer followers than the U.S. sample. Most participants had 11-50 followers on Douyin (33.9%). Fewer participants picked 51-100 followers as their answer to this question (22.6%), followed by 101-150 followers (12.7%). Only 16 Chinese participants claimed that they had more than 300 followers on Douyin (7.2%). Overall, 51.8% of US participants had more than 100 followers on TikTok, while 33% of Chinese participants claimed they had more than 100 followers on Douyin. This number indicated that more interaction and socialization might happen between US TikTok users than Chinese Douyin users.

Another critical feature of TikTok/Douyin is the emerging influencers. With this concern, this study examined users' general TikTok/Douyin use and their preference of influencer video consumption, and the influence of influencers' persuasion on users' purchase behaviors. Table 11 also shows the number of influencers followed by the participant. Most US (27.9%) and Chinese (40.7%) samples claimed that they followed 11-50 TikTok/Douyin influencers. Therefore, the preference of the number of influencers followed by TikTok/Douyin users was relatively similar in the US and China. However, similar to the number of followers on TikTok/Douyin, more US participants (18 or 8.2%) followed more than 300 influencers than Chinese participants (6 or 2.7%). The result indicated that US TikTok users were more likely to follow and be followed by many other TikTok users than Chinese Douyin users. U.S. TikTok users were more extreme in their following and followers than their Chinese counterpart.

Table 11. Frequency and percentage of No. of followers and No. of following of influencers on TikTok/Douyin

	US No. of followers (N = 218)	US No. of following (influencers) (N = 219)	CH No. of followers (N = 221)	CH No. of following (influencers) (N = 221)
1. ≤ 10	22 (10.10%)	27 (12.30%)	23 (10.40%)	8 (3.60%)
2. 11-50	37 (17.00%)	61 (27.90%)	75 (33.90%)	90 (40.70%)
3. 51-100	46 (21.10%)	39 (17.80%)	50 (22.60%)	53 (24.00%)
4. 101-150	23 (10.60%)	34 (15.50%)	28 (12.70%)	29 (13.10%)
5. 151-200	14 (6.40%)	22 (10.00%)	13 (5.90%)	22 (10.00%)
6. 201-250	16 (7.30%)	11 (5.00%)	12 (5.40%)	9 (4.10%)
7. 251-300	15 (6.90%)	7 (3.20%)	4 (1.80%)	4 (1.80%)
8. > 300	45 (20.60%)	18 (8.20%)	16 (7.20%)	6 (2.70%)

Participants were asked to list one TikTok/Douyin influencer who was their favorite and then identified their favorite influencers' expertise based on the categories provided by the researcher. Influencers are a group of TikTok/Douyin users who are content creators with a niche in specific areas. This study categorized the influencer's expertise into eight groups, including

music, travel, beauty, fashion, food, pet, fitness, and others. U.S. and Chinese participants differed quite a bit in favorite influencer type. Music influencers on TikTok for 25.1% were most likely to be chosen as the favorite influencer by most US participants, followed by fashion (18.3%), and beauty (15.5%). Pet influencers were the least favorite influencers identified by US participants (0.9%). In contrast, beauty influencers (31.2%) were most frequently identified as participants' favorite Douyin influencers, followed by food (27.1%), and fashion (17.2%) by the Chinese participants. Pet influencers were also the least favorite Douyin influencers, and no participant picked pet influencers as their favorite influencers. Almost none of the Chinese participants chose fitness influencers as their favorite (0.5%).

Moreover, participants' influencer preference was further examined by their age groups. Participants' age range in this study was between 18 to 49, and 30 was used as a cutoff to divide all participants into young and old age groups. Participants aged 18-29 were grouped into the young group, and participants aged 30-49 were grouped into the old group. In the US sample, the result showed that music (22.1%), fashion (22.1%), and beauty (18.4%) influencers were the most popular TikTok influencers, while pet influencers were the least favorite influencers (0%) in the young age group. In the old age group, participants preferred music (27.3%), fashion (16.8%), and beauty (14%) influencers, and only two participants chose pet influencers as their favorite influencers, which made pet influencers the least favorite (1.4%). Hence age did not make a big difference on the favorite influencer type.

But in the Chinese sample, favorite influencer type differed by age groups. Most participants in the young age group chose beauty (35.5%), fashion (21.8%), and food (20.9%) influencers to be their favorite Douyin influencers. In the old age group, most participants

identified food (33.3%), beauty (27%), and fashion (12.6%) influencers as their favorite influencers.

Above all, the big difference of participants' influencer expertise preference between China and the US was their preference on music (US favorite) and food (Chinese favorite) expertise. Besides, slightly more US participants preferred fitness and pet influencers to be their favorite influencers than Chinese participants.

Table 12. TikTok/Douyin users' influencer expertise preference grouped by age

	US Age < 30 (N = 76)	US Age ≥30 (N = 143)	US All age (N = 219)	CH Age < 30 (N = 110)	CH Age ≥30 (N = 111)	CH All age (N =221)
1. Music	16 (21.10%)	39 (27.30%)	55 (25.1%)	3 (2.70%)	10 (9.00%)	13 (5.90%)
2. Travel	6 (7.90%)	13 (9.10%)	19 (8.70%)	1 (0.90%)	2 (1.80%)	3 (1.40%)
3. Beauty	14 (18.40%)	20 (14.00%)	34 (15.50%)	39 (35.50%)	30 (27.00%)	69 (31.20%)
4.Fashion	16 (21.10%)	24 (16.80%)	40 (18.30%)	24 (21.80%)	14 (12.60%)	38 (17.20%)
5. Food	7 (9.20%)	7 (4.90%)	14 (6.40%)	23 (20.90%)	37 (33.30%)	60 (27.10%)
6. Pet	0 (0%)	2 (1.40%)	2 (0.90%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
7. Fitness	7 (9.20%)	10 (7.00%)	17 (7.80%)	1 (0.90%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.50%)
8. Other	10 (13.20%)	28 (19.60%)	38 (17.40%)	19 (17.30%)	18 (16.20%)	37 (16.70%)

Participants' purchase intentions were measured in three product categories (scenarios), and in each scenario, they were measured by a 5-point Likert scale. So, the purchase intention score should be ranged from 3 (unlikely to buy the product) to 15 (most likely to buy the product). Specifically, the mean, standard deviation, and Cronbach alpha value of purchase intentions in each scenario in the two countries were listed in Table 13. Since, in the scenario, all three products were assumed to be endorsed by the same identified favorite influencer, the higher purchase score indicated a greater influencer's influence on participants' purchase intentions. Overall, the Chinese sample's mean score of the combined purchase intention score (M = 10.81, SD = 1.61) was higher than the mean score in the US sample (M = 10.39, SD = 1.86). In a following t-test, the result supported the statistical significance of the mean difference between

the two country, t (437) = -2.57, $p < .05$. Therefore, Chinese participants' purchase intentions were found to be more influenced by influencers. Specifically, the mean score of purchase score of young US participants (M = 10.05, SD = 1.65) was lower than the old participants (M = 10.56, SD = 1.95), which indicated that participants in the old age group were more influenced by influencers than participants in the young age group in terms of the purchase intention. In the Chinese sample, old participants' purchase intention (M = 10.99, SD = 1.50) was also more influenced by influencers than young participants (M = 10.64, SD = 1.71), as well. However, the t-test result only supported that age group (young/old) marginally mattered in the US sample, t (216) = -1.95, $p = .05$, but not in the Chinese sample, t (219) = -1.62, $p > .05$, in terms of the mean difference of purchase score in each country.

Table 13. Users' purchase score grouped by users' age and different product type

	US Purchase score:N	US Purchase score:Mean	US Purchase score:SD	US Purchase score: Cronbach's Alpha	CH Purchase score: N	CH Purchase score: Mean	CH Purchase score: SD	CH Purchase score: Cronbach's Alpha
Age < 30	76	10.05	1.65	0	110	10.64	1.71	0
Age ≥30	144	10.56	1.95	0	111	10.99	1.5	0
All age	220	10.39	1.86	0	221	10.81	1.61	0
Scenario cream	220	3.52	0.73	0.76	221	3.65	0.8	0.86
Scenario soda	220	3.55	0.73	0.73	221	3.72	0.74	0.82
Scenario beer	220	3.31	0.94	0.83	221	3.44	0.88	0.87

The above descriptive analysis was about TikTok/Douyin users' general demographic information, and the researcher tried to understand user differences by comparing the similarity and differences of their demographic information.

Gender is a critical issue in this study. Users and their favorite influencers differ by gender. Hence, a descriptive analysis was conducted to confirm the importance of gender in the

study. In the U.S. sample, 77 out of 116 male or 66.4% of male users chose male influencers as their favorite influencers, and 39 (33.6%) of them chose female influencers as their favorite. Similarly, 63 out of 104 or 60.6% female users chose female influencers as their favorite influencers, and only 41 or 39.4% of them chose male influencers as their favorite. The result indicated that U.S. males preferred male influencers, and females preferred female influencers. c^2 (1, N = 220) = 16.02, $p < .001$. In the Chinese sample, among 111 male Douyin users, 62 or 55.9% of them chose female influencers, and 49 or 44.1% of them chose male influencers as their favorite influencers. The number was relatively equal in female users, while 52 out of 110 female users chose male influencers, and the rest of them chose female influencers as their favorite influencers. However, a chi-square test of independence showed that there was no significant association between gender and the preference of the chosen influencer among the Chinese participants, c^2 (1, N = 221) = 1.63, p = .20. Only the result from the U.S. sample shows the same gender preference in influencer choice.

The Gender Congruence Hypotheses Testing Results

The impact of influencer gender on product attitude/purchase intention-China vs. the U.S.

Since this study aimed to examine the impact of the congruence between an influencer's gender and a gendered product, based on the hypothesis proposed before, the gender of the product is an important factor to examine. Hence, there are three scenarios in the survey design, female-gendered product (skin cream), neutral product (soda), and male-gendered product (beer). In consistent with the hypothesis, gender congruency should be more important to gendered product than neutral product. The result of a regression analysis showed that the influencer's gender positively predicted consumers' product attitude (β = .21, $p < .01$) and purchase intention (β = .17, $p < .01$) toward the female-gendered product, skin cream, in the Chinese sample.

Specifically, female influencers positively predicted the purchase intention of female-gendered product-skin cream. The gender of the influencer also impacted the outcome for male-gendered product, beer. However, the relationship was negative ($\beta_{attitude}$ = -.15, $p < .05$, $\beta_{purchase}$ = -.22, $p < .01$), which suggested that female influencers were more conducive to participants' product attitudes and purchase intentions than male influencers for beer. As hypothesized, there was no statistical significance of the relationship between the influencer's gender and the outcome for a neutral product, soda.

However, the result was a bit different in the U.S. sample. Among all three scenarios, the influencer's gender only impacted the purchase intention outcome for the female-gendered product, cream ($\beta_{purchase}$ = .18, $p < .05$). The influencer's gender was unrelated to attitude and purchase intention for both neutral and male-gendered products.

The difference of scores on several variables between males and females—China vs. the U.S.

In China, not only influencers' gender matters, but also participants' gender in the product endorsement effectiveness. Several t-tests were used to test the significance of the difference of participants' scores on influencers' gender-product congruency, influencers' expertise-product congruency in different scenarios, and participants' expected gender fit perceptions in general between males and females. The results showed that the above scores differed between males and females, but not all of them was statistically significant. In the Chinese sample, the mean score of influencer gender-product congruency in the cream scenario was different between males (M = 3.50, SD=) and females (M = 3.63, SD=), but there was no statistical significance for the difference. The same situation applied to the influencer gender-product congruency in the soda scenario (M_{male} = 3.69, M_{female}=3.51, $p > .05$). However, the mean score of the influencer gender-product congruency in the beer scenario differed significantly

between males and females, and male participants' scores were higher than females' (M_{male} = 3.36, M_{female} = 2.98, $p < .05$).

The result of a t-test in the U.S. sample only suggested that males had a higher mean score of the perceived influencer gender-product congruency in the beer scenario (M_{male} = 3.72, M_{female} = 3.45, $p < .05$), which meant the slight difference in the mean score of influencer gender-product congruency in the cream group (M_{male} = 3.89, SD = .89, M_{female} =3.89, SD = .84) and soda group (M_{male} = 3.81, , SD = .80, M_{female} =3.84, SD = .83) was negligible.

Gender Congruency and Endorsement Effectiveness Hypothesis Testing Results

Due to the significant differences between US and Chinese samples in their Tik/Douyin use and endorsement effectiveness as shown above, the researcher decided to separate the data analysis by country in presenting the hypothesis results rather than lumping the data together.

Analysis for overall Chinese sample through H1a-H1d

First, H1 regarding the positive relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and endorsement effectiveness was analyzed using the combined mean score of each variable from three scenarios. Then all four sub-hypotheses proposed in H1 were tested in three scenarios separately. In terms of the combined mean score situation, the positive relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and product attitude proposed by H1a was supported in the Chinese ($\beta = .37$, $p < .01$) sample. The positive relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and purchase intention in H1b was also supported in the Chinese sample ($\beta = .47$, $p < .01$).

The moderation effect of individuals' masculinity score on the relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and product attitude/purchase intention proposed in H1c and H1d was partially supported in China. For the overall Chinese sample, especially for H1c, an

individual's masculinity score moderated the relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and product attitude; however, the moderation effect was negative instead of positive ($\beta = -.13$, $p < .05$). There was no statistical significance in the moderation of masculinity for purchase intention H1d. Hence, H1c and 1d were both rejected.

Table 14. Moderation effect of masculinity on gender congruency and product attitude (China)

Variable	Model 1 B	Model 1 SE. B	Model 1 *β*	Model 2 B	Model 2 SE.B	Model 2 *β*	Model 3 B	Model 3 SE.B	Model 3 *β*
Gender	-0.17	0.1	-0.11	-0.17	0.1	-0.11	-0.18	0.1	0.03
Age	0.004	0.01	0.03	0.004	0.01	0.03	0.004	0.01	0.03
Time spent on Douyin/TikTok	-0.07	0.05	-0.09	-0.07	0.05	-0.09	-0.07	0.05	-0.09
Education	-0.04	0.07	-0.05	-0.04	0.07	-0.05	-0.04	0.07	-0.04
Time of being a Douyin/TikTok user	0.1	0.06	0.1	0.1	0.06	0.1	0.1	0.06	0.1
Income	0.06	0.04	0.12	0.06	0.04	0.12	0.06	0.04	0.11
Gender congruency	0.54	0.09	0.37**	0.54	0.09	0.37**	0.53	0.09	0.37**
Masculinity	0	0	0	0.01	0.06	0.005	0.01	0.06	0.01
Gendercongruency*masculinity	0	0	0	0	0	0	-0.05	0.11	-0.03
R^2	0	0.207	0	0	0.207	0	0	0.208	0
***F* for change in R^2**	0	7.95**	0	0	6.93**	0	0	6.16**	0

Note: Gender Congruency and masculinity were centered at their means. **$p < .01$.

Table 15. Moderation effect of masculinity on gender congruency and purchase intention (China)

Variable	Model 1 B	Model 1 SE. B	Model 1 *β*	Model 2 B	Model 2 SE.B	Model2 *β*	Model3 B	Model3 SE.B	Model3 *β*
Gender	-0.11	0.07	-0.1	-0.1	0.07	-0.1	-0.11	0.07	-0.1
Age	-0.001	0.01	-0.001	-0.001	0.01	-0.01	-0.001	0.01	-0.01
Time spent on Douyin/TikTok	-0.001	0.03	-0.001	0	0.03	0	-0.004	0.03	-0.01
Education	-0.02	0.04	-0.03	-0.02	0.04	-0.03	-0.02	0.04	-0.03
Time of being a Douyin/TikTok user	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.044	0.04
Income	0.05	0.03	0.13	0.05	0.03	0.13	0.04	0.03	0.11
Gender congruency	0.47	0.06	0.47**	0.47	0.06	0.47**	0.45	0.06	0.45
Masculinity	0	0	0	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.05	0.05
y	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gendercongruency*masculinity	0	0	0	0	0	0	-0.15	0.07	0.13*
R^2	0	0.27	0	0	0.28	0	0	0.29	0
***F* for change in R^2**	0	11.43**	0	0	10.03**	0	0	9.55**	0

Note: Gender Congruency and masculinity were centered at their means. $^{**}p < .01$.

Analysis for the Chinese sample through H1a—H1d by Product Types

When comparing the three product type scenarios, there were also significant different results in each scenario. The positive relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and product attitude/purchase intention was supported across product gender, skin cream ($\beta_{attitude}$= .44, $p < .01$, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .48, $p < .01$), soda ($\beta_{attitude}$ = .48, $p < .01$, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .55, $p < .01$), and beer ($\beta_{attitude}$ = .46, $p < .01$, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .54, $p < .01$).

Hence, H1a and H1b of the positive relationship between gender-product congruency and influencer endorsement effectiveness were supported in China, and in both combined mean scores and separate scenario situations.

Moderating role of masculinity on product-gender congruence effect in three scenarios—China

Hypothesis 1c and 1d regarding the moderator role of an individual's masculinity score on product attitude and purchase intention were tested in three different scenarios. First, the moderation effect was tested for the Chinese sample. The result found that individual masculinity was not a moderator on product attitude and purchase intention (β_{cream}= .001, β_{soda} = -.004 β_{beer}= .04) in all three product scenarios. Hence, hypotheses 1c and 1d were rejected in all scenarios for the Chinese sample.

Same sex and opposite gender effect in three scenarios—China

Furthermore, the data from each sample were split into two files to examine same sex and opposite gender effect. First, the data were filtered by participant's gender. Then, the data were broken down by influencer's gender, resulting in four groups in the U.S. and China respectively (male participants * male influencers, male participants * female influencers, female participants * male influencers, and female participants * female influencers). Then, regression analyses were conducted under each condition. For the Chinese sample, for the cream product, male participants' product attitudes were more influenced by male influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .55, $p < .01$) than female influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .40, $p < .01$), but their purchase intentions were similarly influenced by female influencers ($\beta_{purchase}$ = .35, $p < .05$) than male influencers ($\beta_{purchase}$= .34, $p < .05$), toward the cream product. For the neutral product, soda, male participants' product attitudes were influenced more by female influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .67, $p < .01$, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .54, $p < .01$) than male influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .34, $p < .01$, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .43, $p < .05$). Under the beer condition, Chinese male participants' product attitudes were more influenced by female influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .58, $p < .01$) than male influencers ($\beta_{purchase}$ = .48, $p < .01$). However, their purchase

intentions were more influenced by male influencers ($\beta_{purchase}$= .50, p < .01) than female influencers ($\beta_{purchase}$ = .48, p < .01). In general, for gendered-products, Chinese male participants were more influenced by opposite-sex (female) influencers in terms of their product attitudes, but for the purchase intentions, same gender congruency effect is more apparent.

Chinese female participants showed similar opposite sex effect on product attitude as their male counterparts for gendered products. They were more influenced by male influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .50, p < .01, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .48, p < .01) than female influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .16, p > .05, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .41, p < .01) regarding their product attitudes and purchase intentions under the cream product scenario, showing strong opposite sex effect. Female participants' product attitudes and purchase intentions were more influenced by female influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .56, p < .01, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .68, p < .01) than male influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .47, p < .01, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .54, p < .01) toward soda products. In the beer scenario, Chinese female participants were more influenced by male influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .42, p < .01, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .58, p < .01) than female influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .40, p < .01, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .39, p < .01) in both their product attitudes and purchase intentions. In general, Chinese female participants were more influenced by the opposite-sex (male) influencers regarding their product attitudes and purchase intentions for gendered products. Hence, in the Chinese sample, male and female participants were mostly influenced by opposite-sex influencers in opposite gendered products.

Analysis for the overall U.S. sample through H1a-H1d

H1a on gender-product congruency and brand attitude was supported in the U.S. sample (β = .65, p < .01). The positive relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and purchase intention in H1b was also supported in the U.S. sample (β = .52, p < .01).

The moderation effect of individuals' masculinity score on the relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and product attitude/purchase intention proposed in H1c

and H1d was partially supported in the U.S. H1c on positive relationship with product attitude moderation by masculinity was supported (β = .10, $p < .05$), but H1d on purchase intention moderation by masculinity was rejected (β = -.01, $p > .05$).

Table 16. Moderation effect of masculinity on gender congruency and product attitude (the U.S.)

Variable	Model 1 B	Model 1 SE.B	Model 1 *β*	Model 2 B	Model 2 SE.B	Model 2 *β*	Model 3 B	Model 3 SE.B	Model 3 *β*
Gender	0.12	0.11	0.06	0.15	0.12	0.07	0.15	0.11	0.07
Age	-0.001	0.01	-0.01	-0.001	0.01	-0.001	-0.001	0.01	-0.01
Time spent on Douyin/TikTok	0.06	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.03	0.05	0.04
Education	0.15	0.06	0.16*	0.14	0.06	0.14*	0.12	0.06	0.12*
Time of being a Douyin/TikTok user	-0.01	0.07	-0.01	-0.03	0.07	-0.03	-0.02	0.07	-0.02
Income	-0.05	0.05	-0.06	-0.05	0.05	0.06	-0.04	0.05	-0.05
Gender congruency	1.09	0.09	0.65**	1.04	0.1	0.62**	1.07	0.1	0.63**
Masculinity	0	0	0	0.1	0.06	0.1	0.1	0.06	0.1
Gendercongruency*masculinity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.17	0.09	0.1*
R^2	0	0.49	0	0	0.5	0	0	0.51	0
***F* for change in R^2**	0	24.52**	0	0	22.27**	0	0	20.76**	0

Note: Gender Congruency and masculinity were centered at their means. **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$.

Table 17. Moderation effect of masculinity on gender congruency and purchase intention (the U.S.)

Variable	Model 1 B	Model 1 SE.B	Model 1 *β*	Model2 B	Model2 SE.B	Model2 *β*	Model3 B	Model3 SE.B	Model3 *β*
Gender	0.08	0.07	0.06	0.11	0.07	0.08	0.11	0.07	0.08
Age	0.002	0.01	0.03	0.003	0.01	0.04	0.003	0.01	0.04
Time spent on Douyin/TikTok	0.002	0.03	0.004	-0.01	0.03	-0.02	-0.01	0.03	-0.02
Education	0.05	0.04	0.1	0.04	0.04	0.07	0.04	0.04	0.07
Time of being a Douyin/TikTok user	0.07	0.05	0.1	0.05	0.05	0.07	0.05	0.05	0.07
Income	-0.03	0.03	-0.06	-0.03	0.03	-0.07	-0.03	0.03	-0.07
Gender congruency	0.5	0.06	0.52**	0.45	0.06	0.47**	0.45	0.06	0.47**
Masculinity	0	0	0	0.1	0.04	0.17**	0.1	0.04	0.17**
Gendercongruency*masculinity	0	0	0	0	0	0	-0.01	-0.01	-0.13
R^2	0	0.35	0	0	0.37	0	0	0.37	0
***F* for change in R^2**	0	13.61**	0	0	13.10**	0	0	11.73**	0

Note: Gender Congruency and masculinity were centered at their means. $^{**}p < .01$, $^{*}p < .05$

Analysis for the U.S. sample through H1a—H1d by product types

When applied to the U.S. sample, there is also positive relationship between perceived influencer gender-product congruency and product attitude and purchase intention in all product types: skin cream ($\beta_{attitude}$= .54, $p < .01$, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .54, $p < .01$), soda ($\beta_{attitude}$= .59, $p < .01$, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .46, $p < .01$), and beer ($\beta_{attitude}$= .65, $p < .01$, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .53, $p < .01$). Hence, H1a and H1b of the positive relationship between gender-product congruency and influencer endorsement effectiveness were supported in the U.S., and in both combined mean scores and separate scenario situations. The impact of consumers' perception of influencer gender-product congruency on their product attitudes and purchase intentions were stronger in the U.S. than China. See Table 14.

Table 18. Influencer gender-product congruency effects (China vs. the U.S.)

	China Product attitude	China Purchase intention	U.S. Product attitude	U.S. Purchase intention
Female-gendered product (skin cream)	.44**	.48**	.54**	.54**
Male-gendered product (beer)	.46**	.54**	.59**	.46**
Gender-neutral product (soda)	.48**	.55**	.65**	.53**
Overall sample	.37**	.65**	.47**	.52**

Note: $^{**}p < .01$

Moderating role of masculinity on product-gender congruence effect in three scenarios—the U.S.

There was a moderation effect found in the US sample in the skin cream scenario, which indicated that participants' influencer gender-product congruency on their product attitudes to the skin cream product is affected by their masculinity score. The result of a hierarchical regression analysis showed a positive relationship between influencer gender-product congruency (β= .55, $p < .01$) individual masculinity (β = .15, $p < .05$) and product attitude in the first model, $R^2 = .39$, SE = .90, F (8) = 16.26, $p < .01$, and a positive moderation effect (β= .15, $p < .01$) in the second model with individual masculinity as the moderator, $R^2 = .41$, SE = .89, F (9) = 15.61, $p < .01$. Individual masculinity was also a positive predictor of participants' purchase intentions for the beer product (β= .20, $p < .01$). In addition, there was no moderation effect in the soda and beer scenario. In conclusion, hypothesis 1c was supported only in the skin cream scenario, and Hypotheses 1c and 1d were also rejected in all other scenarios for the US sample.

Same sex and opposite gender effect in three scenarios—the U.S.

Regarding how influencers' gender impacting male and female participants' endorsement effectiveness (product attitude and purchase intention), the result was different between U.S sample and Chinese sample. In the cream scenario, U.S. male participants were influenced more

by male influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .72, p < .01, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .65, p < .01) than female influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .50, p < .01, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .32, p > .05). In the soda scenario, U.S. male participants were more influenced by male influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .65, p < .01, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .55, p < .01) than female influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .61, p < .01, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .40, p < .05). Under the beer condition, U.S male participants were more influenced by female influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .71, p < .01) than male influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .66, p < .01) regarding their attitudes toward the beer product, and their purchase intentions were more influenced by male influencers ($\beta_{purchase}$ = .65, p < .01) than female influencers ($\beta_{purchase}$ = .41, p < .05). In general, U.S male participants were more influenced by same-sex (male) influencers regarding their product attitudes and purchase intentions except in product attitude toward a male-gendered product.

The same process of regression analysis was applied to U.S. female participants regarding the impact of influencers' gender on their product attitudes and purchase intentions toward the endorsed product. Under the skin cream condition, U.S. female participants were more influenced by male influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .42, p < .01, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .58, p < .01) than female influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .42, p < .01, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .58, p < .01). The situation was similar to the soda product, U.S female participants were also more influenced by male influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .77, p < .01, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .58, p < .01) than female influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .39, p < .01, $\beta_{purchase}$ = .42, p < .01). The situation was different in the beer scenario. U.S. female participants were more influenced by female influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .55, p < .01, $\beta_{purchase}$ = -.13, p < .01) instead of male influencers ($\beta_{attitude}$= .36, p < .01, $\beta_{purchase}$ = -.13, p > .05). In general, U.S. female participants were more influenced by the opposite-sex (male) influencer except in opposite-gendered products. Therefore, the overall U.S. participants were more influenced by male influencers than female

influencers. Male influencers in general are considered more persuasive in their endorsement to both males and females across almost all scenarios.

Expertise Congruence Hypothesis Testing Results

Gender difference on perceived influencer expertise-product congruency—China

The second hypothesis examined the moderation effect of influencer expertise-product congruency on the relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and endorsement effectiveness (product attitude and purchase intention). Hypothesis 1 examined how participants' gender values regarding the congruency level between an influencer's gender and the endorsed product impacted the influencer's endorsement effectiveness. Although, according to prior literature, gender value influences people's decision-making, it is not the only factor. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 explored whether consumers' perception about the congruency between an influencer's expertise and a product influences consumers' product attitudes and purchase intentions toward that product.

Several t-tests were conducted to test how participants cared about influencer expertise-product congruency and whether their gender mattered. In the Chinese sample, the overall combined mean score of influencer expertise-product congruency was 2.81, SD = .61. The mean score of influencer expertise-product congruency in the three scenarios was, M_{cream}= 3.13,SD = 1.1, M_{soda}= 2.75, SD = .82 and M_{beer} = 2.56, SD= .93, respectively, which shows the influencer has the beauty product has the highest expertise score. In terms of the gender difference, the combined mean score of influencer expertise-product congruency was 2.87 (male) and 2.77 (female), but the difference was insignificant, t (219) = 1.3, p >.05. Female participants (M = 3.31, SD = 1.05) reported a higher mean score of influencer expertise-product congruency than male participants (M = 2.97, SD = 1.13) in the cream scenario, t (219) = - 2.3, p < .05. Male

participants (M = 2.89, SD = .86) reported a higher score of influencer expertise-product congruency than female (M = 2.62, SD = .75) participants in the soda scenario, t (219) = 2.51, $p < .05$. Male participants' (M = 2.76, SD = .96) perceived congruency between the chosen influencers' expertise and the beer product was also higher than female participants (M = 2.37, SD = .86), t (219) = 3.18, $p < .05$. Therefore, Chinese participants' perceived influencer expertise-product congruency in all three scenarios differed by gender.

Overall moderation analysis regarding influencer expertise-product congruency on influencer gender-product congruency effect—China

The hierarchical regression analysis was conducted in the Chinese sample with participants' overall score of the relevant variables, including their combined mean score of influencer gender-product congruency, influencer expertise-product congruency, product attitude, and purchase intention. The results regarding the interaction term denied this hypothesis, which indicated that the relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and endorsement effectiveness (product attitude and purchase intention) did not depend on the congruence level between an influencer's expertise and the product in China. Although the moderation effect did not exist, influencer's expertise-product congruency did positively predict consumers' product attitude ($\beta = .16$, $p < .05$) and purchase intention ($\beta = .22$, $p < .01$), which meant the product expertise and gender congruency independently affected product attitude and purchase intention.

Table 19. Moderation effect of expertise congruency on gender congruency and product attitude (China)

Variable	Model 1 B	Model 1 SE.B	Model 1 β	Model 2 B	Model 2 SE.B	Model 2 β	Model 3 B	Model 3 SE.B	Model 3 β
Gender	-0.17	0.1	-0.11	-0.17	0.1	-0.11	-0.14	0.1	-0.09
Age	0.004	0.01	0.03	0.001	0.01	0.01	-0.001	0.01	-0.01
Time spent on TikTok	-0.07	0.05	-0.09	-0.07	0.05	-0.09	-0.07	0.05	-0.09
Time of being a Douyin user	0.1	0.06	0.1	0.1	0.06	0.11	0.1	0.06	0.11
Education	-0.04	0.07	-0.05	-0.04	0.07	-0.05	-0.05	0.07	-0.05
Income	0.06	0.04	0.12	0.07	0.04	0.13	0.07	0.04	0.15
Gender congruency	0.54**	0.09	0.37**	0.43**	0.1	0.3**	.48**	0.11	.33**
Expertise congruency	0	0	0	.19*	0.09	.15*	0.16	0.09	0.13
Gendercongruency* expertisecongruencyc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.21	0.14	0.1
R²	0	0.21	0	0	0.22	0	0	0.23	0
F for change in R2	0	7.95**	0	0	7.62**	0	0	7.05**	0

Note: Gender Congruency and expertise were centered at their means. $^{**}p < .01$, $^{*}p < .05$.

Table 20. Moderation effect of expertise congruency on gender congruency and purchase intention (China)

Variable	Model 1 B	Model 1 SE.B	Model 1 β	Model 2 B	Model 2 SE.B	Model 2 β	Model 3 B	Model 3 SE.B	Model 3 β
Gender	-0.11	0.07	-0.1	-0.1	0.06	-0.1	-0.09	0.06	-0.09
Age	0	0.01	-0.001	-0.004	0.01	-0.04	-0.004	0.03	0.01
Time spent on TikTok	-0.001	0.03	-0.001	0.004	0.03	0.01	0.004	0.03	0.01
Time of being a Douyin user		0.04	0.04	0.03	0.4	0.05	0.03	0.04	0.05
Education	-0.02	0.04	-0.03	-0.02	0.04	-0.04	-0.02	0.04	-0.03
Income	0.05	0.03	0.13	0.05	0.03	0.15	0.06*	0.03	0.16*
Gender congruency	0.47**	0.06	.47**	0.36**	0.07	0.36**	.38**	0.07	.38**
Expertise congruency	0	0	0	.20**	0.06	.22**	.18**	0.06	.21**
Gendercongruency* expertisecongruency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.09	0.09	0.06
R²	0	0.27	0	0	0.31	0	0	0.312	0
F for change in *R²*	0	0	0	0	16.77**	0	0	15.11**	0

Note: Gender Congruency and expertise were centered at their means. $^{**}p < .01$, $^{*}p < .05$.

Moderating analysis regarding influencer expertise-product congruency on influencer gender-product congruency effect in three scenarios—China

Other than the overall analysis of the moderation effect of influencer expertise-product congruency on product attitude/purchase intention, several separate analyses in three scenarios were applied to both samples. First, in the Chinese sample, for the skin cream product, the influencer expertise-product congruency and influencer gender-product congruency positively related to participants' product attitudes (β_{gender} = .24, p < .01, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .316, p < .01), R^2 = .321, SE = .84, F (8) = 12.55, p < .01, and purchase intentions (β_{gender} = .16, p < .05, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .473, p < .01), R^2 = .392, SE = .64, F (8) = 17.11, p < .01. After adding the interaction term to the equation, the impact of the two predictors toward participants' product attitudes (β_{gender} = .26, p < .01, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .319, p < .01), R^2 = .323, SE = .84, F (9) = 11.17, p < .01, and purchase intentions (β_{gender} = .18, p < .01, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .475, p < .01), R^2 = .393, SE = .64, F (9) = 15.20, p < .01, increased. However, the interaction term was an insignificant predictor of participants' product attitudes (β = .05, p > .05) and purchase intentions (β = .04, p > .05) for the skin cream product, showing no moderation effect.

For the soda product, the influencer expertise-product congruency and influencer gender-product congruency also positively related to participants' product attitudes (β_{gender} = .33, p < .01, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .295, p < .01), R^2 = .341, SE = .79, F (8) = 13.73, p < .01, and purchase intentions (β_{gender} = .411, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .265, p < .01), R^2 = .381, SE = .59, F (8) = 16.28, p < .01. After adding the interaction term to the equation, the impact of the two predictors toward participants' product attitudes (β_{gender} = .32, p < .01, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .289, p < .01), R^2 = .352, SE = .79, F (9) = 12.72, p < .01, and purchase intentions (β_{gender} = .405, p < .01, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .261, p < .01), R^2 = .386, SE = .59, F (9) = 14.76, p < .01, decreased. However, the interaction term was an insignificant predictor of

participants' product attitudes (β = .11, $p > .05$) and purchase intentions (β = .08, $p > .05$) toward the soda product.

The influencer expertise-product congruency and influencer gender-product congruency positively related to participants' product attitudes ($\beta_{gender} = .26$, $p < .01$, $\beta_{expertise} = .326$, $p < .01$), $R^2 = .342$, SE = .96, F (8) = 13.79, $p < .01$, and purchase intentions ($\beta_{gender} = .31$, $\beta_{expertise} = .332$, $p < .01$), $R^2 = .384$, SE = .70, F (8) = 16.55, $p < .01$, toward the beer product. After adding the interaction term to the equation, the impact of the influencer gender-product congruency on participants' product attitudes decreased ($\beta_{gender} = .25$, $p < .01$) and the impact of influencer gender-product congruency on the product attitude increased ($\beta_{expertise} = .333$, $p < .01$), $R^2 = .342$, SE = .96, F (9) = 12.21, $p < .01$; the impact of influencer gender-product congruency on purchase intention increased ($\beta_{gender} = .32$, $p < .01$), while the impact of influencer expertise-product congruency on purchase intention decreased ($\beta_{expertise} = .330$, $p < .01$), $R^2 = .385$, SE = .71, F (9) = 14.65, $p < .01$. However, the interaction term was an insignificant predictor of participants' product attitudes (β = -.013, $p > .05$) and purchase intentions (β = .004, $p > .05$) toward the soda product. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was rejected in all three scenarios in the Chinese sample. Influencer's expertise-product congruency was not a moderator on the relationship between influencer's gender-product congruency and product attitude/purchase intention, and those two factors influenced product attitude and purchase intention separately.

Gender difference on perceived influencer expertise-product congruency—the U.S.

In the U.S. sample, the overall combined mean score of influencer expertise-product congruency was 3.62, SD = .78. The mean score of influencer expertise-product congruency in the three scenarios was 3.68, SD = .93 (cream), 3.69, SD = .86 (soda), and 3.48, SD = 1.04 (beer), respectively. In terms of the gender difference, the combined mean score of influencer

expertise-product congruency was 3.67, SD = .79 (male) and 3.56, SD = .77 (female), but the t value was insignificant, t (218) = 1.06, p >.05. Male participants (M = 3.75, SD = .91) reported a higher mean score of influencer expertise-product congruency than female participants (M = 3.60, SD = .95) in the cream scenario, but the t value was insignificant, t (218) = 1.13, *p* >.05. Male participants (M = 3,73, SD = .85) reported a higher score of influencer expertise-product congruency than female (M = 3.64, SD = .87) participants in the soda scenario, but t value was insignificant, t (218) = .75, *p* > .05. Male participants' (M = 3.53, SD = 1.00) perceived congruency between the chose influencers' expertise and the beer product was also different from female participants (M = 3.42, SD = 1.09), but it was not differed by gender, t (217) = .76, *p* > .05. All the t-tests in the U.S. sample were insignificant. Therefore, participants' gender was not a significant factor to explain the difference of participants' score of influencer expertise-product congruency between males and females.

Overall moderation analysis regarding influencer expertise-product congruency on influencer gender-product congruency effect—the U.S.

The results of several regression analyses found that influencer's expertise product congruency independently influenced participants' product attitudes (β=.42, *p* < .01) and purchase intentions (β=.46, *p* < .01), and there was no moderation effect of expertise congruency on gender congruency effect. Hence, hypothesis H2a and H2b were rejected in the U.S. sample.

Table 21. Moderation effect of expertise congruency on gender congruency and product attitude (the U.S.)

Variable	Model 1 B	Model 1 SE.B	Model 1 β	Model 2 B	Model 2 SE.B	Model 2 β	Model 3 B	Model 3 SE.B	Model 3 β
Gender	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.09	0.07	0.07
Age	0	0.01	0.01	0.001	0.01	0.01	0	0.01	-0.002
Time spent on TikTok	0.002	0.03	0.004	-0.01	0.03	-0.01	-0.01	0.03	-0.02
Time of being a TikTok user	0.08	0.04	0.11	0.05	0.04	0.08	0.05	0.04	0.08
Education	0.06	0.04	0.12	0.05	0.03	0.08	0.04	0.03	0.08
Income	-0.03	0.03	-0.06	-0.02	0.03	-0.05	-0.02	0.03	-0.05
Gender congruency	0.51**	0.06	0.53**	0.19*	0.09	.20*	.22*	0.1	.23*
Expertise congruency	0	0	0	.33**	0.08	.42**	0.34	0.08	.42**
Gendercongruency* expertisecongruency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.06	0.05	0.07
R^2	0	0.34	0	0	0.39	0	0	0.4	0
F for change in R^2	0	15.40**	0	0	16.77**	0	0	15.11**	0

Note: Gender congruency and expertise congruency were centered at their means. $^{**}p < .01$.

Table 22. Moderation effect of expertise congruency on gender congruency and purchase intention (the U.S.)

Variable	Model 1 B	Model 1 SE.B	Model 1 β	Model 2 B	Model 2 SE.B	Model 2 β	Model 3 B	Model 3 SE.B	Model 3 β
Gender	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.09	0.07	0.07
Age	0	0.01	0.01	0.001	0.01	0.01	0	0.01	-0.002
Time spent on TikTok	0.002	0.03	0.004	-0.01	0.03	-0.01	-0.01	0.03	-0.02
Time of being a TikTok user	0.08	0.04	0.11	0.05	0.04	0.08	0.05	0.04	0.08
Education	0.06	0.04	0.12	0.05	0.03	0.08	0.04	0.03	0.08
Income	-0.03	0.03	-0.06	-0.02	0.03	-0.05	-0.02	0.03	-0.05
Gender congruency	0.51**	0.06	0.53**	0.19*	0.09	.20*	.22*	0.1	.23*
Expertise congruency	0	0	0	.33**	0.08	.42**	0.34	0.08	.42**
Gendercongruency* expertisecongruency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.06	0.05	0.07
R^2	0	0.34	0	0	0.39	0	0	0.4	0
F for change in R^2	0	15.40**	0	0	16.77**	0	0	15.11**	0

Note: Gender Congruency and expertise were centered at their means. $^{**}p < .01$, $^{*}p < .05$.

Moderation analysis regarding influencer expertise-product congruency on influencer gender-product congruency effect in three scenarios—the U.S.

In the U.S. sample, the influencer expertise-product congruency and influencer gender-product congruency positively related to participants' product attitudes (β_{gender} = .26, p < .01, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .422, p < .01), R^2 = .455, SE = .85, F (8) = 21.43, p < .01, and purchase intentions (β_{gender} = .16, p < .05, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .534, p < .01), R^2 = .456, SE = .55, F (8) = 21.55, p < .01, toward the cream product. After adding the interaction term to the equation, the impact of the two predictors toward participants' product attitudes (β_{gender} = .28, p < .01, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .428, p < .01), R^2 = .457, SE = .85, F (9) = 19.04, p < .01, and purchase intentions (β_{gender} = .17, p < .01, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .536, p < .01), R^2 = .456, SE = .55, F (9) = 19.07, p < .01, increased. However, the interaction term was an insignificant predictor of participants' product attitudes (β = .04, p > .05) and purchase intentions (β = .01, p > .05) toward the cream product.

The influencer expertise-product congruency and influencer gender-product congruency positively related to participants' product attitudes (β_{gender} = .24, p < .01, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .483, p < .01), R^2 = .460, SE = .93, F (8) = 21.82, p < .01, for the soda product. However, influencer's expertise product congruency was not a moderator of the relationship between influencer's gender product congruency and product attitude (β = .05, p > .05). Influencer's gender-product congruency was positively related to purchase intention (β = .46, p < .01), but after adding influencer's expertise - product congruency into the regression, only influencer's expertise-product congruency positively related to purchase intentions (β_{gender} = .12, p > .05, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .466, p < .01), R^2 = .32, SE = .62, F (8) = 11.99, p < .01. In terms of the moderation effect, influencer's gender product congruency, influencer's expertise product congruency, and the interaction term between the two significantly influenced participants' purchase intentions toward the soda product (β_{gender} = .22, p

< .01, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .47, p < .01, $\beta_{interaction}$ = .17, p < .05). The result of the moderation analysis indicated that the influence of influencer's gender-product congruency on U.S. participants' purchase intentions toward the soda product is dependent on the level of participants' perceived influencer expertise-product congruency.

The influencer expertise-product congruency and influencer gender-product congruency positively related to participants' product attitudes (β_{gender} = .44, p < .01, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .306, p < .01), R^2 = .56, SE = 1.05, F (8) = 32.52, p < .01, and purchase intentions (β_{gender} = .37, p < .05, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .235, p < .01), R^2 = .40, SE = .75, F (8) = 17.12, p < .01, toward the beer product. After adding the interaction term to the equation, the impact of the two predictors toward participants' product attitudes (β_{gender} = .40, p < .01, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .302, p < .01), R^2 = .567, SE = 1.04, F (9) = 29.50, p < .01, and purchase intentions (β_{gender} = .32, p < .01, $\beta_{expertise}$ = .231, p < .01), R^2 = .41, SE = .74, F (9) = 15.64, p < .01, decreased. However, the interaction term was an insignificant predictor of participants' product attitudes (β = -.09, p > .05) and purchase intentions (β = -.10, p > .05) toward the beer product.

Therefore, among all the hierarchical regression analyses across both Chinese and the U.S. sample, influencer expertise-product congruency was only a significant moderator on the relationship between participants' perceived influencer gender-product congruency and their purchase intentions toward the soda product, a gender-neutral product. But when the product is gendered, then product-gender congruency and influencer expertise independently contribute to the product attitude and purchase intention.

Overall moderation effect of parasocial relationship on the relationship between gender congruency and influencer trust—China

Hypothesis 3 proposed both moderation effects of parasocial relationship on the

relationship between gender congruency and influencer trust and mediation effects of influencer trust on endorsement effectiveness. First, two hierarchical regression analyses were conducted in both samples to test the moderation effect proposed in H3a and H3b. In the Chinese sample, the overall mean score of participants' parasocial relationship with the identified influencer was 3.73, SD = .49. The combined mean score of participants' influencer trust was 3.75, SD = .49. The mean scores of their influencer trust in different scenarios were 3.83, SD = .69 (cream), 3.82, SD = .63 (soda), and 3.60, SD = .76 (beer), respectively. Putting influencer gender-product congruency and parasocial relationship as the predictor and influencer trust as the outcome variable in the regression model found that the two predictors positively predicted participants' influencer trust ($\beta_{genderconguency}$= .48, p < .01, $\beta_{parasocial}$ = .30, p < .01). However, parasocial relationship failed to moderate the positive relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and influencer trust (β = .02, p > .05). Gender congruency and parasocial relationship independently predict influence trust, rejecting the moderation in hypothesis 3.

Moderation effect of parasocial relationship on the relationship between gender congruency and influencer trust in three scenarios—China

However, in the Chinese sample, under the three separate scenario conditions, hypothesis 3a regarding the moderation effect of parasocial relationship on the relationship between product-influencer gender congruency and influencer trust was supported. In the cream product scenario, product-influencer gender fit positively predicted participants' influencer trust (β = .51, p < .01), and the influence was decreased after adding the parasocial relationship ($\beta_{genderconguency}$= .47, p < .01, $\beta_{parasocial}$ = .22, p < .01), but product-influencer gender fit and parasocial relationship explained 35% of participants' trust in the influencer, R^2 = .35, SE = .56, F (8) = 14.26, p < .01.

Besides, the interaction term (β = .11, $p < .05$) also positively predicted participants' influencer trust, R^2 = .36, SE = .56, F (9) = 13.31, $p < .01$.

In the soda product scenario, product-influencer gender fit positively predicted participants' influencer trust (β = .59, $p < .01$), and the influence was decreased after adding the parasocial relationship ($\beta_{genderconguency}$= .55, $p < .01$, $\beta_{parasocial}$ = .25, $p < .01$). Product-influencer gender fit and parasocial relationship explained 42% of participants' trust in the influencer, R^2 = .42, SE = .49, F (8) = 19.16, $p < .01$. Besides, the interaction term (β = .10, $p = .05$) positively predicted participants' influencer trust, R^2 = .43, SE = .49, F (9) = 17.69, $p < .01$, as well.

The influence of product-influencer gender fit on Chinese participants' influencer trust for the beer product was greater than the influence in the cream and soda scenarios (β = .61, p < .01). The influence even increased after participants' parasocial relationship toward the influencer ($\beta_{genderconguency}$= .62, $p < .01$, $\beta_{parasocial}$ = .23, $p < .01$), and in total, the two predictors explained 43% of the change of participants' influencer trust, R^2 = .43, SE = .59, F (8) = 19.78, $p < .01$. In addition, the parasocial relationship (β = .13, $p < .05$) was approved to moderate the relationship between product-influencer gender fit and influencer trust in the beer scenario, R^2 = .44, SE = .58, F (8) = 18.75, $p < .01$.

Overall moderation effect of the parasocial relationship on the relationship between influencer expertise-product congruency and influencer trust—China

The Chinese sample's combined mean score of participants' expertise congruency was 2.82, SD = .61. The mean score of their expertise congruency in different scenarios were 3.13, SD = 1.10 (cream), 2.75, SD = .82 (soda), and 2.56, SD = .93 (beer), respectively. The hierarchical regression analysis found that influencer-product expertise congruency positively predict Chinese participants' influencer trust (β = .33, $p < .01$), and the influence was decreased

after adding parasocial relationship as another predictive variable ($\beta_{expertiseconguency}$= .24, p < .01, $\beta_{parasocial}$ = .33, p < .01), and those two variables explained 22% of the total change of participants' influencer trust in the Chinese sample, R^2 = .22, SE = .44, F (8) = 7.64, p < .01. However, the interaction term was insignificant, which indicated that parasocial relationship was not a moderator in this relationship.

Moderation effect of the parasocial relationship on the relationship between influencer expertise-product congruency and influencer trust in three scenarios—China

Under the cream product condition, the hierarchical regression analysis also found that influencer-product expertise congruency positively influenced influencer trust (β = .59, p < .01), and this influence decreased after adding participants' parasocial relationship with the influencer ($\beta_{expertiseconguency}$= .55, p < .01, $\beta_{parasocial}$ = .23, p < .01). In total, the two predictors explained 42% of change of influencer trust in the cream scenario in Chinese sample, R^2 = .42, SE = .53, F (8) = 19.51, p < .01. Under the soda product condition, the hierarchical regression analysis suggested that influencer-product expertise congruency positively influenced influencer trust (β = .402, p < .01), and this influence decreased after adding participants' parasocial relationship with the influencer ($\beta_{expertiseconguency}$= .34, p < .01, $\beta_{parasocial}$ = .24, p < .01). In total, the two predictors explained 23% of change of influencer trust in the cream scenario in Chinese sample, R^2 = .23, SE = .56, F (8) = 7.78, p < .01. In the beer product scenario, the result of a hierarchical regression analysis also showed that influencer-product expertise congruency positively influenced influencer trust (β = .56, p < .01), and this influence decreased after adding participants' parasocial relationship with the influencer ($\beta_{expertiseconguency}$= .55, p < .01, $\beta_{parasocial}$ = .15, p < .01). In total, the two predictors explained 34% of change of influencer trust in the cream scenario in Chinese sample, R^2 = .34, SE = .63, F (8) = 13.72, p < .01. However, no moderation effect existed in the relationship

between influencer expertise-product congruency and influencer trust in all three product types among Chinese users.

Overall mediation effect of influencer gender-product congruency effect—China

Hypothesis 3c and 3d predicted the mediation effect of influencer trust on the relationship between influencer's gender-product congruency and endorsement effectiveness (product attitude and purchase intention). The regression analysis supported the mediator role of influencer trust in both countries. In the Chinese sample, influencer trust partially mediated the relationship between influencer's gender-product congruency and product attitude because the relationship between those two variables was reduced from $\beta = .37$, $p < .01$ to $\beta = .22$, $p < .01$, when the parasocial relationship was added into the equation (See Figure 8). Influencer trust also partially mediated the relationship between influencer's gender-product congruency and purchase intention when the relationship between the two variables was reduced from $\beta = .47$, $p < .01$ to $\beta = .22$, $p < .01$ (See Figure 9).

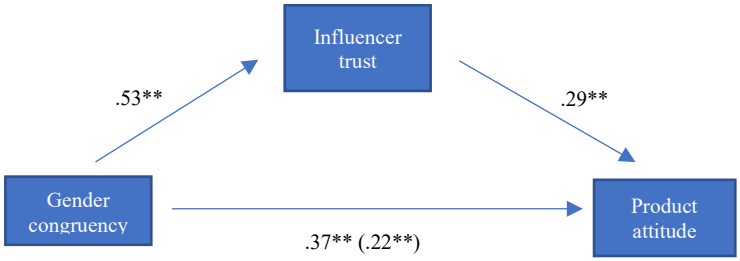

Figure 8. The standardized regression coefficient between gender congruency and product attitude for the overall mediation model in China

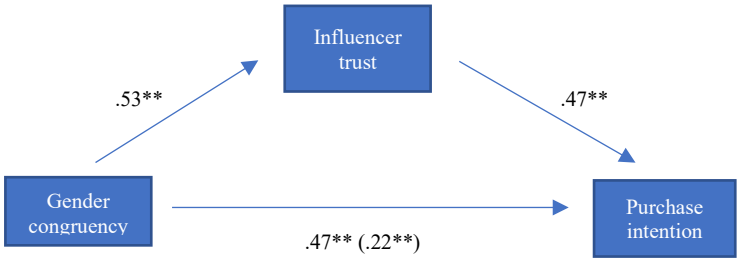

Figure 9. The standardized regression coefficient between gender congruency and purchase intention for the overall mediation model in China

Mediation effect of influencer gender-product congruency effect in three scenarios—China

More mediation analyses were conducted in all scenarios for the two countries, and the result found that the mediation effect existed in all scenarios in the two countries. In the Chinese sample, under the cream condition, influencer trust partially mediated the relationship between influencer's gender-product congruency and product attitude/purchase intention because the relationship was reduced from $\beta_{attitude} = .44$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{attitude} = .27$, $p < .01$, and from $\beta_{purchase} = .48$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{purchase} = .20$, $p < .01$, respectively, when influencer trust was added into the equation. Under the soda condition, influencer trust was also found to partially mediate the relationship between influencer's gender-product congruency and participants' product attitude/ purchase intention because the relationship was reduced from $\beta_{attitude} = .48$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{attitude} = .26$, $p < .01$, and from $\beta_{purchase} = .55$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{purchase} = .21$, $p < .01$, respectively, when influencer trust was added into the equation. Besides, the partial mediation effect was found in the beer scenario as well. The relationship between influencer's gender-product congruency and product attitude/purchase intention was reduced from $\beta_{attitude} = .46$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{attitude} = .18$, $p < .01$, and from $\beta_{purchase} = .54$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{purchase} = .21$, $p < .01$), respectively, when influencer trust was added into the equation.

Overall mediation effect of influencer trust between parasocial relationship and endorsement effectiveness—China

Hypothesis 3e and 3f examined the mediator role of influencer trust on the relationship between parasocial relationship and endorsement effectiveness (product attitude and purchase intention). In both samples, parasocial relationship is positively related to consumers' product attitudes ($\beta_{China} = .36$, $p < .01$, $\beta_{US} = .46$, $p < .01$). After adding influencer trust to the first model (IV: parasocial relationship; DV: product attitude), the relationship between the IV and DV

reduced (β_{China}= .24, $p < .01$) in the Chinese sample, which indicated a partial mediation effect (See Figures 10-11).

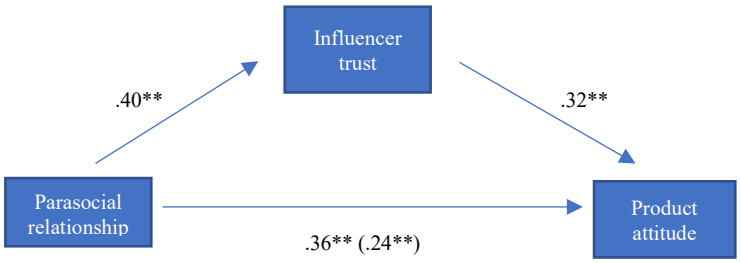

Figure 10. The standardized regression coefficient between parasocial relationship and product attitude for the overall mediation model in China

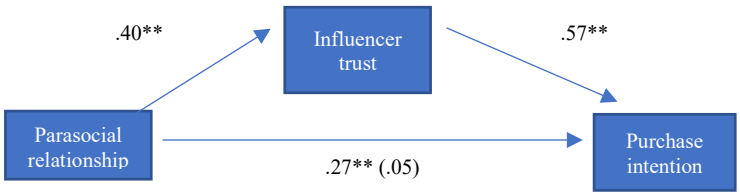

Figure 11. The standardized regression coefficient between parasocial relationship and purchase intention for the overall mediation model in China

Mediation effect of influencer trust on parasocial relationship effect in three scenarios—China

The mediation effect of influencer trust on the parasocial relationship and product attitude/purchase intention was also tested in the different scenarios in both countries. In China, the result found two partial and one full mediation effect in the three scenarios regarding parasocial relationship and product attitude. Influencer trust was found to partially mediate the relationship in the cream and soda scenarios because the relationship was reduced from β_{cream} = .28, $p < .01$ to β_{cream} = .14, $p < .05$, and from β_{soda} = .39, $p < .01$ to β_{soda} = .24, $p < .01$, when influencer trust was added into the equation. In the beer scenario, influencer trust fully mediated

the parasocial relationship and product attitude. The relationship (β = .17, $p < .05$) become nonsignificant after adding influencer trust into the equation.

The findings supported the mediating role of influencer trust in the relationship between parasocial relationship and purchase intention in the cream (β = .27, $p < .01$) and soda (β = .24, $p < .01$) scenarios and the relationship became nonsignificant when influencer trust was introduced. The result indicated that influencer trust accounted for the full relationship between parasocial relationships and purchase intention in the two scenarios. Besides, there was no mediation effect found in the beer scenario in the Chinese sample.

Overall mediation effect of influencer trust on influencer product-expertise effect—China

Hypothesis 3g and 3h examined the mediator role of influencer trust on the relationship between influencer-product expertise and endorsement effectiveness (product attitude and purchase intention). In the Chinese sample, influencer trust was found to be a mediating variable, which partially mediated the relationship between influencer-product expertise congruency and product attitude/purchase intention because the relationship was reduced from $\beta_{attitude} = .30$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{attitude} = .19$, $p < .01$, and from $\beta_{purchase} = .40$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{purchase} = .23$, $p < .01$, after influencer trust was introduced (See Figures 12 and 13).

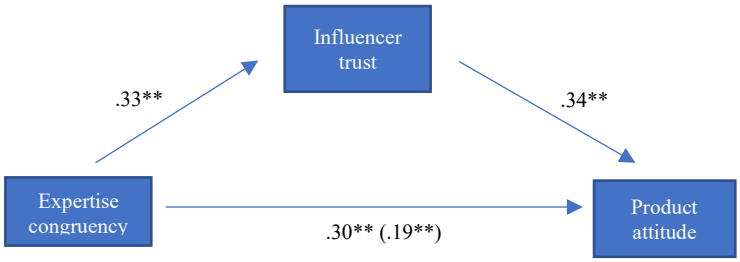

Figure 12. The standardized regression coefficient between expertise congruency and product attitude for the overall mediation model in China

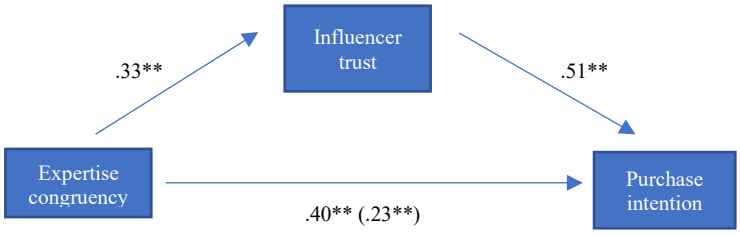

Figure 13. The standardized regression coefficient between expertise congruency and purchase intention for the overall mediation model in China

Mediation effect of influencer trust on influencer product-expertise effect in three scenarios—China

More mediation analyses were conducted under three different product conditions to examine hypothesis 3g and 3h regarding the mediator role of influencer trust on the relationship between influencer-product congruency and product attitude/purchase intention. In total, six partial mediation effects were found in the Chinese sample. The positive relationship between influencer-product expertise congruency and product attitude/purchase intention was reduced when adding influencer trust into the equation across all three products: cream (from $\beta_{attitude} = .47$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{attitude} = .30$, $p < .01$, from $\beta_{purchase} = .58$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{purchase} = .31$, $p < .01$), soda ($\beta_{attitude} = .47$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{attitude} = .31$, $p < .01$, from $\beta_{purchase} = .49$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{purchase} = .24$, $p < .01$), and beer (from $\beta_{attitude} = .50$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{attitude} = .26$, $p < .01$, and from $\beta_{purchase} = .54$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{purchase} = .25$, $p < .01$).

Overall moderation effect of parasocial relationship on the relationship between gender congruency and influencer trust—the U.S.

In the US sample, the overall mean score of participants' parasocial relationship with the identified influencer was 3.84, SD = .59. The combined mean score of participants' influencer trust was 3.78, SD = .64. The mean scores of their influencer trust in different scenarios were 3.84, SD = .78 (cream), 3.86, SD = .72 (soda), and 3.65, SD = .85 (beer), respectively. In the

hierarchical regression model, influencer gender-product congruency (β= .70, $p < .01$) and parasocial relationship (β= .20, $p < .01$) were shown to positively predict participants' influencer trust. However, the interaction term failed to predict participants' influencer trust in the regression model (β= .01, $p > .05$). Hence, the moderation hypothesis in hypothesis H3a in both samples was rejected. Parasocial relationship and gender congruency independently predict influencer trust.

Moderation effect of parasocial relationship on the relationship between gender congruency and influencer trust in three scenarios—the U.S.

However, the result from the US sample rejected H3a in all three scenarios. Although the moderation effect did not exist in the US sample, the product-influencer gender fit and parasocial relationship positively predicted participants' influencer trust in all scenarios. First, the result of a descriptive analysis showed that US participants' mean influencer trust score in the soda scenario was the highest (M = 3.86, SD = .72), followed by cream (M = 3.86, SD = .72) and beer (M= 3.65, SD = .85). In the cream scenario, participants' product-influencer gender congruency positively related to their influencer trust (β = .70, $p < .01$). The relationship decreased when adding the parasocial relationship ($\beta_{genderconguency}$= .63, $p < .01$, $\beta_{parasocial}$ = .21, $p < .01$), and the two variables explained 57% of the change of the influencer trust under the cream product condition, R^2 = .57, SE = .52, F (8) = 34.45, p < .01. In the soda scenario, participants' product-influencer gender congruency positively related to their influencer trust (β = .69, $p < .01$). The relationship decreased when adding the parasocial relationship ($\beta_{genderconguency}$= .58, $p < .01$, $\beta_{parasocial}$ = .30, $p < .01$), and the two variables explained 56% of the change of the influencer trust, R^2 = .56, SE = .49, F (8) = 32.89, $p < .01$. In the beer scenario, participants' product-influencer gender congruency positively related to their influencer trust (β = .78, $p < .01$). The relationship decreased when

adding the parasocial relationship ($\beta_{genderconguency}$= .75, p < .01, $\beta_{parasocial}$ = .13, p < .01), and the two variables explained 68% of the change of the influencer trust under the beer product condition, R^2 = .68, SE = .49, F (8) = 53.29, p < .01.

Overall moderation effect of the parasocial relationship on the relationship between influencer expertise-product congruency and influencer trust—the U.S.

The result of the regression analysis testing the moderation effect of the parasocial relationship on the relationship between influencer expertise-product congruency and influencer trust also suggested that parasocial relationship was not a moderator on this relationship except the only significant moderation effect found in the beer scenario in the US sample. Nevertheless, the influencer expertise-product congruency and parasocial relationship were found to be significant predictors of participants' influencer trust in both countries and all three scenarios.

Moderation effect of parasocial relationship on the relationship between influencer expertise-product congruency and influencer trust in three scenarios—the U.S.

In the US sample, the combined mean score of participants' expertise congruency was 3.69, SD = .78. The mean scores of their expertise congruency in different scenarios were 3.68, SD = .93 (cream), 3.69, SD = .86 (soda), and 3.48, SD = 1.04 (beer), respectively. The hierarchical regression analysis found that influencer-product expertise congruency positively predict US participants' influencer trust (β = .84, p < .01), and the influence was decreased after adding parasocial relationship as another predictive variable ($\beta_{expertiseconguency}$= .75, p < .01, $\beta_{parasocial}$ = .24, p < .01), and those two variables explained 75% of the total change of participants' influencer trust in the US sample, R^2 = .75, SE = .32, F (8) = 78.74, p < .01.

Under the cream product condition, the hierarchical regression analysis also found that influencer-product expertise congruency positively influenced influencer trust (β = .80, p < .01),

and this influence decreased after adding participants' parasocial relationship with the influencer ($\beta_{expertiseconguency}$= .74, p < .01, $\beta_{parasocial}$ = .16, p < .01). In total, the two predictors explained 70% of change of influencer trust in the cream scenario in the US sample, R^2 = .703, SE = .43, F (8) = 60.67, p < .01. Under the soda product condition, the hierarchical regression analysis suggested that influencer-product expertise congruency positively influenced influencer trust (β = .78, p < .01), and this influence decreased after adding participants' parasocial relationship with the influencer ($\beta_{expertiseconguency}$= .67, p < .01, $\beta_{parasocial}$ = .29, p < .01). In total, the two predictors explained 64% of change of influencer trust in the soda scenario in the US sample, R^2 = .64, SE = .44, F (8) = 46.14, p < .01. In the beer product scenario, the result of a hierarchical regression analysis also showed that influencer-product expertise congruency positively influenced influencer trust (β = .79, p < .01), and this influence decreased after adding participants' parasocial relationship with the influencer ($\beta_{expertiseconguency}$= .75, p < .01, $\beta_{parasocial}$ = .16, p < .01). Besides, the two predictors explained 65.5% of change of influencer trust in the beer scenario in the US sample, R^2 = .655, SE = .51, F (8) = 48.74, p < .01. More importantly, the moderation effect was found in the beer scenario, which indicated that the positive influence of influencer-product expertise congruency on the influencer trust depended on participants' parasocial relationship with the identified influencer ($\beta_{expertiseconguency}$= .74, p < .01, $\beta_{parasocial}$ = .19, p < .01, , $\beta_{interactionterm}$ = .10, p < .05). In total, expertise congruence, parasocial relationship and interaction between expertise congruence and parasocial relationship explained 66.4% of the change of influencer trust in the beer scenario, R^2 = .664, SE = .50, F (9) = 44.76, p < .01.

Overall mediation effect on influencer gender-product congruency effect—the U.S.

In the US sample, influencer trust fully mediated the relationship between influencer's gender-product congruency and product attitude and the relationship between influencer's

gender-product congruency and purchase intention. The two relationships became nonsignificant when added influencer trust into the equation.

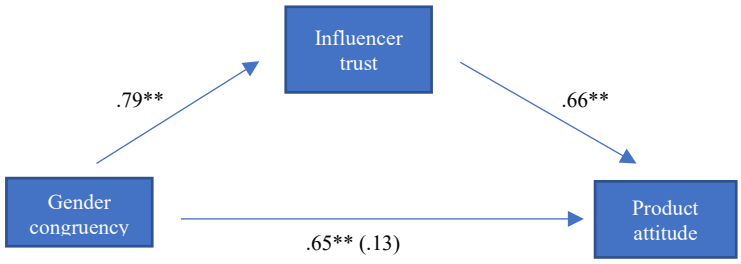

Figure 14. The standardized regression coefficient between gender congruency and product attitude for the overall mediation model in the U.S.

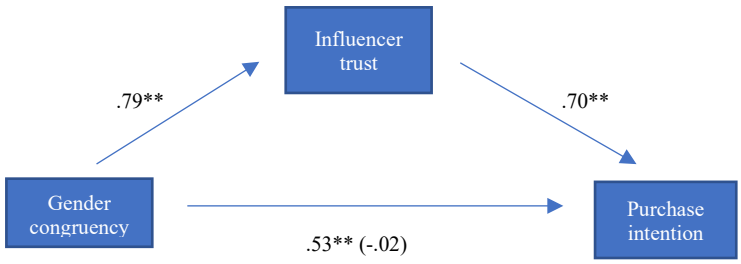

Figure 15. The standardized regression coefficient between gender congruency and purchase intention for the overall mediation model in the U.S.

Mediation effect on influencer gender-product congruency effect in three scenarios—the U.S.

Three partial mediation effects were found in the US sample under three conditions between influencer gender-product congruency and product attitude. First, in the cream scenario, influencer trust partially mediated the relationship between influencer's gender-product congruency and product attitude because the relationship was reduced from $\beta = .56$, $p < .01$ to $\beta = .16$, $p < .01$ when influencer trust was added into the equation. Second, in the soda scenario, influencer trust was also found to partially mediate the relationship between influencer's gender-product congruency and participants' product attitude because the relationship was reduced from

$\beta = .59$, $p < .01$ to $\beta = .13$, $p < .01$, when influencer trust was added into the equation. Besides, the partial mediation effect was also found in the beer scenario. The relationship between influencer's gender-product congruency and product attitude was reduced from $\beta = .65$, $p < .01$ to $\beta = .21$, $p < .01$, when influencer trust was added into the equation.

Three full mediation effects were found in the US sample under three conditions between influencer gender-product congruency and purchase intention. In the cream scenario, the positive relationship between influencer's gender-product congruency and purchase intention ($\beta = .54$, $p < .01$) became nonsignificant after adding influencer trust ($\beta = .15$, $p > .05$). In the soda scenario, the positive relationship between influencer's gender-product congruency and purchase intention ($\beta = .46$, $p < .01$) also became nonsignificant after adding influencer trust ($\beta = -.002$, $p > .05$). Besides, the positive relationship between influencer's gender-product congruency and participants' purchase intentions toward the beer product ($\beta = .53$, $p < .01$) become nonsignificant after adding influencer trust into the equation ($\beta = .13$, $p > .05$).

Overall mediation effect of influencer trust on parasocial relationship effect—the U.S.

Influencer trust fully mediated the relationship between parasocial relationship and product attitude in the US sample because the relationship was nonsignificant once influencer trust was added into the equation. Moreover, parasocial relationship was a significant predictor to consumers' product purchase intentions in both samples ($\beta_{China} = .27$, $p < .01$, $\beta_{US} = .40$, $p < .01$). See Figures 16 and 17. When adding influencer trust in the second model (IV: parasocial relationship; DV: purchase intention), the relationship between the IV and DV became nonsignificant in both countries, which supported the mediator role of influencer trust on the relationship between parasocial relationship and purchase intention in the Chinese and US sample.

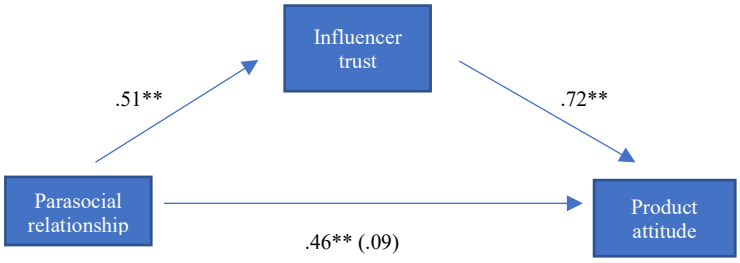

Figure 16. The standardized regression coefficient between parasocial relationship and product attitude for the overall mediation model in the U.S.

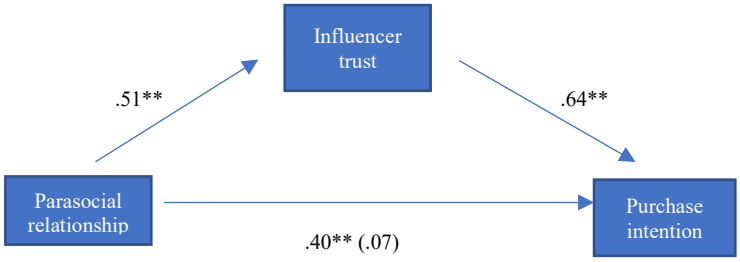

Figure 17. The standardized regression coefficient between parasocial relationship and purchase intention for the overall mediation model in the U.S.

Mediation effect of influencer trust on parasocial relationship effect in three scenarios—the U.S.

In the US, the result found one partial and two full mediation effects in the three scenarios, supporting both hypothesis 3e and 3f. Influencer trust was found to partially mediate the relationship in the cream scenario because the relationship was reduced from $\beta_{attitude} = .47$, $p < .01$) to $\beta_{attitude} = .23$, $p < .01$, and from $\beta_{purchase} = .46$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{purchase} = .22$, $p < .01$, when influencer trust was added into the equation. In the soda and beer scenario, influencer trust fully mediated the relationship between parasocial relationship and product attitude. The relationship ($\beta_{sodaattitude} = .41$, $p < .01$, $\beta_{sodapurchase} = .34$, $p < .01$; $\beta_{beerattitude} = .29$, $p < .01$, $\beta_{beerpurchase} = .18$, $p < .01$) become nonsignificant after adding influencer trust into the equation. These findings supported the notion

that, at least partially (cream), or fully (soda and beer), participants' parasocial relationship could lead to positive product attitudes/purchase intentions through their trust in the influencer.

Overall mediation effect of influencer trust on influencer product-expertise effect—the U.S.

In the US sample, influencer trust was found to fully mediate the relationship between influencer-product congruency and product attitude/purchase intention because the positive relationship ($\beta_{attitude} = .67$, $p < .01$, $\beta_{purchase} = .58$, $p < .01$) became nonsignificant after adding influencer trust into both equations. See Figures 18-19. Hence both Hypotheses 3g and 3h on mediation of influencer trust between influencer product expertise and endorsement effectiveness are supported.

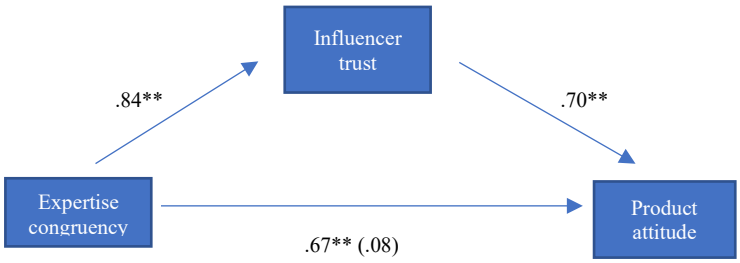

Figure 18. The standardized regression coefficient between expertise congruency and product attitude for the overall mediation model in the U.S.

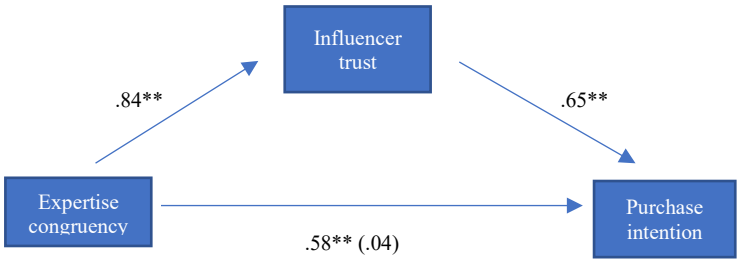

Figure 19. The standardized regression coefficient between expertise congruency and purchase intention for the overall mediation model in the U.S.

Mediation effect of influencer trust on influencer product-expertise effect in three scenarios—the U.S.

There were three partial mediation and three full effects found in the U.S. sample when

examining the relationship between influencer-product expertise congruency and product attitude/purchase intention in cream, soda, and beer scenarios. Influencer trust partially mediated the relationship between influencer-product expertise congruency and product attitude/purchase intention in the cream scenario, and the relationship was reduced from $\beta_{attitude} = .61$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{attitude} = .18$, $p < .05$, and from $\beta_{purchase} = .65$, $p < .01$ to $\beta_{purchase} = .33$, $p < .01$, when adding influencer trust into the equation. In the soda scenario, the findings supported that influencer-product expertise congruency partially influenced participants' product attitude through their trust in the influencer, and the relationship was reduced from $\beta = .67$, $p < .01$ to $\beta = .18$ $p < .05$. Influencer trust was found to fully mediate the relationship between influencer-product expertise congruency and purchase intention ($\beta = .65$, $p < .01$) in the soda scenario, and the relationship was nonsignificant when adding influencer trust into the equation. Besides, the result showed that influencer-product expertise congruency fully mediated product attitude ($\beta = .62$, $p < .01$) and purchase intention ($p = .50$, $p < .01$) through influencer trust in the beer scenario. The positive relationship between influencer-product expertise congruency and product attitude/purchase intention became nonsignificant when influencer trust was introduced.

Hence, Hypotheses 3a and 3b on moderation effects of parasocial relationships were rejected in the overall Chinese and US sample, but H3a was supported in three separate scenarios in the Chinese sample specifically and H3b was supported in the beer scenario in the US sample. The mediation relationships of influencer trust in Hypotheses 3c through 3h were supported by both samples, except H3f was rejected in the Chinese sample under the beer condition only.

Difference between Chinese and US TikTok Users

Cultural value comparison between China and the U.S.

Before testing the influence of cultural values in Hypothesis 4, a descriptive analysis was

run regarding individual users' masculinity, individualism and power distance score. As shown in Table 23, Chinese Douyin users had a higher masculinity (M_{China} = 3.50, SD= .85, M_{US} = 3.39, SD= 1.05) and individualism score (M_{China} = 2.50, SD= .75, M_{US} = 2.43, SD= .90) than US TikTok users. US TikTok users had a higher power distance score than Chinese Douyin users (M_{China} = 2.42, SD= .88, M_{US} = 3.12, SD= 1.16). Moreover, in the US sample, male respondents had a higher score in masculinity (M_{male} = 3.60, SD= .91, M_{female} = 3.15, SD= 1.14) and power distance (M_{male} = 3.32, SD= 1.08, M_{female} = 2.91, SD= 1.22) than female respondents, and female respondents had a higher individualism score (M_{male} = 2.30, SD= .80, M_{female} = 2.58, SD= .98) than male respondents; all the gender difference was statistical significant. In the Chinese sample, male respondents had a higher score in masculinity (M_{male} = 3.69, SD= .74, M_{female} = 3.30, SD= .91) and power distance (M_{male} = 2.48, SD= .92, M_{female} = 2.36, SD= .85), and a lower score in individualism (M_{male} = 2.40, SD= .73, M_{female} = 2.60, SD= .77) than female respondents. But the gender difference was only significant for masculinity score, t (221) = 3.51, $p < .01$, not for power distance and individualism. In terms of the country difference, after combining the US and Chinese data, the result of a t-test showed that the country difference was only significant for power distance in the combined data, t(441) = 7.16, $p < .01$, not for masculinity, t(441) = -1.21, $p > .05$, and individualism value, t(441) = -.84, $p > .05$.

The cultural value scores were also examined by young and old age groups. For the US sample, the individualism score of the young age group was higher than the old age group (M_{young} = 2.49, SD= .79, M_{old} = 2.40, SD= .95), and the power distance score of the old age group was higher than the young age group (M_{young} =3.07, SD= 1.13, M_{old} = 3.15, SD= 1.19). Besides, older participants reported a higher masculinity score than younger participants (M_{young} = 3.28, SD= .96, M_{old} = 3.44, SD= 1.09). The result was similar in the Chinese sample. Young Douyin users

reported a higher score in individualism than old Douyin users in China (M_{young} = 2.57, SD= .76, M_{old} = 2.43, SD= .75). Moreover, older participants claimed a higher score in power distance (M_{young} = 2.34, SD= .88, M_{old} = 2.49, SD= .89) and masculinity (M_{young} = 3.43, SD= .87, M_{old} = 3.56, SD= .83) than younger participants. Besides, in general, Chinese participants in the young and old age group reported a higher individualism and masculinity score, and a lower power distance score than the US participants in the same age group. However, the results of several t-tests suggested that the mean difference of participants' cultural scores in both countries was not differed by their age.

Table 23. Individual cultural score grouped by users' age

	US Number	US Mean	US SD	CH Number	CH Mean	CH SD
Age < 30 Individualism	76	2.49	0.79	110	2.57	0.76
Age < 30 Power distance	76	3.07	1.13	110	2.34	0.88
Age < 30 Masculinity	76	3.28	0.96	110	3.43	0.87
Age ≥30 Individualism	144	2.4	0.95	111	2.43	0.75
Age ≥30 Power distance	144	3.15	1.19	111	2.49	0.89
Age ≥30 Masculinity	144	3.44	1.09	111	3.56	0.83
All age Individualism	220	2.43	0.9	221	2.5	0.75
All age Power distance	220	3.12	1.16	221	2.42	0.88
All age Masculinity	220	3.39	1.05	221	3.5	0.85

Expected influencer gender-product congruency comparison between China and the U.S.

A statistical significance of difference analysis was conducted in the US and China samples separately to test Hypothesis 4a that Chinese consumers have a higher level of expected influencer gender-product congruency than American consumers. A t-test was run in the combined US-China data to examine the significance of the difference. The result showed that Chinses users did have a higher level of expected influencer gender-product congruency (masculinity) than US users (M_{China} = 3.62, SD= .79, M_{US} = 3.51, SD= .95), but the difference was

insignificant after comparing the country variable, $t(441) = -1.37$, $p > .05$. Hence, Hypothesis 4a was rejected. In addition, in the combined data, male respondents had a higher level of expected influencer gender-product congruency than female respondents ($M_{Male} = 3.72$, SD= .80, $M_{female} = 3.41$, SD= .93), and the gender difference was significant in the result of a t-test, $t(441) = 3.77$, $p < .01$.

Influencer gender-product congruency effect comparison between China and the U.S.

Hierarchical regression analysis was applied to test Hypotheses 4b that the gender fit between an influencer and the product will have a greater impact on consumers' product attitudes in China than in the USA and H4c that the gender fit between an influencer and the product will have a greater impact on consumers' purchase intentions in China than in the USA.

Individual cultural values were included as control variables. Hypothesis 4b was rejected because the impact of influencer gender-product congruency on US consumers' product attitude ($\beta = .53$, $p < .01$) was greater than Chinese consumers' ($\beta = .38$, $p < .01$). In addition, individual's individualism value was significant in the regression model as a control variable in both China ($\beta = -.14$, $p < .05$) and US ($\beta = -.29$, $p < .01$) samples. The negative coefficients indicated that the higher the individualism value, the lower the impact of influencer gender-product congruency on users' product attitudes.

Moreover, more regression analyses were conducted in three different scenarios in China and the US. H4b was rejected in each scenario as well because the influence of influencer's gender-product congruency on US participants' product attitudes was greater than on Chinese participants', cream ($\beta_{US} = .54$, $p < .01$, $\beta_{China} = .44$, $p < .01$), soda ($\beta_{US} = .59$, $p < .01$, $\beta_{China} = .48$, $p < .01$), and beer ($\beta_{US} = .65$, $p < .01$, $\beta_{China} = .46$, $p < .01$). See Table 24

The result of the regression analysis between influencer gender-product congruency and purchase intention supported Hypothesis 4c that the impact of influencers' gender fit with products on Chinese users' purchase intentions ($\beta = .49$, $p < .01$) was greater than US users ($\beta = .41$, $p < .01$). Moreover, in the Chinese sample, individuals' power distance value acted as a negative control variable with statistical significance ($\beta = -.13$, $p < .05$); while in the US sample, individualism value was found to be a negative significant control variable ($\beta = -.29$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, under each product condition, the result was a bit different. H4c was supported in the soda ($\beta_{US} = .46$, $p < .01$, $\beta_{China} = .55$, $p < .01$) and beer ($\beta_{US} = .53$, $p < .01$, $\beta_{China} = .54$, $p < .01$) scenarios, but rejected in the cream scenario ($\beta_{US} = .54$, $p < .01$, $\beta_{China} = .48$, $p < .01$). See Table 25.

Table 24. Multiple regression analysis of gender congruency and product attitude with cultural value as control variables (China vs. the U.S.)

Variable	China Model 1 B	China Model 1 SE.B	China Model 1 β	China Model 2 B	China Model 2 SE.B	China Model 2 β	US Model 1 B	US Model 1 SE.B	US Model 1 β	US Model 2 B	US Model 2 SE.B	US Model 2 β
Masculinity	0.04	0.07	0.04	0.02	0.06	0.03	0.003	0.09	0.003	-0.06	0.08	-0.05
Power distance	0.04	0.06	0.04	0.04	0.06	0.04	0.12	0.08	0.13	0.07	0.07	0.07
Individualism	-0.17	0.07	-0.16	-0.15	0.06	0.14*	-0.58	0.09	-0.48	-0.35	0.08	0.29**
Gendercongruency	0	0	0	0.55	0.09	0.38**	0	0	0	0.9	0.1	.53**
R^2	0	0.03	0	0	0.18	0	0	0.32	0	0	0.52	0
R^2 **change**	0	0	0	0	0.15	0	0	0	0	0	0.2	0

Note: $^{**}p < .01$, $^{*}p < .05$

Table 25. Multiple regression analysis of gender congruency and purchase intention with cultural value as control variables (China vs. the U.S.)

Variable	China Model 1 B	China Model 1 SE.B	China Model 1 *β*	China Model 2 B	China Model 2 SE.B	China Model 2 *β*	US Model 1 B	US Model 1 SE.B	US Model 1 *β*	US Model 2 B	US Model 2 SE.B	US Model 2 *β*
Masculinity	0.09	0.05	0.14	0.08	0.04	0.12	0.09	0.05	0.15	0.06	0.05	0.1
Powerdistance	-0.08	0.04	-0.14	-0.08	0.04	-.13*	-0.02	0.05	-0.03	-0.04	0.04	-0.08
Individualism	-0.04	0.05	-0.06	-0.03	0.04	-0.04	-0.3	0.05	-.43**	-0.2	0.05	-.29**
Gendercongruency	0	0	0	0.49	0.06	0.49**	0	0	0	0.4	0.1	.41**
R^2	0	0.03	0	0	0.26	0	0	0.27	0	0	0.39	0
R^2 **change**	0	0	0	0	0.23	0	0	0	0	0	0.12	0

Note: $^{**}p < .01$, $^{*}p < .05$

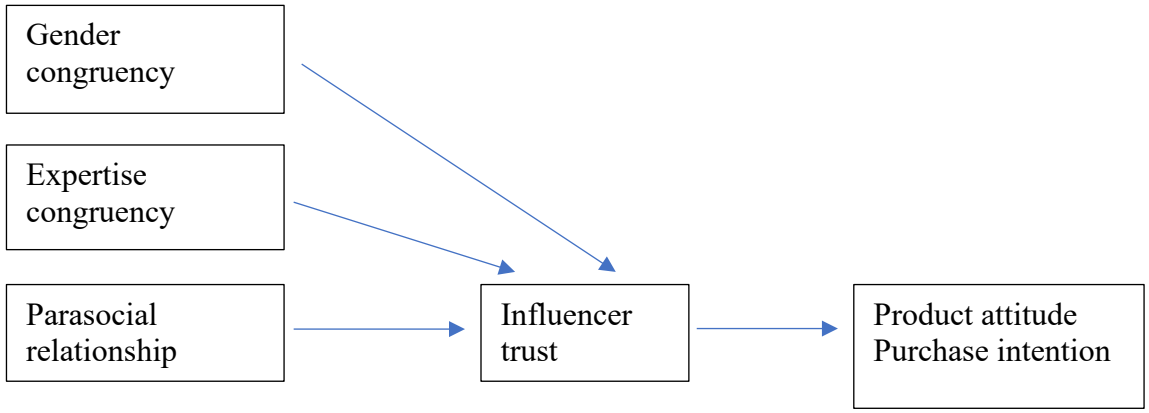

Figure 20. Common relationships among Chinese and US users across product types

CHAPTER VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

This study reveals important differences between Douyin users in China and TikTok users in the U.S. First, Chinese participants spent more time on social media per day than US participants. Chinese users preferred to spend more time on Douyin than US users, which indicates that Chinese users were more addicted to Douyin than U.S. users to TikTok. As one of the common activities Douyin users do is to watch influencer videos, it can explain why influencer videos had overall higher influence on Chinese users' brand attitude and purchase intention in our study than U.S. users. TikTok/Douyin's features facilitate socialization as a social media platform because users can share videos and follow and be followed by other users, no matter they are ordinary users or influencers. According to the descriptive analysis result, we found that US users were more likely to use TikTok to socialize than Chinese users because their average followers were much higher than Chinese users. However, Chinese users had a longer experience using Douyin than US users. Most U.S. users had one to two years of experience using TikTok, while most Chinese users had more than two years of experience using Douyin. Moreover, Chinese users followed more influencers on Douyin than US users on TikTok. So it seems U.S. users prefer to use TikTok as a social platform and share great moments with their friends/followers, while Chinese users prefer to watch videos created by others on Douyin. So Chinese users might want to use Douyin when they are alone, and Douyin is more a tool to pass idle time. Such different TokTok kuse motivations yield different endorsement effect of influencers on TikTok and Douyin.

Although participants consumed influencer videos on TikTok and Douyin, their preferences for influencers' expertise differed in each country. Most U.S. participants identified

music, beauty, and fashion influencers in the U.S. as their favorite TikTok influencers, while most Chinese participants chose food, beauty, and fashion influencers as their favorite Douyin influencers. This preference was perceived to be influenced by the cultural heritage differences in each country. Music plays an essential role in U.S. pop culture, such as Hip Hop, rock, blues, and jazz music. Each of these music genres has deeply influenced Americans for decades. Some identified musicians, such as Aretha Franklin and Sheila Jordan, both natives of Detroit, as their favorite influencers. They are good examples of how music impacts the audience and how musicians connect with the audience in their unique ways. China's food culture has lasted and developed for thousands of years and profoundly influenced Chinese in every part of China. Chinese cuisine has a few different genres, but the most typical known by the public is the "Eight Cuisines," from eight provinces of China, such as Guangdong. But it should also be noted participants in both countries paid much attention to beauty and fashion videos on TikTok/Douyin. One of the reasons was that this was a young platform, and the younger generation was the primary user. They were also significant consumers of beauty and fashion products, meaning these products are more successful categories and popular in TikTok in both China and the U.S.

Moreover, fitness was not a popular influencer expertise in both countries, but still some US participants chose fitness influencers as their favorite influencers, while almost no Chinese participant chose fitness influencers. It is also related to the social norms in each country. Americans are more aware of fitness benefits and body appearance and going to the gym is like a daily routine for most people. In China, people's consciousness about fitness benefits is growing, and according to a Statista report (2020), Chinese fitness market reached 100 billion Yuan in 2019, and this number was only 70 billion in 2015; moreover, the number of fitness clubs in

China increased dramatically as well without a sign of slowing down. But why fitness influencers did not take off even though the industry is growing in China is intriguing.

The influence of influencers on users' purchase intentions among Chinese and the U.S. users

Furthermore, the study also examined how the influencer influenced TikTok/Douyin users' purchase intentions. Overall, Chinese participants were more influenced by TikTok influencers than US participants. In each sample, influencers influenced older participants more than younger participants. It is known that Chinese participants spent more time on Douyin than US users on TikTok, and also, most Chinese participants had a long-time experience using Douyin than US participants. So, they had a solid commitment to this platform and were more willing to trust the influencer and more likely to be persuaded by the influencer. In addition, young users had more experience using the Internet and social media, and there were more ways to get information. Also, they have more access to different platforms to make a purchase decision. Moreover, young users are familiar with the persuasive strategy used by influencers to promote or sell products. Generally, young users have more social media literacy than old users. So, when they came to TikTok/Douyin, they would have more consideration and comparison before making a purchase decision, and they preferred to be more skeptical or suspicious to the endorsed product. Moreover, older users might be faster to make a purchase decision than younger users because they had higher income, and they were able to make the purchase right after the promotion. The descriptive analysis among users in both countries supported that the older user had higher income than younger users. In China, in the young age group, 10% of them had the least monthly income, which was less than 1,000 RMB, and 1.8% had the most monthly income, which was over 20,000 RMB. In total, 40% of young users had a monthly income of

less than 5,000 RMB. However, in the old age group, only 1% of users earned less than 1,000 RMB a month, and 8.1% claimed their monthly income was higher than 20,000 RMB. In addition, only 6% of people reported that their monthly income was less than 5,000 RMB. In the U.S., 10% of young users claimed their salary was less than $ 10,000, and 5.2% reported their salary was more than $ 100,000. On the other hand, in the old age group, only 2.1% of the old users reported a less than $ 10,000 salary, while 12.6% claimed a higher than $ 100,000 salary. Meanwhile, 57.3% of the young user's salary was between $ 25,000 and $ 99,999, and the percentage was 74.2 among the old user. Hence, old users were more easily persuaded by influencers than young users to make a purchase.

Individuals' cultural scores among Chinese and the U.S. users and why they contradict to Hofstede's country value

The individual cultural score reported by participants in this study was opposite of Hofstede's country scores. According to Hofstede's Insights (2021), the power distance score of China and the US is 80 and 40, respectively, and the individualism score of the two countries is 20 and 91, respectively. In general, China was a collectivist country with a high power distance score, and the US was an individualist country with a low power distance score. However, everything has been changing since 1980. Incredibly, in line with the rapid development of the Internet, people's lifestyles, ways of knowing the world, and cultural values may also change. The result of this study revealed the change in people's cultural values. US TikTok users reported a higher power distance score and a lower individualism score than Chinese Douyin users. The result differed from when Hofstede first examined cultural dimension scores in China and the US. Although participants in this study are general people from different industries and

backgrounds, and they are different from Hofstede's study, the result of this study still illustrated the change in people's cultural values over time.

The difference between Hofstede's country scores and individual cultural value scores may be explained by age difference. For example, Statista (2021) states that users aged 10-19, 20-29, 30-39, and 40-49 accounted for nearly 80% of active TikTok users in the US. Specifically, each age group accounted for about 20% of active users. On the other hand, according to QuestMobile (2019), Chinese Douyin users were balanced between men (52.2%) and women (47.8%), and users aged under 35 accounted for 70% of active Douyin users. Therefore, most TikTok and Douyin users are younger than the average age in the US and China. In particular, in light of the average age of the US sample is older than the Chinese sample, it may be the reason why the US sample has a higher power distance score than the Chinese sample. The comparison analysis of power distance between age groups in both countries found that elder users (M_{CH} = 2.49, SD = .89, M_{US} = 3.15, SD = 1.19) had higher power distance score than younger users (M_{CH} = , 2.34, SD = .88, M_{US} = 3.07, SD = 1.13). Besides, due to China's single-child policy, most post-80 (born between 1980-1989) and post-90 (1990-1999) generations in China were born under the single-child policy. Therefore, they possessed all resources of their family, and they were not aware of social inequality or class difference in their times, which could be another reason to explain why they reported a relatively low power distance score in this study.

Moreover, the young generations are more open to new things, challenges, and perceptions. They are more globalized and pay more attention to their personal needs rather than being trapped by social norms than their parents or grandparents. So, China's post-90s generation has been criticized as the “selfish generation." They pursue a world with equal opportunity for

everyone instead of men leading the world, and they are intolerant of gender inequality or discrimination. Young TikTok users are braver to say that other countries are better than the U.S. than the old generation (Hartig, 2021), and 66% of American Gen Z claimed gender equality was a serious issue, while only 51% of those age 65 or elder had the same attitude (PRnewswire, 2022). Participants are mostly from cities and grow up with the Internet to know the outside world at an early age, which also lays a foundation for them to not follow traditional hierarchy and accept and open to new ideas in the future. Besides, in the past several decades, due to the rapid development of China's economy, China has become more open to the world than many other countries and looks for cooperation opportunities with the rest of the world, so Chinese people have more opportunities to know the world and adopt new ideas and technologies. Hence, the open mind of Chinese people and age groups are perceived to be factors that can partly explain why the result regarding cultural value is not following the original Hofstede's cultural dimension scores. The use of individual scores in the study shows that using country score cannot capture the current consumer values in each country.

The contradiction between TikTok/Douyin users' individualism and power distance score and the prior literature can also be explained by the concept of value paradoxes proposed by De Mooij (2005) in her book, *Global Marketing, and Advertising Understanding Cultural Paradoxes.* She argued that value paradoxes existed within and between cultures. For example, the US is an individualistic country, and there is also a need to belong to its people. She also noted the difference between a desirable life and the desired life. The former indicated the life and value people ought to have because they lived in a particular society. The latter represented the life people wanted to have or the thing they wanted to do. Moreover, humans were always expected to want something they did not have, and others had. For example, China is a

collectivist society, but the Chinese want individual success and self-promotion instead of group or national glory. Hence the opposite cultural value of the TikTok users from the national cultural values of Hofstede reflect their desired values in their respective society: Chinese Douyin users believe more in individualism and lower power distance while US TikTok users believe more in collectivism and higher power distance.

Cultural values and TikTok/Douyin use

The regression analysis found a predictable relationship between participants' cultural values and TikTok use in the US sample. People's individualistic values negatively predicted their time spent on TikTok and the number of followers. Although US participants claimed a lower individualism score than Chinese participants, the US is generally an individualistic country. TikTok is known for its trends and memes, and its algorithm promotes videos all the time based on the data they track. Hence, the more users are attached to this platform, and the more users are influenced by others, which contradicts the core value of individualism. Hence, it attracts the less individualistic group in the U.S.

Moreover, the more friends or followers people have on TikTok, the more extensive the online community they are building. People with similar interests and preferences come together, and it is easy for them to feel they belong to this community or group. When their group value increases, their individualism value is reduced. Furthermore, no relationship was found between Chinese participants' cultural values and Douyin use. This study noted that cultural dimensions might be a helpful framework to explain U.S. TikTok user behaviors. However, different framework should be explored to investigate the mechanism of Chinese Douyin user behaviors.

The relationship between gender congruency and the role of masculinity and power distance

The study initially tries to examine the relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and endorsers' endorsement effectiveness (product attitude and purchase intention). The gender congruity theory and Hofstede's cultural dimensions are the primary theories leading the research hypotheses. Moreover, parasocial relationships and influencer trust were used to explore the moderation and mediation effects in the relationship between critical factors. Based on the literature review, the gender fit between an endorser and a product was proposed to positively predict the endorser's endorsement effectiveness. Moreover, the current study added the understanding of the impact of individuals' cultural values on this relationship. The prior literature suggests that males are stricter to the social norms than females, which means males tend to be more masculine than females in a masculine culture, such as the U.S. and China. The result of this study supported this argument. Notably, in both Chinese and US samples, male respondents had a higher masculinity score than female respondents, and the gender difference was significant in the T-test. Men are perceived to be aggressive, assertive, and competitive, and women are linked with feminine attributes, such as caring, emotion, and connection to others in the community. Hence in terms of masculinity, both countries' participants follow the gender pattern of Hofstede's high masculinity values. Both the U.S. and China are indeed highly gendered societies.

In terms of the hierarchical regression analysis regarding the relationship between influencer gender-product fit and consumers' product attitude, the result indicated that influencer gender-product congruency was a positive predictor of endorsement effectiveness, which was consistent with the hypothesis, and in line with Hofstede's cultural scores between China and the

U.S. Notably, in the different product type conditions in each sample, users' perceived gender congruency between influencers and products positively influenced product attitudes and purchase intentions for both gendered products (skin cream and beer), and gender-neutral products (soda), which indicates that product influencer gender congruency is not clear cut as expected, even gender neutral product can benefit from perceived gender-product congruity, not limited to gendered products.

The two countries both had a relatively high score in the masculinity dimension, which indicated the high expectation or the importance of gender fit in consumers' decision-making when they need to buy or like an endorsed product. In addition, the hypothesis added an individual's masculinity value to the regression model as a moderator. The result showed that the effect of influencer gender-product congruency on consumers' product attitudes would increase as an individual's masculinity score amplified in the U.S, sample. In contrast, the influence of influencer gender-product congruency on consumers' purchase intentions would decrease as an individual's masculinity score was higher in the Chinese sample.

In a traditionally masculine culture, men and women are expected to keep their gender roles in society. Hence, the masculinity score as a positive moderator on the relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and participants' product attitudes in the US sample meets the expectation that the higher the masculinity score, the greater influence of the perceived influencer gender product congruency on people's product attitudes. However, the masculinity score negatively influences the relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and product attitude in the Chinese sample. In this regard, the perspective of the cultural dimensions may be more applicable to explain TikTok influencer video use in the US but not in China.

But for purchase decision, the influence of influencer gender-product congruency on purchase intention was not impacted by participants' masculinity level in both the U.S. and Chinese respondents. Masculinity may influence people's product attitudes, which is attitudinal instead of taking real action. When it comes to real action or real effort, product gender fit cannot predict purchase intention and there is a need to consider more factors.

Moreover, in the gendered product situations, individual's masculinity was found to moderate the relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and skin cream product attitude and beer purchase intention in the US sample. Since skin cream (female gendered) and beer (male gendered) are gendered products, and soda is a gender-neutral product, gender can be a factor in explaining the moderation effect of masculinity in the U.S. However, individual's masculinity was not a moderator on the relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and product attitude/purchase intention across gendered and gender-neutral product occasions among Chinese participants. This is quite puzzling because masculinity is a gender value concept but has no influence on gendered products to the Chinese respondents.

In a later multiple regression analysis, the individual's power distance value was a negative control variable in the relationship between influencer gender-product congruency and purchase intention in the Chinese sample, opposite to the prior literature. However, the average power distance score of Chinese respondents was 2.42 on a 5-point Likert scale, which meant Chinese respondents disagreed with the statement of power distance. Therefore, the individual power distance and masculinity scores show that Chinese Douyin users did not accept power inequality in society and preferred gender and power justice. Moreover, the negative influence of power distance in people's purchase decisions also indicates that influencers are not higher up leaders to the general Douyin users. Instead, they are more influential because they are authentic,

trustworthy, and building a parasocial relationship with followers/consumers. Hence, it is understandable that power distance negatively correlated to consumers' purchase intentions in the Chinese sample because of their lower acceptance of societal inequality.

Same-sex and opposite-sex effects among TikTok/Douyin users

When both samples were grouped into six data sets by participants' gender and influencers' gender to examine the same-sex and opposite-sex effects, we found that Chinese male participants' product attitudes and purchase intentions were more influenced by female influencers, which indicated an opposite-sex effect. Moreover, in terms of gendered products, skin cream and beer, male participants' product attitudes toward cream products were more influenced by the male influencer, but when they needed to take a step further and make a purchase decision, they would be more influenced by female influencers, which matched the perceived expertise of female influencers in a female-gendered product - skin cream. In addition, male participants' product attitudes toward beer products were more influenced by female influencers, and their purchase intentions were more influenced by male influencers, which matched the gender characteristics of the beer. On both occasions, Chinese male participants were more influenced by the influencer whose gender was opposite to the product gender in terms of their product attitude, and when they needed to make a purchase decision, they preferred to be influenced by the influencer whose gender was same as the product gender.

In the gendered product situations, no matter the female-gendered product, skin cream, and male-gendered product, beer, Chinese female participants were more influenced by the opposite-sex influencers (male influencers) regarding their product attitudes and purchase intentions. Hence, male participants tended to follow the gender congruency between the influencer and the promoted products. On the other hand, Chinese female participants were more

receptive of the male influencers. However, for the gender-neutral product, soda, both male and female participants were more influenced by female influencers regarding their product attitudes and purchase intentions. Thus, in China, when there is no product gender concern, female influencers have more persuasive power than male influencers, and people prefer to trust female influencers over male influencers for their attitudinal change and purchase decisions. But when the product is gendered, then opposite sex effect is stronger and female consumers are more influenced by male influencers.

The same-sex and opposite-sex effect was a bit different in the U.S. sample. First, U.S. male participants were more influenced by male influencers on all three occasions regarding their product attitudes and purchase intentions. Female participants were also more influenced by male influencers. Hence, the same-sex effect was found among U.S. male participants, and the opposite-sex effect was found among U.S. female participants. Generally, U.S. participants were more influenced by male influencers than female influencers regarding their product attitudes and purchase intentions. Moreover, in the gender-neutral condition, soda products, both female and male participants' product attitudes and purchase intentions were more influenced by male influencers. Hence, if there is no product gender concern, people in the U.S. also prefer to trust male influencers, and male influencers have a greater influence on their attitudes and purchase decisions.

In the gendered product situations, male participants were more influenced by male influencers in attitude and purchase intention toward the skin cream product. Although male participants' beer product attitudes were more influenced by female influencers, their beer purchase intentions were more influenced by male influencers. Whether male or female gendered products, U.S. male influencers were more authoritative in influencing U.S. people's attitude

change and purchase decisions. Female participants' product attitudes and purchase intentions were more influenced by male influencers for the cream product and female influencers for the beer product. Hence, U.S. male participants were more willing to listen to the same-sex influencers (same-sex effect), and U.S. female participants were more willing to listen to the opposite-sex influencers (opposite-sex effect), all in favor for male influencers.

Notably, in both China and U.S. samples, participants were more influenced by female influencers regarding their attitudes toward the beer product, a male-gendered product, and more influenced by male influencers regarding their purchase intentions toward the beer product. Therefore, female influencers have greater persuasive power over people's attitude change than their male counterparts, but for the money investment or real action taken, the congruency between an influencer's gender and the product's gender characteristics matters. Tracking back to the masculine and feminine traits, females are caring, warm, and maintain relationships with others within the community, while males are aggressive and competitive. Therefore, it is reasonable that females easily influence people’s emotions and attitudes. Nevertheless, when people make a purchase decision, they are more rational and care more about expertise, authority, and hard skills with male gender stereotype, rather than soft skills characterizing women.

The impact of expertise congruence on users’ product attitude and purchase intention

Gender is not the only determining factor for people's attitude change and purchase intentions toward an influencer-endorsed product. The influencer's expertise on the product is also essential. Before becoming an influencer on social media, many were ordinary social media users, and they became famous because they had expertise on a specific topic. On the one hand, they could work in that field and have techniques or professional knowledge on the topic. On the

other hand, they could build up reputations by consistently using the relevant products and becoming the grassroots experts in that field, which is how most beauty/cosmetics lovers became influencers on social media. Hence, in addition to the influencer gender-product congruency, this study also examined influencer expertise-product congruency on how it impacted participants' product attitudes and purchase intentions and the moderator effect on the gender congruency.

This study's regression analysis results supported that influencer expertise product congruency positively predicted participants' product attitudes and purchase intentions. Overall, influencer expertise product congruency had a greater impact on U.S. participants than on Chinese participants, which indicated that US TikTok users were more easily persuaded by influencers when the influencer had expertise on that topic. On the other hand, Chinese Douyin users were less likely to be persuaded by influencers just because of the expertise congruency between the influencer and the product. Therefore, more factors should be considered to examine the persuasive mechanism of Douyin influencers on Chinese users. The t-test results found that gender of participants could not explain the difference in female and male participants perceived expertise-product congruency in both countries. Moreover, influencer expertise product congruency did not moderate the relationship between influencer gender product congruency and product attitude/purchase intention in the overall Chinese and U.S. samples, and in the gendered product occasions, except for the gender-neutral product (soda) in the U.S. sample. No moderation effect of product expertise was found in the gendered product occasions.

Furthermore, comparing the impact of influencer gender product congruency and influencer expertise product congruency on participants' product attitudes and purchase intentions, the former had a more significant impact than the latter. Moreover, both Chinese and U.S. participants were more influenced by gender congruency than expertise congruency.

However, relatively speaking, U.S. participants were more influenced by gender congruency and expertise congruency than Chinese participants. In addition, gender and expertise congruency independently impacted participants' product attitudes and purchase intentions rather than interacting with each other.

The role of parasocial relationship and trust in explaining influencer's effectiveness

Trust is a commonly examined factor that explains people's attitudes and behavior changes when they need to make decisions. In the context of influencer marketing, consumers' trust in influencers may indicate the persuasive power of that influencer on consumers' purchase decision makings. If the gender congruency between an influencer and the product matches with consumers' gender value or cultural value, it is assumed that the gender congruency should positively predict consumers' influencer trust. Moreover, this study also examined whether the imagined intimate relationship (parasocial relationship) between an influencer and a consumer impacted this positive relationship. However, the result of the hierarchical regression analysis showed that no moderation effect existed, and influencer gender-product congruency and parasocial relationship influenced participants' influencer trust independently in both U.S. and Chinese samples.

Next, the parasocial relationship was analyzed as a moderator on the relationship between influencer's expertise-product congruency and influencer trust, and no moderation effect existed in the overall sample in both countries. However, in the gendered product scenarios, parasocial relationships moderated the relationship for the beer in the US sample. The result indicated that the parasocial relationship positively impacted the influence of expertise congruency in influencer trust. Beer is widely used as a hedonic drink instead of a functional product. Most people drink beer at a party or get together with their families or friends, and on most occasions,

it helps them chill, relax, and enjoy the time alone or with others. Hence, the function is not the central feature of beer; therefore, the influencers' expertise or professional knowledge about beer is not the fundamental factor when people need to purchase beer products. In this way, the intimate relationship between an influencer and a consumer helps improve the impact of the expertise congruency of an influencer on consumers' trust in influencers, the higher level of the parasocial relationship between an influencer and the consumer, the greater influence of expertise congruency in influencer trust. Hence, the moderation effect of parasocial relationship in the beer scenario in the U.S. sample may not generalize to all male-gendered product situations. Other than a male-gendered product, beer is also a hedonic product. A male-gendered utilitarian product should be examined in future research, particularly when investigating how an influencer's expertise impacts people's trust in that influencer when they endorse the gendered product.

The subsequent mediation analysis confirmed the mediating role of influencer trust in the relationship between influencer gender-product congruency, influencer expertise-product congruency and parasocial relationship with product attitude and purchase intention. In both samples and on all product occasions, influencer trust explained part of the reason why gender congruency, expertise congruency, and parasocial relationship positively predicted participants' product attitudes and purchase intentions. In other words, gender congruency, expertise congruency, and parasocial relationship build trust in the influencer, and the trust further enhances participants' product attitudes and purchase intentions. The mediation analysis also affirms that trust is a crucial factor for an influencer's persuasive power on consumers, so to improve the influencer marketing goal in sales, brands and influencers should consider how to facilitate consumers' trust toward the influencer. Based on the result of this study, at least, they

should consider gender congruency, expertise congruency, and parasocial relationship as three important factors building that trust.

Theoretical Implications

This research makes several theoretical contributions. First, the researcher explores the difference between TikTok and Douyin use between the U.S. and China through the theoretical lens of Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. As a successful global social media platform based in China, TikTok/Douyin is attracting more scholars' attention to its great potential to make a tremendous global influence. It is also an essential social media platform for cross-cultural comparisons, especially the cultural differences between Western and non-Western countries. Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory has been examined for decades in cross-cultural studies. This study focused on three cultural dimensions—masculinity, individualism, and power distance and measured at an individual level. Although masculinity is similar between Chinese and U.S. users, regarding the individualism and power distance cultural dimensions, the result is opposite to the original Hofstede's cultural dimension scores score of China and the US. Although this study shows that some of the original findings and cultural stereotypes of the Hofstede's works are not applicable to Chinese and U.S. TikTok users, the cultural dimensions are still helpful in explaining consumer behavior.

The result indicates that Chinese Douyin users have a higher score in individualism than the U.S. TikTok users, and the U.S. users has a higher power distance score than Chinese users. It reminds us that cultural values in different societies are changing over time, and there is a need to reexamine Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory under different conditions. Moreover, this study explores correlations between TikTok/Douyin users' demographic characteristics, their TikTok/Douyin use preference, and their cultural value scores. The result finds that demographic

characteristics and TikTok/Douyin use preference correlate with an individual's individualism and power distance scores. Despite the fact that the sample was not representative of the adult population in each country as they were recruited from survey panels, the TikTok user profile is skewed toward social media users. As social media has become the place for memes and trends, social media can have significant impact on users' cultural values. Future research needs to observe and examine how social media use influences individuals' cultural values among its users.

Furthermore, this researcher explores the mechanism of social media influencers' persuasive power on their followers in product endorsement through the theoretical lens of gender congruity theory and Hofstede's cultural dimensions. The two theories have been examined in prior advertising, cultural studies, and cross-cultural comparison literature. However, few researchers use them to investigate the recent popular influencer marketing relevant topics. The current study explores correlations between influencer gender-product congruency and the impact of three cultural dimensions, masculinity, power distance, and individualism, on this relationship because the prior findings suggest that these cultural dimensions relate to gender difference. This research confirms individual masculinity as a moderator in the theoretical model between influencer-product gender fit and endorsement effectiveness.

Indeed, this study supports the importance of endorser-product gender congruency in consumers' decision makings. The finding suggests that endorser-product gender congruency positively predicts consumer product attitudes and purchase intentions. The finding is consistent with Hofstede's cultural dimensions. The cultural dimension score for China and the U.S. indicates both countries are masculine countries, which means people value gender difference

and gender inequality in society, and that men are agentic, and women are communal. Also, people are less tolerant of gender incongruency regarding product endorsement.

Moreover, the current cultural value score has several inconsistencies with the original Hofstede's cultural dimensions value; in particular, the power distance score of the U.S. sample is much higher than the Chinese sample, and the difference is due to the country variable. The finding suggests that along with China's globalization, internationalization, and rapid development, the old perception regarding the cultural value is not accurate enough or reliable to measure the current Chinese society. Therefore, researchers should tailor the theory to different research targets and different generations, especially when almost everything is changing daily in the digital world.

Practical Implications

This research also benefits the practices of influencer marketing, especially the influencer marketing practices on Douyin/TikTok targeting the U.S. and/or China markets. The current study is a pioneer study focusing on a comparable social media platform, Douyin/TikTok, with the same features but targeting different audiences. First, advertising and marketing agencies should pay adequate attention to cultural factors when planning to launch marketing campaigns or cooperate with influencers on social media platforms in different cultures. This study compares U.S. TikTok and Chinese Douyin users, including their general demographic characteristics, TikTok/Douyin use preferences and cultural values. The comparison and analysis help marketing practitioners better understand this social media platform, its users, and how culture influences their use preference and their behaviors on this platform. Moreover, besides the general social media use information, this study also points out users' influencer video consumption preference and how users' purchase behavior is influenced by the influencer, which

will inspire influencer marketing practitioners to conduct more effective influencer marketing practices.

The result suggests that U.S. participants prefer to socialize on TikTok, and most have more followers than their Chinese counterparts; Chinese participants prefer to follow Douyin influencers and may consume the influencer video alone passively. Hence, socialization is not the Chinese users' priority on Douyin. Instead, they pass the time and get information on Douyin alone, and they are more likely to be persuaded by influencers to buy products. Meanwhile, U.S. participants spend time on TikTok to communicate, share information, exchange ideas, and build their communities. So, they pay more attention to the sharable videos on TikTok, and they care about the interaction with friends instead of seeking advice from influencers to make purchase decisions.

Moreover, unlike advertising in which younger people is the common target, this study shows that in both countries, old users are more easily persuaded by influencers than young users even though young users have higher use of TikTok. By knowing this, marketing practitioners should pay attention to the audience's age when launching any TikTok/Douyin campaigns or cooperating with influencers on the platform. In both countries, marketers should invest more money in TikTok when targeting audiences aged between 30 and 49 since the study found this user group is easier to be persuaded by influencers. Besides, marketers should consider the aim of their influencer marketing; for example, in the Chinese market, it is feasible to persuade the audience to buy the endorsed or promoted product immediately, and in the US market, it is better to share a positive user experience, or some embedded funny videos rather than directly persuade the audience to buy the product. Finally, the most popular type of TikTok influencers in the U.S. are music, fashion, and beauty influencers, and the most popular type of Douyin influencers in

China are food, fashion, and beauty influencers. So, cooperating with those influencers in each market is expected to reach the most considerable success in influencer marketing.

One of the essential cultural factors is consumers' gender value because gender difference or gender value is always a big concern for marketing practitioners. The current study suggests the importance of gender fit between the endorser and the product since China and the US are two masculine countries. Also, the expected influencer-product gender congruency score indicates that both Chinese and U.S, samples expect gender fit for influencer product endorsement, and the Chinese sample has a relatively higher score than the U.S. sample. Hence, gender incongruency may cause undesirable outcomes for influencer marketing.

Besides, the finding also suggests the importance of product difference, namely, gendered-product or gender-neutral product. The gender characteristic of the product is a crucial factor examined in this study. Other than the overall sample of the U.S. and China, all hypotheses were addressed in three different conditions, female-gendered product (skin cream), male-gendered product (beer), and gender-neutral product (soda). An effective influencer marketing practice should consider the product gender because it makes a difference in consumers' product attitudes and purchase intentions. For example, in this study, male participants' purchase intentions of a gendered product are more influenced by the influencer of the same gender as the product. Moreover, in both Chinese and U.S. samples, participants' purchase intentions toward a male-gendered product (beer) are more influenced by male influencers, whose gender is the same as the gender of beer. Furthermore, product gender can be a factor in explaining the influence of people's masculinity level on the effectiveness of influencer-product gender congruency in the U.S. because the study found that the moderation effect existed in the skin cream and beer conditions but not in the soda condition.

Although gender fit is an important factor that predicts endorsers' endorsement effectiveness, most Douyin/TikTok users are young generations, and traditional cultural values may not be applicable to them. For instance, China is widely perceived as collectivist culture, but our result shows that Chinese respondents have a higher level of individualism than U.S. respondents. Hence, marketing practitioners should think differently and adopt innovative marketing practices to draw those consumers' attention when facing the young Chinese generation.

Besides, gender congruency between influencers and products matters to the influencer's endorsement effectiveness, and the influencer's gender identity is also vital to consumers' product attitude change and behavior intention. In general, Chinese participants were more influenced by opposite-sex influencers; overall, U.S. participants were more influenced by male influencers. Specifically, in the gendered product condition, Chinese male participants' product attitudes were influenced by the influencer whose gender was opposite to the product gender, but their purchase intentions were more influenced by the influencer with the same gender as the product. In the gendered product conditions, Chinese female participants were more influenced by male influencers regarding their product attitudes and purchase intentions. Hence, influencer marketing on Douyin should have several strategies to target consumers of different genders. For example, targeting female users should use more male influencers instead of female influencers. Future research is expected to explore the good traits and characteristics of the male influencers in persuading female Chinese participants.

Nevertheless, marketers should consider gender congruency when marketing aims to enhance sales of gendered products among Chinese male users. They are influenced more by female influencers on their product attitudes, but they are influenced by male influencers in

purchasing both female and male gender products. But for US male users, they prefer male influencers in all gender conditions. In the gendered product conditions, US females prefer the influencer with the opposite gender as the product.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The primary limitation of this study is the use of convenience samples. The third-party platform recruited participants in both countries with specific requirements, such as TikTok/Douyin users and the gender quota. Besides, the sample skewed toward younger people and is not representative of the adult population in general. Hence, the sample used in this study cannot represent the general population and even the population of TikTok users in each country, which means the individual cultural score in this study may not be able to represent the cultural value of the whole country. For example, Chinese participants claimed a higher individualism score than U.S. participants, and US participants claimed a higher power distance than Chinese participants, which contradicts the prior literature. This result may be due to the non-representative samples. Therefore, future research regarding TikTok/Douyin user behaviors should try to recruit a more representative sample of each country. Additionally, younger age group on TikTok also needs to be studied. According to a Statista report (2022), users aged between 10 and 19 account for the largest number of TikTok users in the U.S. (25%), followed by age group 20-29 (22.4%), and 30-39 (21.7%).

Moreover, the product selection in this study might have a confounding effect on measuring the effectiveness of the influencer endorsement in gendered and neutral product on product attitude and purchase intention. Specifically, the male-gendered (beer) and gender-neutral (soda) products are both food and beverage products. However, food influencer is more preferred by Chinese participants than US participants for their influencer videos consumed on

TikTok/Douyin. Hence the higher influencer effectiveness found in the Chinese sample may be caused by the use of food and beverage products with food influencers. Therefore, to avoid the confounding effect, future studies should pick diverse but common gendered, and gender-neutral products to test whether product gender is an issue for influencers' persuasive power. In addition, this study measured users' favorability toward the identified influencer, but did not use this measure in the analysis, so future research can study favorability and parasocial relationship, and they may contribute to influencer trust and endorsement effectiveness differently. Further, influencer follower size can also be measured as a control variable of influencer trust and endorsement effectiveness.

Future research should address the same-sex and opposite-sex effects in influencer research. The current study had some preliminary findings regarding the influence of influencer's gender on male/female participants' product attitudes/ purchase intentions in the gendered and gender-neutral product conditions. Future research can dig into it and examine the difference in same/opposite-sex effects between the U.S. and China and other countries. Furthermore, most U.S. influencer-product gender congruency effects can be explained through the lens of cultural values or cultural dimensions, but China has complexity in influencer's effectiveness, and some factors, such as cultural values, did not work in China to predict influencer's effectiveness. Hence, more research should be conducted among Chinese Douyin users to explore new factors which can explain influencers' effectiveness. In addition, future research may also try to choose the appropriate influencer gender to promote the gender-neutral product, which has not been addressed in the current study.

Conclusion

This cross-country comparison study explored the different use preference of

TikTok/Douyin between the US and Chinese participants from the perspective of Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. The study revealed people's self-reported cultural value in China and the U.S. Hofstede's cultural scores measured three decades ago showed that China and the US differed in the individualism and power distance scores. The U.S. had a much higher individualism score and a lower power distance score. Nevertheless, this study found that U.S. participants claimed a higher power distance and lower individualism score. The reason can be explained by the age difference, the One Child policy in China, and the cultural paradoxes in each culture.

Moreover, the study provides a detailed comparison between TikTok and Douyin users in each country. In addition, Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory is a suitable framework to explain the reason for U.S. TikTok user behavior more than Chinese Douyin user behavior. Therefore, future research should develop other framework to explain short video apps and social media such as TikTok user in China and other countries.

The study also examined the persuasive mechanism of influencer endorsement from the perspective of gender fit/gender congruency; used gender congruity theory and Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory to investigate the drivers of endorsement effectiveness (product attitude and purchase intention) and considered the moderating role of consumers' masculinity value. The result confirms the positive correlation between influencer-product gender fit and consumers' product attitude and purchase intention in both Chinese and U.S, samples, and the moderating role of masculinity value was partially supported in the two samples. Besides, the impact of gender on endorsement effectiveness in the Chinese sample is greater than in the US sample, but it only works for purchase intention, not product attitude. The inconsistency between the hypothesis and the finding may be explained by the young age group of TikTok/Douyin users

and the rapid development of China's economy. In addition, same-sex and opposite-sex effects were found regarding the gender of influencers and participants. Generally, U.S. participants were more influenced by male influencers regardless of participants gender, and Chinese participants were more influenced by opposite-gender influencers. Hence, marketers wanting to use influencers must consider these different gender influences when using Douyin in China and TikTok in the U.S.

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APPENDIX A. IRB LETTER

BGSU
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of Research Compliance

Institutional Review Board

DATE:	May 4, 2021
TO:	Yang Yang, Doctoral
FROM:	Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board
PROJECT TITLE:	[1685439-6] How influencer-product gender congruency impacts influencer's endorsement effectiveness A cross national comparison between China and the USA
SUBMISSION TYPE:	Amendment/Modification
ACTION:	DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE:	May 4, 2021
REVIEW CATEGORY:	Exemption category #2

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board has determined this project is still exempt from IRB review according to federal regulations AND that the proposed research has met the principles outlined in the Belmont Report..

As an Exempt review, changes may be made to the study without IRB approval. However, amendments or modifications to Exempt studies that *substantively changes or alters* the criteria used to make the initial Exempt determination must be submitted to the IRB for approval.

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

If you have any questions, please contact the Institutional Review Board at 419-372-7716 or irb@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board's records.

APPENDIX B. INSTRUMENT

Screening questions for TikTok influencer use:

Do you use TikTok?

- Yes – continue
- No - go to end

Do you follow any TikTok Influencer (A TikTok influencer is a TikTok user who is **not** a traditional celebrity, such as a movie star or an athlete; is famous for his/her self-generated content; is co-consumer as other TikTok users; has more than 1000 followers; has expertise in a particular area, such as cooking or fitness; posts self-generated videos on TikTok at least once a day; makes money through promoting or endorsing commercial products on TikTok)?

- Yes - continue
- No - go to end

Does that Influencer endorse any product?

- Yes - continue
- No – go to end

Demographics (the USA)

Gender:

1) Male
2) Female
3) Other

Ethnicity:

- White
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American
- Native American or American Indian
- Asian/ Pacific Islander
- Other

Age in years:

Marital status:

- Single, never married
- Married or domestic partnership
- Widowed
- Divorced/Separated

Time spent on social media per day:

- Less than 10 minutes
- 11-30 minutes
- 31-59 minutes
- 1-2 hours
- 2-3 hours
- More than 3 hours

Time spent on Tik Tok per day

- Less than 10 min
- 11-30 min
- 31-59 min
- 1-2 h
- 2-3 h
- More than 3 h

Length of time as a Tik Tok user.

- 1 year or less
- 1-2 years
- 2-3 years
- More than 3 years

Number of followers on Tik Tok:

- Less than 10
- 11-50
- 51-100
- 101-150
- 151-200
- 201-250
- 251-300
- More than 300

Number of following on Tik Tok:

- Less than 10
- 11-50
- 51-100
- 101-150
- 151-200
- 201-250
- 251-300
- More than 300

What is your highest education degree?

- Less than high school degree

- High school degree or equivalent
- Some college but no degree
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate degree

Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

- Part-time employed and not a full-time student, working 1-39 hours per week
- Full-time employed, working 40 or more hours per week
- Not employed, looking for work
- Not employed, not looking for work
- Full-time student
- Retired
- Disabled, not able to work
- Other (Specify:)

Which of these describe your annual income last year?

- Under $10,000
- $10,000 to $24,999
- $25,000 to $49,999
- $50,000 to $74,999
- $75,000 to $99,999
- $100,000 to $149,999
- $150,000 and greater

Where are you located?

- City
- Suburbs
- Rural areas

Which state do you live?

Demographics (China)

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Other

Ethnicity:

- Han
- Hui
- Man
- Yi

- Dai
- Zhuang
- Weiwuer (Uigur)
- Other: Specify

Age in years:

Marital status:
- Single, never married
- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced/Separated

Time spent on social media per day:
1) Less than 10 minutes
2) 11-30 minutes
3) 31-59 minutes
4) 1-2 hours
5) 2-3 hours
6) More than 3 hours

Time spent on Tik Tok per day

- Less than 10 min
- 11-30 min
- 31-59 min
- 1-2 h
- 2-3 h
- More than 3 h

Length of time as a Tik Tok user.
- 1 year or less
- 1-2 years
- 2-3 years
- More than 3 years

Number of followers on Tik Tok:
- Less than 10
- 11-50
- 51-100
- 101-150
- 151-200
- 201-250
- 251-300

- More than 300

Number of following of TikTok influencers:

- Less than 10
- 11-50
- 51-100
- 101-150
- 151-200
- 201-250
- 251-300
- More than 300

What is your highest education degree?

- Less than high school degree
- High school degree or equivalent
- Some college but no degree
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate degree

Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?

- Part-time employed and not a full-time student, working 1-39 hours per week
- Full-time employed, working 40 or more hours per week
- Not employed, looking for work
- Not employed, not looking for work
- Full-time student
- Retired
- Disabled, not able to work
- Other (Specify:)

Which of these describe your monthly income?

- Less than 1000 RMB
- 1001 to 3000 RMB
- 3001 to 5000 RMB
- 5001 to 7000 RMB
- 7001 to 10,000 RMB
- 10,000 to 20,000 RMB
- More than 20,000 RMB

Where are you located?

- City
- Suburbs
- Rural areas

Which province do you live? Please specify:

Primary Questions

Expectation about influencer gender-product congruency
Please indicate your perception about the importance of endorser-product gender congruency for endorsement effectiveness (brand attitude and purchase intention). (7-point Likert scale ranging from 1-7 from strongly disagree to strongly agree).

- Male endorsers and female endorsers should endorse different types of products.
- The endorser gender should match with the endorsed product gender (For example, female endorsers should endorse beauty products or domestic products while male endorsers should endorse alcoholic beverages or sports cars).
- When the endorser matches the product gender characteristic, then I will buy the product/like the brand.

Perception about your identified TikTok/Douyin influencer

Please write one TikTok (the USA)/Douyin (China) influencer and answer the following questions:

The name of the influencer:
The gender of the influencer:
- Male
- Female

(The favorability level of the influencer):
Please indicate your agreement to the following statement by scoring 1-7 (Strongly disagree to Strongly agree).
This influencer is my most favorite influencer.

How did you discover this influencer?
- Friend's recommendation
- TikTok's (English version)/Douyin's (Chinese version) recommendation
- Other (please specify) _____

Why did you choose to follow this influencer? (check all that apply)
- The influencer is attractive
- The influencer is knowledgeable
- The influencer is funny
- The influencer has similar view and taste as me
- Other (please specify)

What kind of expertise does this person have:

- Music
- Travel
- Beauty
- Fashion
- Food
- Pet
- Fitness
- Other (Specify:)

How often do you watch that influencer's videos?

- Almost daily
- Several times a week
- Weekly
- Several times a month
- Monthly
- Once several months
- A few times a year
- Less than once a year

Q5. How did the influencer endorse/promote that products in the video? (check all that apply)

- Demonstrate the endorsed product
- Praise the endorsed product
- Disclose sponsor of the endorsed product
- Unboxing videos and either reviewing or using the product right away
- A brand-produced ad featuring the influencer
- An influencer-created video embedded with brand-produced ad
- Simply showing off how he/she uses the product
- Live streaming with real-time influencer-audience interaction
- Other (please specify) _____

What brands does the influencer endorse?

Brand name: _____

Have you bought anything endorsed by that influencer before?

Yes
No
Don't remember, unsure

Please think of the influencer and rate 1-7 for the following statements (1-strongly disagree, 7-strongly agree)

- I feel sorry the TikTok (English version)/Douyin (Chinese version) influencer when he or she makes a mistake;
- The (English version)/Douyin (Chinese version) influencer's personality makes me feel comfortable, as if I am with friends;
- I see the (English version)/Douyin (Chinese version)influencer as a natural, down to earth person;
- I look forward to watching the (English version)/Douyin (Chinese version)influencer on television;
- I would watch programs that featured the (English version)/Douyin (Chinese version) influencer, even if I didn't regularly watch the program;
- When the (English version)/Douyin (Chinese version) influencer is interviewed, he or she seems to understand the things that I want to know;
- If there were a story about the (English version)/Douyin (Chinese version) influencer in a newspaper (either online or hardcopy), magazine, online forums, and online news platforms, I would read it;
- I miss seeing the (English version)/Douyin (Chinese version) influencer when he or she is not in the media;
- I would like to meet the (English version)/Douyin (Chinese version) influencer in person

Imagine your identified influencer {influencer name} is going to endorse a product, and there are three situations below, please answer the following questions for situations (The three categories are from the research by Martian Culture and CAASData (2019), Douyin 30-Day Popular Goods List: beauty products, foods&drinks, alcoholic products).

Scenario 1: [Your identified influencer] endorses a new moisturizer brand and [add endorsement strategy checked in Q5]:

Please think of the moisturizer and your TikTok (the USA)/Douyin (China) influencer rate 1-7 for the following statements:

Source: https://image.baidu.com/search/index?tn=baiduimage&ps=1&ct=201326592&lm=-1&cl=2&nc=1&ie=utf-8&word=%E9%9D%A2%E9%9C%9C

Perceived Influencer-product gender congruency

- The influencer gender fits the product category
- The influencer gender characteristic matches the product characteristic
- The influencer is appropriate to endorse/promote the product because of the gender of the influencer

Perceived influencer expertise-product congruency

- The influencer is an expert in the product
- The influencer is experienced in the product
- The influencer is knowledgeable in the product
- The influencer is qualified in the product
- The influencer is skilled in the product

Influencer trust

- I trust this influencer's opinion on the product
- I rely on this influencer's opinion on the product
- He/she is an honest influencer
- The brand/product endorsed by this influencer is safe

Brand attitude

What do you think about this moisturizer brand that your identified influencer endorses?

- Unappealing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 appealing

- Bad 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 good
- Unpleasant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 pleasant
- Unfavorable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 favorable
- Boring 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 interesting
- Unlikable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 likable

Purchase intention

- I would consider buying this product
- I have no intention to buy this product (R)
- It is possible that I would buy this product
- I will purchase (this brand) the next time I need a (product)
- If I am in need, I would buy this (product)

How much do you like the product picture from a rating of 1 do not like it at all to 10 like it very much?

Make sure to select yellow for this answer so that we know you are paying attention:

- Orange
- Yellow
- Pink
- Purple

Scenario 2: Your identified influencer endorses a new soda drink brand and [add endorsement strategy checked in Q5]:

Please think of the new flavor soda drink of your favorite brand and your TikTok (the USA)/Douyin (China) influencer rate 1-7 for the following statements:
Perceived Influencer-product gender congruency

Source: https://tsingtaoyp.tmall.com/shop/view_shop.htm?spm=a230r.7195193.1997079397.2.1b1d2b4cd0jST6

- The influencer gender fits the product category
- The influencer gender characteristic matches the product characteristic
- The influencer is appropriate to endorse/promote the product because of the gender of the influencer

Perceived influencer expertise-product congruency

- The influencer is an expert in the product
- The influencer is experienced in the product
- The influencer is knowledgeable in the product
- The influencer is qualified in the product
- The influencer is skilled in the product

Influencer trust

- I trust this influencer's opinion on the product
- I rely on this influencer's opinion on the product
- He/she is an honest influencer
- The brand/product endorsed by this influencer is safe

Brand attitude

What do you think about the new flavor soda brand that this influencer endorses?

- Unappealing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 appealing
- Bad 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 good
- Unpleasant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 pleasant
- Unfavorable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 favorable
- Boring 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 interesting
- Unlikable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 likable

Purchase intention

- I would consider buying this product
- I have no intention to buy this product (R)
- It is possible that I would buy this product
- I will purchase (this brand) the next time I need a (product)
- If I am in need, I would buy this (product)

How much do you like the product picture from a rating of 1 do not like it at all to 10 like it very much?

Scenario 3: [Your identified influencer] endorses a new brand beer and [add endorsement strategy checked in Q5]**:**

Please think of the beer and your TikTok (the USA)/Douyin (China) influencer rate 1-7 for the following statements:

Source: https://image.baidu.com/search/index?tn=baiduimage&ipn=r&ct=201326592&cl=2&lm=-1&st=-1&fm=result&fr=&sf=1&fmq=1608390531368_R&pv=&ic=&nc=1&z=&hd=&latest=&copyrig

ht=&se=1&showtab=0&fb=0&width=&height=&face=0&istype=2&ie=utf-8&sid=&word=%E5%95%A4%E9%85%92

Perceived Influencer-product gender congruency

- The influencer gender fits the product category
- The influencer gender characteristic matches the product characteristic
- The influencer is appropriate to endorse/promote the product because of the gender of the influencer

Perceived influencer expertise-product congruency

- The influencer is an expert in the product
- The influencer is experienced in the product
- The influencer is knowledgeable in the product
- The influencer is qualified in the product
- The influencer is skilled in the product

Influencer trust

- I trust this influencer's opinion on the product
- I rely on this influencer's opinion on the product
- He/she is an honest influencer
- The brand/product endorsed by this influencer is safe

Brand attitude

What do you think about this beer brand that this influencer endorses?

- Unappealing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 appealing
- Bad 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 good
- Unpleasant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 pleasant
- Unfavorable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 favorable
- Boring 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 interesting
- Unlikable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 likable

Purchase intention

- I would consider buying this product
- I have no intention to buy this product (R)
- It is possible that I would buy this product
- I will purchase (this brand) the next time I need a (product)
- If I am in need, I would buy this (product)

How much do you like the product picture from a rating of 1 do not like it at all to 10 like it very much?

Individual's Masculinity (to measure participant's value)
Please indicate your perception about the following statements (7-point Likert scale ranging from 1-7).

- It is important for men to have a professional career than it is for women.
- Men usually solve problems with logical analysis; women usually solve problems with intuition.
- Solving difficult problems usually requires an active, forcible approach, which is typical for men.
- There are some jobs that a man can always do better than a woman.

Individual's Individualism (to measure participant's value)
- Individuals should sacrifice self-interest for the group (R);
- Individuals should stick with the group even through difficulties (R);
- Group welfare is more important than individual rewards (R);
- Group success is more important than individual success (R);
- Individuals should only pursue their goals after considering the welfare of the group (R);
- Group loyalty should be encouraged even if individual goals suffer (R).

Individual's Power Distance (to measure participant's value)
- People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions;
- People in higher positions should not ask the opinions of people in lower positions too frequently;
- People in higher positions should avoid social interaction with people in lower positions;
- People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions by people in higher positions;
- People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions.

Please write any other opinion you have about the influencers on Douyin/Tiktok at this survey below.
Thank you very much.

1. 您的性别是？
    a. 男
    b. 女
    c. 其它
2. 您的民族是？
    a. 汉族
    b. 回族
    c. 满族
    d. 彝族
    e. 傣族
    f. 壮族
    g. 维吾尔族
    h. 其它（请具体列出）
3. 您的年龄是 （请仅用代表年龄的数字表示，例如 25）？
4. 您的婚姻状况是？
    a. 单身，从未结婚
    b. 已婚
    c. 同居
    d. 离异/分居
    e. 丧偶
5. 您每天使用社交软件的时间是？
    a. 少于 10 分钟
    b. 11-30 分钟
    c. 31-59 分钟
    d. 1-2 小时
    e. 2-3 小时
    f. 3 小时以上
6. 您每天使用抖音的时间是？
    a. 少于 10 分钟
    b. 11-30 分钟
    c. 31-59 分钟
    d. 1-2 小时
    e. 2-3 小时
    f. 3 小时以上
7. 您成为抖音用户多久了？
    a. 1 年以内
    b. 1-2 年
    c. 2-3 年
    d. 3 年以上
8. 您有多少位抖音粉丝？
    a. 少于 10
    b. 11-50
    c. 51-100

d. 101-150
e. 151-200
f. 201-250
g. 251-300
h. 多于 300

9. 您在抖音上关注了多少个抖音红人账号？
a. 少于 10 个
b. 11-50 个
c. 51-100 个
d. 101-150 个
e. 151-200 个
f. 201-250 个
g. 251-300 个
h. 多于 300 个

10. 您的最高学历是？
a. 低于高中学历
b. 高中或者同等学历
c. 某些大学但是没有学士学位
d. 大专学历
e. 学士学位
f. 硕士研究生学历
g. 博士研究生学历

11. 以下哪项最能描述您的就业情况？
a. 兼职而非全日制学生，每周工作 1-39 小时
b. 全职工作，每周工作 40 个小时或以上
c. 没有工作，正在找工作
d. 没有工作，并且不找工作
e. 全日制学生
f. 退休
g. 残疾人，无法工作
h. 其它原因（请具体说明）

12. 以下哪项描述了您的月收入？
a. 少于 1000 元
b. 1001-3000 元
c. 3001-5000 元
d. 5001-7000 元
e. 7001-10000 元
f. 10001-20000 元
g. 多于 20000 元

13. 您生活在什么地区？
a. 城市
b. 郊区

c. 农村

14. 您生活在哪个省（给出省份滚动条供参与者选择）
15. 请说明您对抖音红人的性别与所推广/代言的产品一致性的重要性的看法（1 分表示非常不同意，5 分表示非常同意）。
    a. 男性代言人和女性代言人应该代言/推广不同类型的产品
    b. 代言人性别应该与产品性别特点相匹配（例如，女代言人应该代言美妆或者家居产品，而男代言人应该代言酒类或者跑车）
    c. 当代言人性别符合产品性别特征时，我将购买该产品/或喜欢该品牌

16. 请选择一位您关注的抖音红人，写下他/她的名字：
    19 题为必答题
17. 这位抖音红人的性别是：
    a. 男
    b. 女
18. 请为下面的描述打分表达您对这位抖音红人的喜爱程度（1 分表示非常不同意，5 分表示非常同意）
    a. 这位抖音红人是我最喜欢的抖音抖音红人
19. 您是如何发现这位抖音红人的？
    a. 朋友的推荐
    b. 抖音的推荐
    c. 其它（请注明）
20. 您为什么会关注这位抖音红人（请勾选所有适用选项）？
    a. 这位抖音红人是吸引人的
    b. 这位抖音红人是知识渊博的
    c. 这位抖音红人是好笑的
    d. 这位抖音红人和我有相似的看法和品味
    e. 其它原因（请具体说明）
21. 这位抖音红人具有哪个领域的专业知识？
    a. 音乐
    b. 旅行
    c. 美妆
    d. 时尚
    e. 美食
    f. 宠物
    g. 健身
    h. 其它（请具体列出）
22. 您观看该抖音红人视频的频率是？
    a. 几乎每天
    b. 一周几次
    c. 每周
    d. 一个月几次
    e. 每月

f. 几个月一次
g. 一年几次
h. 一年少于一次

23. 该抖音抖音红人如何推广/代言视频中的产品？
    a. 向观众展示该产品
    b. 好评该产品
    c. 说明该视频是品牌方赞助的
    d. 产品开箱视频并且立即点评该产品或者使用该产品
    e. 该视频是品牌方制作的广告代入了抖音红人
    f. 品牌方制作的广告植入在该抖音红人创作的视频中
    g. 直接向观众展示该抖音红人如何使用该产品
    h. 在直播中带货并且跟观众实时互动
    i. 其它（请具体列出）
24. 该抖音红人代言或推广过那些品牌？
    a. 请列出品牌名称：
25. 您买过这位抖音红人推广/代言的产品吗？
    a. 买过
    b. 没买过
    c. 不记得，不确定
26. 根据您所选择的这位抖音红人，请为以下描述打分，1 分表示非常不同意，5 分表示非常同意
    a. 当这位抖音红人犯错的时候，我会感到抱歉
    b. 这位抖音红人的个性让我觉得像朋友一样舒服
    c. 我把这位抖音红人看作是一个自然的、真实的人
    d. 我希望在电视上看到这位抖音红人
    e. 我会看平时不常看的节目只要这位抖音红人是节目嘉宾
    f. 我会阅读报纸，杂志，网络论坛，以及网络新闻平台有关于这位抖音红人的故事
    g. 当这位抖音红人不出现在媒体上的时候，我会想念这位抖音红人
    h. 我想与这位抖音红人在生活中见面
    i. 当这位抖音红人在回答采访问题的时候，他/她似乎知道我想了解什么

请针对以下三种场景为下列描述打分，1 分表示非常不同意，5 分表示非常同意：

场景 1: 您所选择的这位抖音红人【这里是第 19 题写下的抖音红人名字】将要代言一个新的面霜品牌；并且用【您在前面 26 号关于产品推广策略的问题的答案】推广这款面霜。

27. 抖音红人性别与产品一致行的感知

a. 该抖音红人的性别适合该面霜产品
b. 该抖音红人性别特征与该面霜产品特征相匹配
c. 由于该抖音红人的性别，他/她适合代言该面霜产品

28. 抖音红人专业与产品一致行的感知

a. 该抖音红人是面霜相关产品专家
b. 该抖音红人在面霜相关产品方面经验丰富
c. 该抖音红人具有丰富的面霜相关产品知识
d. 该抖音红人具有面霜相关产品领域的资质
e. 该抖音红人可以熟练使用面霜相关产品

29. 对抖音红人的信任

a. 我信任这位抖音红人对该面霜产品的观点
b. 我依赖这位抖音红人对该面霜产品的观点
c. 他/她是一位诚实的抖音红人
d. 这位抖音红人代言的面霜产品/品牌是安全的

30. 请对下列描述打分表达您对这个面霜品牌的态度：

1 2 3 4 5 6

a. 不吸引人的 o o o o o o 吸引人的
b. 坏的 o o o o o o 好的
c. 不令人愉悦的 o o o o o o 令人愉悦的
d. 令热不快的 o o o o o o 赞许的
e. 无聊的 o o o o o o 有趣的
f. 不喜欢的 o o o o o o 喜欢的

31. 购买意向

a. 我会考虑购买这款面霜
b. 我没有意向购买这款面霜

c. 我有可能会买这款面霜
d. 下次当我需要面霜的时候，我会选择购买这个品牌的面霜
e. 如果我需要的话，我会购买这款面霜

32. 您有多喜欢这张面霜的图片 （1 分表示一点也不喜欢，10 分表示非常喜欢）？

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

一点也不喜欢 o o o o o o o o o o 非常喜欢

33. 为确保您正在集中精力回答问卷，请勾选黄色为这道题的答案:

a. 橘色
b. 黄色
c. 粉色
d. 紫色

此题为注意力检查问题

场景 2: 您所选择的这位抖音红人【这里是第 19 题写下的抖音红人名字】将要代言一个新的汽水品牌，并且用【此处应该是您在 26 号关于产品推广策略的问题的答案】推广这款汽水。

34. 抖音红人性别与产品一致行的感知 （5 分 likert scale）

a. 该抖音红人的性别适合该汽水产品
b. 该抖音红人性别特征与该汽水产品特征相匹配
c. 由于该抖音红人的性别，他/她适合代言该汽水产品

35. 抖音红人专业与产品一致行的感知

a. 该抖音红人是汽水相关产品专家
b. 该抖音红人在汽水相关产品方面经验丰富
c. 该抖音红人具有丰富的汽水相关产品知识
d. 该抖音红人具有汽水相关产品领域的资质
e. 该抖音红人可以熟练饮用汽水相关产品

36. 对抖音红人的信任
a. 我信任这位抖音红人对该汽水产品的观点
b. 我依赖这位抖音红人对该汽水产品的观点
c. 他/她是一位诚实的抖音红人
d. 这位抖音红人代言的汽水产品/品牌是安全的

37. 请对下列描述打分表达您对这个汽水品牌的态度：
a. 不吸引人的 123456 吸引人的
b. 坏的 123456 好的
c. 不令人愉悦的 123456 令人愉悦的
d. 令热不快的 123456 赞许的
e. 无聊的 123456 有趣的
f. 不喜欢的 123456 喜欢的

38. 购买意向
a. 我会考虑购买这款汽水
b. 我没有意向购买这款汽水
c. 我有可能会买这款汽水
d. 下次当我需要汽水的时候我会选择购买这个品牌的汽水
e. 如果我需要的话，我会购买这款汽水

39. 您有多喜欢这张汽水的图片 （1 分表示一点也不喜欢，10 分表示非常喜欢）？
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

40. 一点也不喜欢 o o o o o o o o o o 非常喜欢

场景 3: 您所选择的这位抖音红人【这里是第 19 题写下的抖音红人名字】 将要代言一个新的啤酒品牌，并且用【此处应该是您在 26 号关于推广策略的问题的答案】推广该啤酒产品。根据这位抖音红人以及这款啤酒，请为下列描述打分，1 分表示非常不同意，5 分表示非常同意：

41. 抖音红人性别与产品一致行的感知

a. 该抖音红人的性别适合该啤酒产品
b. 该抖音红人性别特征与该啤酒产品特征相匹配
c. 由于该抖音红人的性别，他/她适合代言该啤酒产品

42. 抖音红人专业与产品一致行的感知

a. 该抖音红人是啤酒相关产品专家
b. 该抖音红人在啤酒相关产品方面经验丰富
c. 该抖音红人具有丰富的啤酒相关产品知识
d. 该抖音红人具有啤酒相关产品领域的资质
e. 该抖音红人可以熟练饮用啤酒相关产品

43. 对抖音红人的信任

a. 我信任这位抖音红人对该啤酒产品的观点
b. 我依赖这位抖音红人对该啤酒产品的观点
c. 他/她是一位诚实的抖音红人
d. 这位抖音红人代言的啤酒产品/品牌是安全的

44. 请对下列描述打分表达您对这个汽水品牌的态度：

a. 不吸引人的 123456 吸引人的
b. 坏的 123456 好的
c. 不令人愉悦的 123456 令人愉悦的
d. 令热不快的 123456 赞许的
e. 无聊的 123456 有趣的
f. 不喜欢的 123456 喜欢的

45. 购买意向

a. 我会考虑购买这款啤酒
b. 我没有意向购买这款啤酒
c. 我有可能会买这款啤酒
d. 下次当我需要汽水的时候我会选择购买这个品牌的啤酒
e. 如果我需要的话，我会购买这款啤酒

46. 您有多喜欢这张啤酒的图片 （1 分表示一点也不喜欢，10 分表示非常喜欢）？

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

一点也不喜欢 o o o o o o o o o o 非常喜欢

47. 请对下列有关个人价值的描述打分，1 分表示非常不同意，5 分表示非常同意。

a. 对于男人而言，拥有职业生涯比对女人而言更为重要
b. 男人通常通过逻辑分析解决问题，而女人通常会凭直觉解决问题
c. 解决棘手问题通常需要一种积极的，强制性的典型的男性方法
d. 有些工作男人总是可以比女人做得更好
e. 个人应为集体牺牲个人利益
f. 即使遇到困难，个人也应坚持与团队合作
g. 团体福利比个人奖励更重要
h. 集体成功比个人成功更重要
i. 个人只有在考虑了团体的福利之后才可以追求自己的目标
j. 即使个人目标受到打击，也应鼓励团体忠诚度
k. 较高职位的人应该做出大多数决定，而不用咨询较低职位的人
l. 较高职位的人不应该过于频繁地咨询较低职位的人的意见
m. 较高职位的人应该避免与较低职位人士进行社交互动
n. 较低职位的人不应该不同意较高职位的人的决定
o. 较高职位的人不应该将重要任务委托给较低职位的人

48. 请写下您对于本问卷或者其它关于抖音博主的意见以及观点：

非常感谢您的参与。

APPENDIX C. CONSENT LETTER

Informed Consent for the Cross-national Comparison between Chinese and USA TikTok users

Invitation: You are invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to help you decide whether or not to take part. You must be 18 years or older to participate in this study. If you have any questions, please contact the primary researcher.
Introduction of the Researcher: Yang Yang, the principal investigator of this research, is a doctoral candidate in the School of Media & Communication at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). Dr. Louisa Ha is Yang's advisor, and she is a full-time Professor in the School of Media & Communication at BGSU.
Purpose of the Study: The study aims to understand how users perceive influencers on TikTok and the types of products they endorsed.
Procedure: Participants will be asked to fill the online survey questionnaire through Qualtrics. Participants will answer questions about their demographic information, their use of TikTok and social media, and some primary questions regarding this specific study. **There is an attention check question in the middle of the questionnaire**, and I hope you could answer it carefully because it is important to the data quality of this study. The minimum total duration of the survey is 6 minutes, or 360 seconds. **If you complete the survey in less than six minutes, you will not receive any compensation.**
Voluntary: Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time. You may decide to skip questions (or not to do a particular task) or discontinue participation at any time without explanation or penalty. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University.
Benefit: The study will have the following benefits to the community and individual participants:
The study can highlight the mechanism of influencer's persuasive power on consumers in different cultural contexts. The study can explain how cultural value influences influencers' endorsement effectiveness; the study can provide theoretical and managerial implications for influencer marketing.
Compensation: Participants must spend more than six minutes on the survey to receive the compensation. If a participant withdraws from the study (doesn't complete the HIT), he/she will not be compensated. Each participant will get **0.5 US dollars** from Amazon MTurk for completing the survey.
Risks: This study does not involve risks beyond what you would typically experience in daily life.
Anonymous: The researcher will only receive anonymous data from Amazon MTurk.
The following steps will be taken to protect your identity and confidentiality:
1. Please clear your Internet browser and page history, and you may want to complete the survey on a personal device.
2. No one can identify individual identity with the collected data. The researcher will not mention you by name in any published materials.
3. The researcher will not ask any question regarding your IP address and MTurk Worker IDs.
4. You can refuse to answer any questions asked.

5. Research-related materials will be securely stored in the researcher's laptop for three years beyond the study's completion. After three years, the files will be erased.

Contact: If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, feel free to contact the primary investigator: Yang Yang; Office: 315 Kuhlin Center; Phone: (419)-378-0014; Email: yyangdo@bgsu.edu.

Questions: If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact: Chair, BGSU's Institutional Review Board, (419)-372-2294, orc@bgsu.edu.

Clicking the **NEXT** button indicates that you have been informed about and agree to the conditions mentioned above and are over the age of 18.

问卷调查参与同意书
课题名称：中美两国抖音用户的行为比较

您被邀请参加这项研究。这份表格中的信息是为了帮助您决定是否参加。如果您有任何问题，请联系主要研究人员。

目的：本研究的目的是理解抖音用户如何看待抖音上的网红，以及网红所代言或推荐的产品类型。

研究流程：参与者将会被邀请通过问卷星(一个问卷设计平台)完成网上问卷的填写。问题包括：人口统计信息，例如年龄、性别等；抖音段视频软件以及社交软件使用情况，例如每日使用抖音段视频软件的时常，每日使用社交软件的总时常，以及其它关于本项研究的具体问题。问卷中间设置有注意力检查问题，请您仔细阅读并勾选正确答案。如果此问题回答错误，您将不能完成后面的问卷并且不能获得任何报酬。问卷的预期完成时间为 10 到 15 分钟，最短完成时间为 8 分钟，如果您的问卷完成时间少于 8 分钟，您将不符合我们的筛选条件，并且不能得到任何报酬。

自愿性：您的参与是完全自愿的，并且您可以在回答问卷问题的任何阶段退出问卷。您也可以选择跳过某一个或者某几个问题，或者停止继续做答，这并不会影响您和博林格林州立大学的关系。

有益性：这项研究将为社会和个人带来以下益处：
该研究可以突出网红在不同文化背景下对消费者说服力的原理；该研究可以解释文化价值如何影响网红的带货效力，例如影响消费者对于品牌/产品的态度以及购买意向，并且该研究可以为网红营销提供理论和管理方面的启示。

报酬：参与者必须完成注意力检查问题并且答卷时间多于八分钟以获得报酬。每位参与者完成问卷后将从问卷星获得 xx 元作为报酬。

风险：本研究不涉及您平时在日常生活中不会遇到的风险。

匿名性：调查者将仅从问卷星获取匿名数据。
以下步骤可以帮助保护您的身份以及个人信息：

1. 一些雇主可能会使用跟踪软件。为了避免这些类型的隐私问题，请清除您的互联网浏览器和页面历史记录，您可能希望在个人设备上完成调查；
2. 没有人可以用收集到的数据来识别个人身份。研究人员不会在任何出版资料中提到您的名字；
3. 您可以拒绝回答任何问题；

4. 与研究相关的材料将在研究结束后的三年内安全地存储在研究人员的笔记本电脑中。超过三年，这些文件将被删除。

联系方式：如果您有任何问题，请随时联系主要研究人员：杨洋；电话：+86）15529279629。

点击**下一步**按钮表示您已被告知并同意上述条件，且年龄超过 18 岁。