THE EFFECT OF INFLUENCER REPUTATION ON DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT AND CONSUMER BRAND RELATIONSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the sub-components of the value of an influencer to understand their relationship with digital integration. Influencer value components are divided into attractiveness, reliability, and expertise. The study also attempts to explore how these sub-factors affect digital engagement and is intended to understand the causal relationship between digital engagement, consumer-brand relationship, and purchase intentions. The study attempts to identify the effect of adjusting influencers' authenticity, self-identity, and product fit set as moderating variables. The influencer who is the subject of this study was selected from a pool of active celebrity influencers by a panel of experts. Consumers who participated in the survey were asked to watch an influencer's YouTube, online presence, broadcasts, and SNS before completing the survey. A total of 528 consumers participated. The method of SEM with EQS 6 was used to verify the hypothesis in this study. The analysis results are as follows. Of the influencer value system sub-elements, attractiveness and expertise have a definitive impact on digital engagement. However, the sub-factor of influencer reputation has been found to have no significant effect on digital engagement. Digital engagement has been determined to have a positive impact on consumer-brand relationships, and consumer brand relationships have a positive impact on purchase intentions. Influencer authenticity and self-identity have moderating effects when attractiveness, reliability, and expertise affect the consumer-brand relationship.

Keywords: *Internet Influencer, Digital Engagement Consumer-Brand Relationship Purchase Intention*

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has grown rapidly over the past decade and has become an indispensable necessity for modern people. More than 3,028 billion people worldwide use social media, which accounts for 40% of the world's population. Social media users are said to look for influential people, or influencers, to help them make their decisions [1]. Social media influencers are people who have gained fame due to their knowledge and expertise on a particular topic. They regularly post on their favorite social media channels and maintain many enthusiastic fans who actively follow their content. Brand owners like social media influencers because they create trends and guide fans to purchase the products they promote. An online influencer refers to an influencer that has many fans and is popular in the online world, and almost all social media platforms are flooded with these influencers [2-5].

People often follow specific influencers for various reasons such as attractiveness, presence, or style. Influencers use a variety of tools to engage and secure customers, and using this customer base, they recommend products, generate sales, and increase revenue. This has also contributed to the annual growth of social media advertising [6].

Social media is a bidirectional channel that may improve the audiovisual performance of products and services and may also improve the advertising experience for consumers. Compared to traditional media, social media provides more attractive and complex forms of digital advertising [7]. Influencers on social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Weibo, etc.) often showcase the products they use and express their feelings on the products as a means of promotion. Instagram's influencers introduce products through images or

videos and engage in discussion, share ideas, comment, and share emotions with their audiences.

Few studies have identified the relationship between an influencer's reputation on social media and brand evaluation. As well, currently, there are very few existing studies on the relationship between media engagement and influencers. This is because most of the research focuses on video platforms and technology, not on people on the platforms. Existing studies discuss the importance of online video platforms such as YouTube for marketing, but studies on influencers from the videos are insufficient [2,5,6]. Although previous studies on trust in online marketing tend to focus on functional advantages [8], analysis of the characteristics of influencers is insufficient as a prerequisite for media engagement. This study aims to understand the influencer relationship with digital engagement by grasping the sub-components of the value of an influencer. It attempts to understand the impact of digital engagement, consumer-brand relationships, and purchase intentions. In addition, the authenticity, self-identity, and product fit of an influencer are set as control variables to understand the moderating effect.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Influencer

Online Influencers refer to people who have gained fame through online media in the Internet era, which is a new type of fame in modern society. The advent of the influencer not only enriches the internalization of influencer theory, but also the influencer-affected "influencer economy" has become a new e-commerce model, which has the potential to reverse traditional thinking on constantly increasing new investments to promote economic growth [9]. The influencer economy is essentially a business model and a purposeful precision marketing method, as influencers can expand revenue channels by intentionally using their public influence and popularity. Therefore, the influencer economy is connected to the entire industrial chain with influencers at its core [10]. Since influencers and influencer economies are new economic and social phenomena with Chinese characteristics, there are limited studies on this, and most focus on explaining and investigating the phenomenon.

Influencer refers to people famous for their popularity [2, 3,11] who gain "familiarity" in various ways. With the rapid development of technology, the online world is also an important tool for people to gain an audience. The Internet provides the public with unprecedented opportunities to enter the world of influencers and holds a representative position for influencing. Influencers are gaining popularity on their own through new media technologies [8,10,12]. The idea of influencers was first acknowledged in the late 20th century and society is now on the third generation of influencers. The third generation influencer has a stronger ability to generate liquid revenue and has created the influencer economy, an emerging economic form and marketing phenomenon primarily enacted on mobile devices. Entering the Internet era, influencers rapidly emerged with the development of Internet technology, expansion of online social spaces, and the rise of neoliberal ideas on a new type of influencer. With the advent of influencing, influencing became an economic and social phenomenon in terms of the effects of influencers, the economic value created by them, and the resulting influencer economy.

Influencers generally are people or objects on the Internet that have attracted the attention of netizens due to certain events or actions in real life or online life [12,13]. The definition of an influencer has been often defined in various academic areas and lacks uniformity due to the relatively short period of time since the influencer economy was established [2,5,6]. Currently, research on influencers and the economics of influencers has grown relatively slowly compared to the actual practice.

An online influencer is a concept derived from communication theory, which refers to an individual who can spread information and at the same time has a certain degree of influence over other people's decisions [14]. They influence consumers' purchasing behavior by posting product information and sharing experiences and opinions [15]. In recent years, the effect of influencers has become increasingly prominent in consumer behavior. Meanwhile, in real life, consumers' exchange consumption experiences and share shopping experiences with friends and family around them, affecting the decision-making behavior of others to an extent [16].

People communicate and interact through online platforms, and post and obtain product information through the Internet. Platforms are flooded with opinions from users and experts on various

products, and consumers use these platforms to follow the latest fashion trends. With the help of network transmission, positive and negative information about a product can be propagated and affect consumers' product perception [17]. As a result of examining the characteristics and opinions of influencers, the impact on consumers differs depending on the source of information. In this paper, the characteristics of an effective influencer using short-form video social media are expertise, attractiveness, interaction, and good reputation.

2.2 Media Engagement

In a study by Wang [18], advertisements with high engagement were found to have a positive effect on message involvement, message reliability, message attitude, advertising attitude, and advertising recall. In addition, Omnicom Group applied its own media effect measurement model to examine the causality of engagement and sales for financial brands. As a result, it was found that consumers with higher engagement with media contributed more than three times more to sales than consumers with less exposure, and consumers with higher engagement with advertising were identified to be eight times more valuable than consumers with less exposure.

Kilger and Romer [19] proposed a connection between media commitment, advertising commitment, and brand commitment. They argued that there are cognitive mechanisms (the relationship between program and advertising), emotional mechanisms (the degree to which individuals like content and advertising), and behavioral mechanisms (attention to program and advertising content) which are processes that activate the connection between factors, which could ultimately lead to the purchase of products/services. These findings, which identify the attitudes and behavioral consequences of media commitment, demonstrate that media commitment is an experience that the media can use to motivate consumption, influencing what actions will (or will not) occur in the future.

2.3 Consumer Brand Relationship

Consumer brand relations has attracted attention as a new research field in marketing literature research [20,21]. The concept of consumer brand

relations began as a metaphorical concept of interpersonal relationships [22]. In consumer brand relations, brands are depicted as active partners, like humans in interpersonal relationships, and brands have unique personalities like humans [20,23]. More and more companies have been striving to obtain relevant knowledge and information on how consumers connect with brands [20,21]; why some brands are preferred and even loved over others. Therefore, these issues, and other issues related to bonds established between consumers and brands, may be related to goods. In fact, all types of organizations (whether for-profit or non-profit) adopt customer-centered strategies, programs, tools, and technologies for efficient and effective customer relationship management. Even tourism-related public institutions are realizing the need for a deep and integrated tourism experience to build intimacy. Some other researchers and practitioners are increasingly increasing, proposed a metaphor for human relationships and a brand quality model in their award-winning articles [24,25].

The human relations metaphor of marriage provides a structure for understanding the phenomenon of consumer brand relations. The brand quality model focuses on the relationship dimensions of love/passion, brand partner quality, intimacy, interdependence, commitment, and self-connection, but does not explain how these dimensions relate to each other. In other words, it is not a causal model [26-28]. From the perspective of practitioners, brand managers are increasingly interested in this topic. To enhance understanding of brand loyalty, brand love modifies the influence of attitude intensity on loyalty [26].

Research on the brand-consumer relationship begins with a brand personality that approaches the relationship between people and the brand through the personalization of the brand. If the focus of a brand's personality is for one to express their real self, ideal self, or a specific aspect of themselves by using a product, it is the brand-consumer relationship that establishes a personal relationship between the consumer and the product or brand, just as consumers have relationships with each other in their own ways. In other words, the consumer-brand relationship, like human-to-human relationships, is a complex mix of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral processes that occur between consumers and brands, and refers to the solidarity created by consumers and brands as equal partners [20,23]. Therefore, the consumer-brand relationship is a distinct field of research within

marketing literature. Factors influencing the formation of a brand-consumer relationship can be classified into past purchasing experiences, emotional or behavioral experiences, cognitive beliefs, and brand commitment [20,24,25]. Brand-consumer relationships are the basis for forming consumer behavior and outcome variables such as brand loyalty, and the quality of the brand-consumer relationship has a positive effect on consumer behavior and is attracting attention as an important factor in determining consumer happiness level.

2.4 Moderating Variables: authenticity, self-identity, and product Fit

Throughout the research field, authenticity is mainly understood as a subject-related behavioral attribute. Within the field of philosophy, researchers closely link authenticity with moral behavior. Brand authenticity, approached from a brand's point of view, is defined as aiming for long-term consumer value rather than commercial motivation [28-30]. Brand authenticity can also be defined as internal consistency, maintaining the beliefs and the core of the brand itself, and external consistency, refraining from exaggerating or giving false information to people [32,33], creating value for consumers, and trust in the brand. In other words, brand authenticity will serve as a criterion for consumers to identify and judge brands with, and for companies, it can be a competitive advantage that improves value and economic benefits. The concept of authenticity within marketing research is divided into two areas. One is authenticity as an attribute of the subject (the emotional authenticity of the employee) [34]. The other is an item such as a genuine brand [29].

When the consumer's self-image and brand image match, it is called brand identity [35]. Currently, consumers communicate with others while feeling the 'self-regulatory consciousness' of the consumption situation. Because of this, consumers choose brands that can reflect and express their self-image well. Some scholars argued that the brand identity is not only a function of the product, like the product-related attributes that are the criteria for product selection, but also the symbolic meaning of the product that often affects consumer behavior. It was suggested that consumers will move toward consumption behavior that promotes and strengthens their self-concept by consuming symbolic aspects of the product [36,37]. Escalas [38] conceptualized brand-self-identity as

the degree to which consumers project the brand onto their own self-concept, and stated that the brand-self relationship results from the ego playing a schema role. He said that when consumers try to meet self-motivated purposes by adjusting brand associations, a relationship arises between the brand and the individual self, and the brand can be used to develop and foster self-concept [36,37]. Swaminathan, Page, and Gürhan-Canli [39] approached self-relationship from a personal perspective, conceptualizing the relationship between the brand's symbol and the consumer's unique self-relationship, and suggested that consumers who highly relate to the brand and self-concept did not change their attitude. As a result, consumers form a strong relationship with the brand when their own self-concept matches a specific brand's values [40].

Recognized product fit represents the similarity between the original and extended product categories. Past studies have found that a consistently perceived product fit positively affects consumers' attitudes toward brand expansion [41]. Aaker and Keller [42] further the concept of product fit by identifying the three cognitive dimensions of complementarity, substitutability, and transferability. The product fit indicates the degree to which consumers view the two product categories as substitutes. Complementarity refers to the extent to which consumers view the original product category and extended product category as complementary.

Product fit refers to the cognitive ability of a company operating in the original product category to create products in an extended product category [43,44]. Aaker and Keller [42] found that transferability had a direct positive association with consumers' attitudes toward extended products. In addition, they found that when there is high complementarity and substitution, the high recognition quality of the parent brand is related to the acceptance of the brand expansion. Subsequent studies further supported the general relationship between perceived product fit and consumer attitudes toward brand expansion [45,46].

3. HYPOTHESES AND THEORETICAL MODEL

The purpose of this study is to understand the causal relationship between digital engagement, consumer-brand relationships, and purchase intentions. The purpose of this study is to

investigate the moderating effects of an influencer on authenticity, self-identity, and product fit, set as modulating variables. The expertise of an influencer refers to the relevant knowledge, experience, or technology possessed by online celebrities, and the expertise of information sources has a positive effect on changes in consumer attitudes [2,3,5]. Consumers' risk perception of a product will be significantly reduced, and the more professional the source of information, the more it influences consumers' decision-making, for example when individual expertise in high-tech products is highlighted in advertisements. Therefore, products are often introduced during the live broadcasts of online celebrities under the context of a professional review. The more the influencer is considered an expert, the more consumers recognize that they already have abundant information on the product. It improves perceived practical shopping value by reducing the time and cost of understanding a product. At the same time, this expertise can increase the value of perceived pleasure shopping by allowing consumers to voluntarily purchase products.

Trust plays an important role in the online economy. Trust can promote interactions between buyers and sellers on e-commerce platforms. Trust in an opinion leader increases people's willingness to revisit and purchase items on their websites. Consumer participation requires trust between users and opinion leaders. In many studies, the relationship between support and the trust of influencers has been confirmed. As reliable informers, certain influencers have a great influence on disseminating information and increasing product sales. More directly, the study found that online reviews posted by famous or well-known participants on platforms such as Amazon had a significant impact on product sales. When consumers are stimulated by external information, the higher the reliability of information sources, the more consumers can convert positive evaluations of information sources into participation to increase product attractiveness and brand awareness [47].

On corporate social media, users have identified that sharing information by interacting with influencers can form corporate social networks and increase loyalty to corporate brands and products. In this study, interaction is defined as the degree of two-way information interaction between the influencers and consumers, and the degree of synchronization of these interactions and influences [2-5. In the process of innovative communication, it is easier for people to communicate with an influencer without going through information disclosure platforms or other methods.

Attraction is a stereotype of positive connections between people, including not only physical attraction but also other characteristics such as personality and athletic ability [48]. Consumers find influencers more attractive when they think they have something in common with the influencer. Attractive influencers can easily change one's beliefs [49], so when consumers use video streaming social media platforms, the attractiveness of an influencer will increase consumers' good impressions and trust. The hypotheses are as follows:

H1. The value of an influencer will have a positive effect on digital engagement.

H1-1. Attractiveness will have a positive (+) effect on digital engagement.

H1-2. Reliability will have a positive (+) effect on digital engagement.

H1-3. Expertise will have a positive (+) effect on digital engagement.

Hedonic benefits refer to utility derived from emotions or emotional states such as pleasure, fun, and entertainment obtained from consumer experiences [50]. Facebook fan pages for restaurants are an example of an attempt to satisfy social, psychological and hedonic needs, as restaurant marketers effectively identify and implement activities that satisfy these needs for fan page members [28,51].

Engagement seeks to define the degree to which people exposed to programs or specific content understand, focus and immerse themselves in information. It refers to a series of promised actions that develop interest, encourages participation, and establish relationships for a period of time through the Internet, SNS, and various other media platforms [52,53]. Based on existing research, it is determined that engagement is closely connected to the consumer-brand relationship. The consumer-brand relationships, like relationships between people, are a complex mix of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral processes that occur between consumers and brands. It refers to solidarity produced by consumers and brands interacting and contributing as equal partners [54,55]. The study assumes that the influence relationship between variables may differ depending on the degree of brand authenticity, self-identity, and product fit established to find out the moderating effect. The hypotheses are as follows:

H2. Digital engagement will have a positive (+) effect on building consumer-brand relationships.

H3. The consumer-brand relationship will have a positive (+) effect on purchase intention.

H4. The value systems of influencer reputation (attractiveness, reliability, and expertise) on digital engagement will differ depending on the degree of brand authenticity, self-identity, and product fit.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the moderating effects of an influencer on authenticity, self-identity, and product fit, set as modulating variables. This study attempt to explore the components of influencer value and digital engagement. Thus, the research question is follows:

RQ. What are elements of Influencer value and digital engagement?

3.1 Research Model

The research model of this study was designed based on the factors that affect digital engagement by identifying the sub-components of the value of an influencer based on the previous discussion. Hypothesis 1 was established to understand how these sub-factors affect digital engagement. Hypotheses 2 and 3 were established to understand the impact of digital engagement, consumer-brand relationships, and purchase intention. Hypothesis 4 was set to understand the moderating effect by setting the authenticity, self-identity, and product fit of an influencer as control variables. To verify the purpose and hypothesis of this study, a research model was presented as shown in <Figure> below.
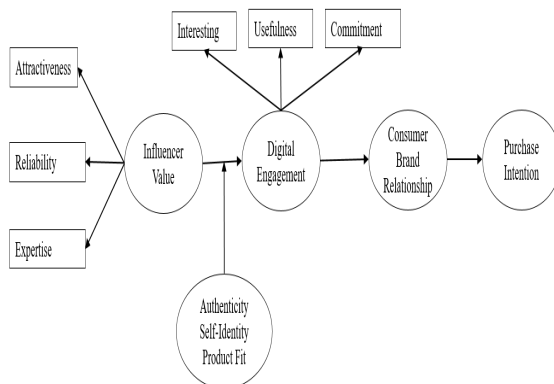

Figure 1: Suggested Research Model

4.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
4.1 Operational definition and measurement of variables

In this study, the influencer value system was classified into attractiveness, reliability, and expertise based on the existing literature research related to celebrities and influencers. Influencers define a person with the ability to influence potential buyers of a product or service by promoting or recommending the items on social media. The classification of the value system consists of twelve items, including four items of attractiveness, four items of reliability, and four items of expertise [16,44,49].

In this study, engagement is defined by the degree to which people who are exposed to programs or specific content understand, immerse, and organize information. It refers to a series of actions over a period of time that ignite interest, encourages participation, and establish relationships through the Internet, SNS, and various other media platforms [19,52,53]. The existing research was divided into four sub-elements and consisted of ten items, including four items of interest, three items of benefit, and three items of commitment.

Consumer-brand relationships, like the relationships between people, are a complex mix of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral processes that occur between consumers and brands, and refer to the solidarity created as a result of interactions with consumers as equal partners [24]. The consumer-brand relationship measurement items used in the existing brand-consumer relationship study used four items and were modified and supplemented according to this study [24]. For the measurement of purchase intention, the measurement items used in the existing literature study were used [24,56]. Three items were used on the measurement scale, and the purchase intention was measured using a single scale asking if subjects were willing to purchase the product in the near future.

The questions regarding authenticity were designed to determine the moderating effect and were reorganized into three questions according to the purpose of the study. Questions regarding brand authenticity were constructed based on existing literature research [40,54,55]). The questionnaire consists of three question items on self-identity and four product fit items. An operational definition of variables was conducted for this questionnaire. In addition, questionnaire items were extracted from previous studies, and the survey measurement was

composed of a 5-point Likert scale, 1 was 'strongly disagree', 3 was 'neutral', and 5 was 'strongly agree'. In other words, the higher the score, the more positive the answer is. Prior to this questionnaire, the basic matters for demographic analysis were measured with four items. The measurement details consisted of questions on gender, age, education, and income.

4.1 Survey Procedure and Data Collection

This study is to understand the impact of an influencer who is active through various media platforms such as the Internet and SNS. We want to understand how an influencer's reputation affects consumers' product choices or attitude formation. Based on this, our study targets consumers who are familiar with various media and frequently search SNS or the Internet. First, researchers asked members who belong to a marketing research institution and are working on consumer panels to participate in the survey. In addition, usage of smartphones, Internet searches, and SNS was determined. In this study, to support survey validity, the characteristics of the population required in the field of marketing research were maintained.

A population can be said to be an entire collection of groups such as people, companies, products, and regions that the researcher intends to investigate. In general, to accurately define the nature of the population, it is necessary to clearly determine various factors such as the subject, scope, and time of the study. Therefore, the sampling method used in this study is a simple random sampling method. The total survey period was about one month, from September 01 to December 01, 2022. The total number of valid samples was 523.

5. RESULTS
5.1 Descriptive statistics

It was confirmed that the gender of respondents was composed of 294 (56.2%) male subjects and 229 (49.8%) female subjects. 85% of the respondents had college-level degrees. Respondents are evenly distributed in age. The demographic analysis results are presented in Table 1 below. This is the threshold of the demographic distribution of this survey.

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

Index(n=523)		Frequency	%
Sex	Male	194	56.2
	Female	229	49.8
Years	20-29 years	95	18.2
	30-39	126	24.1
	40-49	160	30.6
	Over 50 years	142	27.2
Education Level	High school level	91	17.4
	College students	39	7.5
	College level	357	68.3
	Graduate school level	36	6.9
Monthly Income	Below US$ 2,000	116	22.2
	2,000-3,000	127	24.3
	3,000-4,000	90	17.2
	4,000-5,000	83	15.9
	Over US$ 5,000	107	20.5

5.2 Measurement validity

We tested the scales for dimensionality, reliability, and validity using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) before assessing the hypothesized relationships shown in Figure 1. Cronbach's alpha indicated higher than 0.7 for all variables. The results of factor loading, communality, and Cronbach's alpha are provided in the following tables. As shown in Tables 2 and 3, the factor loadings of the items measured in the range from 0.638 to 0.816, demonstrating convergent validity at the item level. The results of the factor analysis for influencer reputation show that the twelve items fall into three dimensions: Factor 1 is "attractiveness," Factor 2 is "reliability," and Factor 3 is "expertise." The three factors that were extracted for influencer reputation explained 73.8 % of the total variance.

Table 2: Results of Factor Analysis for Influencer Reputation

Variables (Cronbach's Alpha)	Items	Communality	Factor		
			1	2	3
Attractiveness (.868)	Att1	.656	.791		
	Att2	.741	.690		
	Att3	.614	.728		

Variables (Cronbach's Alpha)	Items	Communality	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
	Att4	.815	.808		
Reliability (.907)	Re1	.777		.816	
	Re2	.812		.772	
	Re3	.816		.756	
	Re4	.793		.638	
Expertise (.773)	Ex1	.782			.783
	Ex2	.792			.797
	Ex3	.716			.758
	Ex4	.541			.684
Eigenvalues			6.662	1.978	1.475
% of Variance			55.510	12.279	5.988
Total variance extracted			28.242	54.809	73.786
KMO=.905, Bartlett's Sphericity Test χ^2=4475.1(df=66, p=.000)					

The results of the factor analysis for the entire sample of digital engagement are shown in Table 3. The results of the factor analysis show that the twelve items of digital engagement fall into three dimensions: Factor 1 is "interesting," Factor 2 is "usefulness," and Factor 3 is "commitment." The three factors that were extracted for digital engagement explained 74.8% of the total variance.

Table 3: Results of Factor Analysis for Engagement

Variables (Cronbach's Alpha)	Items	Communality	Factor		
			1	2	3
Interesting (.892)	Int1	.820	.855		
	Int2	.756	.726		
	Int3	.699	.770		
	Int4	.759	.778		
Usefulness (.892)	Use1	.692		.661	
	Use2	.577		.601	
	Use3	.765		.805	
	Use4	.828			.898
Commitment (.892)	Com1	.870			.912
	Com2	.713			.697
	Com3	.820	.855		
	Com4	.756	.726		
Eigenvalues			6.292	1.693	1.573
% of Variance			52.25	15.60	6.734
Total variance extracted			27.24	54.17	74.79
KMO=.932, Bartlett's Sphericity Test χ^2=3563.9(df=45, p=.000)					

As shown in Table 4, discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the correlations of components with average variance extracted (AVE). AVE falls between .602 and .697, and the means of the squares of the correlation coefficients fall between .102 and .573, which indicates that AVE is higher than the means of the squares of the correlation coefficients (r^2). This also satisfies the requirement of discriminant and convergent validity for research hypothesis model verification.

Table 4: Discriminant and Convergent Validity

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attractiveness	.602					
Reliability	.131	.697				
Expertise	.224	.357	.573			
Engagement	.158	.065	.189	.612		
CBR	.211	.414	.325	.102	.721	
PI	.159	.463	.327	.112	.602	.607

Note: Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, CBR: Consumer Brand Relationship, CS: Consumer Satisfaction, PI: Purchase Intention, AVE: Average Variance Extracted, r^2: correction coefficient, C.V(Convergent validity): AVE > .50, D.V(Discriminant validity) :(AVE/r^2 > 1)

5.3 Hypothesis Testing

To test the structural relationships in the model, the hypothesized causal paths were estimated. The results are shown in Table 5 and Figure 2, and they indicate that the components of influencer reputation have positive effects on digital engagement (γ=.345, p< .001 for attractiveness, γ=.476, p< .001 for expertise). However, Reliability has no significant positive effects on digital engagement (γ=.047, p=.159). Thus, H1-1 and 1-3 were supported but H1-2 was not. Digital engagement has a positive effect on the consumer-brand relationship (γ= .565, p<.001). Also, the consumer-brand relationship has a positive effect on purchase intention (γ= .881 p<.001). Thus H2 and H3 were supported.

The result found that influencer value did positively influenced on digital engagement and consumer-brand relationships, and purchase intentions as well as an influencer on authenticity, self-identity, and product fit, set as modulating

variables, had a moderating effect on influencer value and digital engagement. It can be said that greater the digital engagement, the greater the establishment of consumer-brand relationships. Consumer brand relations have been found to influence purchase intention

Table 5: Results of Path Analysis

H	Paths	Coefficients
H1-1	Attractiveness → Engagement	.345***(.287)/z=7.941
H1-2	Reliability → Engagement	.047(.979)/z=1.409, p=.159
H1-3	Expertise → Engagement	.476***(.388)/z=8.702
H2	Engagement → CBR	.565***(.877)/z=15.61
H3	CBR → PI	.881***(.858)/z=42.59
Goodness of Fit: χ²=15482.2, *df*=573, p=.000, CFI=.936, GFI=.889, AGFI=.856, NFI=.907, NNFI=.906, RMSEA=.060		

Note: ***p<.001, **p<.05, CBR: Consumer Brand Relationship, CS: Consumer Satisfaction, PI: Purchase Intention
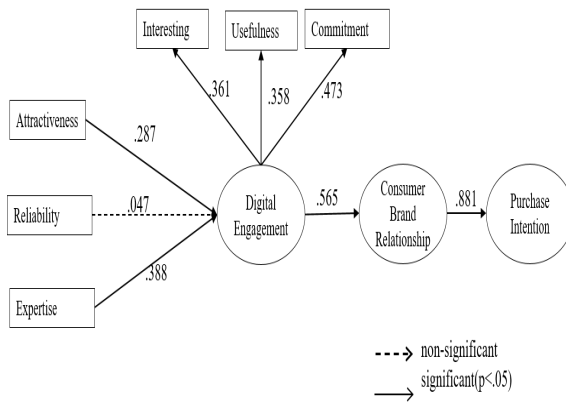

Figure 2: Path Analysis

5.3 Moderating Effects of Authenticity and Self-Identity

As shown in Table 6, the hypothesized model was estimated separately for each of the two groups (e.g., high- and low-authenticity and self-identity). The values of selected fit indexes for multi-sample analysis of the path model with equality-constrained direct effects are reported in Table 5, which shows the standardized solutions. Generally, standardized path coefficients are used to compare paths within groups. The tests show that the interaction between

attractiveness, expertise, and digital engagement (Δχ²=7.941, p<.001 for attractiveness, Δχ²=8.702, p<.001 for expertise) were significant for authenticity. However, the interaction between reliability and digital engagement (Δχ²=7.941, p<.001 for attractiveness, Δχ²=1.409, p=.159 for reliability) was not significant. The tests show that the interaction between attractiveness, reliability, expertise and digital engagement (Δχ²=2.531, p=.012 for attractiveness, Δχ²=4.080, p<.001 for reliability and Δχ²=6.093, p<.001 for expertise) was significant for self-identity. Therefore, H4-1 through H4-6 were supported except for H4-2.

The tests show that the interaction between attractiveness, reliability, expertise and digital engagement (Δχ²=4.490, p=.000 for attractiveness, Δχ²=3.106, p<.002 for reliability and Δχ²=4.497, p<.000 for expertise) was significant for product fit. Therefore, Thus H4-7,8, and 9 were supported.

Table 6: Results of the Moderating Effects of Authenticity and Self-Identity

H	Path	Moderating Variables	Path Coefficient High	Path Coefficient Low	χ² Modification	p-value
H4-1	Attractiveness → Engagement	Authenticity	.462(.365)/ z=8.647	.055(.033)/ z-=.828	Δχ²= 7.941	p=.000
H4-2	Reliability → Engagement		.291(.159)/ z=3.824	.201(.129)/ z=3.347	Δχ²= 1.409	p=.159
H4-3	Expertise → Engagement		.784(.448)/ z=8.258	.472(.366)/ z=7.785	Δχ²= 8.702	p=.000
H	Path	Moderating Variables	Path Coefficient High	Path Coefficient Low	χ² Modification	p-value

H	Path	Moderating Variables	Path Coefficient		χ² Modification	p-value
H4-4	Attractiveness → Engagement	Self-Identity	.347(.327)/z=6.069	.237(.173)/z=3.860	Δχ²=2.531	p=.012
H4-5	Reliability → Engagement		.144(.136)/z=2.454	.079(.046)/z=1.044	Δχ²=4.080	p=.000
H4-6	Expertise → Engagement		.552(.311)/z=6.660	.389(.364)/z=5.978	Δχ²=6.093	p=.000
H	Path	Moderating Variables	High	Low	χ² Modification	p-value
H4-7	Attractiveness → Engagement	Product Fit	.455(.420)/z=7.632	.129(.088)/z=1.922	Δχ²=4.490	p=.000
H4-8	Reliability → Engagement		.179(.167)/z=3.113	.183(.111)/z=2.427	Δχ²=3.106	p=.002
H4-9	Expertise → Engagement		.328(.329)/z=4.763	.434(.338)/z=6.020	Δχ²=4.497	p=.0000

Note: High vs. Low: Classification based on the degree of authenticity and self-identity

6. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify the sub-components of the value of influencers and to understand how these sub-components affect digital engagement. As well, this study examined the causal relationship between digital engagement, consumer-brand relationship, and purchase intention. This study also focused on investigating the moderating effects of influencers set as moderating variables on authenticity, self-identity, and product fit. Therefore, to achieve the purpose of this study, the sub-components of the value system of influencers were examined. A research model was established after securing a theoretical basis for the study by examining the causal relationship between the components of the value system of influencers and the engagement, consumer brand relations, and purchase intentions through a review of previous studies. To achieve results, a survey was conducted on actual consumers.

The summary of the hypothesis analysis results of this study is as follows. Among the sub-factors of the influencer value system, attractiveness and expertise were found to have a positive effect on digital engagement. Reliability indicated a meaningless effect on digital engagement. Digital engagement was found to have a positive effect on building consumer-brand relationships, and consumer-brand relationships had a positive effect on purchase intention. Attractiveness and expertise, which are components of the influencer value system, have been found to be closely related to the formation of digital engagement. It was investigated that the greater the digital engagement, the greater the establishment of consumer-brand relationships. Consumer brand relations have been found to influence purchase intention.

The results of the moderating effect analysis on the authenticity of influencers are as follows. It was found that when attractiveness has an impact on engagement, influencer authenticity plays a moderating role. However, when reliability affects engagement, influencer authenticity does not play a moderating role. The path coefficient of the group with low authenticity increased in the path coefficient of the group with high authenticity. As a result of the investigation, it was confirmed that there was an interaction effect between the high and low groups for all moderating variables. When attractiveness, reliability, and expertise affect engagement, influencer authenticity and product fit play a moderating role. The path coefficient of the group with low authenticity, self-identity, and product fit increased in the path coefficient of the group with high authenticity, self-identity, and product fit. As a result of the investigation, it was confirmed that there was an interaction effect between the high and low groups for all moderating variables.

The significance of this study provides various implications academically and practically. The implications of this study will be divided into two areas. From a theoretical perspective, an influencer is a person with some degree of cultural and economic activity and has both universality and non-criminality, giving the public vicarious satisfaction by showing the ideal image and character pursued by the public. From this point of view, this study is significant in examining the relationship with digital engagement by sub-components of the value system of an influencer, that is, attractiveness, reliability, and expertise. It is meaningful in that it identified the personal relationship by linking research with the value of an Influencer on the preceding factors that digital users are interested in, immersed in, and find likable on digital media or content platforms. It turns out that an influencer's charm books, sophistication, rich experience, and abilities influence the attitudes of users on the platform. This prerequisite is essential for users to be interested in media or content, obtain useful information, and immerse themselves in the professional or attractive elements of an influencer.

The scientific contribution is as follows. This study focued on the perception of users about influencers operating on the Internet. It is true the Internet is associated with technical problems in the media. The results of this study can be said to contribute to creating conditions for practitioners to conveniently access and explore the Internet, such as interaction factors in the Internet space in the future.

The research results are proposed as follows. Considering the digital age environment where various media channels exist, it can be said that the reputation and role of influencer, which is currently active, are important. Today, an influencer is a person who presents an attractive appearance and status to the public which is considered to be significant cultural content through the development of media and visual culture. For this reason, an influencer occupies the position of a key element of the cultural industry that creates socio-cultural trends. The influence of an influencer, which is reproduced and propagated through modern media, also affects consumption culture and purchasing patterns. With the strong support of consumers, influence has played an important role in forming a new trend. This study proved that the attractive and professional images of an influencer, which are active through various media today, are an important means of visual expression of creating and spreading new cultural trends as a cultural

industry being. Based on this, it is essential for companies to use marketing strategies that involve influencers. In this study, authenticity, self-consistency, and product fit were treated as modulating variables. The authenticity and self-identity that followers feel towards an influencer, and the degree of alignment with the product can be important factors in consumers immersing themselves in media or content. Considering this, it can be said that the positive effect of implementing a corporate strategy that involves influencer marketing can be significant.

The significance of this study has already been mentioned in introduction part. The originality and differentiation of this study are as follows. This study is not only a study on the effectiveness of Internet influencers, but also analyzes the characteristics of Internet influencer as a prerequisite for media engagement. This issue is different from the existing research of influencers, and it is the originality of this study.

Despite the significance of this study, the limitations are as follows. The failure to consider the reputation of the internet influencer was excluded from the study. This problem is judged to be a factor that affects consumers when choosing and evaluating brands. It is hoped that a follow-up study will be conducted in consideration of these factors. In this study, the inability to select various product lines remains a limitation. The relationship between an influencer and the product line is expected to appear differently depending on the product line. This should also be considered in subsequent studies. Product involvement was not considered in this study. This is because consumers' attitudes of product influencers also change depending on product involvement. Therefore, it is necessary to consider this point in future studies.

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