

Congruence Effects, Types of Brands, and Celebrity Endorsement

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Human Performance

Middle Tennessee State University

June 2024

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my loving family, whose unwavering support and unconditional love throughout this challenging process enabled me to pursue my dreams. Without your constant support and encouragement throughout my life, I would not have been able to finish this journey. Thank you for all the sacrifices you have made for me to get where I am today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people for their contributions and support in the completion of this dissertation.

First, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Lauber, Dr. Estes, Dr. Jubenville, and Dr. Bowman for all your guidance and unwavering support throughout this process. I am immensely grateful to have completed this journey, and the knowledge gained from each of you during this experience has reaffirmed my dedication to ongoing growth in this field.

Dr. Lauber, I extend my deepest gratitude for your incredible support, friendship, and unwavering commitment throughout this process and my final year of study. Dr. Estes, thank you for your unwavering support, encouragement, and guidance. I cannot thank you enough for your mentorship and invaluable guidance in accomplishing this challenging process. Dr. Jubenville, thank you for your support, expertise, and constructive advice in my professional development. Dr. Bowman, thank you for your expertise, encouragement, and sincere belief in my capabilities in statistical analysis.

I also extend my gratitude to the professors, friends, and loved ones who supported me throughout my academic career. Without the support of all the individuals mentioned above, I would not have been able to complete this journey. Your belief in me, encouragement, and unwavering support have made all the difference, and for that, I am very grateful. Thank you.

ABSTRACT

In the past, many researchers have examined various aspects of celebrity endorsements such as the effects of celebrity credibility, brand-celebrity congruence, celebrity-consumer congruence, and consumer-brand congruence in terms of attitude toward the brand. This study builds on the literature on the various streams of the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, with a particular focus on celebrity athletes. Despite existing research efforts, there is insufficient empirical evidence for celebrity endorsement effectiveness based on three pairs of congruence with different brand types. This study primarily focuses on three types of congruences such as brand-consumer congruence, consumer-celebrity athlete congruence, and celebrity athlete-brand congruence in terms of brand types (e.g., functional brand and symbolic brand) to present the extent to effect of each congruence on consumers' behaviors such as brand attitude and purchase intention. Also, this study examines how consumers' perceptions of self-image (actual or ideal) congruence with different types of brands affect their attitude toward the brand and their purchase intentions. The findings of this study indicate that the importance of congruences in shaping consumers' attitudes toward brands and their purchase intentions varies depending on the type of brand (functional or symbolic), which has implications for brand positioning.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iv
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
CHAPTER I: Introduction.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	3
Research Questions.....	3
Hypotheses.....	4
Significance of the Study.....	5
Definition of Terms.....	7
CHAPTER II: Literature Review.....	9
Celebrity Endorsement Effectiveness.....	9
Self-congruity and Self-concepts.....	10
Brand Types (Functional and Symbolic Brands).....	11
Brand – Consumer Congruence (BCC).....	12
Consumer - Celebrity Congruence (CCC).....	16
Celebrity – Brand Congruence (CBC).....	19
Match-up Hypothesis.....	19
Attitude toward the Brand and Purchase Intention.....	22
CHAPTER III: Methodology.....	25
Brand and Celebrity Selections.....	25
Participants.....	27
Stimuli Advertisements.....	27
Procedure.....	27
Measures.....	28
Manipulation Check (Screening Test).....	29
Brand-Consumer Congruence (BCC).....	30
Consumer-Celebrity Congruence (CCC).....	31
Celebrity-Brand Congruence (CBC).....	31
Attitude Toward the Brand.....	32
Purchase Intention.....	33
Demographic Information.....	33
Statistical Analysis.....	33
Descriptive Analysis.....	33
Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling.....	34
CHAPTER IV: Results.....	36

Characteristics of Sample	36
Confirmatory Factor Analysis	38
Descriptive Statistics and Measurement Models: Actual Self, Functional Brand, and Athlete Celebrity	39
Descriptive Statistics and Measurement Models: Ideal Self, Symbolic Brand, and Athlete Celebrity	42
SEM Testing of the Proposed Structural Model.....	47
CHAPTER V: Discussion.....	53
Summary of Study	53
Implications	56
Limitations and Future Research Direction.....	57
Conclusion.....	58
REFERENCES	60
APPENDICES	72
Appendix A: Sample Questionnaire 1	73
Appendix B: Sample Questionnaire 2	78
Appendix C: Stimulus Materials	83
Appendix D: IRB Approval.....	84

LIST OF TABLES

Figure 1 Hypothesized Model.....	24
Figure 2 Hypothesized Model.....	24
Figure 3 CFA Measurement Model for Functional Brand	40
Figure 4 CFA Measurement Model for Symbolic Brand	44
Figure 5 The Final Structural Model for the Functional Brand.....	48
Figure 6 The Final Structural Model for the Symbolic Brand.....	49

LIST OF FIGURES

Table 1 Profile of Survey Respondents	38
Table 2 Descriptive Statistics, Standardized Factor Loading, and Cronbach's Alpha	41
Table 3 Dependent Variable, Reliability, Validity, and Correlations.....	42
Table 4 Descriptive Statistics, Standardized Factor Loading, and Cronbach's Alpha	45
Table 5 Dependent Variable, Reliability, Validity, and Correlations.....	47
Table 6 Results of SEM with Hypotheses Testing	52

CHAPTER I: Introduction

Using celebrity endorsers in advertising is a popular strategy for competitive companies to promote the product or service by creating and enhancing brand value (Schimmelpfennig & Hunt, 2020; Rifon & Choi, 2012). Brands expend significant sums of money to earn endorsements by employing celebrities. There is a wide range of celebrities in different fields such as entertainment (movie stars, singers, etc.), sports, and other popular public figures to attract audiences (Belch & Belch, 2013). Competitive companies will utilize what they perceive to be the best type of celebrity, and from the best file, to improve their competitive advantage.

Among the different types of celebrity endorsers, athletes are one of the most popular celebrities for marketing practitioners to select in advertising. Athlete endorsement refers to a contract between an authorized athlete and an organization to promote the organization with the athlete's public persona (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016). Many believe that the popularity of celebrities and famous athletes would help brands, create positive associations, contribute to brand awareness, and give meaning to even the most mundane products (Charbonneau and Garland, 2005; Dix et al., 2010; Miciak & Shanklin, 1994; Stevens et al., 2003; Tingchi Liu et al., 2007). A prior study (Belch & Belch, 2013) reports that in the 37 magazines analyzed, the most used celebrity type are actors/actresses (34%), followed by athletes (27%).

Celebrity athlete personalities attract consumers' attention, turning them into brands that advertise their actual and perceived appearance (Kim et al., 2017). Many celebrity athletes endorse the products or services to create and enhance brand image compared to competitors. For example, former professional basketball player Michael Jordan was paid to endorse various types of products (e.g., Nike shoes, cereals, beverages, etc.) that generated revenues of approximately \$13 billion (Dix et al., 2010). Sport stars are often loved and appreciated by the public, and their daily routine attracts the attention of fans. Marketing

practitioners realize how much the public likes to engage emotionally with sports stars and the public often responds favorably to products endorsed by sports stars. Sports celebrities have the power to draw fan attention to endorsement brands, create a positive brand image, increase endorsement brand credibility, and positively influence fan and consumer buying intentions in general (Joseph et al., 2019; Martin, 1996; Rai et al., 2021; Voracek & Caslavovoa, 2019). Thus, businesses are spending millions on using athlete endorsement in advertisements to promote their products or brands (Dix et al., 2010; Thomaselli, 2008).

Many previous studies have examined that celebrity athlete endorsers influence consumer attitudes toward brands and purchase intention by transferring their positive or negative images to the products or services being endorsed. Prior research on the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement has led to several celebrity endorsement theories such as celebrity credibility (Hovland et al., 1953; Laffery & Goldsmith, 1999; Ohanian, 1990; 1991; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), match-up hypothesis (Kamins & Gupta, 1994; Kahle & Homer, 1985; Till & Busler, 2000), self-congruity theory (Choi & Rifon, 2012, Sirgy 2000; Sirgy et al., 2008; Zhu et al., 2019) and meaning transfer model (McCracken, 1989; Miller & Allen, 2012; Roy, 2018) almost for more than 40 years. Some explanation of each of these theories establishes a basis for this study.

The celebrity credibility theory suggests that high credible celebrity has a more positive effect on the consumers' perception than one given by low credibility (Hovland et al, 1953; Ohanian, 1990). The Match-up hypothesis indicates that celebrity endorsement has a positive impact on consumer attitudes toward the advertisement when the celebrity endorser matches the product being endorsed (Kamins & Gupta, 1994; Kahle & Homer, 1985; Till & Busler, 2000). The self-congruity theory has been applied to understand consumer behaviors such as brand attitudes and purchase intentions by conceptualizing consumers' self-concepts (Hosany & Martin, 2012; Li & Lai, 2021; Sirgy 1982; 1985; 2018; Sirgy & Su, 2000). The

meaning transfer model proposed by McCracken (1989) suggests that celebrity endorsers convey meanings such as personalities and values to the brand or product they endorse.

Although the positive effects of celebrity advertisements have been well documented in existing research along with various theories, there are still limitations in the source models explaining the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in terms of types of brands. Few studies have examined all three congruences in a single framework, and none have investigated the impact of three pairs of congruences in terms of brand types (functional and symbolic) (Albert et al., 2017; Pradhan et al., 2016). This study will place these congruences into a coherent framework that better explains the strengths and limitations of each.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is among three pairs of congruences, brand-consumer, consumer-celebrity, and celebrity-brand, to examine which congruence strongly influences consumers' brand attitudes depending on the brand types (functional and symbolic brands) by testing a conceptual framework to compare the effects of three pairs of congruence. The findings of this study will provide a better understanding of the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement and expand on the current celebrity endorsement effectiveness literature by investigating all three pairs of congruences based on the brand types. In addition, the study will have empirical implications for marketing practitioners to understand the importance of each congruence in the formation of brand attitudes and purchase intentions, which can be used to increase the advertising effectiveness of brands using celebrity endorsements.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are as follows:

RQ1. Do these three congruences affect the consumer's attitude toward the brand to the same degree of importance regardless of brand type?

RQ2. If answered 'no' to RQ1, how does the importance of congruences vary by the types of brands, and which congruence has the strongest impact on consumer attitudes toward each brand type?

RQ3. Does the congruence between the symbolic brand and ideal self-image have a stronger effect on brand attitude than the congruence between actual self-image and the functional brand?

RQ4. Does the congruence between the ideal self-image and celebrity endorser have a stronger effect on brand attitude than the congruence between actual self-image and celebrity endorser?

RQ5. Does the congruence between the celebrity and symbolic brand congruence have a stronger effect on brand attitude than the congruence between celebrity and the functional brand?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. Functional brand and consumer's actual self-image congruence will influence attitude toward the functional brand.

Hypothesis 2. Symbolic brand and consumer's ideal self-image congruence will influence attitude toward the symbolic brand.

Hypothesis 3. Symbolic brand and consumer's ideal self-image congruence is likely to generate a more favorable attitude toward the symbolic brand than the functional brand and consumer's actual self-image congruence does toward the functional brand.

Hypothesis 4. Congruence between the consumer's actual self-image and the celebrity athlete endorser will influence attitude toward the functional brand.

Hypothesis 5. Congruence between the consumer's ideal self-image and the celebrity athlete endorser will influence a favorable attitude toward the symbolic brand.

Hypothesis 6. Congruence between the consumer's ideal self-image and the celebrity athlete endorser is likely to have a greater impact on attitudes toward the symbolic brand than the congruence between the consumer's actual self-image and the celebrity athlete endorser does on the functional brand.

Hypothesis 7. Celebrity athlete endorser and functional brand congruence will influence attitude toward the functional brand.

Hypothesis 8. Celebrity athlete endorser and symbolic brand congruence will influence attitude toward the symbolic brand.

Hypothesis 9. Celebrity athlete endorser and symbolic brand congruence is likely to have a greater impact on attitude toward the symbolic brand than the celebrity athlete endorser and functional brand congruence does on the functional brand.

Hypothesis 10a. Attitude toward the functional brand is positively related to purchase intention.

Hypothesis 10b. Attitude toward the symbolic brand is positively related to purchase intention.

Significance of the Study

Many prior studies have identified celebrity endorsement effectiveness in terms of consumer perception, attitudes, and buying behavior. There are several validated theories for marketing practitioners that affect what is practiced by celebrity athlete endorsers in advertising, but it is unclear which factors have the greatest impact on consumer attitudes toward a brand and purchase intentions because there are many attributes to influence the consumer's perception of the brand. In other words, even though studies have found the

effectiveness of celebrity endorsements is based on different concepts, there is not a comprehensive framework, including all these theories, to explain the various celebrity endorsements practiced in advertising practice. Furthermore, much less is known about which type of congruence is the most effective aspect to consider concerning brand types to maximize the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in specific advertising. Therefore, the research that compares and contrasts these congruences by examining a range of combinations of endorsers, brand/product attributes, and consumers' attitudes will help clarify when one congruence outperforms others, and in what conditions.

Moreover, many prior studies for celebrity endorsement tend to consider consumers as passive agents when examining the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers in advertising a product or brand which is done by measuring consumers' attitudes toward the brand or purchase intentions (Knoll & Matthes, 2017; Albert et al., 2017). However, recent studies suggest that consumers are not just passive agents. Rather, consumers function as active contributors to maximize the endorsement effectiveness (Zhu et al., 2019; Albert et al., 2017; Erfgen et al., 2015). Consumers can use a brand to express themselves by purchasing and consuming a specific product, in which consumers perceive the brand image that aligns with either their actual or ideal self-images (Fennis & Pruyn, 2007; Zhu et al., 2019).

In the early 21st century individuals often consume the brand image rather than the products themselves (Li & Lai, 2021). Brands are perceived to have the ability to meet the diverse needs of consumers: some brands satisfy functional needs, while others satisfy more hedonistic or symbolic needs (Zhu et al., 2019). Functional brands are associated with a consumer's actual self-image, or how consumers perceive themselves. In contrast, symbolic brands are associated with a consumer's ideal self-image, or how the consumer wants to be perceived (Huber, et al., 2018). Much prior research has mainly examined the effectiveness of consumer and celebrity congruence by considering consumers as passive agents to

understand and explain celebrity endorsement. Even though recent celebrity endorsement research includes the consumers as the active spectators of celebrity endorsement, but mainly focuses on one or two different types of congruences among brand-consumer, consumer-celebrity, and celebrity-brand congruences. Although there are some studies examining three congruences together, those do not investigate the effects of each pair of congruences in terms of the different brand types and different self-images (Albert et al, 2017; Pradhan et al., 2016).

Consumers' perceptions of the brand can be influenced by different types of congruences of potential pairs such as brand-consumer congruency, celebrity-brand congruency, and celebrity-consumer congruency. Despite the differences among the three types of congruences, few studies have investigated whether the three congruences have the same effect on consumer attitudes toward different brand types. That is, few studies have looked at all three congruences together and have not investigated how each congruence affects brand attitude depending on the types of brands, functional and symbolic brands. Therefore, this study will suggest a multidimensional construct for the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement by examining the effects of three congruences in a single frame: brand-consumer, brand-celebrity, and consumer-celebrity. This research will exhibit the extent to which congruence has a significant impact on brand attitude and purchase intention depending on the brand types (Functional vs. Symbolic). Also, this study suggests how each pair of congruence based on self-congruity theory has a different effect on consumers' brand attitudes depending on the brand type.

Definition of Terms

For convenience, the following terms are defined in this research project below:

Celebrity Endorser: "Any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this

recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement”

(McCracken, 1989, p. 310).

Match-up Hypothesis: An appropriate fit between celebrity endorsers and endorsed products produced a more positive effect on endorsement (Kamin & Homer, 1985); the higher the consumer's perceived celebrity and product fit, the higher the level of endorsement effectiveness (Friedman & Friedman, 1979).

Self-congruity theory: The psychological process and result in which consumers compare their perception of brand personality or brand user image with their self-concepts such as actual self, ideal self, and social self-concepts (Hosany & Martin, 2012; Sirgy 1982; 1985; 2018)

Actual self-image: The image describes how an individual perceives himself or herself (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Hosany & Martin, 2012; Sirgy, 1982; 1985; 2018).

Ideal self-image: The image indicates how an individual wants to perceive himself or herself (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Hosany & Martin, 2012; Sirgy, 1982; 1985; 2018).

Functional brand: The brands provide practical benefits to consumers, meet utilitarian needs, and solve current and anticipated problems (Bhat & Reddy, 1998; Kwon et al., 2016; Zhu et al., 2019).

Symbolic brand: The brands allow consumers to express symbolic needs such as self-expression, prestige, and important aspects of their identities (Bhat & Reddy, 1998).

CHAPTER II: Literature Review

In this chapter, the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement is explored and then extended based on the previous literature and theories (i.e., self-congruity theory, match-up hypothesis). Understanding the effects of celebrity endorsement in marketing practice, three pairs of congruences (i.e., brand-consumer, consumer-celebrity, celebrity-brand) are investigated along with different types of brands (i.e., functional vs. symbolic). Also, this section proposes a conceptualized model of the study and the corresponding research hypotheses.

Celebrity Endorsement Effectiveness

McCracken defined the celebrity endorser as “any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement” (McCracken, 1989, p. 310). The effectiveness of celebrity endorsement has been well documented in the existing literature. Numerous studies on endorser effectiveness suggest that celebrity has a strong impact on consumers’ behaviors such as attitude toward the brand, purchase intention, and so forth. The source-credibility model (Hovland et al., 1953) has been applied to examine the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers. Celebrities typically build a credible image derived from public awareness and popularity, which has a greater impact on attitude change and purchase intentions than non-celebrity spokespersons (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Erdogan, 1999; Ohanian, 1991). Prior research suggests that there are three dimensions of celebrity spokesperson credibility: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Expertise refers to “the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions” (Erdogan, 1999; Hovland et al., 1953; Ohanian, 1990, p. 41). Expertise is identified as the knowledge, experience, or training an individual possesses including skills in a relevant field (Hovland, et al., 1953; Erdogan, 1999). Trustworthiness is defined as “the degree of confidence the consumer places in a

communicator's intent to convey the assentation she/he considers most valid" (Hovland et al., 1953; Ohanian, 1990, p. 41). Many studies have shown that credibility is an important factor in evaluating the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement as persuading and changing public opinion. According to Ohanian (1991), attractiveness refers to how likable or physically attractive sources are to consumers. Prior research has shown that celebrities who are physically attractive generate more favorable responses than those who are not (Eagly et al., 1991; Kahle & Homer, 1985). Thus, attractiveness has become an important factor of source credibility in assessing the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements. Celebrities in different areas (e.g., sports, movies, music, technical experts, etc.) have been selected by marketers. Marketing practitioners use celebrity endorsers to promote their products or services by differentiating competitors in the market. This is because consumers have recognized celebrities as credible sources of information about a product or brand endorsed. Due to these benefits, businesses spend heavily to employ celebrities in their advertising.

Self-congruity and Self-concepts

For more than 40 years, to examine consumer behavior, the self-congruence theory has been applied for marketing purposes in various business areas (Hosany & Martin 2012; Li & Lai, 2021; Sirgy 1982; 1985; 2018; Sirgy & Su, 2000). Self-image congruence refers to "the cognitive match between consumers' self-concept and a product, brand, or service" (Hosany & Martin, 2012, p. 686; Sirgy & Su, 2000). The terms self-congruence, self-image congruence, self-congruity, and image congruence are often used as interchangeable expressions to describe the phenomenon of congruence (Hosay & Martin, 2012; Sirgy, 1982, 1985, 2018). Many prior studies suggested that self-congruity influences consumers' behavior such as consumer brand attitude and purchase intention (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Hosany & Martin, 2012; Sirgy, 1982, 1985, 2018; Sirgy & Su, 2000; Zhu et al., 2019).

Self-concept has been used to explore psychological consumer behavior and marketing in effective ways. The term self-concept is defined as the whole of thoughts and feelings by which an individual refers to himself or herself (Li & Lai, 2021; Rosenberg, 1989). In the past, the self-concept was considered to be a one-dimensional construct (Birdwell, 1968; Grubb & Hupp, 1968; Grubb & Stern, 1971), but recent research has shown that the self-concept consists of one or more aspects of the self (Markus & Wurf, 1987; Huber et al., 2018). The consumer's self-concept has been conceptualized as having multiple 'selves', one or more elements that fall into the four dimensions of the self-concept to describe consumer behavior. (Hosany & Martin, 2012; Sirgy, 1982; 1986; 2018; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Onkvisit & Shaw, 1987). : “(1) actual self-concept, how individuals perceive themselves, (2) ideal self-concept, how individuals would like to perceive themselves, (3) social self-concept, how individuals are viewed by others, and (4) ideal social self-concept, how individuals would like to be viewed by others” (Belch & Landon, 1977; Dolich, 1969; Hughes & Guerrero, 1971; Hosany & Martin, 2012, p. 686; Jeon, 2018, p. 13; Sirgy, 1982;1985; 2018). These four dimensions of consumer self-concept are utilized to evaluate the attractiveness of a brand's user image or brand personality for positioning in the market (Sirgy, 2018). With empirical support, many previous studies have suggested consumption behaviors based on two core components of the self-image: the actual self and the ideal self-concept. (Hosany & Martin, 2012; Choi & Rifon, 2012; Zhu et al., 2019).

Brand Types (Functional and Symbolic Brands)

Among the prior research, there is a distinct classification of brands depending on the individual different purposes of consumption brand: one is functional, and the other is symbolic consumption (Bhat & Reddy, 1998; 2013; Zhu et al., 2019). Functional brands satisfy and often to be purchased to meet practical and utilitarian needs (Bhat & Reddy, 2013; Zhu et al., 2019; Voss et al., 2003). Functional brands consist of brands that provide practical

benefits to consumers, meet utilitarian needs, and solve current and anticipated problems (Kwon, Seo & Ko, 2016; Roth, 1995). On the other hand, symbolic brands satisfy symbolic needs such as self-expression and prestige, and practicality is secondary (Bhat & Reddy, 2013). Symbolic brands allow consumers who use them to strengthen their desired social status by providing a sense of belonging and self-esteem (Belk, 1988; Kwon et al, 2016; Zhu et al., 2019). Consumers tend to be driven by a self-verification motive to express their actual self while they tend to be guided by a self-enhancement motive to express their ideal self (Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Japutra et al., 2019). Therefore, functional brands are associated with a consumer's actual self-image, how they view themselves whereas symbolic brands are more associated with a consumer's ideal self-image, how they want to be perceived (Huber, et al., 2018).

Brand – Consumer Congruence (BCC)

Today, brands serve not only fundamental functions but also psychological and social purposes as symbols that enable consumers to express their identity and interact with others socially and culturally (Aaker, 1997; Belk, 1988; Choi & Rifon, 2012; Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Grubb & Stern, 1971; Sirgy, 1982). There are a number of studies and theories to explain the human nature of motivation for consumer behavior in making purchase decisions to satisfy their needs and wants. Prior research suggests that brand personality is an important component of brand image in target markets, as consumers consider whether brand personality fits their self-image when making purchase decisions (Sirgy, 2018). Brand personality is defined as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker, 1997, p.347). Escalas (2004) suggests that consumers can form bonds with brands by building a connection between themselves and the brand. That is, when individuals consume a brand, they integrate the brand into their self-concept, thereby incorporate the brand as part of their extended self (Escalas & Bettman, 2005).

Consumers' self-concepts have been used to understand and explain their consumption behaviors (Aaker, 1999; Choi & Rifon, 2012). Self-concept plays a critical role in guiding and predicting individual attitudes and behaviors and is widely applied in various areas such as psychology, marketing, consumer behavior, and so forth. (Li & Lai 2021; Sop & Kozak, 2019). The existing study suggests that the product user's image interacts with the consumer's self-concept to create a personal experience called self-image matching during the consumption process (Sirgy et al. 1997). According to Sirgy (2018), for example, consumers may perceive Apple computer users as "creative" and consider themselves "creative." In this case, there exists a high congruence between the brand-user image and the consumer's self-concept. On the other hand, if they perceive Apple computer users as "creative" but do not consider themselves as "creative" then there exists incongruence (Sirgy, 2018, p.197). Thus, self-congruence is the extent to which consumers compare their perception of brand personality or brand user image with their self-concepts. Another recent study found that the self-congruence (actual or ideal self) between tourists and destinations had a significant impact on the perceived value of destinations (Li & Lai, 2021; Frías-Jamilena et al., 2019).

Most consumer researchers denote that the actual self-image reflects what we call the "consumer self-concept (Sirgy, 2018). As mentioned previously, consumers can have one or more self-concepts among the four dimensions (Sirgy, 2018), and different 'consumer self-concepts' can be reflected in consumption depending on the purchase purpose (Aaker, 1997; 1999). Consumers express their self-concept by purchasing and using a brand that fits their personalities. Thus, the self-congruence theory assumes consumption preferences are determined by the cognitive correspondence between certain aspects of consumer self-concept and brand personality (Sirgy, 1982; 1985; 2018). Self-congruence is explained as a matching process in which the higher the degree of congruence between consumers' self-

concept (image) and product image, the higher the likelihood that they will have a good impression of the product (Sirgy & Su, 2000; Sirgy, 1982; 1985).

Graeff (1996) suggests the self-image and product image congruence model focusing on two types of self-brand image: self (actual)-congruity and ideal congruity. This study indicated that consumers have a more positive attitude toward the brand and greater purchase intention when they perceive it to be congruent with their self-image (Graeff, 1996). The more the brand image is perceived as similar to that of the consumer, the more the consumer identifies with the brand (Albert et al., 2017; Tušk et al., 2013). Also, brands, like any other symbols, are more valued when they emphasize the user's self-concept (Albert et al., 2017; Belk, 1988). Thus, brands that match the consumer's self-image tend to generate more positive attitudes (Albert et al., 2017; Belk, 1988).

As reviewed previously, consumers can achieve self-congruence by consuming brands that they perceive to be similar to their actual or ideal selves. Either way, the brand will satisfy consumers' demands for self-expression. Therefore, the consumer's self-concept influences the attitude toward the brand (Aaker, 1999). In deciding to purchase a particular product or service, consumers typically go through a variety of psychological processes to determine the importance of each attribute within a product category and to gather information to select the ultimate optimal brand in terms of intended use. (Bhat & Reddy, 1998; 2013). Considering that, a brand serves a basic function as well as a psychological and social purpose as a symbol that enables consumers to express their individuality and social identity. (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Sirgy, 1982; 1985; 2018). Consumption objects offer consumers hedonic/symbolic and/or utilitarian/functional benefits that are not mutually exclusive but may differ in prominence (Batra & Ahtola, 1991; Huber et al., 2018). Many previous studies have been proposed to distinguish the differences between functional and symbolic brands in multidimensional aspects of consumer perception (Bhat & Reddy, 1998;

2013; Huber et al., 2018; Zhu et al., 2019). A prior study indicates that Consumers' perceived actual self-congruence plays a dominant role when dealing with functional brands, whereas consumers' perceived ideal self-congruence influences their attitude toward symbolic brands (Zhu et al., 2019).

Consumers are more attracted to the functional value appeals of utilitarian brands, while they are more attracted to the symbolic value appeals of luxury brands (Huber, et al., 2018; Kwon et al., 2016; Zhu, et al., 2019). In particular, luxury brand consumption is linked with various motives including symbolic values such as the signaling of social status and reputation (Kwon et al., 2016; Belk 1988; Zhou & Belk 2004; Han et al., 2010). The depiction of a symbolic brand is primarily that of an abstract concept of self-enhancement (e.g., self-esteem, prestige, reputation) (Monga & John, 2010) and luxury brands are related to symbolic perception to portray important aspects of self-identity (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Zhu et al., 2019). The prior study suggests that congruence between brand image and ideal self-image influences stronger on the consumer attitude toward before than does congruence between brand image and actual self-image (Greaff, 1996). Based on the above review, the following hypotheses can be proposed:

Hypothesis 1. Congruence between the functional brand and the consumer's actual self-image will influence the attitude toward the functional brand.

Hypothesis 2. Congruence between the symbolic brand and the consumer's ideal self-image will influence a favorable attitude toward the symbolic brand.

Hypothesis 3. Congruence between the symbolic brand and the consumer's ideal self-image is likely to generate a more favorable attitude toward the symbolic brand than the congruence between the functional brand and the consumer's actual self-image does toward the functional brand.

Consumer - Celebrity Congruence (CCC)

Much prior research confirmed the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in advertising. However, the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements does not always bring the same results because there are many attributes that affect the consumer's perception of the brand. In the past, while many studies focused on congruence between brands and celebrity endorsers to test the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, recent studies examined the significance of congruence between consumers' self-images and celebrity endorsers based on the self-congruity theory. As previously reviewed, moreover, consumers are not passive actors, but active contributors who express themselves, emphasize certain aspects of identity, symbolize status, or express a sense of belonging to a group (Asker, 1999; Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Sirgy et al., 2008; Zhu et al., 2019). Therefore, the perceptions of a brand or product can vary depending on consumers' perceptions of the celebrity endorsers. Recent research suggests that consumers' perceptions of celebrity endorsers concerning their self-concepts are an important facet of investigating the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in advertising (Albert et al., 2017; Choi & Rifon, 2012; Gonzalez-Jimenez et al., 2019; Zhu et al. 2019).

Consumers are constantly transferring the symbolic attributes of brands into their lives to shape aspects of themselves and the world (Choi & Rifon, 2012). In addition, the use of brand endorsers has a significant impact on consumers' attitudes toward the brand in general. McCracken (1989) suggested by purchasing and using celebrity-endorsed products, consumers gain their perception and evaluation of the product, which is then used to build a satisfactory self-concept. Endorsements allow symbols, images, and meanings to be transferred from celebrities to brands and endorsed brands represent material and accessible persons full of meaning (Albert et al., 2017; McCracken, 1989). Celebrities can be reference groups, which are actual or fictitious individuals or groups that individuals compare against

based on their judgments, aspirations, or behavior (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Park & Lessig, 1977). Often praised for their athletic prowess, celebrity athlete endorsers can be considered surrogate role models for children, adolescents, and young adults (Chan and Zhang, 2007; Dix et al. 2010). Celebrity athlete endorsers positively influence young adult consumption through behavior conversion, word-of-mouth, and building brand loyalty (Bush, Martin, & Bush, 2004; Dix et al., 2010). In addition, celebrity endorsers are often used in advertising and influence young adult consumers to build their own identities (Boon & Lomore, 2001; Dix et al., 2010). Young consumers borrow the characteristics of celebrities they respect in building their identities (Boon & Lomore, 2001; Choi & Rifon, 2012).

Kelman's (1961) identification of social influence theory provides additional theoretical explanations for the celebrity endorsement process (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Kamins & Gupta, 1994). Of the three processes of social influence: compliance, identification, and internalization- that come from an individual's adoption of the attitude advocated by the communicator, identification occurs when an individual conforms to the attitude or behavior of others whom they admire or like (Choi & Rifon, 2012). Consumers have a self-esteem motivation to behave in ways that create and develop their ideal selves, and they adopt some celebrities as inspirational figures with desired meanings that trigger their ideal selves (Boon & Lomore, 2001; Choi & Rifon, 2012; Escalas & Bettman, 2003).

Many prior studies found that celebrity endorsers influence consumers' attitudes towards the brand depending on the types of brands. For example, the consumer is more likely to have a favorable attitude toward functional brands perceived to be congruent with their actual self-image while a consumer is more likely to have a favorable attitude toward symbolic brands perceived to be congruent with their ideal self-image (Zhu et al., 2019). Their study explored the Chinese consumer's perceptions of a Chinese celebrity and a

Western celebrity depending on the types of products, which were functional and symbolic brands. The findings of this study showed that symbolic brands endorsed by Western celebrities led to a higher perception of the ideal self and stronger attitudes toward the symbolic brand while functional brands endorsed by Chinese celebrities led to a higher perception of the actual self and stronger attitude toward the functional brand (Zhu et al., 2019).

Congruence between consumers and celebrities enables the consumers to have proper symbols and meanings that support their identity formation, which may explain the strong influence on attitude toward the brand (Albert et al., 2017; McCracken, 1989). Consumers seek to increase their self-esteem by improving their ideal self-image, and some celebrities are viewed as inspirational figures with desirable meanings that stimulate their ideal self-images (Boom & Lomore, 2001; Choi & Rifon, 2012; Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Consumers, therefore, seek to imitate the celebrity endorser's behavior and attitude when perceive that the celebrity endorser's image matches their ideal self-image (Choi & Rifon, 2012). If similarities exist between the consumer's actual or ideal self-image and the celebrity endorser, the consumers are more likely to have a favorable attitude toward the brand. As reviewed earlier, symbolic brands are more likely to be used for self-esteem and prestige value, while functional brands are more like to be chosen for practical needs and utilitarian benefit. Thus, consumers tend to conform to the attitudes and behaviors endorsed by celebrities when they perceive that the celebrity endorser's image is consistent with their either actual or ideal self-image in order to achieve their self-image. The following hypotheses are proposed to examine the relationships of the congruence between consumer's self-image (actual and ideal self) and celebrity endorser to the brand attitude.

Hypothesis 4. Congruence between the consumer's actual self-image and the celebrity athlete endorser will influence the attitude toward the functional brand.

Hypothesis 5. Congruence between the consumer's ideal self-image and the celebrity athlete endorser will influence the attitude toward the symbolic brand.

Hypothesis 6. Congruence between the consumer's ideal self-image and the celebrity athlete endorser is likely to have a greater impact on the attitudes toward the symbolic brand than the congruence between the consumer's actual self-image and the celebrity athlete endorser does on the functional brand.

Celebrity – Brand Congruence (CBC)

Many studies have suggested that there exists a strong association between a brand or product and a celebrity endorser to explain the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement (Lee & Koo, 2015; Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990; Misra & Beatty, 1990). The perceptions and emotions produced by celebrities are bound to the endorsed brand through repeated associations (Choi & Rifon, 2012), leading consumers to build more positive attitudes and behaviors toward the endorsed brand (Albert et al., 2019; Erdogan, 1999). Recent studies indicate that the congruence between brands and celebrity athlete endorsers generates a more favorable attitude toward the brand (Chang et al., 2018; Rai et al., 2021).

Match-up Hypothesis

The match-up hypothesis is one of the important theories applied to investigate the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990). In marketing practice, the fit between a celebrity endorser and an endorsed brand has been regarded as an important attribute in selecting the celebrity endorser to promote the brand (Lee & Koo, 2015; Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990; Misra & Betty, 1990; Till & Busler, 2000). Although there is not a unified definition of 'match' or 'fit', the existing research shows that consumers are more likely to purchase a product when congruence between the celebrity

endorser and endorsed product exists rather than an incongruence match (Lee & Koo, 2015; Till & Busler, 2000; Ohanian, 1991; Kamins, 1990; Kahle & Homer, 1985).

Friedman and Friedman (1979) suggested that the influence of celebrities on advertising differs depending on the types of products. They concluded that the higher the consumer's perceived celebrity and product fit, the higher the level of endorsement effectiveness. The match-up hypothesis was proposed by Kahle and Homer (1985) and suggested that an appropriate fit between celebrity endorsers and endorsed products produced a more positive effect of endorsement. The findings of the studies indicated that consumers have a more favorable attitude toward the brand and purchase intention when an attractive relevant product such as a disposable razor was endorsed by a physically attractive celebrity rather than an unattractive one (Kahle & Homer, 1985). Kamins and Gupta (1994) showed that higher concordance on the spokesperson/product combination resulted in a higher level of trustworthiness and attractiveness of the spokesperson and perceived more favorable product attitudes.

Till and Busler (2000) demonstrated that the theoretical perspective of 'match-up' is consistent with the hypothesis of previous studies focusing on the match-up effectiveness of "congruence" (Kamins, 1990; Lynch & Schouler, 1994), "fittingness (Kanugo & Pang, 1973), appropriateness (Solomon et al., 1992), and "consistency" (Walker et al., 1992) (Jeon, 2018, pp. 10-11). The findings of the study also suggested that the congruence between a celebrity endorser and a product influences the consumer's attitude toward the brand. For example, athletic celebrity endorsers had a more positive impact on products such as energy bars related to athletic performance than non-athletic products such as candy bars that were not related to athletic performance (Till & Busler, 2000).

More recent studies suggest that athlete-product fit had a positive effect on attitude toward athlete brand and purchase intention (Koo, 2022; Lee & Koo, 2019; Fleck et al.,

2012). The consumers' perceptions of the celebrity endorser can influence the perceptions of the credibility of the advertisement (Kamins, 1989). Celebrity athlete endorsers are more likely to be perceived as role models by consumers, especially young people, which generates trustworthiness and affects their attitude toward the brand and buying behaviors (Dix et al., 2010; Harris, 2008; Thomaselli, 2008; Xu, 2008).

Celebrity athlete endorsers are more likely to be recognized in society than celebrity non-athlete endorsers because of the praise they acquire after winning the competition (Joseph et al., 2019; Rai, Yousa, et al., 2021; Shuart, 2007; Stevens et al., 2003). Unlike celebrity non-athlete endorsers, celebrity athlete is often considered as a hero in the community after earning valuable outcomes from the competition (Moskowitz & Wertheim, 2011; Parry, 2020; Rai et al., 2021; Shuart, 2007; Yang and Shi, 2011). Thus, celebrity athletes have a positive image in many communities because of their high level of expertise, credibility, attractiveness, and performance in their field (Lohneiss & Hill, 2014; Rai et al., 2021). Sports stars can gain persuasion through both processes, depending on the product they endorse and how much expertise they have in that product category (Dix et al., 2010; Tingchi Liu et al., 2007; Chan, 2008; Harris, 2008). These attributes of athlete celebrities allow them to advocate for a range of products that have nothing to do with their performance. Some non-sports products are more likely to fit the athlete's endorsement than other non-sports products because of differences in the degree of celebrity athletes and products (Martin, 1996; Rai et al., 2021). In addition, athlete celebrities have their own unique human brand image attained from their performances in sports, leading to consumers' attitudes toward the brand endorsed by athletes (Carlson & Donovan, 2013; Koo, 2022). Because of these benefits, many marketing practitioners employ various high-profile athlete celebrities in advertising for sports-related products as well as non-sports-related products such as watches, fashion, luxury brands, and so forth (Koo, 2022).

In turn, celebrity-brand congruence positively influences the attitude toward the ad, brand, and even purchase intention. Based on the above review, the following hypotheses can be proposed.

Hypothesis 7. Celebrity athlete endorser and functional brand congruence will influence attitude toward the functional brand.

Hypothesis 8. Celebrity athlete endorser and symbolic brand congruence will influence attitude toward the symbolic brand.

Hypothesis 9. Congruence between a celebrity athlete endorser and a symbolic brand is likely to have a greater impact on attitudes toward the symbolic brand than the congruence between a celebrity athlete endorser and a functional brand has on the functional brand.

Attitude toward the Brand and Purchase Intention

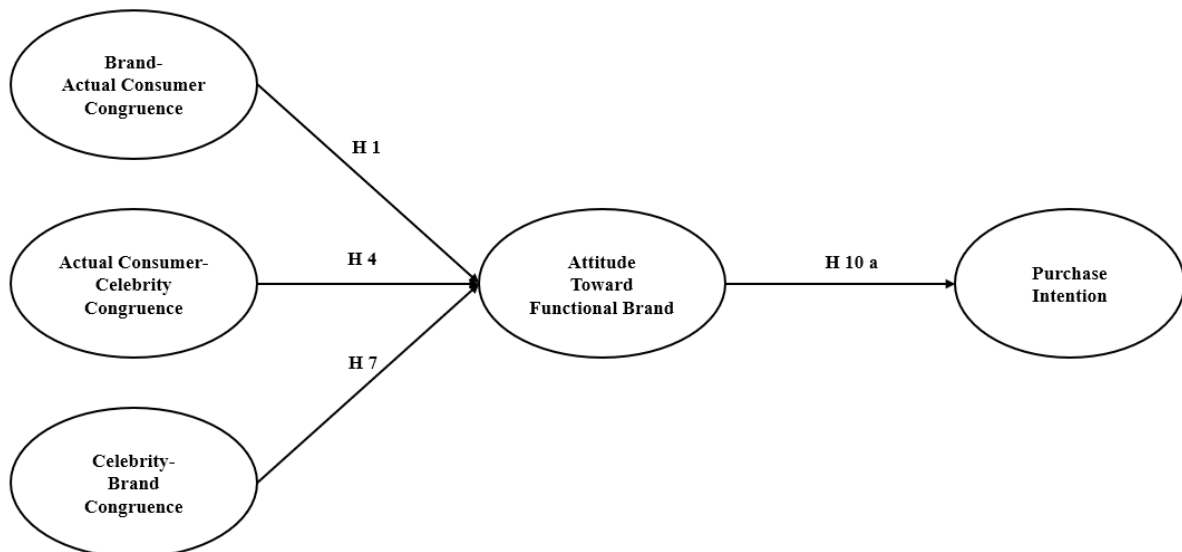
Many studies have employed the attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intention as the outcome variables to examine the consumer perception and behaviors in the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement. According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), purchase intention is a function of attitude toward the brand (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Pradhan et al., 2016). In addition, the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), suggests the model that attitude toward the brand leads to the formation of purchase intention (Ajzen & Fishbein 1970, 1973; Fishbein & Ajzen 1975; Pradhan et al., 2016). The Dual Mediation hypothesis specifies that there is a consistent pattern of the variables: attitude toward the ad → attitude toward the brand → purchase intention, which forms the relationship between the variables (Brown & Stayman, 1992; MacKenzie et al., 1989; Goldsmith et al., 2000; Jeon, 2018). Many previous studies indicate that attitude toward the ad mediates the relationship between celebrity-brand congruence and attitude toward the brand (Lee & Koo, 2015; Koo, 2022; Gaied & Rached, 2017) and the relationship between

celebrity-consumer congruence and attitude toward the brand (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Lee et al., 2022). As reviewed earlier, the findings of the research suggest that there is a correlation between these variables: Attitude toward the ad causes a greater impact on attitude toward brand that subsequently influences purchase intention (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Heath & Gaeth, 1994; Kalwani & Silk, 1982; MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989). In addition, research has shown that the attitude toward the brand is an antecedent factor influencing purchase intention (Homer, 1990; Mackenzie et al., 1986). Based on the above review, the following hypotheses can be proposed.

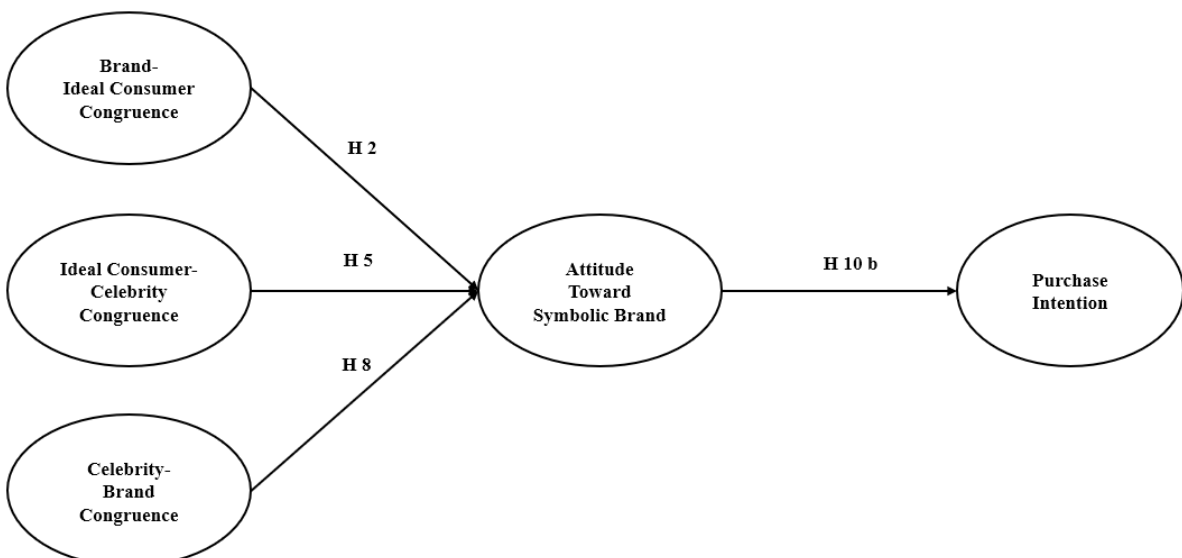
Hypothesis 10a. Attitude toward the functional brand is positively related to purchase intention.

Hypothesis 10b. Attitude toward the symbolic brand is positively related to purchase intention.

In sum, the current study is intended to extend the conceptual framework of celebrity endorser effectiveness by assessing the effects of three congruences (brand-consumer; consumer-celebrity; celebrity-brand congruences) depending on the brand types (functional and symbolic brands) on attitude toward the brand and purchase intention. Figures 1 and 2 depict a path model representing the hypothesized casual relationships among the variables in terms of actual self and functional brand, and ideal self and symbolic brand consecutively.

Figure 1*Hypothesized Model for Functional Brand*

Note. The effect of functional brand/consumer's actual self congruence, consumer's actual self/celebrity congruence, and celebrity/functional brand congruence on attitude toward brand and purchase intention

Figure 2*Hypothesized Model for Symbolic Brand*

Note. The effect of symbolic brand/consumer's ideal self congruence, consumer's ideal self/celebrity congruence, and celebrity/symbolic brand congruence on attitude toward brand and purchase intention

CHAPTER III: Methodology

This study was conducted to examine how the three congruences affect the consumers' perception and behavior depending on the consumers' actual/ideal self-congruity and the brand type and which congruence was the most effective for consumer attitude toward each brand type. Many prior studies of congruency in celebrity endorsement have measured one or two congruences to capture the best combination of the match to increase the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement. Although previous studies have measured three congruences, these studies may not be sufficient to understand consumer psychological formations associated with celebrity endorsement. Thus, this study showed how consumers' formation of brand attitude and purchase intention was related to an endorsement based on the purpose of the brand use (functional and symbolic) and the self-congruity with the celebrity.

In order to verify the research model and the proposed hypotheses in Figures 1 and 2, the current study utilized three congruences as the independent variables for each brand type, functional and symbolic brands separately. This study adopts the 'match-up hypothesis' (Kamins & Gupta, 1994) and 'self-congruity theory' (Sirgy et al., 1997, 2000). Most of the constructs used in this study were adopted, developed, and modified based on questionnaire scales validated in the existing literature. (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Pradhan et al., 2016; Zhu et al., 2019). The following sections provide the research methodology used to conduct the study including brand and celebrity selection, sample, procedure, measurement items and variables, and method of data analysis.

Brand and Celebrity Selections

This study adopted appropriate celebrities and brands from the previous literature to increase the validity and reliability of the experiment. The current paper selected one athlete endorser who indicates high credibility from the previous research, "Athlete-product

congruence and endorser credibility” (Lee & Koo, 2015). The preliminary test of the study found that LeBron James was ranked as the most credible and trusted sport star showing the highest credibility in North America. Thus, this study employed LeBron James who was identified as a favorable athlete endorser for the celebrity of each advertisement.

Prior studies commonly used a few product categories as pairs of brands such as sports shoes, watches, handbags, and so forth. According to Brand Concept Management (BCM, Park et al., 1986), the brand concept can be categorized into either functional or symbolic brands, which comprise the personality the of brand’s image (Park et al., 1986; Bhat & Reddy, 1998). According to Bhat and Reddy (1998), a more economical offering of the functional brand (i.e., Casio, Timex watches) simply seeks to know the time, while luxury brand (i.e., Movado, Rolex watches) focuses on more than just elegance, design, and pure utility purposes. In this study, therefore, two brands, Timex as a functional brand, and Rolex as a symbolic brand, were used to measure the distinct concepts of brand images. For this study, the main reason for choosing the brands of watches rather than the brands sport-related (e.g., Nike, Adidas, Puma, etc.,) was that brands of watches have a wide range of selections to indicate either functional or symbolic aspects. In addition, another reason was that the sport-related product might strongly (easily) affect the congruence between the product and celebrity athlete endorser in the experiment. The respondents may have a high level of familiarity with one pair of the conditions, which could not ensure to test of which pair of congruence the most influenced the attitude toward the brand. In addition, a watch was one of the most frequently endorsed product categories by celebrity athletes (Kelting & Rice, 2013; Koo, 2022). Thus, the selection of the product with two brands was intended to achieve adequate variations in the participants’ perceptions of each pair of congruence.

Participants

The current study was conducted at the universities by implementing an online survey and a paper-pencil survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire used in this study was distributed to the students attending and employees working in Mid-Atlantic universities of the US to complete the online survey. A convenience sampling method was used to select the subjects of this survey. To gain more accurate and relevant information from the survey, irrelevant or inappropriate responses were removed.

Stimuli Advertisements

The advertisements used for the current study were fictitious, but the real brands (Timex as a functional brand and Rolex as a symbolic brand) and a celebrity athlete (Lebron James) were used to increase the validity of the study. Two advertisements for each brand, Timex and Rolex with Lebron James were designed: one print advertisement featuring a Lebron James and a Timex; and one print advertisement featuring a Lebron James and a Rolex. Advertisement A was designed for the functional brand with the celebrity and advertisement B was designed for the symbolic brand with the celebrity (Appendix B). Two advertisements were designed in the same way to reduce the confounding effects.

Procedure

After IRB approval, the survey was distributed in two ways. One was an online survey, and the other was a paper-pencil survey. The online survey was delivered to students via email. The participants were asked to answer the screening questions before answering the main questionnaire. Then, participants read the definitions of brand type, functional and symbolic brands, to understand the difference between the two brand types. For the functional brands, participants read the following statements: "Functional brands satisfy and often are purchased to meet your practical and utilitarian needs. For example, you buy a watch to know the time for daily purposes." For the symbolic brand, participants read the

following statements: “Symbolic brands satisfy and are purchased to meet your symbolic needs such as prestige, desired social status, and self-expression. For example, you buy a watch to strengthen your desired social status, prestige, and self-esteem.” After reading the description of each brand type, the participants are randomly assigned to watch either functional or symbolic advertisements: one is a Timex wristwatch with a celebrity endorser, LeBron James and the other is a Rolex wristwatch with a celebrity endorser, LeBron James. The participants were required to watch the assigned advertisement for at least 10 seconds before answering the survey. The respondents were asked to rate the level of each pair of congruence: brand-consumer; consumer-celebrity; celebrity-brand. In the last section, respondents enter their demographic information.

For the paper-pencil survey, the printed copies of the survey questionnaire were delivered to university classes after advance-notice emails were delivered to instructors whose classes participated. I attended the classes with the approval of the instructors to perform the survey and introduced the experiment and general information about the survey. A consent form was provided for participants to consent before starting the survey. I also informed the participants that this survey is voluntary so they could refuse to participate without any penalty. Participants listened to the survey with the general information of the experiment and answered the same questionnaires as the online survey questionnaires provided. Participants had 10-20 minutes to complete the survey.

Measures

Although there are several scales to measure brand, celebrity, and consumer congruences, the current study implements the measurement adapted from the prior study (Sirgy et al., 1997, 2000; Choi & Rifon, 2012; Zhu et al., 2019). The measurement items for each variable used in this study were adopted from previously validated instruments (brand-consumer congruence, brand-celebrity congruence, celebrity-consumer congruence) and were

adapted to fit the current study. For brand-consumer congruence, four items were considered by Sirgy et al. (1997, 2000) and Zhu et al. (2019). For measuring both consumer-celebrity congruence and celebrity-brand congruence, three items were taken from Sirgy et al. (1997, 2000) and Zhu et al. (2019), and one item was obtained from Japutra et al. (2019). For attitude toward the brand, four items were adapted from Sirgy et al. (1997, 2000) and Zhu et al. (2019). For measuring purchase intention, three items were developed by Yi (1999).

Manipulation Check (Screening Test)

The manipulation check was implemented in two steps. First, to ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the screening questions were added to the survey. The participants were asked to answer three statements on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 very unfamiliar to 7 Very familiar: ‘Do you know LeBron James?’, ‘Do you know the brand of a watch, Timex?’, ‘Do you know the brand of a watch, Rolex?’. Thus, the respondents who answered ‘unfamiliar’ to any question were excluded from the sample for further analysis. The manipulation check was conducted to detect respondents who were unable to correctly identify the celebrity and brands in the ad because the image that consumers had in their mind about the celebrity with each brand before exposure to the ad could be critical to determining each congruence: brand-consumer; consumer-celebrity, celebrity-brand. This study excluded respondents who were not appropriate to perform further analysis from the sample.

Second, participants were provided with definitions and examples of functional and symbolic brands to help them distinguish the two brand types. Participants were asked to answer the following two questions: ‘What types of brand do you think “Timex” is?’; ‘What types of brand do you think “Rolex” is?’ to see whether they consider Timex as a functional brand and Rolex as a symbolic brand from the ads they saw. Thus, this manipulation check helped to determine that participants consider different watch brands as either functional or symbolic brands according to their perception of the brand.

Brand-Consumer Congruence (BCC)

In the second section, the participants evaluated the congruence between brand and consumer. The following instructions were provided to participants: “Please take a moment to think about the brand in the ad and describe your perceptions of the brand image. Then think about the types of people who use this brand in general and then how you see your actual self-image. Please indicate that you agree or disagree with the following statements.” To measure the congruence between brand and consumer, participants were asked to answer four items adapted from previous literature (Sirgy et al., 1997, 2000; Zhu et al., 2019, p. 304). Participants were asked to rate the level of congruence between functional brand and their actual self-image on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree.

“This brand’s personality is consistent with how I am”;

“This brand’s personality reflects who I am”;

“This brand’s users are the people I belong to”;

“This brand’s image can be matched with mine”.

The same instructions as the previous measurement were given but replaced with the ideal self-image instead of the actual self and a symbolic brand instead of a functional brand.

Participants were asked to take a moment to think about their ideal self-image and rate the level of congruence between the symbolic brand and their ideal self-image on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree.

“This brand’s personality is consistent with how I would like to be”;

“This brand’s personality reflects the person I would like to be”;

“This brand’s users are the people I would like to belong to”;

“This brand’s image can be matched with the person I would like to be”.

Consumer-Celebrity Congruence (CCC)

In this section, the participants assessed the level of congruence between consumer and celebrity. In a similar way to measure brand-consumer congruence, participants were provided the following instructions: “Please take a moment to think about the celebrity endorser in the ad and describe your perceptions of the celebrity image. Then think about how you see your actual self-image. Please indicate that you agree or disagree with the following statements”. Three items were adapted from previous literature (Sirgy et al., 1997, 2000; Zhu et al., 2019) and one item was adapted from Japutra et al. (2019).

“This celebrity image is consistent with how I am”;

“This celebrity image reflects who I am”;

“This celebrity image can be matched with me”;

“This celebrity is a mirror image of me”.

The same statements as the previous measurement adopted to measure ideal image and celebrity congruence are provided. Participants were asked to assess and illustrate their ideal self-image and then rate their agreement or disagreement with the following items.

“This celebrity image is consistent with how I would like to be”;

“This celebrity image reflects the person I would like to be”;

“This celebrity image can be matched with the person I would like to be”;

“This celebrity is a mirror image of the person I would like to be”.

Celebrity-Brand Congruence (CBC)

In this section, the participants were asked to rate the congruence between the celebrity and each brand (functional and symbolic). The same instructions were provided to think about each brand and the celebrity-endorsed products in two ads. First, the celebrity and functional brand congruence was measured by using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = strongly disagree” to “7 = strongly agree.” Participants were provided the following

instruction: “Take a moment to think about the brand and your perceptions of the celebrity image in the ad. Then indicate that you agree or disagree with the following statements for the brand”. The questionnaire scales were used the same as the scales of consumer-celebrity congruence: three items were adapted from previous literature (Sirgy et al., 1997, 2000; Zhu et al., 2019) and one item was adapted from Japutra et al. (2019).

“This celebrity image is consistent with the functional brand”;

“This celebrity image reflects the functional brand”;

“This celebrity image can be matched with the functional brand”;

“This celebrity is a mirror image of the functional brand”.

To measure symbolic brands, participants were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with the same statements above based on celebrities and symbolic brands in the ad. The participants were asked to rate the following statements.

“This celebrity image is consistent with the symbolic brand”;

“This celebrity image reflects the symbolic brand”;

“This celebrity image can be matched with the symbolic brand”;

“This celebrity is a mirror image of the brand”.

Attitude Toward the Brand

Participants were asked to rate their attitude toward each brand type (functional and symbolic) on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The statements in the scales are the following. Four items were adapted from previous literature (Sirgy et al., 1997, 2000; Zhu et al., 2019, p. 304).

“I like this brand”;

“This brand has a good reputation”;

“I have a positive attitude toward this brand”;

“It is a good brand”.

Purchase Intention

To measure purchase intention for both brand types, participants were asked whether they would consider buying the advertised brand the next time they purchase a watch. Participants were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with the following statements using the 7-point semantic differential scale anchored by “very unlikely/very likely”, “improbable/probable, and “impossible/possible” to rate the following statements separately one for the functional brand and one for the symbolic brand. The items were adapted from previous literature to measure participants’ intention to purchase a product (Laffery, 2009; Lee & Koo, 2015; Yi, 1990).

“If it was affordable, I would consider buying the advertised brand Timex in the ad.”

“If it was affordable, I would consider buying the advertised brand Rolex in the ad.”

Demographic Information

The final section consisted of seven questions that asked the respondents to provide general background information about themselves in the areas of gender, marital status, class standing, ethnicity, basketball preference, and student-athletes. This section was necessary to obtain an accurate sample of respondents aged 18 years and older and to analyze the demographic segments of the sample.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive Analysis

Following the collection of survey information, data were coded and analyzed with IBM SPSS statistics 26.0 and IBM AMOS. All identifiable information was removed, and the students’ answers remained anonymous. Before performing the core analysis, data cleaning was implemented to remove erroneous data in the early step of the data analysis. According to Byrne (2001), missing data is unavoidable in a study, so an approach should be used to replace missing data before performing data analysis. A descriptive analysis was

implemented to understand the characteristics of the sample and identify the data entry errors for further analyses. Descriptive analysis is an important step in determining the distribution of data and detecting outliers before performing further statistical analyses.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modeling

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the factor structure of the constructs, including each type of congruence (i.e., brand-consumer, consumer-celebrity, celebrity-brand congruences), attitude toward the brand, and purchase intention. Building on the statistical theory of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), CFA is a general analytical approach for providing construct-related evidence of validity for a sample response from a particular tool. Thus, the results of CFA indicate whether the indicator variables selected based on prior studies are appropriate for the relevant variables for this experiment. The assessment of model fit from different perspectives was performed based on several criteria. Hu and Bentler (1999) suggest that a minimal set of fit indices should be reported when performing CFA. The indices chosen for this study are Chi-square (χ^2), standardized root mean residual (SRMR), comparative fit index (CFI), normed fit index (NFI), and the root means square error of approximation (RMSEA). The following cut-off values were applied for this study: standardized root mean square residual (SRMR < .08), comparative fit index (CFI > .90), normed fit index (NFI > .90), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA < .08), Tucker – Lewis Index (TLI > .90) (Byrne, 1994; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005; 2015; Steiger, 2007).

After verifying the model fit to the data, the SEM was implemented to test hypotheses and examine the path relationship in the structural model. The structural model specified brand-consumer, consumer-celebrity, and celebrity-brand congruences as the exogenous constructs and two endogenous variables, purchase intention and attitude toward the brand. The relationships existed among three congruences and two behavioral outcomes

with one set of relationships for functional brands and another for symbolic brands. Similar to the CFA, SEM showed if the proposed model has a good fit to the data based on the multiple fit indices, Chi-square (χ^2), χ^2 / degree of freedom (*df*), SRMR, CFI, NFI, TLI, and RMSEA (Kline, 2005; 2015). To improve the model fit well, post-hoc model modifications were performed based on statistical criteria.

CHAPTER IV: Results

This chapter indicates a summary of the results of the analysis of data. This chapter is organized as follows. Firstly, a summary of descriptive statistics including characteristics of the sample for the survey respondents. Secondly, based on the results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), descriptive statistics and results of the measurement models are presented. Lastly, the results of the proposed model are presented to evaluate hypotheses by analyzing the structured model with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Characteristics of Sample

A total of 731 respondents participated in the survey. After deleting missing and inappropriate data, 491 surveys comprising 226 for functional and 265 for symbolic brands provided useful data for the study. The data cleaning process involved several steps to ensure the quality and validity of data utilized for the analysis. Initially, 372 respondents provided data for the functional brand and 359 for the symbolic brand. However, 82 responses for the functional brand and 53 responses for the symbolic brand were deleted because the participants did not complete their questionnaires. To further ensure validity, a screening test was conducted based on specific criteria. This screening process resulted in the deletion of 64 respondents for the functional brand and 34 respondents for the symbolic brand. The screening criteria were designed to ensure that only participants who were familiar with both the celebrity athlete endorser and the brand, and who had perceptions aligned with the brand personality, were included in the final analysis. This step was crucial to maintaining the integrity of the data and ensuring the robustness of the analysis. Only respondents over 18 years old were included in the survey. The ratio of gender was male (51.3%) and female (47.7%). The majority of the respondents were between 18 and 24 years old (61.9%). Table 1 indicates the education levels of the respondents: freshman (4.5%), Sophomore (15.5%), Junior (21.8 %), senior (33.0%), master's degree (16.3%), and doctorate degree (7.9%). In

terms of marital status, the majority of the respondents were single (75.2%). Regarding classified ethnicity, more than half of the respondents were White or Caucasian (56.6%), followed by Black and African American (31.8%) (see Table 1). For further analyses, the survey questionnaires distributed randomly were divided into two groups based on the questions: one for the functional brand (n = 226) and the other for the symbolic brand (n=265).

Table 1*Profile of Survey Respondents*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	252	51.30
Female	234	47.70
Non-binary	5	1.00
Age (years)		
18-24	298	60.60
25-34	78	15.90
35-44	42	8.60
45-54	28	5.70
55-64	31	6.30
> 60	14	2.70
Marital status		
Single	369	75.20
Married	111	22.60
Other(s)	11	2.20
Ethnicity		
Asian or Pacific Islander	9	1.80
Black or African American	156	31.80
Hispanic or Latino	29	5.90
White or Caucasian	278	56.60
Multiracial or Biracial	12	2.40
Other(s) / not listed here	7	1.40
Education		
Freshman	22	4.50
Sophomore	76	15.50
Junior	107	21.80
Senior	162	33.00
Master's degree	80	16.30
Doctorate degree	39	7.90
Other(s)	5	1.00

Note. n =491

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was implemented on each measurement construct to assess the indicator variables of each proposed measurement model, one for the functional brand and the other for the symbolic brand. The results of each CFA showed that

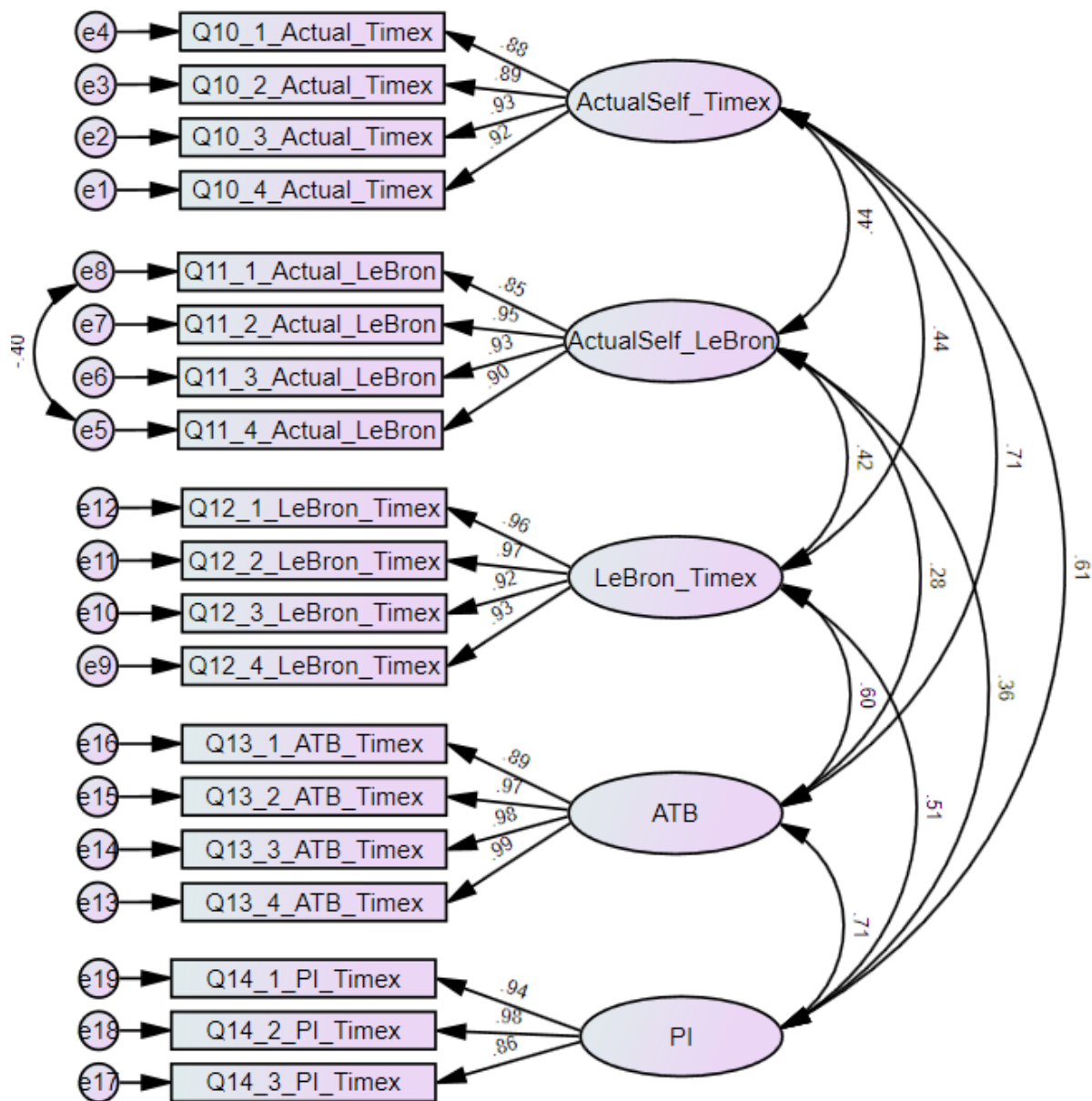
the measurement indicated an acceptable fit to the data showing several fit indices falling within the acceptable range. The indices used to evaluate the model efficacy of factor analysis were chi-square (χ^2), χ^2 / degree of freedom (df), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), normed fit index (NFI), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and standardized root means square error (SRMR).

Descriptive Statistics and Measurement Models: Actual Self, Functional Brand, and Athlete Celebrity

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on each item that measured attitude toward brand, purchase intention, and three congruences: (1) congruence between brand and consumer's actual self-image, (2) congruence between consumer's actual self-image and athlete celebrity, and (3) congruence between celebrity athlete and functional brand. The initial model fit was ($\chi^2 / df = 356.49 / 142 = 2.51$, RMSEA = 0.08 [90 percent CI = 0.07-0.09], NFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.95 and SRMR = 0.047). To improve the model fit, modification indices values of the items were used and connected by covariance based on statistical criteria. After modifying the model with covariance of two items, the model showed more acceptable values for all indices ($\chi^2 / df = 334.94 / 141 = 2.37$, RMSEA = 0.07 [90 percent CI = 0.06-0.09], NFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.96 and SRMR = 0.046). The range of factor loadings of each item is from .85 to .99. Figure 3 demonstrates the measurement model and the standardized factor loadings.

Figure 3

CFA Measurement Model for Functional Brand



Note. The effect of functional brand/consumer's actual self-congruence, consumer's actual self/celebrity congruence, and celebrity/functional brand congruence on attitude toward brand and purchase intention

Descriptive statistics, factor loadings, and Cronbach's alpha (α). the average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR) for the constructs of the functional brand were found sufficiently shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2*Descriptive Statistics, Standardized Factor Loading, and Cronbach's Alpha*

Factor	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
BCC	Timex brand's personality is consistent with how I am	2.93	1.53	0.88	0.95
	Timex brand's personality reflects who I am	2.70	1.52	0.89	
	Timex brand's users are the people I belong to	2.72	1.60	0.93	
	Timex brand's image can be matched with me	2.76	1.51	0.92	
CCC	Timex celebrity image is consistent with how I am	2.55	1.46	0.90	0.94
	Timex celebrity image reflects who I am	2.24	1.33	0.93	
	This celebrity image can be matched with my actual image	2.22	1.34	0.95	
	This celebrity is a mirror image of me	1.99	1.23	0.85	
CBC	This celebrity image is consistent with the Timex brand	3.14	1.68	0.96	0.97
	This celebrity image reflects the Timex brand	3.03	1.77	0.97	
	This celebrity image can be matched with the functional brand Timex	3.09	1.79	0.92	
	This celebrity is a mirror image of the Timex brand	2.85	1.69	0.93	
ATB	I like the Timex brand	3.25	1.75	0.89	0.98
	Timex brand has a good reputation	3.56	1.97	0.97	
	I have a positive attitude toward the Timex brand	3.50	1.93	0.98	
	Timex is a good brand	3.59	1.94	0.99	
PI	Very Unlikely (1) very likely (7)	2.77	1.93	0.94	0.94
	Improbable (1) Probably (7)	2.67	1.89	0.98	
	Impossible (1) Possible (7)	3.08	2.03	0.86	

Note. n = 226. BCC = Brand (Timex) and consumer (Actual self) congruence; CCC = Consumer (Actual self) and celebrity (LeBron James) congruence; CBC = Celebrity (LeBron James) and brand (Timex) congruence; ATB = Attitude toward the brand (Functional brand); PI = Purchase intention

Given an acceptable model fit, Cronbach's alpha of all scales exceeded the threshold of 0.70, ranging from 0.94 to 0.98 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Therefore, the internal validity of the measurement model was adequate (Table 2). Additionally, average variance extract (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) for all constructs were found to be greater than 0.50 and 0.80, respectively (Fornell & Lacker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010). Therefore, the convergent validity of the model was considered adequate (Table 3). In addition, discriminant validity was established by analyzing the correlations among the factors and standardized regression weights in the proposed measurement model, indicating evidence of discriminant validity (Table 3; Fornell & Lacker, 1981).

Table 3

Dependent Variable, Reliability, Validity, and Correlations

Latent Constructs	CR	AVE	Latent Constructs					
			1	2	3	4	5	
1. CBC	0.972	0.896	0.946					
2. BCC	0.949	0.823	0.439	0.907				
3. CCC	0.949	0.823	0.424	0.441	0.907			
4. ATB	0.977	0.916	0.603	0.707	0.279	0.957		
5. PI	0.949	0.861	0.509	0.612	0.362	0.709	0.928	

Note. n = 226. Model 1 = Functional brand BCC = Brand and consumer congruence; CCC = Consumer and celebrity congruence; CBC = Celebrity and brand congruence; ATB = Attitude toward the brand; PI, Purchase intention; Composite reliability (CR); the square root of the average variance extract (AVE) (*in-bold*); correlations between constructs (*off-diagonal*).

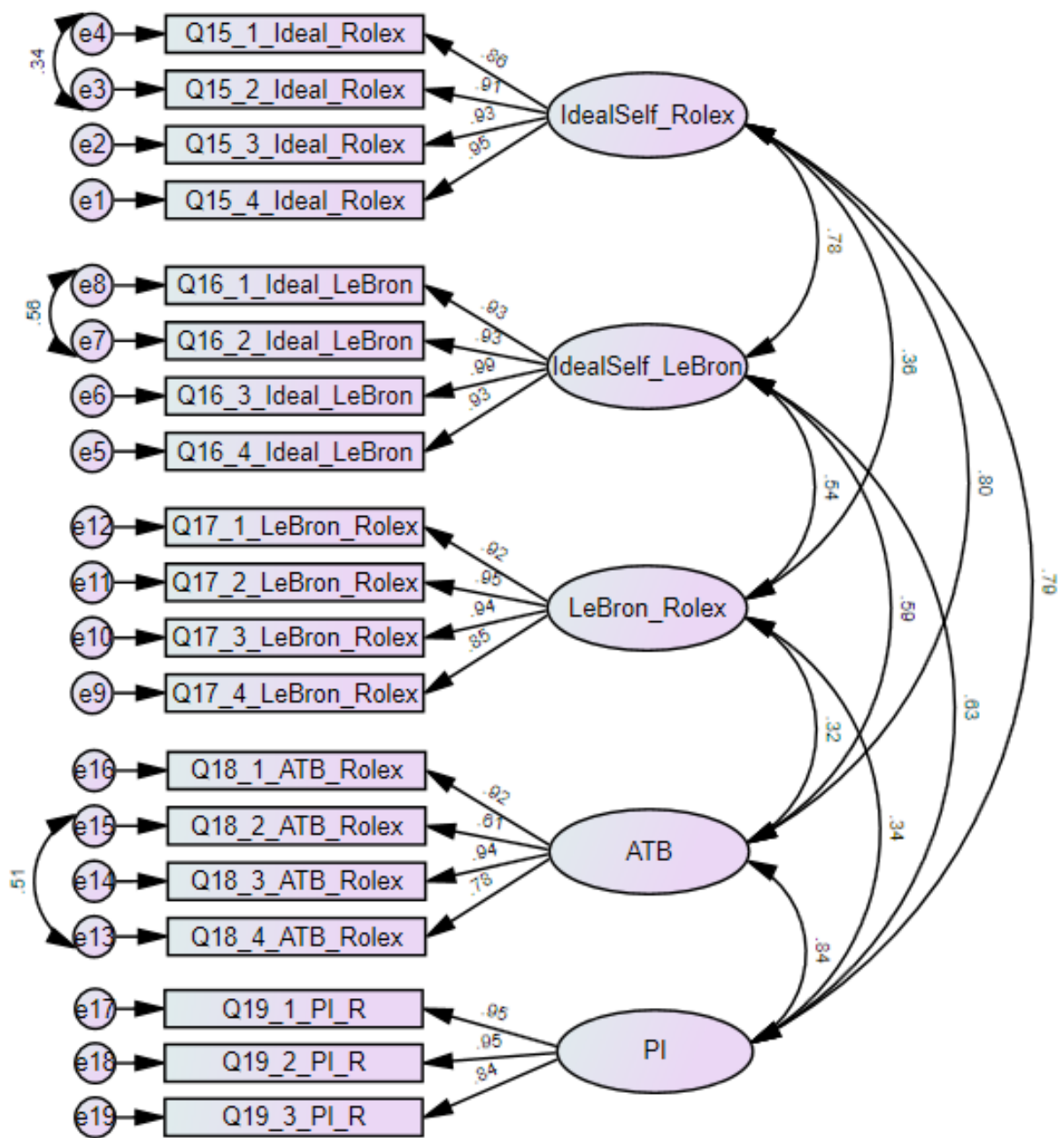
Descriptive Statistics and Measurement Models: Ideal Self, Symbolic Brand, and Athlete Celebrity

Same to the analysis of the functional brand above, confirmatory factor analysis was performed on each item that measured attitude toward the brand, purchase intention, and three congruences: (1) congruence between symbolic brand and consumer's ideal self-image, (2) congruence between consumer's ideal self-image and athlete celebrity, and (3)

congruence between celebrity athlete and symbolic brand. The values of indices of the initial model were ($\chi^2 / df = 489.692 / 142 = 3.45$, RMSEA = 0.09 [90 percent CI = 0.08-0.10], NFI = 0.92, CFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.93 and SRMR = 0.048). The initial model fit was tolerable, but not good. Thus, the model was modified based on statistical criteria (e.g., the modification indices) to improve the model fit. After modifying the model based on modification indices, the model fit attained was found satisfactory with all indices ($\chi^2 / df = 334.94 / 141 = 2.37$, RMSEA = 0.07 [90 percent CI = 0.06-0.09], NFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.96 and SRMR = 0.046). The range of factor loadings of each item is from .78 to .99. Figure 4 demonstrates the measurement model and the standardized factor loadings.

Figure 4

CFA Measurement Model for Symbolic Brand



Note. The effect of symbolic brand/consumer’s ideal self congruence, consumer’s ideal self/celebrity congruence, and celebrity/symbolic brand congruence on attitude toward brand and purchase intention

Descriptive statistics, factor loadings, and Cronbach’s alpha (α), average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability (CR) for each construct were found sufficient shown in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4*Descriptive Statistics, Standardized Factor Loading, and Cronbach's Alpha*

Factor	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
BCC	Rolex brand's personality is consistent with how I would like to be	4.51	1.77	0.86	0.95
	Rolex brand's personality reflects the person I would like to be	4.60	1.85	0.91	
	Rolex brand's users are the people I would like to belong to	4.36	1.96	0.93	
CCC	Rolex brand's image can be matched with the person I would like to be	4.54	1.91	0.95	0.97
	This celebrity image is consistent with how I would like to be	4.29	1.92	0.93	
	This celebrity image reflects who I would like to be	4.27	1.99	0.93	
	This celebrity image can be matched with my ideal self-image	4.12	2.07	0.99	
CBC	This celebrity is a mirror image of the person I would like to be	3.87	2.17	0.93	0.95
	This celebrity image is consistent with the Rolex brand	5.50	1.37	0.92	
	This celebrity image reflects the Rolex brand	5.54	1.46	0.95	
	This celebrity image can be matched with the Rolex brand	5.52	1.42	0.94	
ATB	This celebrity is a mirror image of the Rolex brand	5.20	1.63	0.85	0.90
	I like the Rolex brand	4.98	1.55	0.92	
	Rolex brand has a good reputation	5.89	1.04	0.61	
	I have a positive attitude toward the Rolex brand	5.31	1.45	0.94	
PI	Rolex is a good brand	5.67	1.21	0.78	0.93
	Very Unlikely (1) very likely (7)	5.15	2.06	0.95	
	Improbable (1) Probably (7)	5.11	2.05	0.95	
	Impossible (1) Possible (7)	5.55	1.72	0.84	

Note. n = 265. BCC = Brand (Rolex) and consumer (Ideal self) congruence; CCC = Consumer (Ideal self) and celebrity (LeBron James) congruence; CBC = Celebrity (LeBron

James) and brand (Rolex) congruence; ATB = Attitude toward the brand (Symbolic); PI= Purchase intention; CFA = Confirmafactory Factor Analysis

Given acceptable model fit, Cronbach's alpha of all scales exceeded the benchmark of 0.70, ranging from 0.90 to 0.97 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Therefore, the internal validity of the measurement model was adequate (Table 4). In addition, the average variance extract (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) for all constructs were greater than 0.50 and 0.80, respectively (Fornell & Lacker, 1981) (Table 5). According to Fornell and Lacker (1981), an AVE of less than 0.50 may be acceptable if the CR is greater than or equal to 0.70. Therefore, the convergent validity of the model was considered adequate. Moreover, the square root of AVE values is higher than that of shared variance between constructs, indicating empirical support for discriminant validity, with the exception of attitude toward brand (ATB) (Table 5).

Referring to Table 4, the square root of AVE of ATB is equal to the one factor, purchase intention (PI), but is greater than the absolute value of the correlations with other factors. Many prior studies confirm that attitude toward brand and purchase intention differ theoretically and practically, the current study retains attitude toward the brand as a dependent variable. Overall, discriminant validity was acceptable for this measurement model and supported the discriminant validity between the constructs.

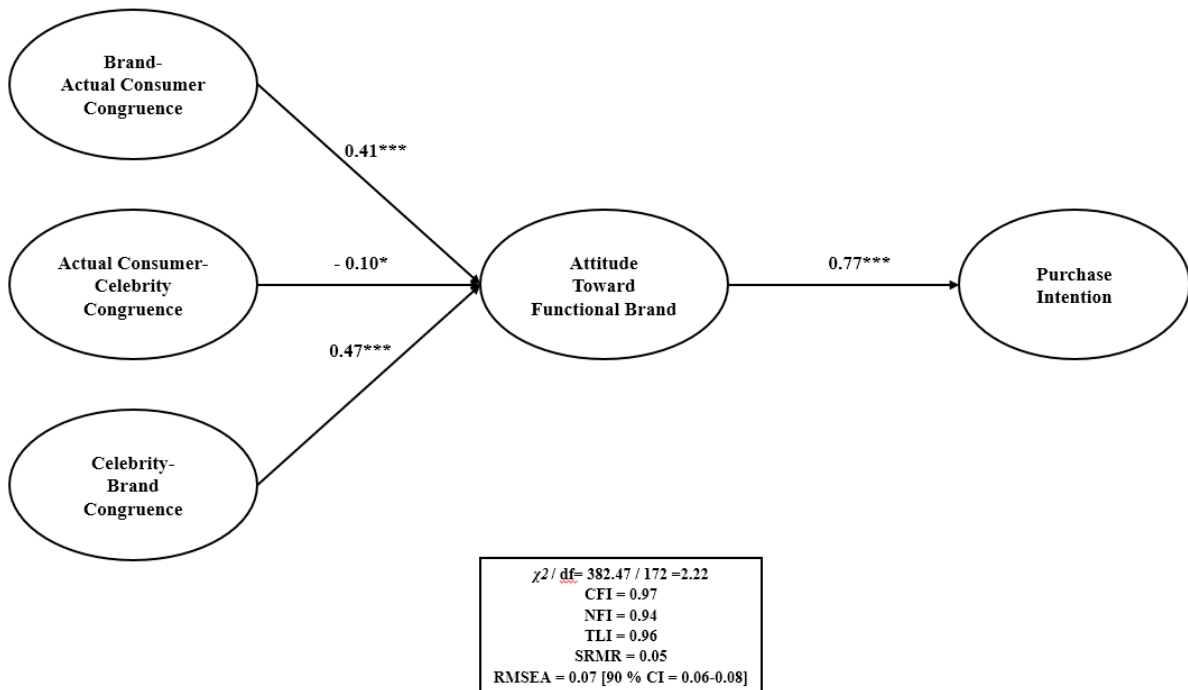
Table 5*Dependent Variable, Reliability, Validity, and Correlations*

Latent Constructs	CR	AVE	Latent Constructs					
			1	2	3	4	5	
1. ATB	0.89	0.70	0.83					
2. BCC	0.95	0.84	0.78	0.92				
3. CCC	0.97	0.90	0.58	0.77	0.95			
4. CBC	0.95	0.84	0.33	0.36	0.52	0.92		
5. PI	0.94	0.83	0.83	0.80	0.64	0.340	0.91	

Note. n = 265. BCC = Brand and consumer congruence; CCC = Consumer and celebrity congruence; CBC = Celebrity and brand congruence; ATB = Attitude toward the brand (Symbolic brand); PI, Purchase intention; Composite reliability (CR); the square root of the average variance extract (AVE) (*in-bold*); correlations between constructs (*off-diagonal*).

SEM Testing of the Proposed Structural Model

The overall model fit of the proposed structural model was assessed to verify the proposed research model in Figure 5 and Figure 6 respectively while including control variables, gender and age. The effects of control variables were assessed as independent variables that were regressed on the constructs of attitude toward brand and purchase intention. This takes into account the association of each structure with the control variables. In the case of the structural model in Figure 5, comparing the results of the model with no control variables and the results of the model with control variables, the relationships were slightly changed. Actual self-image and celebrity congruence was slightly weaker than it was before. However, most of the results of the model with control variables were consistent with the model with no control variables, and the slight difference accounts for the influence of age and gender. Therefore, the results indicated that gender and age did not significantly influence any constructs in this analysis. The results from the structural equation model (SEM) indicated the goodness of fit indices for the model were acceptable with ($\chi^2 / df = 382.47 / 172 = 2.22$, RMSEA = 0.07 [90 percent CI = 0.06-0.08], NFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.97, TLI = 0.96 and SRMR = 0.05). Structural path coefficients of the model for the functional brand appear in Figure 5.

Figure 5*The Final Structural Model for the Functional Brand*

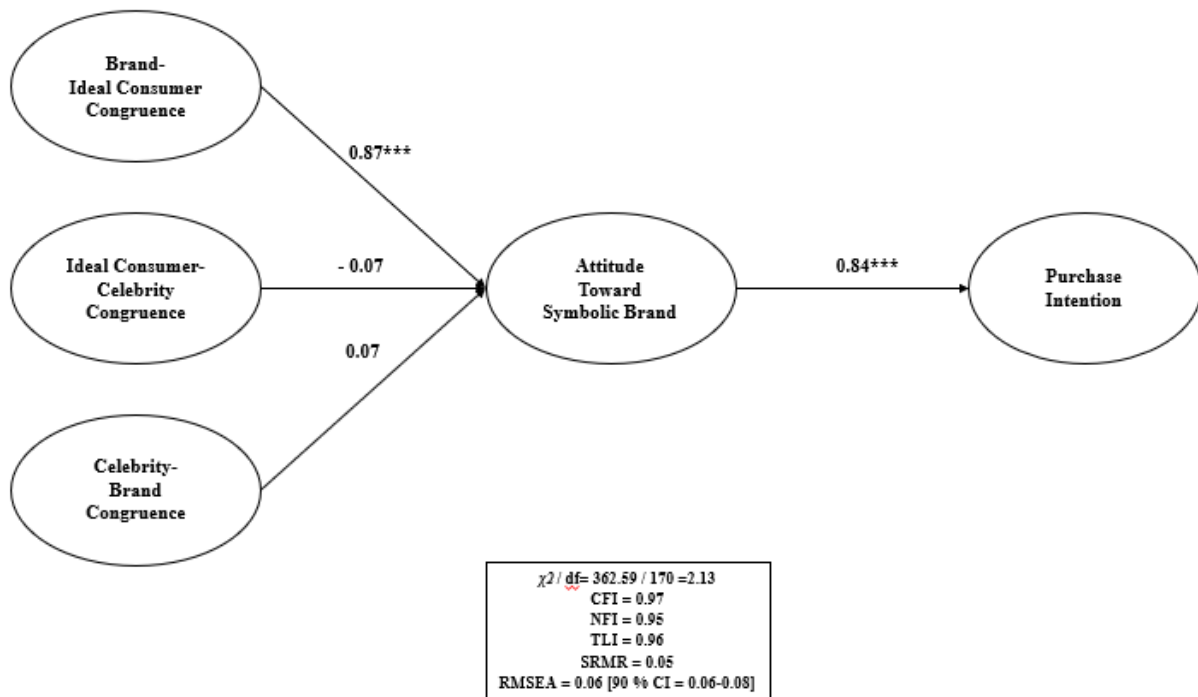
Note. Path Diagram of the Final Structural Model with Standardized Path Coefficients.
 * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Next, in the structural model presented in Figure 6, the relationships between variables changed slightly when control variables were added. Specifically, the inclusion of gender and age as control variables weakened the relationships between ideal self-image and celebrity endorser congruence, as well as between celebrity endorser and brand, compared to the model with no control variables. However, most of the results of the model with control variables were consistent with the model with no control variables, and the slight differences observed can be attributed to the influence of age and gender. Therefore, the results indicated that gender and age did not significantly influence any of the constructs in this analysis. The results from the structural equation model (SEM) indicated the goodness of fit indices of the model were acceptable with ($\chi^2 / df = 362.59 / 170 = 2.13$, RMSEA = 0.07 [90 percent CI =

0.06-0.08], NFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.97, TLI = 0.96 and SRMR = 0.05). Structural path coefficients of the model for the symbolic brand appear in Figure 6.

Figure 6

The Final Structural Model for the Symbolic Brand



Note. Path Diagram of the Final Structural Model with Standardized Path Coefficients.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Hypothesis 1 expected that the congruence between the functional brand and the consumer's actual self-image influences attitude toward the functional brand. By looking at the structural relationships, the congruence between the functional brand and the consumer's actual self-image had a significant direct impact on attitude toward the functional brand ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < .001$) (Figure 5). Thus, hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that the congruence symbolic brand and the consumer's ideal self-image influences attitude toward the symbolic brand. The structural path coefficient indicated that the congruence between the symbolic brand and the consumer's ideal self-

image had a significant impact on attitude toward the symbolic brand ($\beta = 0.87, p < .001$) (Figure 6). Therefore, hypothesis 2 was supported.

Hypothesis 3 anticipated that the congruence between the symbolic brand and the consumer's ideal self-image is likely to have a greater impact on attitude toward the symbolic brand than the congruence between the functional brand and the consumer's actual self-image does on attitude toward the functional brand. Both factors had a significant direct impact on attitude toward each type of brand. By comparing the factor loadings for each structural path, however, the congruence between the symbolic brand and the consumer's ideal self-image ($\beta = 0.87, p < .001$) has greater factor loading than that of the congruence between the functional brand and the consumer's actual self-image ($\beta = 0.41, p < .001$). Therefore, hypothesis 3 was supported.

Hypothesis 4 expected that the congruence between the consumer's actual self-image and the celebrity athlete endorser influences the attitude toward the functional brand. By looking at the structural path coefficient in Figure 5, the congruence between the consumer's actual self-image and celebrity athlete endorser had a significant and negative impact on attitude toward the functional brand ($\beta = -0.10, p < .001$) (Figure 5). Thus, hypothesis 4 was supported.

Hypothesis 5 inferred that the congruence between the consumer's ideal self-image and the celebrity athlete endorser influences the attitude toward the symbolic brand. The result of the structural path coefficient showed the congruence between the consumer's ideal self-image and celebrity athlete endorser had no significant direct impact on attitude toward the symbolic brand ($\beta = -0.07, p = 0.38$) (Figure 6). Thus, hypothesis 5 was not supported.

Hypothesis 6 expected that the congruence between the consumer's ideal self-image and the celebrity athlete endorser is likely to have a greater impact on attitudes toward the symbolic brand than the congruence between the consumer's actual self-image and the

celebrity athlete endorser does on the functional brand. By comparing the factor loadings for each structural path, the congruence between the consumer's actual self-image and the celebrity athlete endorser only had a significant effect on attitude toward the functional brand ($\beta = -0.10, p < .001$), but congruence between the consumer's ideal self-image and the celebrity athlete endorser did not ($\beta = -0.07, p = 0.38$). Therefore, hypothesis 6 was not supported.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that the congruence between the celebrity athlete endorser and the functional brand influences attitude toward the functional brand. The structural relationship indicated that the celebrity athlete endorser and functional brand congruence had a significant effect on attitude toward the functional brand ($\beta = 0.47, p < 0.001$). Thus, hypothesis 7 was supported.

Hypothesis 8 anticipated that the congruence between the celebrity athlete endorser and symbolic brand influences attitude toward the symbolic brand. The results of the structural path coefficient showed that celebrity athlete endorser and symbolic brand congruence had no significant effect on attitude toward the symbolic brand ($\beta = 0.07, p = 0.15$). Therefore, hypothesis 8 was not supported.

Hypothesis 9 inferred that the congruence between the celebrity athlete endorser and symbolic brand is likely to have a greater impact on attitude toward the symbolic brand than the celebrity athlete endorser and functional brand congruence does on the functional brand. By comparing the factor loadings for each structural path, the celebrity athlete endorser and symbolic brand congruence had no significant effect on the symbolic brand ($\beta = 0.07, p = 0.15$), but only the celebrity athlete endorser and functional brand congruence had a significant effect on the attitude toward the functional brand ($\beta = 0.47, p < 0.001$). Thus, hypothesis 9 was not supported.

Hypotheses 10a and 10b expected that attitude toward the functional or symbolic brands would have a positive relationship with purchase intentions. By looking at the structural path coefficient, both attitudes toward the functional brand ($\beta = 0.77, p < 0.001$) and attitude toward the symbolic brand ($\beta = 0.84, p < 0.001$) had significant effects on purchase intention. Therefore, hypotheses 10a and 10b were supported. A summary of the results of the structural models with hypotheses testing is described in Table 6.

Table 6

Results of SEM with Hypotheses Testing

	β	t-value	p-value	Hypotheses Testing
Congruence functional brand & consumer's actual self \rightarrow ATB	0.41***	7.28	<0.001	H1: supported
Congruence consumer's actual self & celebrity \rightarrow ATB	-0.10*	-2.22	<0.1	H4: supported
Congruence celebrity & functional brand \rightarrow ATB	0.47***	9.65	<0.001	H7: supported
ATB (functional brand) \rightarrow PI	0.77***	12.04	<0.001	H10a: supported
Congruence symbolic brand & consumer's ideal self \rightarrow ATB	0.87***	10.35	<0.001	H2: supported
Congruence consumer's ideal self & celebrity \rightarrow ATB	-0.07	-0.87	0.38	H5: Not supported
Congruence celebrity & ideal brand \rightarrow ATB	0.07	1.44	0.15	H8: Not supported
ATB (symbolic brand) \rightarrow PI	0.84***	12.89	<0.001	H10b: supported

Note. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$; ATB = Attitude toward the brand; PI = Purchase intention.

CHAPTER V: Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings, implications, limitations, and future research directions of this study. The chapter is structured as follows: firstly, a summary of the study and its discussion with the findings are presented. Next, the theoretical and managerial implications are discussed, followed by an exploration of the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Study

This study examined the effects of congruences on consumer attitude formation based on the types of brands by employing three pairs of congruence: brand-consumer, consumer-celebrity, and celebrity-brand, considering consumers as the active agents. Additionally, the proposed model, which incorporates all three pairs of congruences into a single framework, demonstrates varying levels of influence and importance for different brand types. This makes it possible to compare the effects of each pair of congruence on both attitudes toward the brands and purchase intention. The findings showed that there are notable differences in the impacts of the three pairs of congruence on consumers' responses depending on the brand types: functional and symbolic brands. The results of this study provide valuable insights into the factors that influence consumer attitudes toward functional and symbolic brands and the role that celebrity endorsers can play in shaping these attitudes. The study supported several of the proposed hypotheses.

The findings of this study provide some of the congruences that had significant impacts on attitudes toward the brand. Specifically, for the functional brand, the consumer's attitude toward the brand was influenced considerably by all three pairs of congruences: congruence between the brand and the consumer, congruence between the consumer and the athlete celebrity, and congruence between celebrity athlete and brand. Brand and consumer congruence had the most significant impact on the consumer's attitude toward the functional

brand, followed by celebrity athlete and brand congruence. Consumer's actual self and celebrity congruence also had a considerable but negative impact on consumers' attitudes toward the brand. This result is reasonable because the purpose of employing celebrity endorsement is to capture the consumer's attention by transferring the celebrity image that is evaluated as superior and popular to that of the brand.

On the other hand, for the symbolic brand, the results of the research were different from those of the functional brand. Brand and consumer congruence had a significant impact on the attitude toward the symbolic brand, but unexpectedly, the other two pairs of congruences (i.e., consumer and celebrity congruence; celebrity and brand congruence) did not have a significant effect on the attitude toward the brand. While these findings suggest that the impact of consumer-celebrity congruence and celebrity-brand congruence may not be significant in shaping attitudes towards symbolic brands, it is important to note that these congruences may still underlie the influence of other factors. Specifically, consumer-celebrity congruence and celebrity-brand congruence may play a significant role in shaping attitudes toward functional brands, as suggested by previous literature. Furthermore, the use of celebrity endorsers can have a significant impact on consumers' attitudes toward brands in general.

The observed insignificant influences of two pairs of congruences may be explained by the Meaning Transfer Model (McCracken, 1989; Pradhan et al., 2016). According to the theory, the symbolic meaning of the celebrity can be transferred to the brand that is associated with creating a desire to achieve an ideal self-concept when the consumers perceive it to be congruent with their ideal self-image (Albert et al., 2017; Graeff, 1966; McCracken, 1989; Tuške et al., 2013). McCracken (1989) suggested by purchasing and using celebrity-endorsed products, consumers gain their perception and evaluation of the product, which is then used to build a satisfactory self-concept. In addition, consumers are constantly

transferring the symbolic attributes of brands into their lives to shape aspects of themselves and the world (Choi & Rifon, 2012). Also, endorsements allow symbols, images, and meanings to be transferred from celebrities to brands, and endorsed brands represent material and accessible persons full of meaning (Albert et al., 2017; McCracken, 1989).

In other words, it is important to create associations and aspirations for the brand or celebrity in the consumer's perception so that the consumer can form a satisfactory ideal self-concept using the brand advertised by the celebrity. When a brand aligns with the consumer's self-image and creates a user's self-image, the brands are more valued and generate favorable attitudes (Albert et al., 2017; Belk, 1988; Graeff, 1996). Participants were able to create an ideal self-image by associating with the symbolic attributes of the brand. However, a satisfactory ideal self-image might not have been achieved by transferring the symbolic brand's attributes, endorsed by the celebrity athlete in this study, to the ideal self. Therefore, it's crucial for marketers to carefully consider the type of brand and the congruence factors when selecting a celebrity endorser for their brand.

This study showed how each pair of congruence affects consumer attitude formation toward different types of brands. The results indicated that brand and consumer congruence had a significant impact on attitudes toward both functional and symbolic brands. In addition, the results revealed that the brand and consumer congruence than the functional brand more likely influenced the symbolic brand. The results implied that ideal self-image congruence with symbolic brands has a greater impact on attitudes toward those brands than actual self-image congruence with functional brands has on attitudes toward those brands. This suggests that consumers are more strongly influenced by how a symbolic brand aligns with their ideal self-image than by how a functional brand aligns with their actual self-image.

Implications

This study offers both theoretical and managerial implications. Previous research on celebrity endorsement has indicated the effects of congruence on consumers' responses, such as attitudes toward the brand and purchase intention, by investigating the relationship. However, from a theoretical perspective, this study examines and compares consumer perceptions and attitude formation by implementing experiments within a single framework, involving different brand types, and focusing on self-congruence theory. The study further investigates the effect of three pairs of congruence (i.e., brand-consumer congruence, consumer-celebrity congruence, and celebrity-brand congruence) on attitudes toward and purchase intention of functional and symbolic brand types. The experiment results for each brand provide a detailed analysis of the relationship between consumer perceptions, brand attitude formation, and consumer self-image congruence with both brand types and celebrity endorsers, highlighting the theoretical implications of celebrity endorsement in different brand contexts.

In addition, the findings of this study provide several managerial implications for marketing practitioners in terms of the positioning of the brand types. As the results show, marketing strategies should be implemented successfully to target groups based on their brand type because consumer responses would vary.

First, it is important for marketing practitioners to carefully consider the types of brands they are promoting and the types of celebrity endorsers they are using. The study found that the impact of congruence on consumer attitudes depended on whether the brand was functional or symbolic. Therefore, marketing practitioners should consider the types of brands they are promoting and select a celebrity endorser who is congruent with that brand type. For example, if promoting a functional brand such as a household cleaning product, it

may be more effective to use a celebrity endorser who is seen as reliable and trustworthy rather than one who is glamorous and fashionable.

Next, this study found that consumer self-image congruence with symbolic brands had a greater impact on attitudes toward those brands than actual self-image congruence with functional brands had on attitudes toward those brands. Therefore, marketing practitioners should focus on promoting the symbolic attributes of their brand and creating aspirational associations for consumers to achieve a satisfactory ideal self-image through using the brand.

Finally, the study found that the congruence between brand and consumer had the strongest impact on consumer attitudes toward the brand and purchase intention. Therefore, marketers should strive to create a strong brand identity that is congruent with the target consumer's self-concept. This can be achieved through market research and understanding the target consumer's values, beliefs, and self-image. Overall, the findings of this study provide valuable insights for marketing practitioners on the importance of congruences in shaping consumer attitudes and the role that celebrity endorsers can play in enriching these congruences.

Limitations and Future Research Direction

Although adequate efforts were made to add to the body of knowledge, this study inevitably has several limitations. The first limitation of this study is related to the sample. Looking at the study participants, more than half of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 24. This bias may induce that the collected data may not entirely represent the general consumers' responses due to the diverse social class or economic status. For future studies, it would be ideal to have a sample composed of a diverse group of individuals, as a sample from a diverse group would show effective and reliable results that reflect the real market.

Next, the study used only one celebrity athlete, with one industry, with two advertisements depicting wristwatches as endorsed products. There are so many brands and

celebrities, so it is hard to take into account the types of products and celebrities. Prior research indicates that consumers are more likely to have a favorable attitude toward a brand when they view it as matching their self-image or fitting into their personality (Lee, 2009; Overs & Schuurmans, 2005; Pradhan et al., 2016). Therefore, this study may have a potential preference bias toward the products or celebrities. In particular, for the symbolic brand, it would be beneficial to employ various brands and products with their favorite celebrities to collect data showing the self-congruence effect on consumers' responses while reducing preference bias.

Lastly, in a similar vein to the second limitation, the celebrity used in this study is only male. The results of the study did not indicate a significant gender difference in attitude toward the brand, but gender could influence the consumers' responses to different brand types or celebrities. So, future research would examine the effects of the congruence implementing different genders of celebrities for both male and female respondents. This would help establish customized marketing strategies of different brand types for consumers based on gender. Also, future studies would enhance the generalizability regarding gender-based differences.

Conclusion

The study's findings suggest that different marketing strategies are necessary to attract specific target groups when positioning brands. Consumers do not purchase products or brands for their own sake but rather to enhance and maintain their self-image depending on the purpose of the purchase. The study examined the influence of congruences on consumer attitude formation across different types of brands, functional and symbolic brands, focusing on three pairs of congruence: brand-consumer, consumer-celebrity, and celebrity-brand. By including all three pairs of congruences in a single framework, the study demonstrated varying levels of influence and importance for different brand types, allowing for

comparisons of the effects of each congruence pair on attitudes and purchase intentions. The findings showed significant differences in the impact of congruences on consumer responses to functional and symbolic brands. The study provides crucial insights into the role of self-image and celebrity endorsers in shaping consumer attitudes toward brands. It emphasizes the importance of understanding how consumers perceive themselves and how well brands align with those self-perceptions. Additionally, the study suggests that the impact of celebrity endorsers can vary depending on the types of brands being endorsed and the consumer's self-perceptions. These insights can help marketing practitioners approach more effective brand strategies and celebrity endorsement campaigns that resonate with consumers and drive positive brand attitudes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sample Questionnaire 1

You must be 18 or older to participate in this study. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study without penalty after starting the survey. This is an anonymous survey study. No reference will be made in oral or written reports, which could link you to the study.

Section A.

Instruction: Please **Check** () the appropriate box with the following statements.

1. Are you familiar with the wristwatch brand "Timex"?
Very unfamiliar 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very familiar
2. Are you familiar with the wristwatch brand "Rolex"?
Very unfamiliar 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very familiar
3. Do you know athlete basketball player "LeBron James"?
Very unfamiliar 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very familiar

Section B.

Instruction: Please read the definitions of brand type in the box to understand the difference between a **functional brand** and a **symbolic brand**. Please **Check** () the appropriate box with the following statements.

- **Functional brands** satisfy and are often purchased to meet your practical and utilitarian needs. For example, you will buy a watch to know the time for daily purposes (e.g., Casio watch, Maybelline cosmetic, Suave hair cream, etc.)
- **Symbolic brands** satisfy and are purchased to meet your symbolic needs such as prestige, desired social status, and self-expression. For example, you buy a watch to strengthen your desired social status, prestige, and self-esteem (e.g., Luxury brands such as Gucci, Chanel, Dior, Prada, Hermes, etc.)

1. What type of brand do you think "Timex" is? ¹ Symbolic Brand ² Functional Brand
2. What type of brand do you think "Rolex" is? ¹ Symbolic Brand ² Functional Brand

Section C. Timex Brand- Consumer's Actual Self Congruence.

Instruction: **Actual self is how you perceive yourself.** Take a moment and watch the advertisement for **LeBron James with Timex** for 10 seconds. Then think about your **Actual self-image** and **Timex** brand. Then, select the answer for how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1 Timex brand's personality is consistent with how I am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2 Timex brand's personality reflects who I am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3 Timex brand's users are the people I belong to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- 4 Timex brand's image can be matched with me 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Below is a set of word pairs. Please circle the number that best describes your opinion about the pairing of your **Actual self-image** and **Timex brand**. For example, if you think the Timex brand matches your actual self-image, you may respond like the example below.

	Bad Match	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good Match
1.	Incompatible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Compatible
2.	Bad Match	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good match
3.	Incongruent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Congruent
4.	Bad fit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good fit
5.	Irrelevant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Relevant
6.	Inconsistent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Consistent
7.	Inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Appropriate
8.	Ineffective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Effective

Section D. Consumer's Actual Self-Athlete Celebrity LeBron James Congruence.

Instruction: Take a moment to think about your **Actual self-image** and Celebrity **LeBron James**. Then Please circle the number for how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	This celebrity image is consistent with how I am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	This celebrity image reflects who I am	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	This celebrity image can be matched with my actual image	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	This celebrity is a mirror image of me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Below is a set of word pairs. Please circle the number that best describes your opinion about the pairing of your **Actual self-image** and **LeBron James**.

1.	Incompatible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Compatible
2.	Bad Match	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good match
3.	Incongruent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Congruent
4.	Bad fit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good fit
5.	Irrelevant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Relevant
6.	Inconsistent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Consistent

7.	Inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Appropriate
8.	Ineffective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Effective

Section E. Athlete Celebrity LeBron James – Timex Brand Congruence.

Instruction: Take a moment to think about the celebrity **LeBron James** and **Timex brand**. Then please circle the number for how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	This celebrity image is consistent with the Timex brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	This celebrity image reflects the Timex brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	This celebrity image can be matched with the functional brand Timex	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	This celebrity is a mirror image of the Timex brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Below is a set of word pairs. Please circle the number that best describes your opinion about the pairing of **LeBron James** and **Timex Brand**.

1.	Incompatible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Compatible
2.	Bad Match	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good match
3.	Incongruent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Congruent
4.	Bad fit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good fit
5.	Irrelevant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Relevant
6.	Inconsistent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Consistent
7.	Inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Appropriate
8.	Ineffective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Effective

Section F. Attitude Toward the Brand (Timex).

Instruction: Please circle the number for how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I like the Timex brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Timex brand has a good reputation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I have a positive attitude toward the Timex brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Timex is a good brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section G. Purchase Intention (Timex).

Instruction: Please circle the number that best reflects how you feel about the following statement.

“If it was affordable, I would consider buying the advertised brand Timex in the ad”

1	Very Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Likely
2	Improbable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Probable
3	Impossible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Possible

Section H. Celebrity Credibility.

Below is a set of word pairs. From your point of view, please circle the number that best reflects the personality or image of LeBron James, who endorses the product. For example, if you think the athlete is honest, you may respond like the example below.

Dishonest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Honest
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------	--------

1.	Unattractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Attractive
2.	Not classy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Classy
3.	Ugly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Beautiful
4.	Plain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Elegant
5.	Not Sexy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sexy
6.	Undependable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dependable
7.	Dishonest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Honest
8.	Unreliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Reliable
9.	Untrustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Trustworthy
10.	Insincere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sincere
11.	Not an expert	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Expert
12.	Inexperienced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Experienced
13.	Unknowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Knowledgeable
14.	Unqualified	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Qualified
15.	Skilled	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unskilled

Section I. General Information.

This part is to get some information about yourself. Please **Check** (☑) the appropriate box.

1. Gender: ¹ Male ² Female ³ non-Binary ⁴ Other(s)
2. How old are you? ¹ Under 18 ² 18-24 years old ³ 25-34 years old ⁴ 35-44 years old
⁶ 45-54 years old ⁷ 55-64 years old ⁷ 65+ years old
3. Marital Status: ¹ Single ² Married ³ Other(s)
4. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received.
¹ Freshman ² Sophomore ³ Junior ⁴ Senior ⁶ Master's degree ⁷ Doctorate degree
5. Is basketball your favorite sport to watch?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Are you a student-athlete or a former athlete? ¹ Yes (Please answer questions 7a) ² No
 7a. I am (was) a student-athlete, and I am (was) on the _____ team.

😊 Thank you very much for completing this survey 😊

Appendix B: Sample Questionnaire 2

Symbolic Brand

You must be 18 or older to participate in this study. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study without penalty after starting the survey. This is an anonymous survey study. No reference will be made in oral or written reports, which could link you to the study.

Section A.

Instruction: Please **Check** () the appropriate box with the following statements.

1. Are you familiar with the wristwatch brand "Timex"?
Very unfamiliar 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very familiar
2. Are you familiar with the wristwatch brand "Rolex"?
Very unfamiliar 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very familiar
3. Do you know athlete basketball player "LeBron James"?
Very unfamiliar 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very familiar

Section B.

Instruction: Please read the definitions of brand type in the box to understand the difference between a **functional brand** and a **symbolic brand**. Please **Check** () the appropriate box with the following statements.

- **Functional brands** satisfy and are often purchased to meet your practical and utilitarian needs. For example, you will buy a watch to know the time for daily purposes (e.g., Casio watch, Maybelline cosmetic, Suave hair cream, etc.)
- **Symbolic brands** satisfy and are purchased to meet your symbolic needs such as prestige, desired social status, and self-expression. For example, you buy a watch to strengthen your desired social status, prestige, and self-esteem (e.g., Luxury brands such as Gucci, Chanel, Dior, Prada, Hermes, etc.)

1. What type of brand do you think "Timex" is? ¹ Symbolic Brand ² Functional Brand
2. What type of brand do you think "Rolex" is? ¹ Symbolic Brand ² Functional Brand

Section C. Rolex Brand - Consumer's Ideal Self Congruence.

Instruction: **Ideal self is how you would like to perceive yourself.** Take a moment and watch the advertisement for **LeBron James with Rolex** for 10 seconds. Then, take a moment to think about your **Ideal self-image** and **Rolex** brand. Please select the answer for how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements.

- | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|---------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| 1 This brand's personality is consistent with how I would like to be | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

2	This brand's personality reflects the person I would like to be	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	This brand's users are the people I would like to belong to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	This brand's image can be matched with the person I would like to be	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Below is a set of word pairs. Please circle the number that best describes your opinion about the pairing of your **Ideal self-image** and **Rolex brand**. For example, if you think the Rolex brand matches your Ideal self-image, you may respond like the example below.

	Bad Match	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good Match
1.	Incompatible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Compatible
2.	Bad Match	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good match
3.	Incongruent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Congruent
4.	Bad fit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good fit
5.	Irrelevant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Relevant
6.	Inconsistent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Consistent
7.	Inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Appropriate
8.	Ineffective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Effective

Section D. Consumer's Ideal Self - Athlete Celebrity LeBron James Congruence.

Instruction: Take a moment to think about your **Ideal self-image** and **LeBron James**. Please circle the number for how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	This celebrity image is consistent with how I would like to be	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	This celebrity image reflects the person I would like to be	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	This celebrity image can be matched with the person I would like to be	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	This celebrity is a mirror image of the person I would like to be	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Below is a set of word pairs. Please circle the number that best describes your opinion about the pairing of your **Ideal self-image** and **LeBron James**.

1.	Incompatible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Compatible
2.	Bad Match	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good match
3.	Incongruent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Congruent
4.	Bad fit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good fit

5.	Irrelevant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Relevant
6.	Inconsistent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Consistent
7.	Inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Appropriate
8.	Ineffective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Effective

Section E. Athlete Celebrity LeBron James – Rolex Brand Congruence.

Instruction: Take a moment to think about the celebrity **LeBron James** and **Rolex brand**. Then Please circle the number for how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	This celebrity image is consistent with the Rolex brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	This celebrity image reflects the Rolex brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	This celebrity image can be matched with the Rolex brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	This celebrity is a mirror image of the Rolex brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Below is a set of word pairs. Please circle the number that best describes how you feel about the pairing of **LeBron James** and the **Rolex brand** being endorsed.

1.	Incompatible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Compatible
2.	Bad Match	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good match
3.	Incongruent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Congruent
4.	Bad fit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good fit
5.	Irrelevant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Relevant
6.	Inconsistent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Consistent
7.	Inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Appropriate
8.	Ineffective	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Effective

Section F. Attitude Toward the Brand (Rolex).

Instruction: Please circle the number for how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I like the Rolex brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Rolex brand has a good reputation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3	I have a positive attitude toward the Rolex brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Rolex is a good brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section G. Purchase Intention (Rolex).

Instruction: Please circle the number that best reflects how you feel about the following statement.

“If it was affordable, I would consider buying the advertised brand Rolex in the ad”

1	Very Unlikely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Likely
2	Improbable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Probable
3	Impossible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Possible

Section H. Celebrity Credibility.

Below is a set of word pairs. From your point of view, please circle the number that best reflects the personality or image of LeBron James, who endorses the product. For example, if you think the athlete is honest, you may respond like the example below.

Dishonest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Honest
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------	--------

1.	Unattractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Attractive
2.	Not classy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Classy
3.	Ugly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Beautiful
4.	Plain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Elegant
5.	Not Sexy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sexy
6.	Undependable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dependable
7.	Dishonest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Honest
8.	Unreliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Reliable
9.	Untrustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Trustworthy
10.	Insincere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sincere
11.	Not an expert	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Expert
12.	Inexperienced	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Experienced
13.	Unknowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Knowledgeable

14.	Unqualified	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Qualified
15.	Skilled	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unskilled

Section I. General Information.

This part is to get some information about yourself. Please **Check** (☑) the appropriate box.

- Gender: ¹ Male ² Female ³ non-Binary ⁴ Other(s)
- How old are you? ¹ Under 18 ² 18-24 years old ³ 25-34 years old ⁴ 35-44 years old
⁶ 45-54 years old ⁷ 55-64 years old ⁷ 65+ years old
- Marital Status: ¹ Single ² Married ³ Other(s)
- What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received.
¹ Freshman ² Sophomore ³ Junior ⁴ Senior ⁶ Master's degree ⁷ Doctorate degree
- Is basketball your favorite sport to watch?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
- Are you a student-athlete or a former athlete? ¹ Yes (Please answer questions 6a) ² No
6a. I am (was) a student-athlete, and I am (was) on the _____ team.

😊 Thank you very much for completing this survey 😊

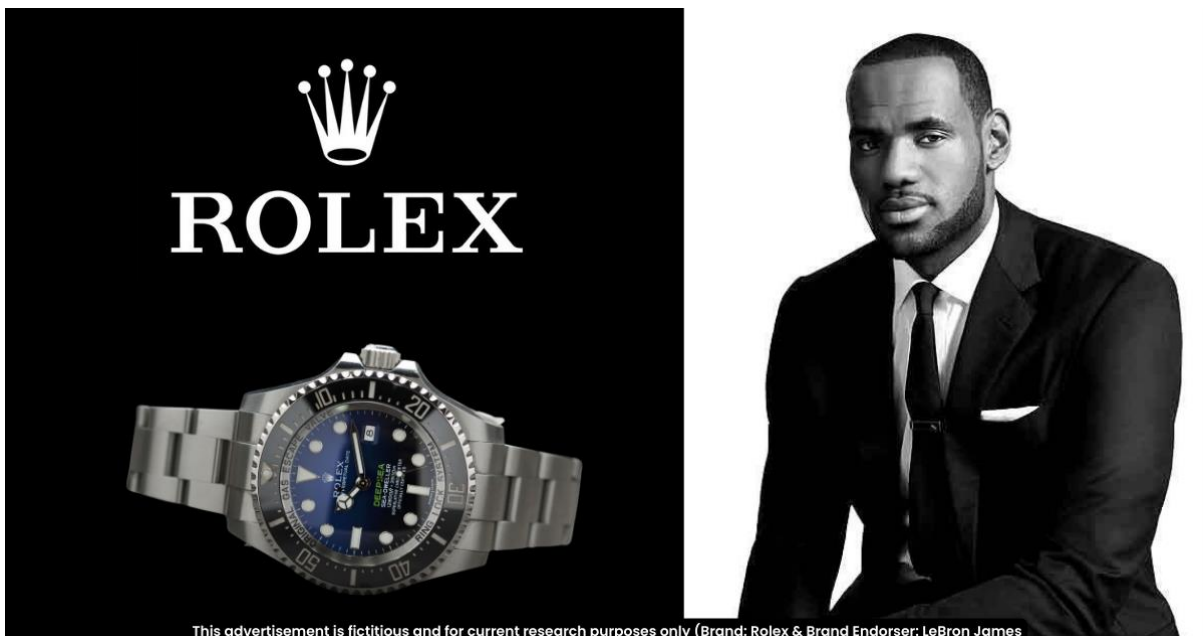
Appendix C: Stimulus Materials

Advertisement A: Functional Brand



The advertisement for Timex is presented in two panels. The left panel features a black background with the word "TIMEX" in white, sans-serif font at the top. Below it, a Timex watch with a blue dial, white markers, and a silver metal link bracelet is displayed. The right panel shows a black and white portrait of LeBron James, dressed in a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie, looking slightly to the left. At the bottom of the entire advertisement, a small line of text reads: "This advertisement is fictitious and for current research purposes only (Brand: TIMEX & Brand Endorser: LeBron James)".

Advertisement B: Symbolic Brand



The advertisement for Rolex is presented in two panels. The left panel features a black background with the Rolex crown logo at the top, followed by the word "ROLEX" in white, serif font. Below the text, a Rolex watch with a blue dial, white markers, and a silver metal link bracelet is displayed. The right panel shows a black and white portrait of LeBron James, dressed in a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie, looking slightly to the left. At the bottom of the entire advertisement, a small line of text reads: "This advertisement is fictitious and for current research purposes only (Brand: Rolex & Brand Endorser: LeBron James)".

Appendix D: IRB Approval

IRB

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Office of Research Compliance,
010A Sam Ingram Building,
2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd
Murfreesboro, TN 37129



HUMAN PARTICIPANT RESEARCH IRBF004IC INFORMED CONSENT - EXEMPT

Dear Researcher,

The IRB and MTSU reminds you that the two essential components of research involving human subjects are adequate informed consent and the protection of participant's rights, such as autonomy and confidentiality). Therefore, MTSU requests its faculty, staff and students to take the consent process of the human subject research very seriously – it is a conversation and not a mere document. If you cannot disclose a certain activity or an intervention to the participants, then you must not include such processes in your study. Moreover, the law requires the administration of the informed consent, but it does not clearly state how many times. Researchers are encouraged to remind the participants of their rights as many times as it is needed. In order to qualify for exemption, the informed consent document or a process must satisfy the following minimum requirements:

- a) Summative descriptions of the purpose of the study and the specifics on what is expected from the subjects in order for them to be research participants
- b) Participation is fully voluntary and they can withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice
- c) An overview on what will be required from the participants
- d) Clear disclosures of possible discomforts and/or potential risks as a result of the participation
- e) Total time to be taken in the study and other factors that would influence the participants
- f) Contact information for the principal investigator and the faculty sponsor if the PI is a student.

We also would like to remind our researchers that working with human participants is not an academic right; it is a true privilege.

MTSU IRB

Instructions:

This template is meant for obtaining informed consent from a human participant by providing a paper copy to disclose the research-related activities. The same text and structure must be used for online surveys, verbal interviews through telephone or in person, and other means of collecting data.

- A. **Participant Copy** – *Give this copy to the participant once it is signed by the PI:*
 - a. Fill in all of the unprotected spaces – Do not leave any of the fields empty
 - b. The research team must give disclosure of what is expected from the participant and provide a description of the study – Please note that "N/A" is not an accepted response.
 - c. Once the form receives IRB approval, the PI must sign the document and hand it to the participant to read – the faculty advisor must also sign if the PI is a student
 - d. In addition to allowing the participant to read this form, the investigators must also explain the procedures verbally. The investigators must encourage the participants to ask questions.
- B. **Researcher Copy** – *Retain this copy for your records:*
 - a. Fill in all of the unprotected spaces
 - b. The participant will accept his/her participation by entering his/her initials.

IRB**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

Office of Research Compliance,
010A Sam Ingram Building,
2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd, Murfreesboro, TN 37129

**INFORMED CONSENT – RESEARCHERS' DISCLOSURES**

(Part A – Participant's Copy)

Study Title	<i>Congruence Effects, Types of Brand, and Celebrity Endorsement.</i>	Office Use
Principal Investigator	Yun Heui Jeon	APPROVED
Faculty Advisor	Steven Estes	Approval Date: 11/01/2020
Contact Information	yj2w@mtmail.mtsu.edu	Expiration: 11/30/2023

Dear Participant,

On behalf of the research team, the Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) would like to thank you for considering to take part in this research study. You have been contacted by the above identified researcher(s) to enroll as a participant in this study because you met its eligibility criteria.

This consent document describes the research study for the purpose of helping you to make an informed decision on whether to participate in this study or not. It provides important information related to this study, possible interventions by the researcher(s) and proposed activities by you. This research has been reviewed by MTSU's internal oversight entity - Institutional Review Board (IRB) - for ethical practices in research (visit www.mtsu.edu/irb for more information).

As a participant, you have the following rights:

- You should read and understand the information in this document before agreeing to enroll
- Your participation is absolutely voluntary and the researchers cannot force you to participate
- If you refuse to participate or to withdraw midway during this study, no penalty or loss of benefits will happen
- The investigator MUST NOT collect identifiable information from you, such as, name, SSN, and phone number
- The researcher(s) can only ask you to complete an interview or a survey or similar activities and you must not be asked to perform physical activities or offer medical/psychological intervention
- Any potential risk or discomforts from this study would be lower than what you would face in your daily life

After you read the following disclosures, you can agree to participate in this study by completing "Part B" of this informed consent document. You do not have to do anything further if you decide not to participate.

1. What is the purpose of this study?

This research project is designed to examine the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement by evaluating your attitude toward the brand and purchase intention based on an athlete celebrity endorser and brand types.

2. What will I be asked to do in this study?

This study will ask about your perceptions of a brand, and its association with a celebrity.

3. How many times should I participate or for how long?

This is a one-time survey and it will take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete.

IRBF0041C – Informed Consent EXEMPT

IRB ID:
APPROVAL DATE:
EXPIRATION DATE: N/A

4. What are the risks and benefits if I participate?

The survey is entirely voluntary and there is no penalty or risk if you choose to participate in this study.

5. What will happen to the information I provide in this study?

This study does not collect any identifier information from you and your response will be anonymous. We use identification numbers for each participant's data, which will be meaningless and will not be used to identify participants given that we do not have information connecting the identification numbers that specify participants. Only the researchers (Yun Heui Jeon and Dr. Estes) of this study access the data to analyze and no one outside the research will be granted access to participant information.

6. What will happen if I refuse to participate and can I withdraw if I change my mind in the middle?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you can withdraw from the survey at any time in the middle without penalty.

7. Whom can I contact to report issues and share my concerns?

You can contact the researcher(s) by email or telephone (Yun Heui Jeon by email yj2w@mtmail.mtsu.edu OR Dr. Steven Estes by email Steven.Estes@mtsu.edu and by telephone 615-898-2906). You can also contact the MTSU's Office of Research Compliance by email – irb_information@mtsu.edu. Report compliance breaches and adverse events by dialing 615 898 2400 or by emailing compliance@mtsu.edu.

INVESTIGATOR's SIGNATURE	FACULTY ADVISOR's SIGNATURE	DATE
NON-IDENTIFIABLE PARTICIPANT ID# _____		

Confidentiality Statement:

All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private but total privacy cannot be promised, for example, your information may be shared with the MTSU IRB. In the event of questions or difficulties of any kind during or following participation, you may contact the Principal Investigator as indicated above. For additional information about giving consent or your rights as a participant in this study, please feel free to contact our Office of Compliance at (615) 898 2400.

Compensation:

Unless otherwise informed to you by the researcher(s), there is no compensation for participating in this study. The investigator must disclose if the participant would be compensated in the benefits section.

Study-related injuries:

MTSU will not compensate for study-related injuries.

Exemption Criteria:

This study was submitted to the MTSU IRB – an internal oversight entity to oversee research involving human subjects. The IRB has determined that this investigation consists of lower than minimal risk and it is exempt from further IRB processes based on the criteria: "Choose a category."

IRBF0041C – Informed Consent EXEMPT

IRB ID:
APPROVAL DATE:
EXPIRATION DATE: N/A

Note to the Participant

You do not have to do anything if you decide not to participate in this study. But if you wish to enroll as a participant, please complete "Part B" of this informed consent form and return it to the researcher. Please retain the signed copy of "Part A" for your future reference.

Approved 11.01.22

IRB**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

Office of Research Compliance,
010A Sam Ingram Building,
2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd, Murfreesboro, TN 37129

INFORMED CONSENT
(Part B – Researcher's Copy)

Study Title	<i>Congruence Effects, Types of Brand, and Celebrity Endorsement.</i>	Approval Information
Principal Investigator	Yun Heui Jeon	IRB ID: <i>NOT APPROVED</i>
Faculty Advisor	Steven Estes	Approval Date: mm/dd/yyyy
Contact Information	yj2w@mtmail.mtsu.edu	Expiration Date: N/A

You have been contacted by the investigator(s) because the researchers believe you meet the eligibility criteria to participate in the above referenced research study. Be aware that you must NOT be asked by the investigator(s) to do anything that would pose risk to your health or welfare, such as:

- Identifiable information – name, phone number, SSN, address, College ID, social media credentials (FaceBook page, twitter, etc.), email, identifiable information of closest relatives and etc.
- Physical activities – like exercise studies
- Medical intervention – testing drugs, collection of blood/tissue samples or psychological questions
- Nothing risky – any proposed activity that would expose you to more risk than what you would face on a day to day basis is not approved by the IRB

However, you can do the following:

- Withdraw from the study at any time without consequences
- Withdraw the information you have provided to the investigators before the study is complete
- Ask questions so the researcher must explain the procedures used in the research verbally.

The investigators must give you enough time to ask any questions. Once you have had a chance to read "Part A" (Participant's Copy), indicate your acceptance by checking the appropriate boxes:

	NO	YES
➤ I have read investigator(s)' disclosure (Part A) for the above identified research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ The researcher(s) explained the procedures to be conducted verbally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ I understand each part of the interventions and all my questions are answered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
➤ The researcher(s) gave me a signed copy of the disclosure page (Part A)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

By initialing below, I give my consent to participate in this study. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences.

X

_____ **NON-IDENTIFIABLE PARTICIPANT ID#** _____
Participant initial Date

Initial this copy and return it to the researcher and retain Part A for your reference in case you have questions or you wish to get in touch with the researcher or with the MTSU IRB

IRBF004IC – Informed Consent EXEMPT

IRB ID:
APPROVAL DATE:
EXPIRATION DATE: N/A