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**Examining the Effect of Branded versus Unbranded
Content Strategy: The Moderating Role of Self-
Construal**

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Content Strategy: The Moderating Role of Self-
Construal

本論文係蔡汶津君（學號：R11741059）在國立臺灣大學商學研究所完成之碩士學位論文，於民國 113 年 6 月 26 日承下列考試委員審查通過及口試及格，特此證明。

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Abstract

In recent years, social media has been consistently used in companies' marketing strategies to cultivate brand trust and drive revenue growth. Among the numerous different content types, there are two distinctive content types that have been discussed by current industry experts, which include the 'branded content' which centers on promoting the brand and its products, and the 'unbranded content' which focuses on caring and building longer relationships with the customers. As means to incorporate the above two content types into the whole company's content strategies, current industry has suggested a '80/20 content strategy' that entails to allocate 80% of unbranded posts and only 20% for brand's promotional purposes.

Though its positive implications have been widely discussed and encouraged, barely any implementations of the '80/20 content strategy' have been found, and therefore, thorough research is essential to address the effectiveness of the proposed strategy toward the company's objectives. This study investigates how different content strategies (i.e., 80/20 versus 20/80 content strategy) affect brand trust and customers' purchase intentions. Furthermore, this study underscores the importance of self-construal in affecting the whole process.

Through an experiment (287 participants), we show that though '80/20 content strategy' versus the '20/80 content strategy' does not significantly exhibit higher customers' purchase intentions, the '80/20 content strategy' is found to significantly affects purchase intentions through the activation of customers' perceived brand benevolence. Meanwhile, the '20/80 content strategy' is found to activate customers' perceived brand competence, thereby influencing their purchase intentions. By adding self-construal into the analysis, we found

that customers with interdependent self-construal exhibit higher perceived brand benevolence that leads to their purchase intentions when exposed with the 80/20 content strategy compared to the 20/80 content strategy. Conversely, those with independent self-construal exhibit higher perceived brand competence that also leads to their purchase intentions when exposed with the 20/80 content strategy versus the 80/20 content strategy.

As a result, this study has enlightened the importance of branded and unbranded content implementations in the social media realm, and further provided deeper insights toward the effectiveness and usage of different content strategies by different companies. This study also marks the first experiment to incorporate the effects of branded or unbranded content and their respective strategies toward brand trust and purchase intentions within different customers' self-construal, which provides valuable insight toward the social media marketing practices.

Keywords: content strategy, branded content, unbranded content, social media marketing, trust, self-construal

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Chapter 1. Introduction

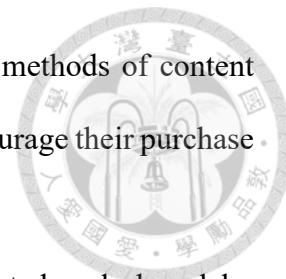
1.1. Motivation

Over the past few years, the rapid usage and evolution of social media have transformed how our society operates. In 2022, global social media users surpassed 4.59 billion, and this number is expected to surge to nearly six billion by 2027 (Statista, 2023). Amidst this surging user base on social media platforms, companies around the world have also become an integral part of this landscape. As of January 2023, global statistics have shown that the leading benefits of using social media for marketing purposes include increased exposure and traffic, generation of leads, development of loyal fans, and also improvements in sales (Statista, 2023). Thus, in recent years, there has been a noticeable trend among global companies, consistently using digital media platforms, including social media to promote their products and services and engage with current and prospective customers. This strategic approach aims to effectively cultivate brand awareness and trust, culminating in the ultimate goal of driving revenue growth (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019).

As an increasing number of companies begin to incorporate social media into their marketing strategies, customers are inevitably exposed to a substantial volume of content across these platforms. With an abundance of information, customers face limitations in time, effort, and attention needed to engage with all of it. This will result in customers being unable to effectively filter out the useful information for them (Forbes, 2022).

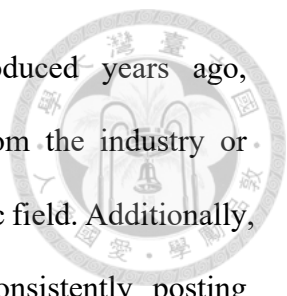
Furthermore, studies have shown that 79% of content marketers feel business-generated contents often adopt to be excessively introducing the company and promoting its products, leading to a self-promotional perspective. This situation might diminish customers' trust in the brand and reduce their inclination to make purchases (Bizadmark, n.d.).

Consequently, companies are striving to determine the most effective methods of content creation and distribution to bolster customer's brand perception and encourage their purchase intentions.



Currently, numerous different types of content are being created and shared by companies on social media platforms. The majority of this content focuses on explaining product or service features, emphasizing brand's strengths, discounts or events, and all primarily center around promoting brands or products. This category of content is commonly coined as 'branded content' by the industry (Reputation X, 2023). In addition to 'branded content', there also exists another category that diverges from brand or product-centric messaging, as it primarily focuses on providing value to the customers in order to relate and build longer relationships with them, and is thus coined as 'unbranded content' by the industry (SparkGrowth, 2020).

In addition to the above-mentioned different content types, social media experts have also introduced other posting strategies in relation to those different content types. Widely observed and acknowledged within the industry and practical field, 80/20 content strategy stands out as a prevalent content strategy for content distribution on social media platforms. This content strategy entails allocating 80% of content to provide more value to customers and dedicating 20% of content for promotional purposes, in relation to its total posts. Experts believe that by providing a higher proportion of valuable content to the customers, companies can demonstrate their commitment to building relationships with the customers that extend beyond mere transactions. This approach aims to show that the company is willing to be a part of customers' lives, aims to offer assistance and value in their daily experiences, making content more than just a means to push trust in brands and purchase intentions (Brand Muscle, 2020).

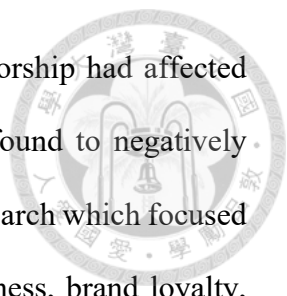


Though the above-mentioned content strategies were introduced years ago, definitions of the above-mentioned terms were mainly seen only from the industry or practical field, and rarely or even none are introduced within the academic field. Additionally, many companies nowadays have also chosen to still focus on consistently posting promotional related contents, and yet to implement the 80/20 content strategy. This raises the pertinent question discerning the differences and significance between the branded and unbranded content, along with their respective 80/20 content strategy. Moreover, it prompts another contemplation on the necessity of integrating these content strategies into overarching strategies.

These distinctions have underscored the critical need for thorough and comprehensive research that will be essential to determine the most suitable strategies for companies worldwide in managing their social media presence. In addition, there also exists a noticeable gap in academic research encompassing both the unified definition of branded and unbranded content and the 80/20 content strategy. Contributing toward this knowledge gap could significantly contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of effective social media management strategies.

1.2. Background

Before the emergence of branded and unbranded content, and also 80/20 content strategy, social media strategies revolved around other preceding strategies of firm-generated content, user-generated content, word-of-mouth, and also the more recent trust-based reviews. Additionally, they could also include sponsorships, influencer marketing, and self-media. In early 2023, statistics showed that the influencer marketing market size worldwide has reached the number of 21.1 billion (Statista, 2023). However, within this stream of research,



researchers found that in the case of sponsorships, disclosure of sponsorship had affected customers' recognitions in the advertising attempts, which was then found to negatively affect product attitudes as a result (Kim & Kim, 2021). Alternatively, research which focused on FGC field has found that FGC has positively affected brand awareness, brand loyalty, eWOM, and also purchase intention, as these variables are also found to be positively correlated with each other (Poulis & Rizomyliotis & Konstantoulaki, 2018). Based on these previous findings, FGC could contribute in empowering the firms to conduct marketing initiatives on their own without relying on external parties, and this paper thus intends to investigate how consumers will react to the firms' usage of branded and unbranded content.

As mentioned earlier, the current established definitions of branded and unbranded content predominantly come from the industry perspectives. Branded content typically refers to content created explicitly to endorse a brand's products or services. Adversely, unbranded content, serving as a complementary role toward the branded ones, encompasses a more diverse form – informational, educational, entertaining, or other content – aimed at indirectly fostering brand awareness and engagement without direct association with specific product or brand.

Traditionally, unbranded content used to have a much lower proportion in companies' total social media posts compared to the branded ones. This approach believed that social media marketing's ultimate goal was to generate revenue, and therefore promotion-related content served as the main focus. However, in line with the modern approach, adhering to the 80/20 content strategy, there has been a shift toward a much higher proportion of unbranded content relative to the branded content. This approach aims to focus on generating trust from the customers toward the brand, believing it serves as a pivotal factor in influencing purchases. This new approach still acknowledges the role of unbranded content

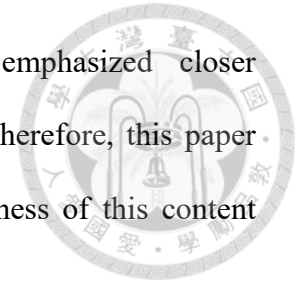
as a supporting role toward the branded content, and has also advocated for an overall increase in the presence of unbranded content within the content mix.

Given the absence of unified and academically established definitions of branded and unbranded content, other than incorporating the existing coined definitions from the companies' perspectives, this paper will also provide other definitions of branded and unbranded content, focusing from the customers' perspectives. In this regard, definitions of branded and unbranded content will differ based on whether customers perceive any persuasiveness and ingroup feelings from the social media posts. Therefore, we proposed that as to whether a piece of content falls under the category of branded or unbranded, and whether it has successfully achieved its intended impact will be determined by the extent to which customers feel that they were being persuaded, or feel any ingroup feeling from the social media posts.

This research aims to achieve the primary objective of proving the effectiveness of employing both branded and unbranded content with adherence to the 80/20 content strategy through the process of activating the existing trust concepts in digital media context, as it will analyze how this strategy will affect the different elements of trust, and whether it can ultimately impact the subsequent stages of marketing approaches, which is the customer's attitude and purchase intention.

This paper also aims to achieve its secondary objective, which is to validate an early observation indicating significant variations in the current implementation of this strategy across companies in different countries, due to the distinct cultural factors and their individuals' self-construal. This paper will leverage the existing literature on the impact of cultural differences on people's perceived trust, as according to the theory, people with individualism traits emphasize personal merits and achievements, aligning with the traits

often seen through branded content. Conversely, collectivism emphasized closer relationships, thus aligning with traits linked to unbranded content. Therefore, this paper seeks to investigate the influence of cultural factors on the effectiveness of this content strategy in social media strategies.



1.3. Contributions

This paper aims to contribute significantly to the academic fields by presenting novel definitions of branded and unbranded content coming from both company and customer perspectives, showcasing broadened understanding from the current industry norms, and also by enriching the current academic discourses through the proposed hypotheses. Based on the results of this research, we will then be able to provide enriched insights into the implications of employing the 80/20 content strategy, particularly regarding its influence on brand trust and purchase intentions. Additionally, it will also help to investigate the potential variations in these effects across different cultural factors.

Besides its academic related contributions, this research also aims to offer practical insights into developing social media targeting strategies, particularly considering a company's geographical location and target audiences. It seeks to shed light toward the efficiency of implementing established strategy, as proposed by the industry experts, in fostering brand trust and driving purchase intentions. Furthermore, it will also guide companies in leveraging suitable strategies within their respective cultural context to achieve their objectives effectively.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Social Media Marketing and Content Strategy

In recent years, companies have increasingly used social media as a crucial tool to interact with customers and also to influence their choices and consumption behaviors (Chen et al., 2011). Among the many different adopted strategies of using social media as a marketing tool, content strategy has emerged as a prominent approach. Creativity in generating the intended messages on social media remains important to foster consumer engagement and to ultimately yield desired results (Sheehan & Morrison, 2000).

One of the content strategies that has recently grown with high attention was the electronic word-of-mouth. Through this implementation, customers are enabled to share their opinions and experiences about companies' or brands' products or services with their connections on social media platforms. Previous research examining the effect of eWOM in social media shows that useful information derived from the eWOM and its successful adoption will significantly affect customers' purchase intentions. To be concise, quality and credibility of the information provided, alongside with customers' need for information are determinants of the usefulness of that information that will lead toward information adoption. As a part of the results, it has also shown that the attitude toward the eWOM information had also supported customers' purchase intentions (Erkan & Evans, 2016).

Besides the above, partnerships with social media influencers have also gained traction as a means intended to attract consumers' interests in goods and services, and also to drive sales (Ryu and Park, 2020). Posts by these social media influencers have demonstrated customers' favorable adoption toward companies' products or services through



the fulfillment of attachment by the influencers' followers, that is related to their ideality, relatedness, and also competence (Ki et al., 2020).

However, in the case of eWOM, since negative UGC could instead negatively impact the brand, researchers found that offsetting negative UGC could be done by targeting opinion leaders to achieve the desirable result of positive advertising (Cheong & Morrison, 2008). As for the case of influencer marketing strategy, previous findings also recommended that brands should pay attention toward the consistency of influencer partners and target consumers, as any resonances could instead reduce the effectiveness of their promotional efforts (Belanche, Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2021b). However, by applying these two strategies, companies haven't only shown reliance toward external parties to achieve their marketing objectives, but they also need to pay attention toward the uncontrollable effect of UGC and consistency of the chosen influencer partners.

Therefore, during these recent years, existing findings and discussions toward firm-generated content were also found. Researchers have focused on the type of content that could better attract customers' attention, engagement, and purchase behavior within the shared firm-generated contents. According to the findings toward the effects of FGC, it has been found that FGC has a positive and significant effect on customers' spending and cross-buying behaviors, as well as toward the customers' profitability. The findings also show that FGC is a useful tool not only for promoting products on sale, but to also promote products with higher prices. Other than that, in support of the IMC approach, results also showed the positive effect and synergy between the usage of FGC and other marketing methods, such as email or television-based marketing efforts. The degree of customers' responses toward the FGC, or what is called as the receptivity of FGC, has proven to have the greatest effect of all (Kumar et al., 2016).

Additionally, previous research has also found a positive connection between FGC and eWOM. Not only that FGC is found to be positively influencing brand awareness and loyalty, but it also positively influences customers' eWOM and purchase intention (Poulis & Rizomyliotis & Konstantoulaki, 2018). Therefore, companies could still post their own content and try to initiate the eWOM in the process, such as encouraging for reposts, leaving comments, creatively replying toward the eWOM. FGC could be solely controlled by companies, so they will reduce the uncertainty effect resulting from UGC. Furthermore, since they could also lead to beneficial eWOM, companies could then gain the positive effects of purchase intentions from both FGC and positive eWOM.

Based on the vast discussions and research toward both FGC and UGC, social media content strategy remains an important field to discuss. It shows that companies are in need to enhance their content generation strategies that can best suit their purposes, and also the reason on why they should try to reduce reliance toward external parties. By using FGC, other than helping companies to save costs, these strategies could also still convey the same intended messages by ensuring more control toward the positive effects.

2.2. Branded Content and Unbranded Content

Creative strategies implemented by companies in the content generation process are used as a way to bridge the companies' intended messages and the desired effects to be received by their target audiences (Laskey, Day, & Crask, 1989). When companies create content, it remains important to pay attention in demonstrating their creativity and engagement, and also be consistent in their messaging styles and posting frequencies, in order to achieve the objectives in fostering relationships and boosting sales (AIContentfy, 2023). Therefore, though FGC are found to exert positive effects, there are different types of content

that the companies can create, as they could create them by focusing on either branded or unbranded tones. Both of these tones also have different effects toward the customers.

However, despite the companies' efforts in creating these different tones of content to achieve their desired goals, it's uncertain whether these objectives actually align with what customers truly feel. From the customers' standpoints, there might be a disconnect between what the companies aim for and how customers really perceive these contents. This is why we've decided to further analyze the constructs of branded and unbranded content from both firms' and consumers' perspectives.

Branded content is created with a strong brand association and aimed to promote its products or services. It incorporates a company's branding elements, core values, or direct mentions in online reputation management (Reputation X, 2023). While variations in definitions exist, the current consensus aligns with this description. Through this clear objective of brand promotion, branded content serves as an effective tool to actively engage social sharing and bolster the brand's dominance in search results (Reputation X, 2023).

Branded content can include many formats, such as product demonstrations, customer testimonials, and influencer-generated content. These content types are instrumental for customers seeking comprehensive understanding of products or services before their purchase. Through displaying their strengths and values, they could also effectively establish credibility and foster trust among customers (Spark Growth, 2020). Also, due to their targeted appeal to interested customers, they also often lead to more sales (Web Content Development, 2016).

Diverging from industry perspectives, the formulation of branded content definition will use the persuasive knowledge model theory as its base. The persuasion knowledge model represents the dynamic of persuasion, starting from the process of the agent, responsible for

creating the persuasion attempt, to the target, the intended recipient of the persuasion, and also both of their interactions in attempting to persuade and in coping to those attempts. In the context of marketing, persuasive knowledge is relevant as customers try to discern sellers' intentions, evaluating whether their behaviors or statements are intended to persuade the customers. This evaluative process will subsequently evoke customers' suspicions and prompts to question the sellers' motivations. Consequently, if customers feel that the sellers' actions are motivated by persuasion, they are then likely to perceive the sellers as less sincere (Campbell & Kirmani, 2000).

Therefore, when customers see brand posts and access their persuasion knowledge, it will enable them to reflect and evaluate the underlying motivations behind these messages, and the results will thus show whether the customers' feel suspicious or feel that they are being persuaded by the brands. Due to the styles and formats of branded content which are indicating direct promotional efforts, we anticipate that when customers evaluate these types of messages, they will feel the intentions as persuasive, and thus the posts will then be categorized as branded content from the customers' perspective.

Unbranded content is one without direct mentions or references of the brand or company, avoiding brand-specific terms within it, and aimed to provide useful and relevant content for the audiences (Reputation X and E2M Solutions, 2023). Through sharing the unbranded content, it enables the brands to build connections with its customers, as customers will perceive the brands to be more relatable and authentic (Digital Strike, 2022).

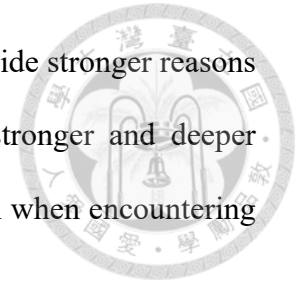
Unbranded content usually includes those with interactive-styled and educational contents, such as following trending topics, sharing memes, or asking questions (Spark Growth, 2020). An example of the well-known and successful unbranded content is the Adobe Personality Test. This test allows the visitors to take a simple quiz to learn about their

creative personalities and how they approach creativity thinking based on them. Without directly promoting Adobe, this post served as a supporting role to Adobe's other branded content, as it will lead to customers sharing the results of this fun activity, thus being able to increase more brand recognition without a direct promotion effort (Reputation X, 2023).

Formulation on the definition of unbranded content from the customer's perspectives will be grounded from the theory of ingroup bias. When individuals to some degree could define or see themselves as part of the group, they would feel a sense of ingroup (Reid, 1987). Throughout the years, a sense of ingroup could lead to bias, and ingroup bias is usually defined as grading one's own ingroup to be more positive than outgroup (Aberson & Healy & Romero, 2000). Since unbranded content is aimed to increase brand's relevancy and connection to the customers, we anticipate that when customers evaluate these posts, they would be able to develop the sense of ingroup with the brand, feeling a certain level of belonging with the brand, and thus able to exert ingroup bias toward the brand through the posts.

In designing the content strategies, the proportion of generating both the branded and unbranded contents will be based on the 80/20 content strategy, which is in accordance with how the social media experts have advocated recently, though there hasn't been a lot of further and formal investigation toward the effectiveness of this method. 80/20 content strategy means that brands should allocate 80% of their contents with focus on providing values toward the customers, encompassing those that are either entertaining, educational, or problem-solving, and allocate the other 20% for promotion purposes. This strategy acknowledges customers' social media behavior, recognizing their desire for more than mere advertisements on their social media feeds, as they seek connection, entertainment, and also valuable information that can be useful in their lives. By delivering more content that the

audiences like and valuable without persistent sales pushes, brands provide stronger reasons for customers to follow them, fostering lasting relationships. This stronger and deeper relationship will then increase the likelihood of customers taking action when encountering the promotional messages (Brand Muscle, 2020).



Therefore, this paper aims to address the two main issues: the lack of formal research on the definitions of branded and unbranded contents coupled with whether audiences really perceive them as firms do; and in regards to the brands' implementations of 80/20 content strategy, as many of them are currently still doing the contrary of this strategy and of expert suggestions. From the customer's perspective, branded content is perceived as content that exerts with persuasive intentions to urge customers to purchase the brands' products or services. In contrast, unbranded content is perceived as content from which customers are able to feel a sense of ingroup toward the brand. In summary, this study aims to understand whether implementing the method in emphasizing more unbranded content or preserving this current phenomenon of posting more branded content is a more effective strategy to any brands.

2.3. Brand Trust and Purchase Intention

In the field of e-commerce, since transactions occur without direct contact between the sellers and the consumers, consumers are thus generally concerned toward the brand's legitimacy and authenticity of their products or services, such as whether the brand has engaged in illegitimate business or have any issues on their privacy and security. As a consequence, in order for the consumers to connect with the brands and conduct any transactions, trust on the brands have become very essential (Chen & Dhillon, 2003). Social

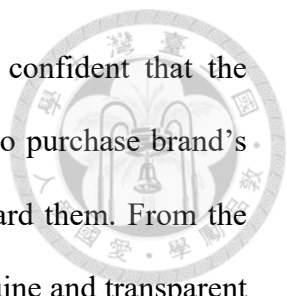
media also is itself a field without any direct contact between the sellers and consumers as e-commerce, we believe that the above-mentioned findings were also relevant to our study.

Lou and Yuan (2018) found that several factors from social media influencer's branded contents that can affect customers' brand awareness and purchase intentions include in customers' perceived trust on the posts' informativeness value and credibility components, which encompasses trustworthiness, attractiveness, and similarity.

In the realm of social media, research has also shown that a brand's personality match in social media sites also positively influences customers' brand trust (Pentina, Zhang, & Basmanova, 2013). Furthermore, consumers with high engagement, shown in exposing ideas or pictures related to the brands, are expected to have more connection to the brands, thus would also more easily form trust beliefs with the brands (Liu et al, 2018).

The significance of trust in the digital domain has been established through the previous findings. In this study, we aim to provide another new aspect of trust within our proposed framework, focusing on exploring the essential factors within both branded and unbranded content that can lead to brand trust.

In the realm of online business, it has been determined that trust holds high significance for brands. The important attributes that contribute toward consumer trust in E-commerce encompass competence, integrity, and benevolence. Competence refers to the brand's ability in fulfilling its promises to its customers. Integrity refers to a brand that acts in a consistent, reliable, and honest manner. Benevolence refers to the brand's ability to prioritize consumer interests and indicates sincerity toward the customers. These attributes of consumer's brand trusts have also been found to positively influence the customers' purchase intentions (Oliviera et al, 2017).



Therefore, from the competence aspect, when customers feel confident that the brand's commitments will be accomplished, they will then be willing to purchase brand's products or services, in order to receive the brand's commitments toward them. From the integrity aspect, consumers who believe that the brand is managing genuine and transparent businesses, will also purchase their products to gain the respective benefits. Lastly, from the benevolence aspect, consumers who feel that the brands are sincere toward them and will also listen to their requests, will then also purchase the brands' products or services.

2.4. Content Strategy and Brand Trust

In the realm of E-commerce, existing literature has highlighted three different dimensions of brand trust, which encompasses competence, integrity, and benevolence. We believe that content strategies represent one of the potential channels through which customers perceive these three different dimensions of brand trust.

Previous research in the influencer marketing field suggests that when influencers share content with informative value, it generally fosters a positive impact toward their followers' trust (Lou & Yuan, 2018). Content is classified as informative when it mentions any product-oriented facts and references to the brand or products (Lee et al., 2018b). When a brand itself chooses to post such content, the aim is to show the brand's expertise, knowledge, and leadership within their respective industry. Brands that effectively demonstrate its adequate knowledge, expertise, skills, leadership, and other characteristics will foster the customers to feel that the brand is worthy of their trust, and thus perceive it as a competent brand (Xie and Peng, 2009). Therefore, we posit that exposure to informative content can contribute to the development of the competence component of brand trust among customers.

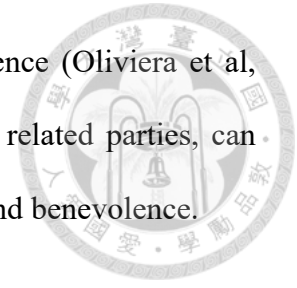
As defined in the preceding section, branded content typically aligns with a company's core values and focuses on promoting their products and services. We believe that branded content, which content itself is imbued with informative value, is also aimed to show the brand's expertise and skills. This approach thus could also result in a positive impact on followers' trust, particularly in terms of the brand's competence.

In existing literature assessing social media engagement behavior, findings indicate that entertaining content and relational content are significant to drive active and positively-valence engagement behavior among customers. Therefore, when companies share content that could fulfill consumers' needs for enjoyment, pleasure, and support their connection and belonging needs, customers are more inclined to engage actively on social media platforms (Dolan et al., 2015b). Through active engagement, companies can effectively cultivate interactions between themselves and the customers.

In the previous section, we defined unbranded content as content intended to establish connection, offer entertainment, and provide valuable information to customers. Therefore, we believe that unbranded content, in which content typically focused on entertainment and fostering connections with customers, has the potential to drive high engagement and thus facilitate increased interactions between companies and their customers.

In the domain of consumer trust in E-commerce, prior studies have highlighted that repeated interactions between companies and customers are significant in shaping affective trust (Chen & Dillon, 2003). While expectations regarding product performance are crucial for building brand trust, affective and emotional evaluations also significantly contribute. These evaluations can influence brand trust, particularly in terms of integrity and benevolence, signifying a brand's willingness to prioritize customers' best interests. Previous research in the E-commerce realm has indicated that interactions between these two parties

positively impact customer's trust in a brand's integrity and benevolence (Oliviera et al, 2017). We believe that unbranded content, facilitating interactions of related parties, can positively influence brand trust, especially toward aspects of integrity and benevolence.



2.5. The Moderating Effect of Cultural Factors

Individualism refers to a view of individuals who put emphasis toward personal autonomy and self-fulfillment (Hofstede, 1980). In contrast, collectivism refers to individuals that are oriented toward in-groups and away from out-groups (Oyserman, 1993). These cultural forces thus also influence how individuals in each society perceive and associate their self-esteem with success or failure.

In an individualistic society, individuals correlate their self-esteem to success-related situations, due to their continuous pursuit of self-enhancement. Due to this aspect, individuals with individualistic traits are more attuned toward accomplishments and generally positive aspects of themselves (Kitayama et al, 1997). As previously stated, we have defined branded content as content that emphasizes a brands' strengths, values, and positive, success-related aspects. This content is expected to resonate with individuals possessing individualistic traits and able to engage them effectively.

Collectivists, who prioritize social relationships, are also found to exhibit stronger in-group bias, attributed to their heightened sense of dependence and loyalty to their own group, leading to lower propensities to trust for external partners compared to the individualists (Huff & Kelley, 2003). As unbranded content aims to provide relevant and helpful content to customers, fostering higher interaction and engagement, also creating relationship and connection with the customers, we expect that this type of content will particularly resonate

with individuals possessing collectivism traits, thus able to affect their positive feelings toward it.

Through the previously conducted research, it has been shown that cultural dimensions, typically individualism and collectivism can influence people's trust (Huff & Kelley, 2003). When brands generate more branded content, they concentrate on showing their values and merits to attract the customers. This approach is likely to be positively received by customers with individualist traits who value successes-related scenarios, and through this process, brands could earn the trust dimension of competence from them. On the contrary, when brands create more unbranded content with a focus on nurturing interaction and connection with the customers, this approach is likely to positively affect customers with collectivist traits who value relationships and in-groups. Therefore, brands could earn the trust dimensions of integrity and benevolence, showing that they act by prioritizing customers' interests.

Based on previous literature, we also found that individualism and collectivism aren't entirely negatively correlated and are different within an individual level. For instance, Americans were found to possess a high degree of individualism, but not necessarily having the lowest collectivism traits, showing that cultural factors have to be examined from the individual level, and can't be solely attributed to countries as limitations (Oyserman et al., 2002b).

At the individual level, individualism is found to reflect toward an independent self-construal trait, whereas collectivism is found to reflect toward an interdependent self-construal trait (Trafimow et al., 1991). Since this study focuses on a single culture, hence the variable that we use is the independent and interdependent self-construal traits.

Chapter 3. Hypotheses Development

In this study, we seek to compare the effects of suggested 80/20 content strategy, where brands are encouraged to designate 80% of their social media content to unbranded content that focuses to exert care and connection for the customers, and only 20% to share their branded content that focuses on promotions, with the currently more popular implementation of 20/80 content strategy. In the 20/80 strategy, brands put much more emphasis on sharing content that depict their promotional efforts, where they allocate just 20% to share their unbranded content and 80% for their branded content.

In this study, we aim to investigate the effect of branded and unbranded content toward customer's purchase intention. We don't see the effect solely based on branded and unbranded content as separate entities, but through the incorporating of 80/20 content strategy, which is a strategy encouraging brands to create proportionally 80% of unbranded content and 20% of branded content to achieve their main objective, which is to influence customers' purchase intentions.

Based on the previously mentioned effect of persuasive knowledge in the context of marketing attempts, customers were found to perceive content with clear promotional messages as less sincere. Additionally, we also adapted the theory of psychological reactance, in which stated that when there is a threat, individuals will be motivated to restore that freedom through a direct expression of reactance behavior (Brehm & Brehm, 1981). In the realm of marketing, previous research had also summarized different effects of consumer reactance resulting from diverse marketing attempts. In this research, the author summarized that reactance happened when customers were confronted with sellers that could gain commissions from the purchase made, since it would induce pressure from the customers,

and also when customers were faced with sellers who conducted the “hard-sell” tactic, as they would feel threatened to choose their desires freely (Clee & Wicklund, 1980).

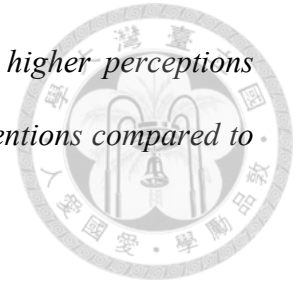
Therefore, based on the nature of branded content type which is focused on its promotional efforts, we thus believe that customers will exhibit higher purchase intentions when they are exposed with unbranded content type, those with a less promotional focus or message.

Hypothesis 1: Customers exposed to the 80/20 content strategy will exhibit higher purchase intentions compared to those exposed to the 20/80 content strategy.

To examine the positive effects on purchase intentions by content types, we will refer to previous research in the field of influencer marketing, which has identified that brand trust emerges as a significant factor influencing purchase intentions. In addition, based on the preceding research about trust in the e-commerce field, there are also three different dimensions of trust that would lead toward purchase intentions, which are competence, benevolence, and integrity. We propose that different content strategies would affect the three dimensions differently, and thus will also affect the overall relationship between content strategy and purchase intentions through the mediation of brand trust. Put together, we formally propose our second hypotheses.

Hypothesis 2.1.: Customers exposed to the 20/80 strategy will have higher perceptions toward the brand's competence, leading to more positive purchase intentions compared to those exposed to the 80/20 strategy.

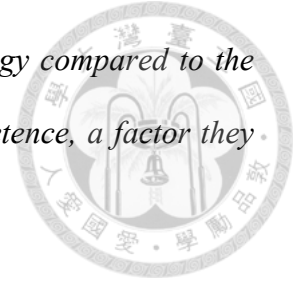
Hypothesis 2.2.: Customers exposed to the 80/20 strategy will have higher perceptions toward the brand's benevolence, leading to more positive purchase intentions compared to those exposed to the 20/80 strategy.



Hypothesis 2.3.: Customers exposed to the 80/20 strategy will have higher perceptions toward the brand's integrity, leading to more positive purchase intentions compared to those exposed to the 20/80 strategy.

We also propose that the above hypothesis will be moderated by the individual level of self-construal traits linked with the different cultural factors. Individuals with interdependent self-construal traits highlight a strong emphasis on social relationships and display high in-group bias, thus leading to lower tendencies to trust external partners compared to individuals. Therefore, we expected them to support the application of the 80/20 content strategy, with brands posting 80% unbranded and 20% branded content, and thus to have a positive impact on their purchase intentions. On the contrary, for those possessing independent self-construal traits, we expect them to support the relationship where the proportion of branded and unbranded posts is reversed, meaning when brands post 80% of branded posts and 20% of unbranded posts. Therefore, we will examine the moderating effect of individual-level self-construal traits, which encompass independent and interdependent, on the relationship between the different strategies of branded and unbranded posts' posting proportions, that will specifically lead to different results, and could be significant for companies serving different types of customers.

Hypothesis 3: Self-construal will moderate the focal effect of content strategy.



Hypothesis 3a: Independent consumers prefer the 20/80 content strategy compared to the 80/20 strategy, as the former focuses on demonstrating brand's competence, a factor they generally prioritize, thereby resulting in positive purchase intentions.

Hypothesis 3b: Interdependent consumers prefer the 80/20 content strategy compared to the 20/80 strategy, as the former focuses on demonstrating brand's integrity and benevolence, factors they generally prioritize, thereby resulting in positive purchase intentions.

As also mentioned in previous literature, both a firm's characteristics and interactions between customers and brands, which include the service quality and customer satisfaction, were found to positively influence a firm's competence, integrity, and benevolence. Therefore, in this study, we will control for the type of the firms to be studied, considering factors such as the size of the firm and the level of popularity or consumer base they owned.

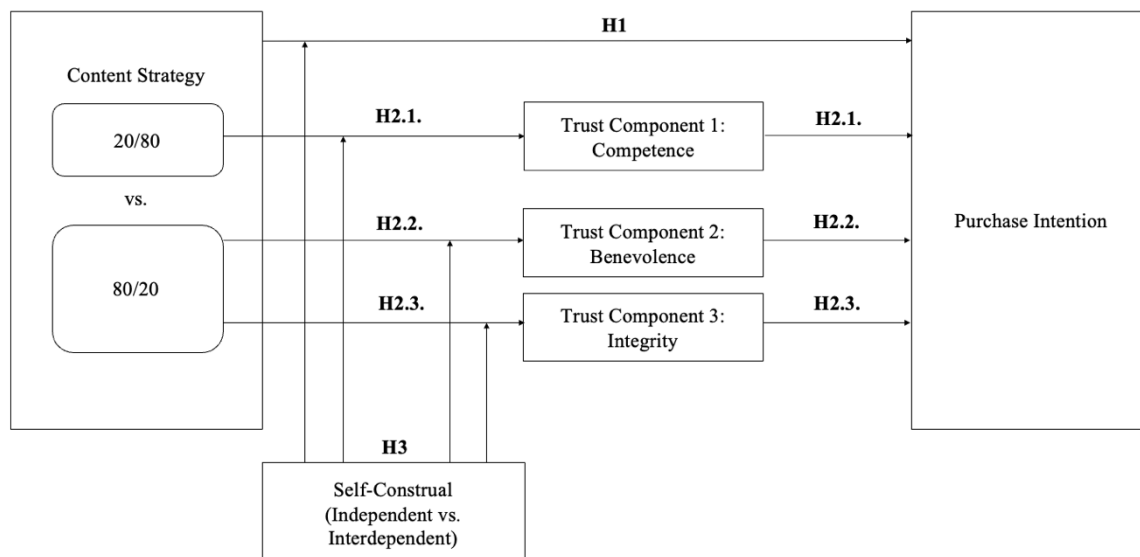


Figure 1. Hypothesized Model

Chapter 4. Methodology

4.1. Sample

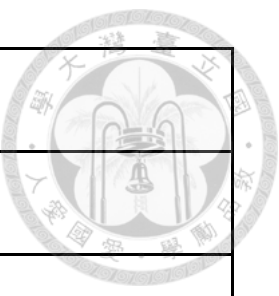
The study recruited convenience samples from Amazon's Mechanical Turk, where workers participated in exchange for a small monetary incentive. After excluding participants who didn't complete all survey questions, there was a total of 287 United States citizens participated in the study (45.64% male and 52.61% female, $M_{age} = 41.07$, $SD = 13.53$). Participants' detailed demographics-related distributions are specified below.

Table 1. Detailed Demographic Items' Distributions

Demographic Items	Options	Percentage Distributions
Gender	Male	45.64%
	Female	52.61%
	Others	1.74%
Income	Under \$20,000	8.36%
	\$20,001-\$30,000	9.06%
	\$30,001-\$40,000	10.45%
	\$40,001-\$50,000	9.41%
	\$50,001-\$60,000	7.67%
	\$60,001-\$70,000	10.80%



	\$70,001-\$80,000	6.97%
	\$80,001-\$90,000	5.57%
	\$90,001-\$100,000	5.92%
	\$100,001-\$110,000	4.88%
	\$110,001-\$120,000	2.79%
	\$120,001-\$130,000	1.74%
	\$130,001-\$140,000	2.09%
	\$140,001-\$150,000	3.14%
	Over \$150,000	11.15%
Social media usage	0 hours	3.48%
	Less than 1 hour	19.51%
	1-2 hours	38.33%
	3-4 hours	24.39%
	5-6 hours	9.06%
	More than 6 hours	5.23%
Brand interaction	0 brands	23.69%

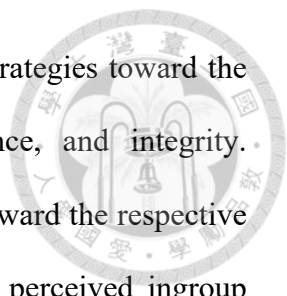


	1-5 brands	37.28%
	6-10 brands	19.16%
	10-15 brands	9.41%
	16-20 brands	4.18%
	21-25 brands	1.74%
	More than 25 brands	4.53%

4.2. Study Design and Procedure

For this study, we conducted experimental research. This study was a 2 (content strategy) x 2 (self-construal) between-subject design and participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. The survey commenced with a self-construal manipulation, which would allow participants to be randomly assigned to one of the two short story options that primed either independent or interdependent self-construal (see details in the self-construal manipulation below). Participants would then read the paragraphs and answered a related question.

Next, the survey continued to the next part of content strategy manipulation. The participants were randomly assigned to one of the two content strategy conditions (more unbranded vs. more branded content condition) and were asked to review the corresponding posts. Next, we measured participants' attitudes toward the posts and the brand, and also the participants' likelihood in purchasing the brands' products or services after viewing the posts.



We then continued to test the impact of two different content strategies toward the three dimensions of brand trust, including competence, benevolence, and integrity. Furthermore, we then evaluated on participants' trustworthiness level toward the respective posts. Next, we continued by examining the perceived influence and perceived ingroup belongingness from the two different strategies. Subsequently, we assessed participants' knowledge, familiarity, attitudes, and habits related to the brand before taking the survey.

In the next section, we checked the effectiveness of our manipulations. We started by checking our content strategy manipulation first. We did so by testing customers to rate the promotion level or care level of the two different strategies. To make our findings more robust, we also asked participants to rate each of the posts' informativeness, entertainment, relevance, and other values' levels. The next part was to check the self-construal manipulation, as we asked participants to rate their focused dimensions at that current moment, to see whether they were more focused toward their own self or their family/friends.

Finally, we also collected some demographic information, including participants' gender, age, income, daily social media usage, and the number of brands they follow on social media.

4.3. Manipulation

4.3.1 Self-Construal

The short story used in the manipulation check of self-construal was taken from Trafimow et al. (1991). The stories were narrating two different versions of the *warrior stories*, focusing on either private or collective self-prime conditions. Both paragraphs started with the same paragraph.

Story of Sostoras

Sostoras, a warrior in ancient Sumer, was largely responsible for the success of Sargon I in conquering all of Mesopotamia. As a result, he was rewarded with a small kingdom of his own to rule. About 10 years later, Sargon I was conscripting warriors for a new war. Sostoras was obligated to send a detachment of soldiers to aid Sargon I. He had to decide who to put in command of the detachment.

In private condition, the story continues as the main character of the story chose to dispatch a talented general for the upcoming war.

After thinking about it for a long time, Sostoras eventually decided on Tiglath who was a talented general. This appointment had several advantages. Sostoras was able to make an excellent general indebted to him. This would solidify Sostoras's hold on his own dominion. In addition, the very fact of having a general such as Tiglath as his personal representative would greatly increase Sostoras's prestige. Finally, sending his best general would be likely to make Sargon I grateful. Consequently, there was the possibility of getting rewarded by Sargon I.

While in the collective condition, the story continues as the main character of the story chose to dispatch a member of his family for the same situation.

After thinking about it for a long time, Sostoras eventually decided on Tiglath who was a member of his family. This appointment had several advantages. Sostoras was able to show his loyalty to his family. He was also able to



cement their loyalty to him. In addition, having Tiglath as the commander increased the power and prestige of the family. Finally, if Tiglath performed well, Sargon I would be indebted to the family.



After reading these paragraphs, they will then be required to answer the question “In your own words, please summarize why Sostoras appointed Tiglath in one or two sentences in the textbox below.”

4.3.2. Content Strategy

In this study, we used two different content strategies: the first strategy was the 80/20 content strategy, who had 80% of unbranded content and 20% of branded content (i.e., the more unbranded content condition), and the second strategy, referred as the 20/80 content strategy, which consisted of 20% of unbranded content and 80% of branded content (i.e., the more branded content condition).

A well-known and moderately-favored brand was chosen as the source of contents. We decided on this approach based on our pretest results, as we found that the utilization of content from less renowned brands had proven ineffective in eliciting the anticipated effects outlined in our study. Additionally, we also believed that utilizing content from well-recognized brands would similarly be ineffective, given its highly possibility to influence customers’ prior attitudes toward the brands.

In terms of classifying which content to be branded or unbranded, we based our choices on the potential objectives of the content. If content was primarily focused on promotion and clearly featured the brand's products, it was then categorized as ‘branded’. Conversely, content that did not focus on promotion and lacked clear references to the brands’

products or its related information were categorized as ‘unbranded’. The contents that we picked and used in the survey can be seen in the Appendices section.



4.4. Measurements

First, in order to measure the participants’ attitudes toward the posts (AP), we used three 7-point bipolar items (*Negative/Positive* [AP1]; *Bad/Good* [AP2]; *Unfavorable/Favorable* [AP3]) (adapted from Drolet & Aaker, 2002). In terms of measuring participants’ attitudes toward the brand (AB), we used the same set of three 7-point bipolar items (*Negative/Positive* [AB1]; *Bad/Good* [AB2]; *Unfavorable/Favorable* [AB3]) (adapted from Drolet & Aaker, 2002). Next, we also measured participants’ purchase intentions toward the posts (PI) by using three 7-point bipolar items (*Very unlikely/Likely*) (adapted from Dodds & Monroe & Grewal, 1991).

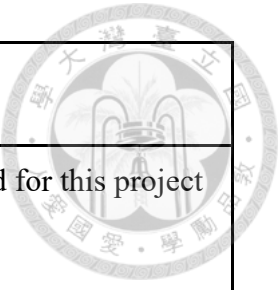
In order to measure the three elements of brand trust on the provided social media posts, we used the 7-likert scales (*Strongly disagree/Strongly agree*) with measurement items specified in table below.

Table 2. Measurement items of the brand trust elements

Variables	Instruments	Source
Competence	C1. These posts made me believe that Lipton has the ability to support its businesses.	Oliviera et al, 2017
	C2. These posts made me believe that Lipton has sufficient expertise in its business.	
	C3. These posts made me believe that Lipton	Warner-Söderholm et



	is reliable in doing what it say will be done. C4. These posts made me believe that Lipton is effective in providing helpful advice to solve my problems.	al, 2018
Benevolence	B1. These posts make me believe that if I required help, Lipton would do its best to help me.	Oliviera et al, 2017
	B2. These posts make me believe that Lipton really do care about the well-being of its customers. B3. These posts make me believe that Lipton is sincerely concerned about the problems of its customers. B4. These posts make me believe that Lipton is sincere and genuine. B5. These posts make me believe that Lipton really look out for what is important to its customers.	Warner-Söderholm et al, 2018
Integrity	I1. These posts made me believe that Lipton is honest with its customers. I2. These posts made me believe that Lipton	Oliviera et al, 2017



	would keep its commitments.	
	I3. These posts made me believe that Lipton's social media persona is consistent with what its brand stands for.	Created for this project

We specifically created a new measurement (new item, I3) for this study, since there were fewer existing measurements of integrity found in previous literatures, and through related findings regarding social media content strategy, we found that consistency in brand's social media persona is crucial to reach and interact with the audiences (Forsey, 2022).

Following, to measure participants' feelings of trustworthiness toward the posts, we used five 7-point bipolar items (*Undependable/Dependable*; *Dishonest/Honest*; *Unreliable/Reliable*; *Insincere/Sincere*; *Untrustworthy/Trustworthy*) adopted from the trustworthiness subscale of the Source-Credibility Scale (Ohanian, 1990).

To test out our proposal of both branded and unbranded content definitions from the customers' perspectives, we measured participants' feelings of being influenced and ingroup belongingness from the provided posts, with items taken from persuasive knowledge theory ingroup theory with measurement items specified in table below.

Table 3. Measurement items for persuasive knowledge and ingroup

Theory	Instruments	Source
Persuasive Knowledge	PK1. I felt that these posts were trying to persuade me that Lipton and its products	Adapted from Campbell and Kirmani, 2000



	and services are of good quality. PK2. I felt that these posts were trying to influence my attitude toward Lipton. PK3. I felt that these posts were trying to pressure me to purchase something from Lipton. PK4. I felt that these posts were a little pushy.	
Ingroup	IG1. I felt that I am one of the intended audiences of these posts. IG2. I probably have a lot in common with the intended audiences of these posts. IG3. I would consider that I share similar interests with people who interact with this brand's Instagram account. IG4. I felt that I would belong to the community of this brand's Instagram account.	Adapted from Liu, Zhang, and Keh, 2019

Then, we also considered several potential covariates that could create noises for our survey results, especially participants' previous knowledge and familiarity toward the brand, since we expected that our hypothesis regarding different content strategies' effect will only affect medium well-known brands and not toward an already very well-known brand.

To measure the brand's previous knowledge, familiarity, prior attitude, purchase frequencies, and also identity, we used several 7 bipolar items (*Not knowledgeable at all/Very knowledgeable; Not familiar at all/Very familiar; Very Negative/Very Positive; Never or almost never/All the time; Not similar at all/Very similar*). For more details of the related survey questions, see Appendix (6).

Chapter 5. Results

5.1. Reliability and Validity

To ensure the reliability and validity of our measurement items, we tested all items' Cronbach's α and factor loadings. All our measurement items' Cronbach alpha values were larger than the suggested 0.7 cutoff point (Chin, 1998), and their loadings showed that they load in the same category (MacCallum et al., 1999), except for persuasive knowledge measurement items. In the subsequent analysis, we averaged all items in construct. Factor loadings and Cronbach alpha of the variables are summarized in table 4.

For the variable of persuasive knowledge, Cronbach alpha of the four measurement items was 0.657, and the measured last item that had loaded in different dimension than the others. Additionally, from the face validity of the items, the last item described the influence attempt as more negative than the other three items. Together, we decided to only aggregate the first three items. The reliability and validity for the three-items filtered for persuasive knowledge was then back to the acceptable standard, and the results of the three items are also shown in the table below.

Table 4. Measurement variables' factor loadings and Cronbach alpha

Variables	Items	Loadings	Cronbach alpha
Attitudes toward the post	AP1	.969	.962
	AP2	.963	
	AP3	.962	
Attitudes toward the brand	AB1	.978	.969
	AB2	.976	
	AB3	.960	
Competence	C1	.873	.819
	C2	.884	
	C3	.921	
	C4	.607	
Benevolence	B1	.831	.947
	B2	.926	
	B3	.943	
	B4	.918	
	B5	.936	



Integrity	I1	.930	.903
	I2	.947	
	I3	.868	
Persuasive Knowledge	PK1	.765	.906
	PK2	.774	
	PK3	.634	
Ingroup	IG1	.869	.918
	IG2	.927	
	IG3	.916	
	IG4	.882	

5.2. Manipulation Check

5.2.1. Content strategy

To assess the effectiveness of the content strategy manipulation, we measured two items that include in testing participants' perceptions of whether the content aimed primarily to promote (promotion) or genuinely care for their audiences (care). Through our content strategy manipulation in the survey, we expected to see that branded content would exert a stronger promotional perception toward the participants, and therefore leading to higher perceived care in the 80/20 content strategy. Conversely, we expected that unbranded content

would foster stronger care perception, thereby resulting in a higher perceived promotion in the 20/80 content strategy condition. We will share the results of these two items separately in the next two subsections.



5.2.1.1. Promotion

To test the first result of our content strategy manipulation, a 2 (content strategy: 80/20 vs 20/80) x 2 (self-construal: independent versus interdependent) ANOVA test on participants' feelings toward a brand's promotional motives in its social media posts was conducted. There was a significant main effect of content strategy, with higher mean found on the 20/80 strategy [$M_{20/80} = 6.45 > M_{80/20} = 5.59$, $F(1,283) = 40.031$, $p = <.001$] and insignificant effects of both self-construal [$F(1,282) = .909$, $p = .341$] and interaction between content strategy and self-construal [$F(1,282) = .806$, $p = .370$]. This result indicates that the manipulation for content strategy is successful, as branded content is deemed as more promotional than the unbranded content. The mean and standard deviation of the perceived promotion from the social media posts were summarized below.

Table 5. Mean and standard deviation for perceived promotion

Self-Construal	Content Strategy	
	80/20 strategy	20/80 strategy
Interdependent	5.71 (SD = 1.368)	6.45 (SD = .800)
Independent	5.46 (SD = 1.44)	6.44 (SD = .887)

5.2.1.2. Care

To test the second result of our content strategy manipulation, a 2 (content strategy: 80/20 vs 20/80) x 2 (self-construal: independent versus interdependent) ANOVA test on participants' feelings toward a brand's caring motives in its social media posts was conducted. There was a significant main effect of content strategy, with higher mean found on the 80/20 strategy [$M_{80/20} = 4.89 > M_{20/80} = 4.32$, $F(1,282) = 8.643$, $p = .004$] and insignificant effects on both self-construal [$F(1,282) = 2.795$, $p = .106$] and interaction between content strategy and self-construal [$F(1,282) = 1.840$, $p = .176$]. This result indicates that the manipulation for content strategy is successful, as unbranded content is deemed to exert more care than the branded content. The mean and standard deviation of the perceived care from the social media posts were summarized below.

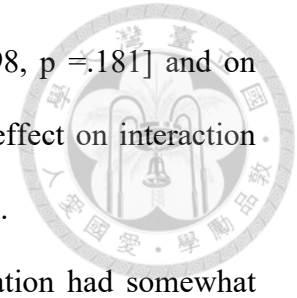
Table 6. Mean and standard deviation for perceived care

Self-Construal	Content Strategy	
	80/20 strategy	20/80 strategy
Interdependent	4.67 (SD = 1.678)	4.31 (SD = 1.557)
Independent	5.11 (SD = 1.565)	4.36 (SD = 1.791)

5.2.2. Self-construal

To test the effectiveness of our self-construal manipulation, a 2 (content strategy: 80/20 vs 20/80) x 2 (self-construal: independent versus interdependent) ANOVA test was conducted to see whether our manipulation succeed in accordingly let participants focused more on either themselves or their family/friends. There was an insignificant main effect on

self-construal [$M_{interdependent} = 4.45$, $M_{independent} = 4.72$; $F(1,283) = 1.798$, $p = .181$] and on content strategy [$F(1,283) = .058$, $p = .810$], with a significant main effect on interaction between content strategy and self-construal [$F(1,283) = 4.120$, $p = .043$].



Based on the results, it seemed that content strategy manipulation had somewhat affected the results of self-construal manipulation. In particular, for 20/80 content strategy, we were able to see that the independent self-construal manipulation had successfully appeared as expected [$M_{independent} = 4.90 > M_{interdependent} = 4.23$, $F(1,283) = 5.814$, $p = .017$]. However, in the 80/20 strategy condition, the independent and interdependent self-construal had the same rates [$M_{independent} = 4.54$, $M_{interdependent} = 4.68$, $F(1,283) = .232$, $p = .631$]. The mean and standard deviation of the self-construal were summarized below.

The insignificant main effect on self-construal as the result from the manipulation check was beyond our expectation, and one of the possible reasons was due to the placement of the manipulation check's related question within the survey, that was placed after the sequences of dependent variables and other relevant measurements. Hence, we used another method to check our manipulation, which was through the manual analysis of participants' success rate in summarizing the two different self-construal-focused stories. The success scoring was based whether the participants mentioned the related keywords in their summary for each condition. For participants in the independent condition, we considered the manipulation successful when they mentioned that the general was chosen due to his/her capability, skills, or talents. Conversely, for participants in the interdependent condition, their summaries needed to mention that the general was chosen due to their family relatedness or to show loyalty toward family. The success rate of participants in summarizing the story in an interdependent situation is 91.33%, and success rate of the rest of the participants in

summarizing the story in an independent situation is 91.97%. Hence, we believed that the participants were still affected by the manipulation.



Table 7. Mean and standard deviation for self-construal

Self-Construal	Content Strategy	
	80/20 strategy	20/80 strategy
Interdependent	4.68 (SD = 1.791)	4.23 (SD =1.720)
Independent	4.54 (SD = 1.731)	4.90 (SD =1.426)

5.3. Hypotheses Testing

5.3.1. Hypothesis 1

To test our hypothesis 1, which was the different effects of 80/20 content strategy and 20/80 content strategy toward customers' purchase intentions, we conducted a two between-subject one-way ANOVA to assess customers' purchase intention, attitudes toward the post, and attitudes toward the brand. We expected to see the same pattern for the beforementioned three variables, and we also expected that 80/20 content strategy would exhibit in higher purchase intention, attitudes toward the post, and attitude towards the brand. We will discuss each of the three variables' results in the next separate subsections.

5.3.1.1. Purchase intention

Based on the two between-subject one-way ANOVA results, we found that 80/20 content strategy has no significant impact toward customers' purchase intentions [$M_{80/20} = 5.20$, $M_{20/80} = 5.17$; $F(1,285) = .029$, $p = .864$]. Hence, hypothesis 1 is not supported. The mean and standard deviation of the purchase intentions from the different strategies of the

social media posts were summarized below. The possible reasons for the insignificant result are discussed in the discussion session.



Table 8. Mean and standard deviation for purchase intentions

Content strategy	Means	Standard Deviation
80/20	5.20	1.450
20/80	5.17	1.514

5.3.1.2. Attitudes toward the posts

Based on the two between-subject one-way ANOVA results, we found that 80/20 content strategy has no significant impact toward customers' attitude toward the posts [$M_{80/20} = 5.62$, $M_{20/80} = 5.65$; $F(1,283) = .056$, $p = .814$]. Hence, hypothesis 1 is not supported. The mean and standard deviation of the attitudes toward the posts from the different strategies of the social media posts were summarized below.

Table 9. Mean and standard deviation for attitudes toward the posts

Content strategy	Means	Standard Deviation
80/20	5.62	1.084
20/80	5.65	1.183

5.3.1.3. Attitudes toward the brand

Based on the two between-subject one-way ANOVA results, we found that 80/20 content strategy has no significant impact toward customers' attitude toward the brand [$M_{80/20}$

= 5.53, $M_{20/80} = 5.51$; $F(1,283) = .024$, $p = .877$]. Hence, hypothesis 1 is not supported. The mean and standard deviation of the attitudes toward the brand from the different strategies of the social media posts were summarized below.



Table 10. Mean and standard deviation for attitudes toward the brand

Content strategy	Means	Standard Deviation
80/20	5.53	1.177
20/80	5.51	1.344

We also tested the correlations of the above three variables of purchase intention, attitude toward the posts, and attitude toward the brand, and all these main dependent variables were found to be highly correlated. Therefore, we will focus on the variable of purchase intention in all the subsequent analysis. The correlation results of these three variables were summarized on table 11 below.

Table 11. Correlation Results of Purchase Intention, Attitude toward the Posts, and Attitude toward the Brand

Correlations	PI	AP	AB
PI			
AP	$r = .706^{**}$ ($p < .001$)	1	

AB	$r = .851^{**}$ ($p = <.001$)	$r = .834^{**}$ ($p = <.001$)	1
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5.3.2. Hypothesis 2

To test our hypothesis 2, one-way ANOVA and PROCESS model 4 were conducted to test the effects of two different content strategy types toward customers' trust of the brands and purchase intention. We will present the results of the three different trust elements separately on the next subsections, where we expected that that there will be a significant effect of perceived competence on participants exposed with the 20/80 content strategy alongside with mediation effect of competence in their purchase intentions, and there will also be a significant effect of perceived benevolence and integrity on participants exposed with the 80/20 content strategy alongside with the mediation effect of both benevolence and integrity in their purchase intentions.

5.3.2.1. Competence

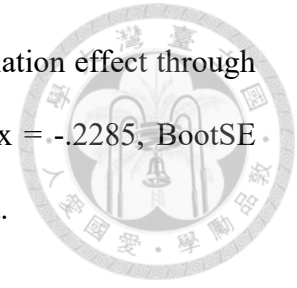
Through the one-way ANOVA, we found a significant main effect of content strategy and competence [$M_{80/20} = 5.15$, $M_{20/80} = 5.31$; $F(1,283) = 3.985$, $p = .046$].

Further, we ran PROCESS model 4 to directly analyze the mediation effect through the competence element. We found a significant indirect effect (index = .1765, BootSE = .1016, 95% CI = [.0049, .3481]), hence, hypothesis 2.1. is supported.

5.3.2.2. Benevolence

Through the one-way ANOVA, we found a significant main effect of content strategy and benevolence [$M_{80/20} = 4.82$, $M_{20/80} = 4.57$; $F(1,283) = 4.391$, $p = .037$].

Further, we ran PROCESS model 4 to directly analyze the mediation effect through the benevolence element. We found a significant indirect effect (index = -.2285, BootSE = .1175, 95% CI = [-.4509, -.0061]), hence, hypothesis 2.2. is supported.



5.3.2.3. Integrity

Through the one-way ANOVA, we found an insignificant main effect of content strategy and integrity [$M_{80/20} = 5.13$, $M_{20/80} = 5.02$; $F(1,283) = .448$, $p = .504$].

Further, we ran PROCESS model 4 to directly analyze the mediation effect through the integrity element. However, we found an insignificant indirect effect (index = -.0719, BootSE = .1084, 95% CI = [-.2877, .1373]), hence, hypothesis 2.3. is not supported.

5.3.3. Hypothesis 3

To test our hypothesis 3, a 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to test the impact of different self-construal toward different content strategies and a series of moderated mediations through the three different trust components was also conducted via PROCESS model 8. We will present the results of purchase intentions and trust mediation on the separate subsections below. For purchase intentions results, we expected that for participants in interdependent condition, 80/20 strategy will be rated higher than the 20/80 strategy, meanwhile for participants in independent condition, 20/80 strategy will be rated higher than the 80/20 strategy. In terms of trust mediation results, we expected that there would be a mediation effect of competence toward the purchase intentions for participants exposed to independent condition and 20/80 content strategy, and also a mediation effect of benevolence and integrity toward the purchase intentions for those exposed to interdependent condition and 80/20 content strategy.

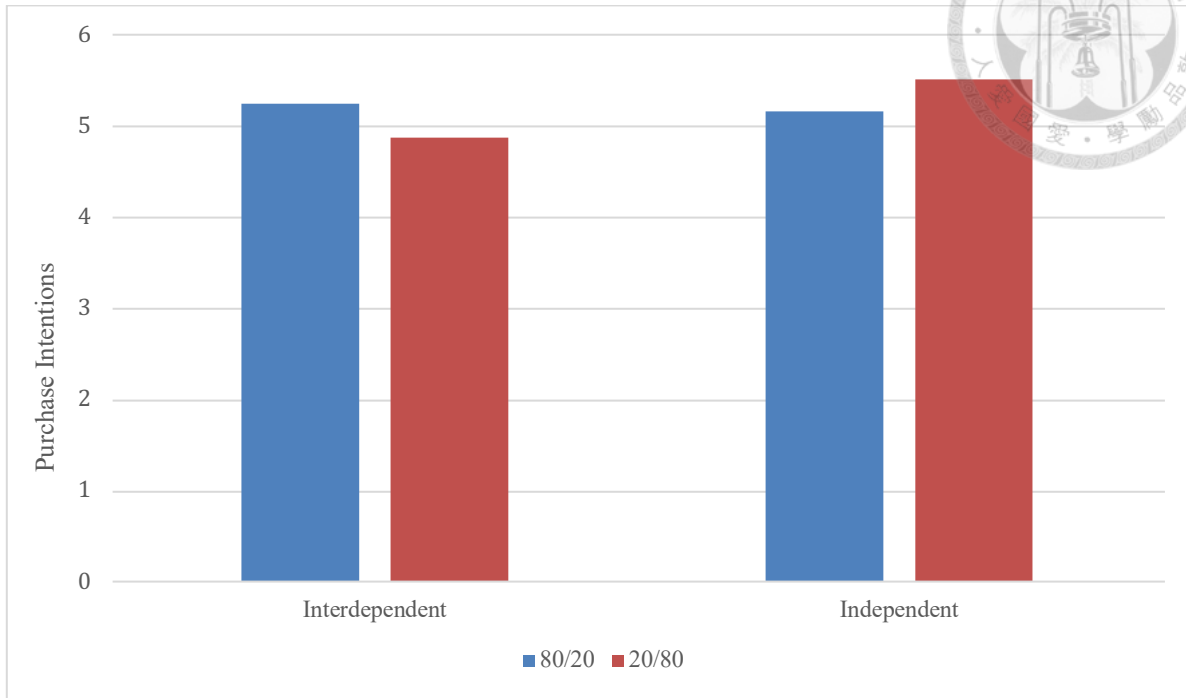
5.3.3.1. Purchase Intention

A 2 (content strategy: 80/20 vs 20/80) x 2 (self-construal: independent versus interdependent) ANOVA was conducted to test the purchase intention. We found a significant two-way interaction between content strategy and self-construal [$F(1,283) = 4.166$, $p = .042$] and insignificant effects of both self-construal [$F(1,283) = 2.603$, $p = .108$] and content strategy [$F(1,283) = .003$, $p = .957$]. Specifically, we found that in interdependent condition, 80/20 strategy is rated higher than 20/80 strategy ($M_{80/20} = 5.24 > M_{20/80} = 4.87$, $p = .047$). In independent condition, we found that 20/80 strategy is rated higher than the 80/20 strategy ($M_{80/20} = 5.16 < M_{20/80} = 5.51$, $p = .031$). Results for both independent and interdependent conditions were significantly different. The mean and standard deviation of the purchase intentions in each different condition were summarized below.

Table 12. Mean and standard deviation of purchase intentions for each condition

Self-Construal	Content Strategy	
	80/20 strategy	20/80 strategy
Interdependent	5.24 (SD= 1.389)	4.87 (SD=1.506)
Independent	5.16 (SD= 1.522)	5.51 (SD=1.461)

Figure 2. Mean and standard deviation of purchase intentions for each condition



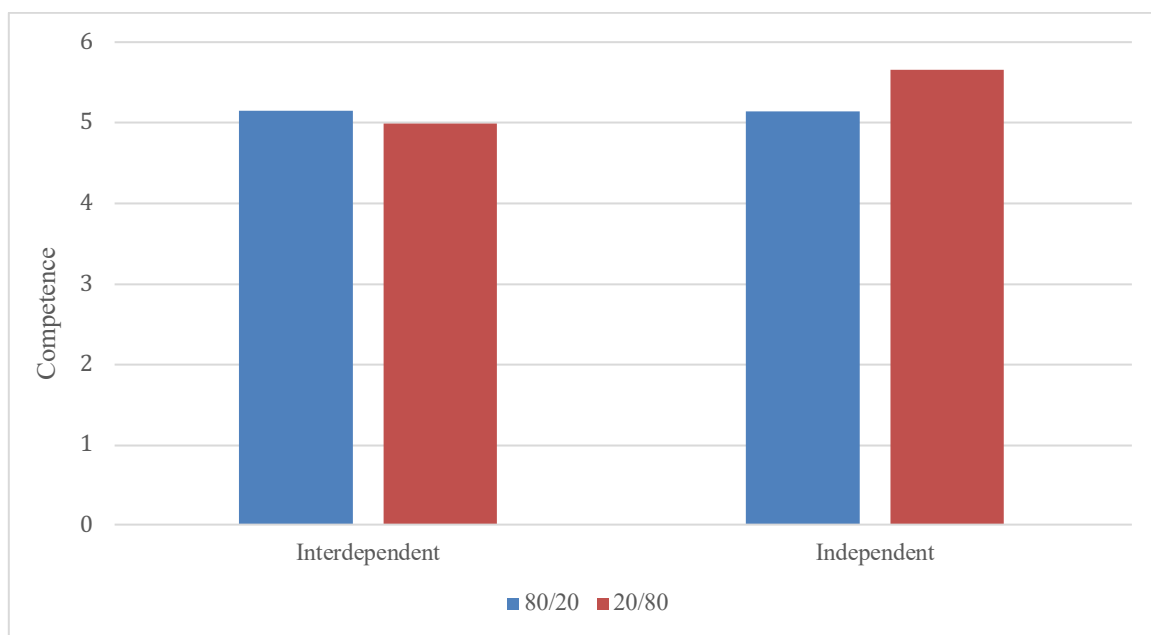
5.3.3.2. Mediation Through Trust

First, through competence element, we first found a significant two-way interaction between content strategy and self-construal [$F(1,283) = 6.992, p = .009$] and insignificant effects of both self-construal [$F(1,283) = 6.612, p = .011$] and interaction between content strategy and self-construal [$F(1,283) = 1.919, p = .167$]. Specifically, independent condition, we found that 20/80 strategy is rated significantly higher than the 80/20 strategy ($M_{80/20} = 5.14 < M_{20/80} = 5.66, p = .006$). Meanwhile in interdependent condition, we found that 80/20 strategy isn't rated significantly different from the 20/80 strategy ($M_{80/20} = 5.15, M_{20/80} = 4.99, p = .363$). The mean and standard deviation of competence in each different condition were summarized below.

Table 13. Mean and standard deviation of competence for each condition

Self-Construal	Content Strategy	
	80/20 strategy	20/80 strategy
Interdependent	5.15 (SD= .837)	4.99 (SD=1.069)
Independent	5.14 (SD= 1.327)	5.66 (SD=1.092)

Figure 3. Mean and standard deviation of competence for each condition



Further, we ran PROCESS model 8 to directly analyze the mediation effect through the competence element. We found a significant indirect effect (index = .6198, BootSE = .2338, 95% CI = [.1587, 1.0751]). Specifically, we found the significant effect on the independent condition (index = .4722, BootSE = .1991, 95% CI = [.1071, .8598]).

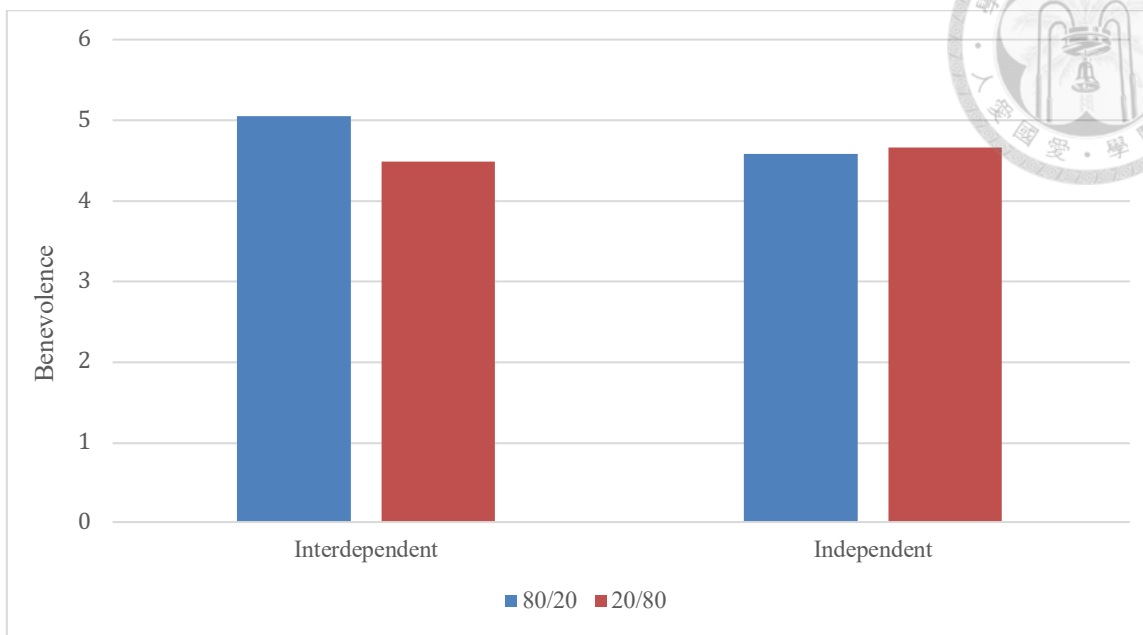
Conversely, we found an insignificant effect on the interdependent condition (index = -.1476, BootSE = .1392, 95% CI = [-.4172, .1302]).

Secondly through benevolence, we first found a significant two-way interaction between content strategy and self-construal [$F(1,283) = .4166$, $p = .042$] and insignificant effects of both self-construal [$F(1,283) = .888$, $p = .347$] and content strategy [$F(1,283) = 2.381$, $p = .124$]. Specifically, in interdependent condition, we found that 80/20 strategy is rated higher than 20/80 strategy ($M_{80/20} = 5.05 > M_{20/80} = 4.48$, $p = .010$). Meanwhile in independent condition, we found that 20/80 strategy is rated with no significant difference with the 80/20 strategy ($M_{80/20} = 4.57$, $M_{20/80} = 4.65$, $p = .432$). The mean and standard deviation of competence in each different condition were summarized below.

Table 14. Mean and standard deviation of benevolence for each condition

Self-Construal	Content Strategy	
	80/20 strategy	20/80 strategy
Interdependent	5.05 (SD= 1.13)	4.48 (SD=1.433)
Independent	4.57 (SD= 1.357)	4.65 (SD=1.39)

Figure 4. Mean and standard deviation of benevolence for each condition



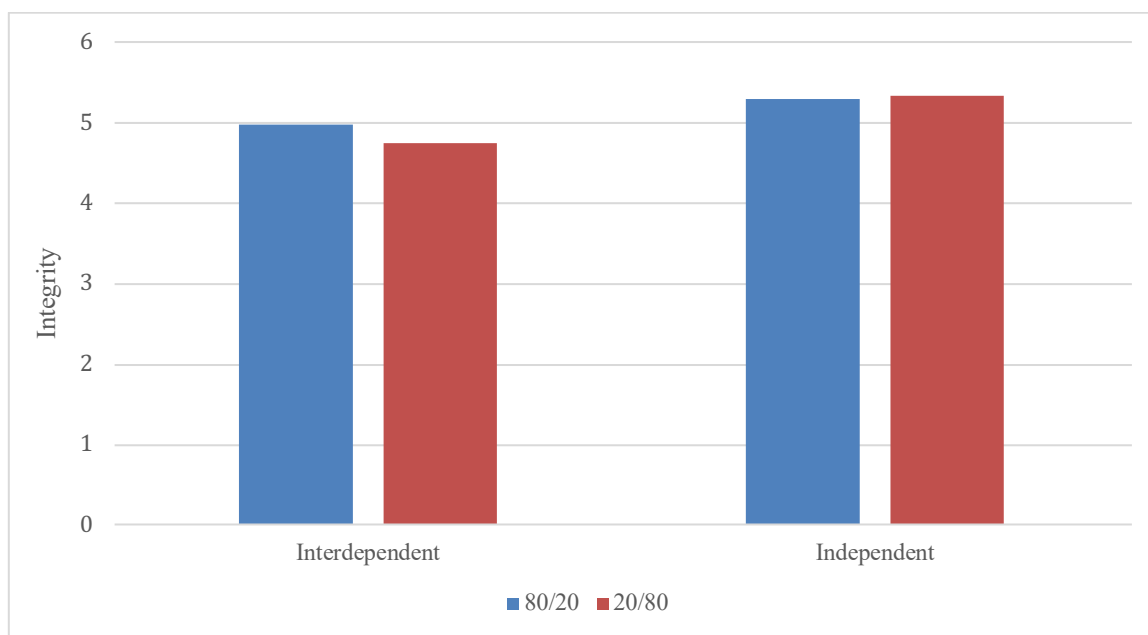
We also ran PROCESS model 8 to directly analyze the mediation effect through the benevolence element. We found a significant indirect effect (index = .4571, BootSE = .2308, 95% CI = [.0172, .9226]). Specifically, we found the significant effect on the interdependent condition (index = -.4013, BootSE = .1553, 95% CI = [-.7108, -.1064]). Conversely, we found an insignificant effect on the independent condition (index = .0558, BootSE = .1670, 95% CI = [-.2757, .3837]).

Finally, through integrity, we found an insignificant two-way effect for interaction between content strategy and self-construal [$F(1,283) = .885$, $p = .348$] and content strategy [$F(1,283) = .448$, $p = .504$], and significant effects of self-construal [$F(1,283) = 10.026$, $p = .002$]. The mean and standard deviation of the integrity in each different condition were summarized below.

Table 15. Mean and standard deviation of integrity for each condition

Self-Construal	Content Strategy	
	80/20 strategy	20/80 strategy
Interdependent	4.97 (SD= 1.086)	4.74 (SD=1.272)
Independent	5.29 (SD= 1.349)	5.33 (SD=1.172)

Figure 5. Mean and standard deviation of integrity for each condition



Further, we ran PROCESS model 8 to directly analyze the mediation effect through the integrity element. We found no significant indirect effect (index = .1824, BootSE = .2090, 95% CI = [-.2162, .6009]). Specifically, we found no significant effects on both the independent (index = .0290, BootSE = .1594, 95% CI = [-.2886, .3399]) and interdependent conditions (index = -.1533, BootSE = .1395, 95% CI = [-.4321, .1159]).

5.4. Additional Findings

5.4.1. Solidify definitions of branded and unbranded content

To provide additional supports toward our definitions of branded and unbranded content that referred to both the current industries' descriptions (companies' perspectives) and the customers' perspectives, we will provide the below three results, with the first results of post perceived values which will depict the definitions of branded and unbranded content from companies' perspectives, second results of perceived influence which will depict the definitions of branded content from the customers' perspectives, and third results of perceived ingroup feelings which will depict the definitions of unbranded content from the customers' perspectives.

5.4.1.1. Post Perceived Values

To provide additional support toward our definitions of branded and unbranded content that referred to current industries' definitions, we conducted a one-way ANOVA test to test customers' perceptions of different values toward different content types. We expected that branded content will be rated higher in informative, functional, necessary, and practical values, whereas unbranded content will be rated higher in entertaining, delightful, enjoyable, relevant, and connect values.

Through the test, we found significant results of higher mean in 80/20 strategy on values including relevant and connect, while higher mean in 20/80 strategy on values including informative, functional, necessary, and practical. The mean and standard deviation of each of the posts' perceived values were summarized below.



Table 16. Mean and standard deviation of posts' perceived values on each condition

Values	Mean Difference (SD)	F	P value
Informative	$M_{80/20} = 4.17$ (SD= 1.83) < $M_{20/80} = 4.60$ (SD= 1.44)	4.874	.028
Functional	$M_{80/20} = 4.39$ (SD= 1.65) < $M_{20/80} = 4.76$ (SD= 1.57)	9.901	.002
Necessary	$M_{80/20} = 3.90$ (SD= 1.73) < $M_{20/80} = 4.22$ (SD= 1.56)	2.794	.096
Practical	$M_{80/20} = 4.69$ (SD= 1.63) < $M_{20/80} = 4.99$ (SD= 1.22)	3.006	.084
Entertaining	$M_{80/20} = 5.13$ (SD= 1.62) < $M_{20/80} = 5.15$ (SD= 1.47)	.013	.908
Delightful	$M_{80/20} = 5.06$ (SD= 1.62) < $M_{20/80} = 5.12$ (SD= 1.39)	.083	.773
Enjoyable	$M_{80/20} = 5.45$ (SD= 1.32) > $M_{20/80} = 5.27$ (SD= 1.49)	1.238	.267
Relevant	$M_{80/20} = 4.96$ (SD= 1.50) > $M_{20/80} = 4.59$ (SD= 1.68)	4.406	.045
Connect	$M_{80/20} = 4.51$ (SD= 1.83) > $M_{20/80} = 3.77$ (SD= 1.90)	11.416	<.001

5.4.1.2. Post Perceived Influence

To provide support toward our definitions of branded content that referred to customers' perspectives, we conducted a two between-subject one-way ANOVA and PROCESS model 4 to analyze participants' perceived influence from the posts. We expected that branded content will be rated higher than the unbranded content.

A two between-subject one-way ANOVA was conducted to test the effects of different content types toward customers' perceived influence. We found that branded content has a significant impact toward customers' perceived influence [$M_{\text{branded}} = 4.81$,

$M_{\text{unbranded}} = 4.28$; $F(1,283) = 14.589$, $p = <.001$]. Hence, our proposed definition toward branded content from the customers' perspectives is supported. The mean and standard deviation of the post perceived influence were summarized below.

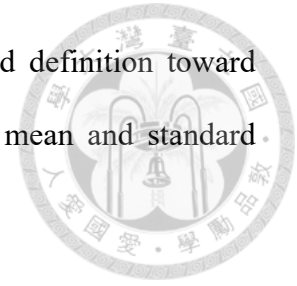


Table 17. Mean and standard deviation for post perceived influence

Content type	Means	Standard Deviation
Unbranded	4.28	1.211
Branded	4.81	1.112

Additionally, we ran PROCESS model 4 to directly analyze the mediation effect through the perceived influence. We found a significant indirect effect (index = $-.2488$, BootSE = $.0768$, 95% CI = $[-.4098, -.1101]$), hence, showing that participants perceived influence rated higher on branded content type has affected to lower purchase intentions.

5.4.1.3. Post Perceived Ingroup

To provide support toward our definitions of unbranded content that referred to customers' perspectives, we conducted a two between-subject one-way ANOVA and PROCESS model 4 to analyze participants perceived ingroup feelings from the posts. We expected that unbranded content will be rated higher than the branded content.

A two between-subject one-way ANOVA was conducted to test the effects of different content types toward customers' perceived ingroup. We found that unbranded content has no significant impact toward customers' perceived ingroup [$M_{\text{branded}} = 4.63$, $M_{\text{unbranded}} = 4.78$; $F(1,283) = .921$, $p = .338$]. The mean and standard deviation of the perceived ingroup were summarized below.

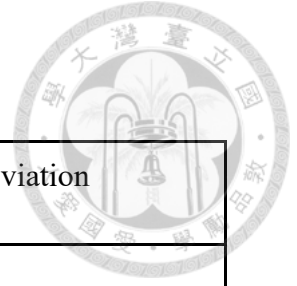


Table 18. Mean and standard deviation for perceived ingroup

Content type	Means	Standard Deviation
Unbranded	4.78	.1256
Branded	4.63	.1134

Additionally, we ran PROCESS model 4 to directly analyze the mediation effect through the perceived ingroup. We found an insignificant indirect effect (index = -.0936, BootSE = .1061, 95% CI = [-.1174, .2996]), hence, showing that participants perceived ingroup that weren't found on either content type didn't affect the purchase intentions.

5.4.2. Prior Knowledge and Attitude of the Brand

We expected that elements related to prior knowledge and attitude of the brand could affect our results, so in this study, we deliberately controlled the related variables. The mean and standard deviation of the related variables were summarized below.

Table 19. Means and standard deviations of control variables

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Knowledge	4.94	.076
Familiarity	5.93	.068
Prior Attitude	5.28	.072

Frequency	4.20	.098
Similarity	4.35	.090

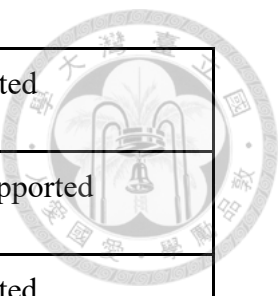
Further, we also ran the F-test, which will be used as a method to compare the above mean numbers with 4 and 7 as number indicators, in which all variables' means should be higher than 4 and not too close to 7. The F-test results were summarized and located in the appendix section.

Based on the results, though we expected that prior knowledge and attitudes toward the brand can affect the study results, but after adding the related variables as control, we found that our focal effect still showed directional effects, and thus has further emphasized the robustness of our results.

To conclude our study results, below are the summary table of all results stated in Chapter 5.

Table 20. Summary Table of All Results

Hypothesis	Variables	Results
Hypothesis 1	Purchase Intentions	Not Supported
	Attitudes toward the post	Not Supported
	Attitudes toward the brand	Not Supported
Hypothesis 2	Competence (Hypothesis 2.1.)	Supported



	Benevolence (Hypothesis 2.2.)	Supported
	Integrity (Hypothesis 2.3.)	Not Supported
Hypothesis 3	Purchase intentions (interactions between content strategy and self-construal)	Supported
	Trust Mediation via competence	Supported
	Trust Mediation via benevolence and integrity	Partially Supported

Chapter 6. Discussions, Limitations, and Contributions

6.1. Discussions

Through the results of our study, hypothesis 1 which predicted that 80/20 content strategy will exhibit higher customers' purchase intentions than the 20/80 content strategy isn't supported. Several possibilities that could lead to this result include, first, there was a very strong interaction between content strategy and self-construal (see the result from hypothesis testing [H3] above). Second, we believed that regardless of the content strategy, as long as the contents were posted directly by the brands, they would still naturally contain some promotional elements, which would still induce pushes toward the customers, thereby reducing their purchase intentions. Third, since we were collecting samples from citizens of United States, which citizens were found to have high degree of individualism (Oyserman et al., 2002), also based on our Hypothesis 3, we believed that they were more independent,

thus would generally prefer the 20/80 strategy, more able to influence their purchase intentions compared to the 80/20 strategy.

Based on the previous research findings, trust on brands could be differentiated into three different elements, and we predicted that under different content strategy, each three of them will also depict the different results toward customers' purchase intentions. Hypothesis 2 that we proposed above predicted that under the exposure of different content strategies, customers' will specifically have higher perceptions toward certain brand trust's element, and this will then be able to affect their purchase intentions. For hypothesis 2.1., which predicted that the implementation of 20/80 content strategy will positively influence customers' perceptions toward brands' competence and consequently their purchase intentions is supported. Based on the results, we concluded that through a 20/80 content strategy, customers were able to see the brands being competent, thus induced them to purchase related brands' products and services. In the case of hypothesis 2.2., which predicted that the implementation of 80/20 content strategy will positively influence customers' perceptions toward brands' benevolence and consequently their purchase intentions is also supported. Through this finding, we also concluded that 80/20 content strategy was able to make customers feel the caring efforts from the brands, thus influencing them to purchase brands' products and services. However, hypothesis 2.3., which predicted that the implementation of 80/20 content strategy will positively influence customers' perceptions toward brands' integrity and consequently their purchase intentions is not supported. We believed that this result was due to the vague definition over integrity itself, as integrity is a fundamental concept about honesty, in which we believed should be exerted by the brands through either of the content strategies.

We also proposed hypothesis 3, which predicted that due to customers' different self-construal, they will have different content strategy preference, in which this preference is also connected toward the synergy between both the content and customer's focuses, and thus able to affect their purchase intentions. This study has also confirmed the proposed hypothesis 3, which predicted that self-construal which include collectivism and individualism traits will moderate the focal effect. For hypothesis 3a, we found significant interaction between the independent self-construal and brand's perceived competence, which had affected higher purchase intentions. Hypothesis 3b was partially proven, since we only found the significant interaction between the interdependent self-construal and brand's perceived benevolence, but not on brand's perceived integrity on higher purchase intentions.

Lastly, as stated on our additional findings' results above, we further reinforced our proposed definitions of branded and unbranded content, from both the companies' and customers' perspectives. In terms of the branded and unbranded contents' definitions from the companies' perspectives, we found that branded content is rated higher toward informative, functional, necessary, and practical values, and this result was matched with our prediction. However, we found that unbranded content was only rated higher toward relevant and connect values. The insignificant results found toward entertaining, delightful, and enjoyable values were affected by our brand and posts' selection, in which through all used unbranded content in the survey (Appendix 2), we concluded that all these posts were lacked in providing entertaining, delightful, and enjoyable values, and were mainly focused on being relevant and offering connections for the customers. In terms of our proposed branded content definition from the customers' perspectives, we found that branded content was found to exert higher influence than the unbranded content, which as aligned with our prediction. However, in terms of our proposed unbranded content definition from the

customers' perspectives, our prediction of unbranded content that could lead to higher perceived ingroup wasn't depicted on our results, and this could be caused due to the similarity variable, a variable to test participants' perceived similarity towards Lipton's brand image that we controlled in our study. We did so since we predicted that prior attitudes and knowledge toward the brand before taking the survey would impact participants' biases towards the brand and thus our study results. Therefore, we concluded that our control towards the similarity variable was the reason that had affected the significance in ingroup results.

6.2. Limitations and Future Research Directions

There were several limitations in this study, which primarily, was related to the samples that we used for the study. Ideally, since we proposed and supported that self-construal were the mediators of different content strategies and its impact toward customers' purchase intentions, we believed that due to this existing mediation effect of cultural factors, conducting cross-cultural comparisons were necessary to further strengthen our hypotheses and increase the impact of our study results, and therefore, future studies could head in the direction of incorporating countries with different cultural traits of individualism and collectivism.

Secondly, results of this study have shown that the self-construal manipulation was affected by the content strategy manipulation, which has then caused several invalid results. We believed that our current placement of self-construal manipulation check was too far behind, and also placed too close to the content strategy manipulation check. Thus, we believed that a better placement of the manipulation check or conducting a separate pretest

for the self-construal manipulation will increase the effectiveness of the manipulation, thus ensure a more accurate study result.

Third, the current social media posts used for the content strategy manipulation in this study had primarily focused on the posts' images. We selected posts with images containing branding elements and classified them as branded content, meanwhile posts without direct branding elements in the images were classified as unbranded content. However, we recognize that for more detail-oriented customers, they may also pay attention toward branding elements present in hashtags or captions. In cases where branding elements are absent from images, but present in hashtags or captions, these posts may not be simply identified as unbranded content. Therefore, since our current classification is more suitable for those with an image-oriented processing style, future research should consider a classification method that accounts for detail-oriented processing style, in which could involve in focusing on captions, hashtags, or other post elements to achieve more accurate content classification.

Furthermore, the current posts used in our study were also primarily focused on the individual relationships between the audience and the brands. We believe that further studies should explore to use the type of posts that emphasize on societal values, such as ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) topics, in which these types of posts are likely to be more appreciated by individuals with an interdependent self-construal.

Also, still in terms of the used posts in our study, we also believed that the current used unbranded contents weren't able to show several important values, such as values related to humor and entertainment, which was proposed as several elements customers looked for in unbranded contents. We believed that incorporating posts that were able to directly or clearly depict these values could enhance our results. For example, selecting posts

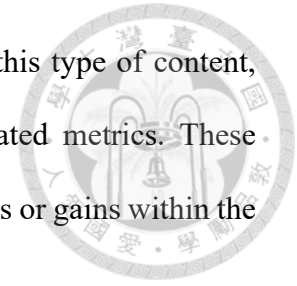
that were discussing witty topics, funny memes, or jokes on current trends might depict humor value more clearly. On the other hand, for delightful value, selecting posts that used a more informal tone and easier to understand could lead to participants perceived of delightful value.

Last, as we attempted to control brand's related previous knowledge and attitude in the study, it has in turn affected the significance of the post perceived ingroup on our unbranded content results. We believed that control towards brand's related previous knowledge and attitude remains important, since this was intended to ensure that the brand chosen for this study isn't too strong, as we believed that an overly strong brand could already receive positive valuation, such as high perceived competence trust from its customers, and thus could impact the study results. We believed that a separate pretest as a means to conduct an initial filter towards the suitable brand to use in the study that could thus the attempted control could be done in the future studies.

Another possible boundary condition could also be the product types. We predicted that the impact of this study won't work for certain product types, such as for complicated products. In this case, contents provided by the brands should be more focused on branded types, meaning brands should use 20/80 content strategy, in order to be able to increase customer access toward the related product information and ensure that their customers have a complete understanding of their products. Additionally, for hedonic types of products, we believed that brands should focus more on unbranded related contents, incorporating 80/20 strategy as a mean to resonate toward the nature of the product itself, and thus able to let customers exhibit higher brand trust and purchase intention.

In the current study, we used purchase intentions as our primary dependent variable, and for future research, we suggest to explore in using dependent variables related to social

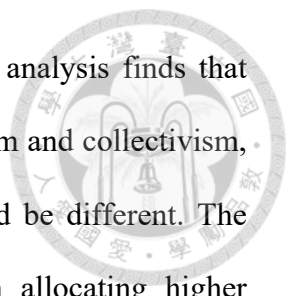
media behaviors, such as the audience's desire to see more or less of this type of content, their willingness to share or comment on these posts, and other related metrics. These variables could provide a more direct reflection of the audience's feelings or gains within the posts.



6.3. Contributions

Through the presented significant results, this study has contributed toward both academic and practical implications. We will start by discussing its managerial implications. This study has offered practical insights into the fields of social media marketing, social media content strategy, global marketing, international marketing, and other related fields. Furthermore, we believe that this study has offered multiple benefits to the companies in reflecting on their current marketing strategies. This study has shed light toward the efficiency of implementing the proposed 80/20 content strategy in fostering customers' brand trust and driving their purchase intentions. Based on the study results, not only have we confirmed our acknowledgements that though we deemed unbranded branded is important, it still couldn't be utilized as an entirely separate entity from branded content, as it wouldn't exert the desired results by the companies, moreover, the existing mediation effect of self-construal has shown that in order for the companies to achieve their objectives effectively, being attentive towards the customers' cultural factors remains important.

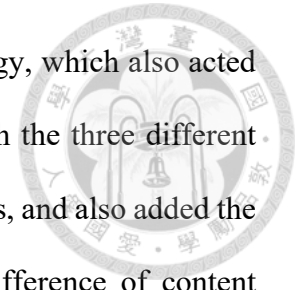
The implementations of either the 80/20 and 20/80 content strategy rely heavily on the audiences' cultural traits, since these cultural traits would affect the content types that could lead them to different brand trust elements, and also on their purchase intentions. Therefore, we encouraged companies to thus carefully consider their geographical locations and target audiences in developing their social media targeting strategies. For example, if a



company operates in two different countries and a geographical level analysis finds that citizens of these countries exhibit different cultural traits of individualism and collectivism, then the social media content strategy applied for each country should be different. The company should implement the 20/80 content strategy, focusing in allocating higher proportion of branded content in the country with individualistic traits. Conversely, it should implement the 80/20 content strategy, focusing in allocating higher proportion of unbranded content in the country with collectivist traits in its social media operations. Furthermore, since cultural traits couldn't entirely depend on geographical level, the results of this study also have provided positive impacts towards different cultural context on individual level. If a company wants to focus on sharing its branded content and applying the 20/80 content strategy, then it could attempt to manipulate their customers through advertising means into an independent condition, so that regardless of their current self-construal, they would still prefer to see branded content. Conversely, if the company needs to apply the 80/20 content strategy to achieve its objectives, then it could try to manipulate their customers into an interdependent condition, so that their intended audiences will prefer to see unbranded content.

In terms of its academic contributions, we acknowledged that previous studies have found the importance of shared contents within social media in influencing customers' purchase intentions, and also the identification on the three different dimensions of brand trust in the e-commerce realm that had significantly influenced customers' purchase intentions. Therefore, in accordance with the previous findings and current discussions in the social media industry, this paper has contributed to a more enhanced viewpoint of this topic by first, formally defining the academic term of branded and unbranded content, that has still been rarely discussed in the academic fields at this point. Second, we created a new

independent variable of 80/20 content strategy and 20/80 content strategy, which also acted as new antecedents of content strategy. We subsequently linked it with the three different trust dimensions as a process that leads to customers' purchase intentions, and also added the different cultural factors, in order to further point out the nuance difference of content strategy due to different cultural traits and defined a new and in-depth customer journey in current social media and digital marketing domain.





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[reach#:~:text=Not%20only%20does%20branded%20content,lead%20to%20higher%20conversion%20rates](https://aicontentfy.com/en/blog/benefits-of-branded-social-media-content-for-increased-reach#:~:text=Not%20only%20does%20branded%20content,lead%20to%20higher%20conversion%20rates).

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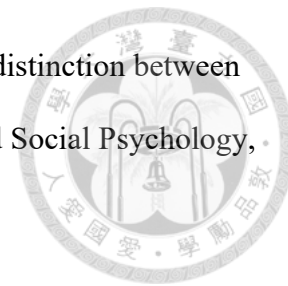
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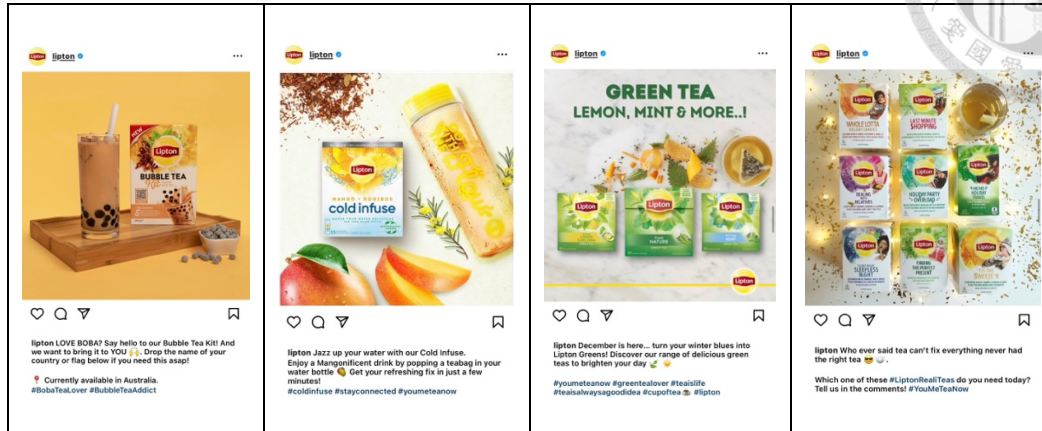
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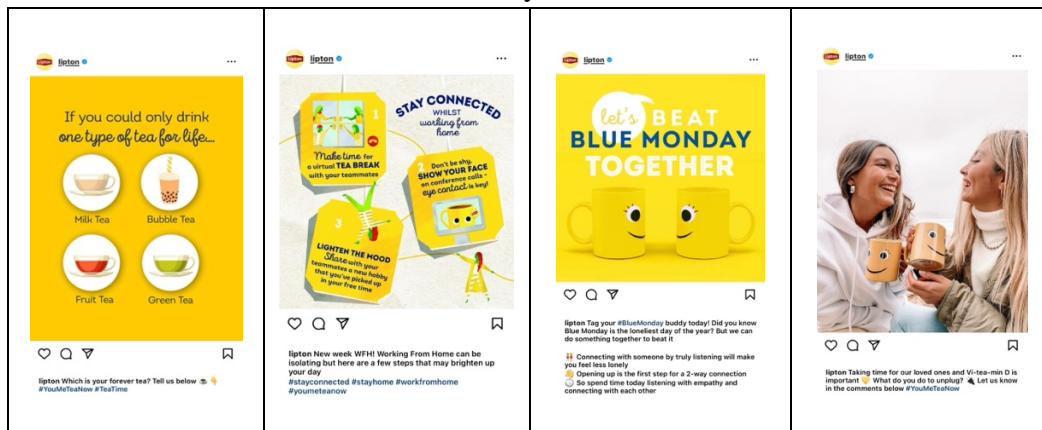
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Appendices

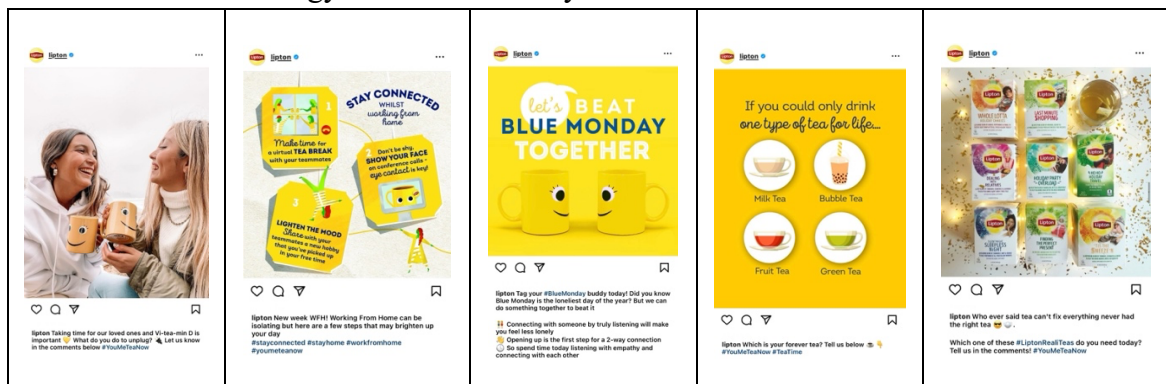
1. Branded content used in the survey



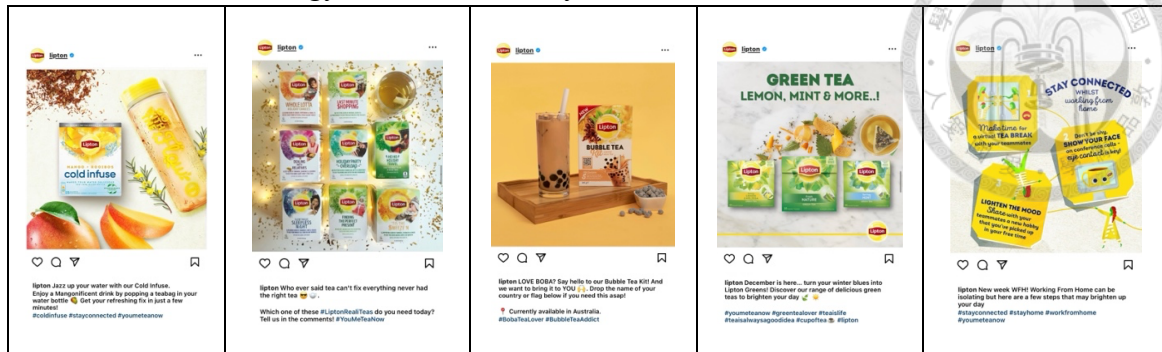
2. Unbranded content used in the survey



3. 80/20 content strategy used in the survey



4. 20/80 content strategy used in the survey



5. F-Tests result on the control variables (brand's prior knowledge and attitude)

Variables	Larger than 4 (p value)	Lower than 7 (p value)
Prior knowledge	<.001	<.001
Familiarity	<.001	<.001
Prior attitude	<.001	<.001
Frequency	.041	<.001
Similarity	<.001	<.001

6. Survey Content

Part 1. Reading Comprehension Task

In this section, we would like to understand how people comprehend written language on digital devices. On the next page, you will see a short story about Sostoras' decision. Please read it carefully and imagine the scene. You will be asked to summarize the the key takeaway of the story.

Story of Sostoras

Sostoras, a warrior in ancient Sumer, was largely responsible for the success of Sargon I in conquering all of Mesopotamia. As a result, he was rewarded with a small kingdom of his own to rule. About 10 years later, Sargon I was conscripting warriors for a new war. Sostoras was obligated to send a detachment of soldiers to aid Sargon I. He had to decide who to put in command of the detachment.

(independent version) After thinking about it for a long time, Sostoras eventually decided on Tiglath who was a talented general. This appointment had several advantages. Sostoras was able to make an excellent general indebted to him. This would solidify Sostoras's hold on his own dominion. In addition, the very fact of having a general such as Tiglath as his personal representative would greatly increase Sostoras's prestige. Finally, sending his best general would be likely to make Sargon I grateful. Consequently, there was the possibility of getting rewarded by Sargon I.

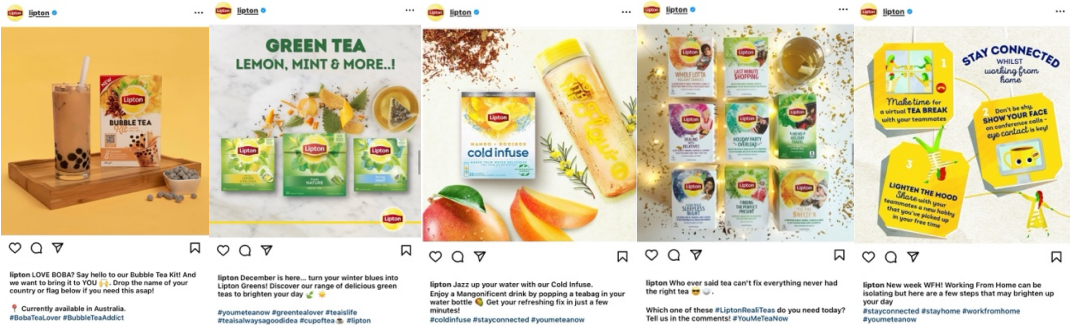
(interdependent version) After thinking about it for a long time, Sostoras eventually decided on Tiglath who was a member of his family. This appointment had several advantages. Sostoras was able to show his loyalty to his family. He was also able to cement their loyalty to him. In addition, having Tiglath as the commander increased the power and prestige of the family. Finally, if Tiglath performed well, Sargon I would be indebted to the family.

In your own words, please summarize why Sostoras appointed Tiglath in one or two sentences in the textbox below.



Part 2. Social Media Posts

In this section, please imagine you are browsing through your Instagram and saw the following posts on the next page in your Instagram feed. Please read the posts and answer questions in the next couple of pages.



My attitudes toward these Instagram posts I just read are _____.

Negative	Positive
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐

After reading these posts, my attitudes toward **Lipton** are _____.

Negative	Positive
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐

After reading these posts, how likely are you to purchase something from **Lipton**?

Very unlikely

Very likely

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐



Please recall the social media posts that you viewed earlier and indicate to what extent

do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

These posts made me believe that Lipton has the ability to support its business.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

These posts made me believe that Lipton has sufficient expertise in its business.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

These posts made me believe that Lipton is reliable in doing what it say will be done.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Indicate 'three' for this item as a data quality check.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐



These posts made me believe that Lipton is effective in providing helpful advice to solve my problems.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please recall the social media posts that you viewed earlier and indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

These posts make me believe that if I required help, Lipton would do its best to help me.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

These posts made me believe that Lipton really do care about the well-being of its customers.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

These posts made me believe that Lipton is sincerely concerned about the problems of its customers.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



These posts made me believe that Lipton is sincere and genuine.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

These posts made me believe that really look out for what is important to its customers.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please recall the social media posts that you viewed earlier and indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

These posts made me believe that Lipton is honest with its customers.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

These posts made me believe that Lipton would keep its commitments.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

These posts made me believe that Lipton's social media persona is consistent with what its brand stands for.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate your feelings about the social media posts you just viewed.



These posts made me feel that Lipton is _____.

undependable

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

dependable

dishonest

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

honest

unreliable

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

reliable

insincere

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

sincere

untrustworthy

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

trustworthy

Please recall the social media posts that you viewed earlier and indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

I felt that these posts were trying to persuade me that Lipton and its products and services are of good quality.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐



I felt that these posts were trying to influence my attitude toward Lipton.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I felt that these posts were trying to pressure me to purchase something from Lipton.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Indicate 'three' for this item as a data quality check.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I felt that these posts were a little pushy.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Please recall the social media posts that you viewed earlier and indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

I felt that I am one of the intended audiences of these posts.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐



I probably have a lot in common with the intended audiences of these posts.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I would consider that I share similar interests with people who interact with this brand's

Instagram account.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I felt that I would belong to the community of this brand's Instagram account.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

How knowledgeable are you about tea in general?

Not knowledgeable at all

Very knowledgeable

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

How familiar are you with Lipton?

Not familiar at all

Very familiar

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

What was your attitude toward Lipton before taking this survey?

Very Negative

Very Positive

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐



How often do you purchase Lipton products or brands similar to Lipton?

Never or almost never

All the time



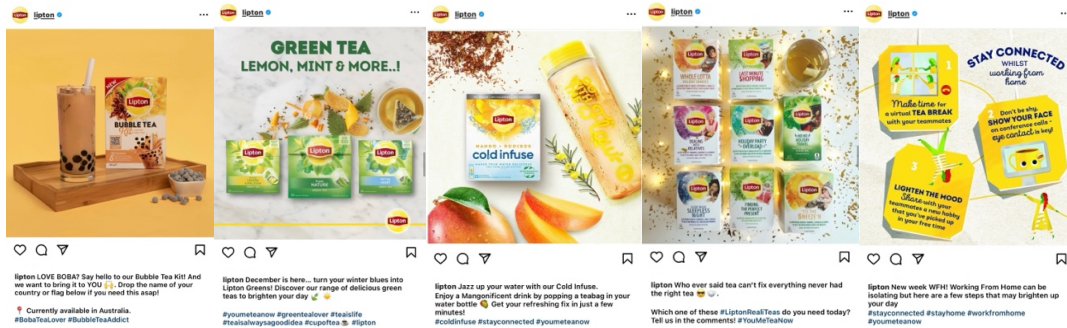
To what extent do you feel Lipton's brand image is similar to you?

Not similar at all

Very similar



Please review the posts you saw earlier again and answer the following questions.



To what extent do you feel the primary purpose of these posts were promoting Lipton's products or its brand?

Not at all promoting its

Completely promoting its products or brand

products or brand



To what extent do you feel the primary purpose of these posts was Lipton showing genuine care for its customers without focusing the attention on its product or brand?



Not at all showing care

Definitely showing care

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please recall the social media posts that you viewed earlier and indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.

I felt that these posts were informative to help judge the quality of the tea made by Lipton.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I felt that these posts were functional.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I felt that these posts were necessary.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



I felt that these posts were practical.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I felt that these posts were entertaining.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I felt that these posts were delightful.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I felt that these posts were enjoyable.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I felt that these posts were relevant to my daily life.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I felt these posts were similar to those you would share with your friends.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Please complete the following sentence based on how you feel at this moment.

At this moment, I feel I am more focused on _____.

my friends and family

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

myself



Part 3. Personality Survey

Please indicate the extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

My close relationships are an important reflection of who I am.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

When I feel very close to someone, it often feels to me like that person is an important part of who I am.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I usually feel a strong sense of pride when someone close to me has an important accomplishment.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐



I think one of the most important parts of who I am can be captured by looking at my close friends and understanding who they are.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

When I think of myself, I often think of my close friends or family also.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If a person hurts someone close to me, I feel personally hurt as well.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

In general, my close relationships are an important part of my self-image.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Indicate six for this item as a data quality check.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Overall, my close relationships have very little to do with how I feel about myself.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



My close relationships are unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

My sense of pride comes from knowing who I have as close friends.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

When I establish a close friendship with someone, I usually develop a strong sense of identification with that person.

Strongly disagree

Strongly agree

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part 4. Demographics

Finally, we only have a couple of demographic questions for categorization purposes.

Please answer the following questions.



What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

What is your age? (numbers only)

What is your annual household income?

- Under \$20,000
- \$20,001-\$30,000
- \$30,001-\$40,000
- \$40,001-\$50,000
- \$50,001-\$60,000
- \$60,001-\$70,000
- \$70,001-\$80,000
- \$80,001-\$90,000
- \$90,001-\$100,000
- \$100,001-\$110,000
- \$110,001-\$120,000
- \$120,001-\$130,000
- \$130,001-\$140,000
- \$140,001-\$150,000
- Over \$150,000

On average, how many hours a day do you do social media?

- 0 hours
- Less than 1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- 3-4 hours

- 5-6 hours
- More than 6 hours

How many brands do you follow on social media?

- 0 brands
- 1-5 brands
- 6-10 brands
- 11-15 brands
- 16-20 brands
- 21-25 brands
- More than 25 brands



You've reached the end of the survey. Thank you for your participation.

Please click continue (>>) to be redirected to the confirmation page.