Master's Thesis of Juan Alberto Aguayo

Personal Self-Disclosure in SNS Leads to Greater Intent to be Followed Due to Parasocial Relationships

SNS 상에서의 사적인 자기노출과 준사회적 관계로 인한 팔로워 수 증가에 대한 의도의 영향관계 연구

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Graduate School of Business
Seoul National University
Marketing Major

Juan Alberto Aguayo

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Examiner 이경미

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Juan Alberto Aguayo

Confirming the master's thesis written by
Juan Alberto Aguayo
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Chair	송인성	(Seal)
Vice Chair	김준범	(Seal)
Examiner	이경미	(Seal)

Abstract

This paper looks at the varying effects that posting personal self-disclosure and professional self-disclosure information by celebrities and influencers on Instagram will have. Those that post personal self-disclosure information on Instagram will be perceived as more sincere, leading to the development of a greater parasocial relationship. This will in turn lead to being more likely to being followed on Instagram. This effect is moderated by the type of person doing the disclosure, as a celebrity will be perceived as more sincere, develop a greater parasocial relationship, and be more likely to being followed by a user compared to an influencer whether self-disclosing personal or professional information via Instagram; demonstrating the value that the brand of "celebrity" has over "influencer" in social media.

Keyword: self-disclosure, parasocial relationship, sincerity, celebrity, influencer, social media

Student Number: 2018-21534

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Introduction

The introduction of Web 2.0 was the change from static web pages to user-generated content, changing the way we interact through the internet. Websites like Myspace, Facebook, and Livejournal allowed anyone the opportunity to have a personal web page and share one's personal thoughts, ideals, photos showing hobbies, friends, and family to anyone over the internet (Stever and Lawson 2013). "Social media are inherently designed to facilitate human connection" (Sanderson 2011, 494) as it became a way to connect and communicate with not only friends and family, but also connect with strangers, including celebrities and influencers.

The early days of Web 2.0 had celebrities view *social media* (SNS) as a marketing tool to promote their upcoming movie, album, project etc. that was primarily run by a third party, like an assistant or a PR firm (Stever and Lawson 2013). Presently, they see SNS as more than a marketing tool, but as a safe way to interact with their fans, even taking part in self disclosing personal information about their family, friends, and hobbies (Hambrick, Simmons, Greenhalgh, and Greenwell 2010; Kassing and Sanderson 2010; Stever and Lawson 2013; Kim and Song 2016). Celebrity Sarah Silverman shared that her dog had died, garnering countless messages of condolences and sympathy from friends and strangers alike (Kim and Song 2016).

Web 2.0 also introduced the "micro-celebrity" (Kamis, Ang, and

Welling 2017). Hereupon referred to as "influencers"; influencers are third-party endorsers that influence their audience's attitudes through blogs, tweets, vlogs, how-to-videos, and various other SNS activities (Fredberg 2010). Through the various SNS avenues, influencers will post content disclosing about their personal life while at the same time promoting third-party businesses and products which their followers will then consume as they value the influencer's opinion (Glucksman 2017).

Celebrities and Influencers both take part in similar activities in SNS, disclosing personal and professional information. However, what kind of connection or relationship develops based on the kind of self-disclosure? How are these relationships developed? What are the differences in relationship development with a celebrity and influencer based on the type of self-disclosure? What are the consequences of the type of self-disclosure activities? A way to measure success in SNS is the number of followers one has, as it accelerates the diffusion of information (Yoganarasimhan 2012). How will the intent to be followed vary? Since, SNS is a powerful marketing tool that promotes brands and products, how will brand evaluation be affected by the type of disclosure? This paper will look to directly compare the celebrity and influencer, as there is few literature that directly compares the two. It will demonstrate how certain relationships develop and the consequences of these relationships based on the kind of self-disclosure they take part in.

<center>Literature Review</center>

Parasocial Relationship

Parasocial interaction or *parasocial relationship* as it will be referred to hereon out was first introduced by Horton and Wohl (1956), describing the one-way relationship of friendship and intimacy on the part of the television viewer with a remote television personality, including news hosts, radio personalities, and even fictional characters (Reeves and Nass 1996; Rubin and McHugh 1987). Parasocial relationships with television personalities would arise due to their conversational style and gestures in informal face-to-face settings that mimic interpersonal communication that invites interactive responses (Horton and Wohl 1956). Thanks to Web 2.0 there is a greater ability for informal "face-to-face" interpersonal communication to arise with a celebrity or influencer, as one is able to "interact" with the celebrity or influencer at any time, by liking, sharing, commenting, and following. One of the characteristics of a parasocial relationship is that it is one-sided where the media figure is not aware of you (Horton and Wohl 1956), and SNS allows for this kind of asymmetric interpersonal communication in the part of the celebrity and influencer, in that they and not the user actually control whether or not they interact with you (Stever and Lawson 2013). It is therefore important to understand how this one-sided relationship can develop through social media.

Social Penetration Theory explains that human relationships will

develop through the voluntary sharing of personal information like feelings, thoughts, values, and beliefs with another (Altman and Taylor 1973). Altman and Taylor (1973) also stated that the frequency of interaction and the level of disclosure will have a positive effect on the levels of intimacy perceived. Social media allows for this "interaction" to take place outside of the traditional mediums through which Horton and Wohl (1956) originally hypothesized the formation of parasocial relationships. Social media allows for celebrities and influencers to share their feelings, thoughts, values, and beliefs with others at their desired level of disclosure and frequency. The user of social media has the ability to be exposed to this information as frequently as they desire by visiting the celebrities' or influencers' SNS as often as they desire.

Kim and Song (2016) were able to show the development of parasocial relationships being formed by the asymmetric interaction of the user with celebrities they followed on Twitter. Participants named a celebrity that they currently followed on Twitter and were asked a series of questions regarding parasocial relationship measures and the kind of self-disclosure that celebrities took part in. They demonstrated that when celebrities took part in personal self-disclosure, the parasocial relationship was higher compared to professional self-disclosure. However, the study's methodology for demonstrating this revolved around participants already having a history of "interaction" with the celebrity; that is, they were already

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followers of the celebrity. Therefore, it is unclear as to whether a previous history of interaction is a required variable for a parasocial relationship to develop through SNS or if it is because of the personal self-disclosure. Horton and Wohl (1956) stated that parasocial relationships only existed during the viewing experience, and Rubin, Perse, and Powell (1985) said that in addition to the duration of history of viewing the local news, that the amount of local news viewing was not a significant factor leading to parasocial relationships. There is precedent research for a parasocial relationship to form without a previous history of interaction, but it has not been clear in the study conducted by Kim and Song (2016). This paper will look to answer that question as it relates to social media.

Tahmashbi (2017) demonstrated the possibility that the development of a parasocial relationship is possible with influencers and not just a phenomenon that is applicable to the traditional celebrity. Aside from the his main hypothesis, he alluded that when comparing parsocial relationships, interaction through YouTube demonstrated higher parasocial relationship levels compared to Instagram, followed by Twitter with an influencer that the participants had mainly no previous history of interaction with. One of the main takeaways from this study is that parasocial relationships appear to be able to be developed through social media and that previous interaction with the influencer is not necessary, even though this was not the purpose of the study. These results are a consequence of

the main purpose of the study which was to look at how attachment types affect parasocial relationships and initial product purchase considerations, and purchase decision. However, looking at the materials used for each condition, I was able to note that the posts that participants were exposed to consisted of both personal self-disclosure and professional self-disclosure and that the YouTube condition had the least amount of professional self-disclosure exposures. This is consistent with the purpose my paper, which is to explore how the type of disclosure a user is exposed to influences the development of parasocial relationships and that previous interaction with the subject is not essential for them to develop. Kim and Song (2016) showed that celebrities that revealed personal self-disclosure posts lead to users developing greater levels of parasocial relationships and Savage and Spense (2014) also demonstrated that radio listeners would develop parasocial relationships when a radio host revealed personal stories during their radio show.

Previous work has looked at the development of parasocial relationships with subjects with whom the participant already has had a history of interaction with, or conclusions were inferred about the development of parasocial relationships even though that was not the primary purpose of the study. This paper will look more closely as to how this parasocial relationship is formed through social media and provide a basis of research for truly comparing the formation of this relationship

between a user and a celebrity or influencer, as it will employ an experimental methodology and expose participants to either personal or professional self-disclosure Instagram posts to directly compare the differences.

        H1:   Personal(professional) self-disclosure posts will result in higher(lower) levels of parasocial development.

        H2:   Parasocial relationships can develop with celebrities (influencers) with whom one does not have any previous history of interaction with.

Sincerity

Sincerity has been studied by various disciplines, thus various interdisciplinary definitions exist. These definitions include notions of honesty (Aaker 1997); transparency (Erickson 1995); accountability (Keane 2002); and integrity (Austin 1962). Trilling (1972) also defined sincerity as the opposite of hypocrisy, or honesty without pretense. Taheri, Gannon, Cordina and Lochrie (2018) looked to separate sincerity into two distinct dimensions: sincere social interaction and sincere emotional response. Sincere social interaction, based on work by Taylor (2001) is the dimension where the person wants to provide accurate insight into their functioning lives because they want to, and not purely to take advantage of them for financial gain. Whereas sincere emotional response, based on work by Bryce, Murdy, and Alexander (2017) and Yi, Lin, Jin, and Lou (2017) is the

emotional response elicited within the participant as a result of the interactions with the person. The division of sincerity into these dimensions allowed Taheri et al. (2018) to conceptualize the sincerity of the stimulus person with the participant as interacting in an open manner, the stimulus person, representing themselves accurately to share the reality of their day-to-day lives. This conceptualization is also consistent with the conceptualization made by Prince (2017), that sincerity in people can be perceived based on the encounters when the stimulus person provides an accurate representation of their life. Social media allows people to present their "true" selves or "false" selves, therefore the more accurately people present themselves on social media the greater level of perceived sincerity of the stimulus person.

Social media users have been shown to be acutely sensitive as to whether the celebrities they interact with on social media are being sincere or not. According to Marwick and Boyd (2011), followers on Twitter want to ensure that the person that is tweeting is in fact the person that they claim to be. Twitter allows for personal disclosure and intimacy to be normative, thus access, intimacy, and affiliation are valueless if the Twitter account is written by a PR firm or an assistant (Marwick and Boyd 2010). People can notice the language and grammar used to evaluate if the celebrity is in fact self-disclosing, revealing their true selves (Stever and Lawson 2013) that would result in greater perceived sincerity of the celebrity. One of the

factors of sincerity has been noted as being friendship (Pakaluk 1991, Cocking and Mathews 2001). Friendship develops through sincerity, and friendships have been noted to develop through interacting through the internet (Briggle 2008). Leading to the hypothesis that other relationships can be formed through sincerity through SNS.

> **H3**: Personal (professional) self-disclosure will lead to higher (lower) levels of perceived sincerity.

> **H4**: The development of a parasocial relationship is a result of perceived sincerity.

Celebrity as a Brand

A brand is "a name, symbol, design, or mark that enhances the value of a product beyond its functional value" (Farquhar 1989, 24). However, not all brands provide the same value. Cobb-Walgren, Ruble and Donthu (1995) looked at comparing two brands in two different industries; each brand in their respective industry was objectively similar based on Consumer Reports ratings; however, the brand that participants were aware of more was evaluated as having greater value compared to the lesser known brand. Awareness is one of the characteristics that Aaker (1991) described as being a contributing factor to brand equity. "Influencer" is a relatively new brand compared to "celebrity," which has existed for much longer and brands are built over time and cannot be built overnight (Kumar 2006), which "celebrity" has a clear advantage over "influencer."

Research conducted by Aaker (1997) looking at what the different types of personalities that are applicable to brands noted that *sincerity* is one of these five personality traits that are applicable to brands.   It has also been noted by other research that people develop not only psychological and social bonds with brands (Rindfleisch, Wong, and Burroughs 2005), but also develop relationships with the brand (Kumar 2006; Raut and Brito 2014). People therefore would perceive more value in the "celebrity" brand resulting in greater development of perceived sincerity and greater development of a parasocial relationship due to the fact that the person doing the disclosing on social media is viewed as a celebrity.

> **H5**:   Celebrities will be perceived as more sincere and develop greater levels of parasocial relationship compared to influencers.

> **H6**:   The type of person exposed to, will interact with the type of disclosure affecting sincerity and parasocial relationship.

This paper will not only look to explain how perceived sincerity and parasocial relationships are developed based on the kind of self-disclosure and type of person disclosing, but will research two specific outcomes that would result due to them. Specifically, as mentioned before, a way to measure success in social media is based on the number of followers that a person has. How will intent to follow change due the development of sincerity and parasocial relationship? Does the intent to follow depend on

who is doing the disclosing?   Another outcome to be researched is brand attitude. Social media is often used for marketing; therefore it is important to understand how the previous variables would affect a brand being promoted. Therefore, how does type of disclosure, type of person, sincerity and parasocial relationship affect the intent to follow and brand attitude?

> **H7**:   Intent to follow will be higher (lower) for personal (professional) self-disclosure posts.

> **H8**:   Intent to follow will be higher (lower) for celebrities (influencers)

> **H9**:   Brand attitude will be higher (lower) for personal (professional) self-disclosure posts

> **H10**:   Brand attitude will be higher (lower) for celebrities (influencers)

(Conceptual Model in Figures and Tables, Figure 1)

Study 1

Design

The experiment consists of four conditions; celebrity/personal self-disclosure, celebrity/professional-disclosure, influencer/personal self-disclosure, and influencer/professional self-disclosure. Instagram posts were chosen as this medium allows for text, photo, and video. Participants were exposed to either a celebrity (Chrissy Teigen – described as a former model, current TV personality, and author with over 20 million followers on

Instagram) or an influencer (Niomi Smart – described as a lifestyle and health influencer with more than 1.5 million followers). Participants were then exposed to ten real life posts uploaded by the celebrity (influencer) that either represents personal self-disclosure or professional self-disclosure (Appendix A). Participants were told that the ten posts were selected randomly and placed in no particular order that represent the typical posts made by the celebrity (influencer). Eight of the posts were photos and two were video posts that were extracted from Instagram and uploaded to Youtube for easy access for the participants to view when completing the survey. The posts show only the description posted by the celebrity (influencer); neither the number of likes nor replies are shown to prevent unknown variables affecting results.

Measures

Manipulation checks were conducted to confirm that the participants perceived the personal posts as personal self-disclosure related posts and professional posts as professional self-disclosure related posts. Manipulation check questions developed from Kim and Song (2016). Parasocial relationship scale is measured with adapted questionnaires from Kim and Song (2016), Tahmasbi (2017), and Auter and Palmgreen (2000). Sincerity scale adapted from Aaker (1997) (Appendix B).

Results

Participants were recruited from US university forums from the

website Reddit.com. The Chrissy Teigan (celebrity) conditions had a total of 177 participants (Female=55%) with 81% ranging from the ages of 18~25. The Niomi Smart (influencer) conditions had a total of 90 participants (Female=64.6%) with 79% ranging from the ages of 18~25. Manipulation checks are shown in *table 1*, showing that they were indeed effective. Participants perceived the personal (professional) disclosure posts as being more personal (professional). Measures for the scales were the following: Cronbach's alpha for sincerity is .888, and parasocial relationship is .950. The scales demonstrated to be reliable.

An ANOVA for the type of disclosure (personal vs professional) was conducted for the sincerity and parasocial relationship measures. A significant main effect of type of disclosure on sincerity was found ($F(1,267)$ = 25.235, $p<.001$); results (*table 2*) indicate that those that viewed personal self-disclosure posts perceived the celebrity and influencer as being more sincere than those in the professional self-disclosure conditions. A significant effect of type of disclosure on parasocial relationship was also found ($F(1,267)=15.010$, $p<.001$); results also indicating that those that viewed personal self-disclosure posts developed a greater level of parasocial relationship with the celebrity and influencer compared to professional self-disclosure. As expected, type of disclosure had a significant effect on both sincerity and parasocial relationship and personal disclosure resulted in greater levels compared to professional self-

disclosure.

An ANOVA for the type of person (celebrity vs influencer) was also conducted for the sincerity and the parasocial relationship measure. As expected, the results (*table 2*) indicate that the celebrity condition results in a greater level of sincerity compared to the influencer, however a significant effect of type of person on sincerity was not found ($F(1,267)=1.273$, $p=.260$). A significant effect of type of person on parasocial relationship levels was found ($F(1,267)=6.752$, $p<.001$), showing that participants developed a higher level of parasocial relationship with the celebrity compared to the influencer. Results show that as hypothesized, when participants are exposed to celebrities compared to influencers, a higher level of sincerity and parasocial levels are likely to result.

Regressions for mediation and moderation analysis were conducted. The main dependent variable was parasocial relationship with type of disclosure(personal/professional) as the independent variable, sincerity as the mediator and person(celebrity/influencer) serving as the moderator (*Figure 2*). Dummy variables were used for type of disclosure (1=personal, 0=professional) and type of person (1=celebrity, 0=influencer). The regression between disclosure and sincerity showed to be significant ($R2=.0864$, $B=.8542$, $p<.001$). The regression of sincerity on parasocial proved to be significant ($R2=.5453$, $B=.4669$, $p<.001$). An interaction effect between sincerity x person on parasocial relationship was found ($R2=.51$,

B=.2729, p<.003). This was unexpected, as it was hypothesized that type of person would interact with disclosure, not sincerity effecting parasocial relationship. However the analysis for study 1 does show that the effect on parasocial relationship is mediated completely through sincerity as c' showed to be insignificant (R2=.5451, B=.1430, p=.247), and that type of person does serve as a moderator. Further analysis was also conducted with parasocial relationship serving as the mediator but that resulted in partial mediation and not total mediation like the hypothesized original model. Another model was also run with type of person serving as the main independent variable, resulted in a nonsignificant regression on sincerity.

Discussion

Results provide initial support that participants exposed to personal disclosure posts will perceive the celebrity and influencer as more sincere and develop a greater parasocial relationship compared to professional disclosure exposures, and that this effect is greater for celebrities compared to influencers regardless on the type of disclosure. The resulting model also provides initial evidence that the type of disclosure will lead to the development of parasocial relationships and that this effect is fully mediated by sincerity. Although, results indicate that the celebrity is perceived as more sincere and people will develop a greater parasocial relationship with them, one can not infer that this is a result of the brand of "celebrity." This is due to the possibility of previous knowledge of the

celebrity being a significant issue; 77.9% of the participants were previously aware of the celebrity compared to 9.6% being previously aware of the influencer. I did run an analysis of previous knowledge, finding no significance, but because the study was not designed to divide the participants in such a way, the data may be lacking. Study 2 addresses this issue by creating a fake celebrity and influencer. This will provide greater evidence as to the difference between "celebrity" and "influencer" as well as give better results to *intent to follow* and *brand attitude* as previous knowledge may have an effect on these.

Study 2

Design

Study 2 was conducted in a similar fashion as study 1, consisting of the same four conditions. However, in order to confirm the effect that the type of person has on sincerity, parasocial relationship, brand attitude, and intent to follow, a fake celebrity and influencer were created for the study. Participants were primed to view the fake person, "Joely Gabrielle Watson" as either a celebrity or influencer. The primed celebrity conditions were described as:

> *Joely Gabrielle Watson is a Broadway actress that has been nominated for two Tony awards (Antoinette Perry Award for Excellence in Broadway Theatre) in her young career. She is active on social media with more than 10 million followers.*

and the primed influencer was described as:

> *Since starting her YouTube channel in 2014, Joely Gabrielle has become a popular author and social media personality. Often posting videos about beauty and content, Joely Gabrielle is loved by women across the world. She is an active Instagram user with over 1.5 million followers.*

The personal self-disclosure conditions will consist of the same nine posts for the celebrity and influencer. The professional self-disclosure conditions will also consist of the same nine posts for the celebrity and influencer (Appendix C). Unlike study 1, videos will not be used. A tenth post will be a fake brand of sunglasses, "Arydss," to be evaluated (Appendix D). Participants will also be asked about how likely they are to follow the celebrity or influencer.

Measures

The same measurement scales for sincerity and parasocial relationship were used for this study. In addition, three questions to determine the *intent to following* the celebrity or influencer was developed for this study (e.g., "If you do not follow Joely Gabrielle, how likely are you to?" (not likely at all=1 , very likely=7), "How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: 'I would like to meet Joely Gabrielle.'" (completely disagree = 1, completely agree =7), "Based on the content you just reviewed, how interested are you in learning about Joely Gabrielle?"

(not interested at all =1, very interested = 7). Finally, to determine brand attitude toward the fake sunglasses brand, three questions were adapted from Kamins and Marks (1987) and Mackey, Ewing, Newton and Windisch (2009) (Appendix E).

Results

Participants were recruited from US university forums from the website Reddit.com. The celebrity condition had a total of 148 participants (Female = 52.7%) with 77.7% ranging from ages 18~25. The influencer condition had 162 participants (Female = 56.8%) with 82.1% ranging from ages 18~25. Manipulation checks (*Table 3*) were successful. Measures for the scales were the following; Cronbach's alpha for sincerity is .892, parasocial relationship is .932, brand attitude is .893, and intent to follow is .769. All scales gave results well above the accepted .70 showing that they are reliable scales.

An ANOVA for the type of disclosure was conducted for sincerity, parasocial relationship, brand attitude, and intent to follow. The results (*Table 4*), show that like study 1, a significant main effect of type of disclosure on sincerity (F(1,308)= 53.07, p<.001), and parasocial relationship (F(1,308)=110.628, p<.001), with the personal self-disclosure conditions resulting in higher sincerity and parasocial relationship levels. Type of disclosure on intent to follow also resulted in the expected significant results (F(1,308)=20.846, p=.001) with the personal self-

disclosure conditions demonstrating higher intent to follow levels compared to professional self-disclosure. There was no main effect of disclosure type and brand attitude (F(1,308)=1.097, p=.296); the personal self-disclosure conditions did however demonstrate higher levels of brand attitude as compared to professional self-disclosure.

An ANOVA for the type of person (celebrity vs influencer) was conducted for sincerity, parasocial relationship, brand attitude, and intent to follow. Results (*Table 4*) show, like study 1, the sincerity and parasocial relationship levels are higher for the primed celebrity, however study 2 shows non-significant results for not only sincerity (F(1,308)=1.273, p=.345), but also parasocial relationship (F(1,308)=2.044, p=.155). There was a significant result with intent to follow (F(1,308)=10.31, p<.001), where the primed celebrity had a higher intent to follow level compared to the primed influencer. The analysis of brand attitude resulted in non-significant results (F(1,308)=.228, p=.633), and the primed celebrity condition does not show higher levels compared to the primed influencer.

Regression and moderation analysis were conducted for the final model (Figure 3). Regression done on disclosure and sincerity was significant (R2=.355, B=1.21, p<.001). There is also a significant interaction effect of *disclosure x type of person* on sincerity (R2=.355, B=.642, p<.008). A significant regression is also present when regressing disclosure on parasocial (R2=.2895, B=.8381, p<.001). There is also a significant

interaction of *disclosure* x *person* on parasocial (R^2=.2895, B=.4167, p<.05). A regression between the two mediators, sincerity and parasocial was conducted also revealing significant results (R^2=.4922, B=.4267, p<.001). Regression on the dependent variable *intent to follow* was conducted with type of disclosure showing a non-significant value representing full mediation (R^2=.6224, B=-.1492, p=147). When sincerity is regressed on intent to follow, there is a non-significant value (R^2=.6224, B=.0618, p=.111). The regression between *parasocial* and *intent to follow* is significant (R^2=.6224, B=.7719, p<.001). Finally, there is an interaction effect of *type of person* x *type of disclosure* on intent to follow (R^2=.6224, B=.3138, p<.05). One unexpected result of the regression analysis is that regressing type of person on intent to follow also garners significant results (R^2=.6224, B=.3138, p<.001), and only intent to follow, with no significant results for neither sincerity (R^2=.355, B=-.018, p=.907), nor parasocial relationship (R^2=.289, B=.061, p=.619). Further analysis was conducted by changing the mediators, which also results in a significant model, but due to the results of study 1, and my hypothesized model, this model was decided upon. The model proposed with brand attitude as the main dependent variable results in a non- significant model as the first pretest for the existence of mediation showed that the regression of type of disclosure on brand attitude to be insignificant, therefore further pre-tests and full model regressions were not done.

Discussion

The results of study 2 mirror the results of study 1. When a celebrity or influencer takes part in personal self-disclosure, they will be perceived as being more sincere and people will develop a greater parasocial relationship compared to professional disclosure and the effect is greater for celebrities compared to influencers regardless of the type of disclosure. The outcome variable of intent to follow, also follows similar results. Those that take part in personal self-disclosure are more likely to be followed compared to professional self-disclosure. Also, a celebrity is more likely to be followed compared to an influencer in all situations. Study 2 demonstrates how the brand of "celebrity" compared to influencer has a greater effect compared to "influencer" leading to people perceiving a celebrity as being more sincere, develop greater parasocial relationships, and even show a greater intent to follow. This is not a result due to previous knowledge, as participants were exposed to the same person and were simply primed to regard the person as either an influencer or celebrity. Results further show that for brand attitude, no significant results are attained and the results do not follow the results of other variables.

Study 2 further demonstrates that the development of *parasocial relationships* is indeed mediated by *perceived sincerity*. Furthermore, *sincerity* and *parasocial relationship* serve as mediators to the outcome variable of *intent to follow*. This demonstrates that we are more likely to

follow someone on SNS the greater the parasocial relationship one develops with the celebrity or influencer. It was also demonstrated that the *type of person* does serve as a moderator and interacts with *type of disclosure* affecting sincerity, parasocial relationship, and intent to follow. This also demonstrates that people are sensitive to the type of person they interact with online and will perceive the person differently and react differently based on the type of person they interact with in SNS. The other outcome variable of brand attitude shows that it does not fit the proposed model showing that other variables not studied in this paper are more likely to affect brand attitude.

Conclusion

This paper demonstrates the effect that personal self-disclosure activities through Instagram results in being perceived as more sincere, resulting in the formation of parasocial relationships with an unknown other compared to professional self-disclosure activities. The more sincere a person is perceived to be, the greater the parasocial relationship development. Therefore is would be wise in the part of celebrities and influencers to take part in more personal self-disclosure to be perceived as more sincere, thus creating a stronger parasocial relationship with their audience.

This paper also demonstrates that previous history of interaction is not needed for parasocial relationships to develop as previous work had

demonstrated (Horton and Wohl 1956; Kim and Song 2016). These parasocial relationships can form with a person with whom one has no previous history of interaction. Study 2 demonstrates this by using a fake person with whom the participants had no history of interaction or previous knowledge. Yet, parasocial relationships were shown to develop to a greater degree when the celebrity or influencer that took part in personal self-disclosure; showing that personal self-disclosure is necessary for the development of parasocial relationships, and not only a history of interaction. Of course, my paper does not take into account the kind of personal self-disclosure with which the celebrity or influencer take part in. Would disclosing happy or sad personal self-disclosure result in the development of different levels of a parasocial relationship? Are there kinds of personal details that may actually reduce the parasocial relationship?

One of the main conclusions one can draw from this paper is the distinct effects of being perceived as either a celebrity or influencer will have on not only sincerity, but also parasocial relationship, and intent to follow. The type of person moderated the effect on all three variables and through priming in Study 2, I was able to demonstrate the greater effect that "celebrity," compared to "influencer" has on all the variables, even though participants were exposed to the same Instagram posts. Simply being perceived as a celebrity with no previous exposure to the person will result in greater effects, further showing how the brand of "celebrity" is more

valuable in SNS where "influencer" was created.

This paper, unlike other research, demonstrates an outcome due to the development of parasocial relationships. One of the ways to measure success in SNS is based on the number of followers one has (De Veirman, Cauberghe, Hudders 2017). The greater the development of a parasocial relationship, the greater the intent to be followed will be. Therefore, it is beneficial for celebrities and influencers to take part in personal self-disclosure as this will lead to parasocial relationship development leading to being more likely to be followed. The more people that follow, then the greater audience one is able to reach and influence when taking part in marketing activities through SNS. So when a company makes a contract with a celebrity or influencer, it would be best to choose one that takes part in personal disclosure as these people will have a greater increase in number of followers as the contract moves forward allowing for greater information transmission.

Finally, the other outcome variable measured was brand attitude. However this was not significantly affected by type of disclosure or type of person. This may be because participants were evaluating the product and not the brand, as participants were only exposed to the brand once and not seen together with the celebrity or influencer. "Fit" was also not considered. Further research is needed to understand how type of disclosure truly affects a brand in SNS.

Appendix A

Chrissy Teigen (Celebrity) Posts - professional disclosure
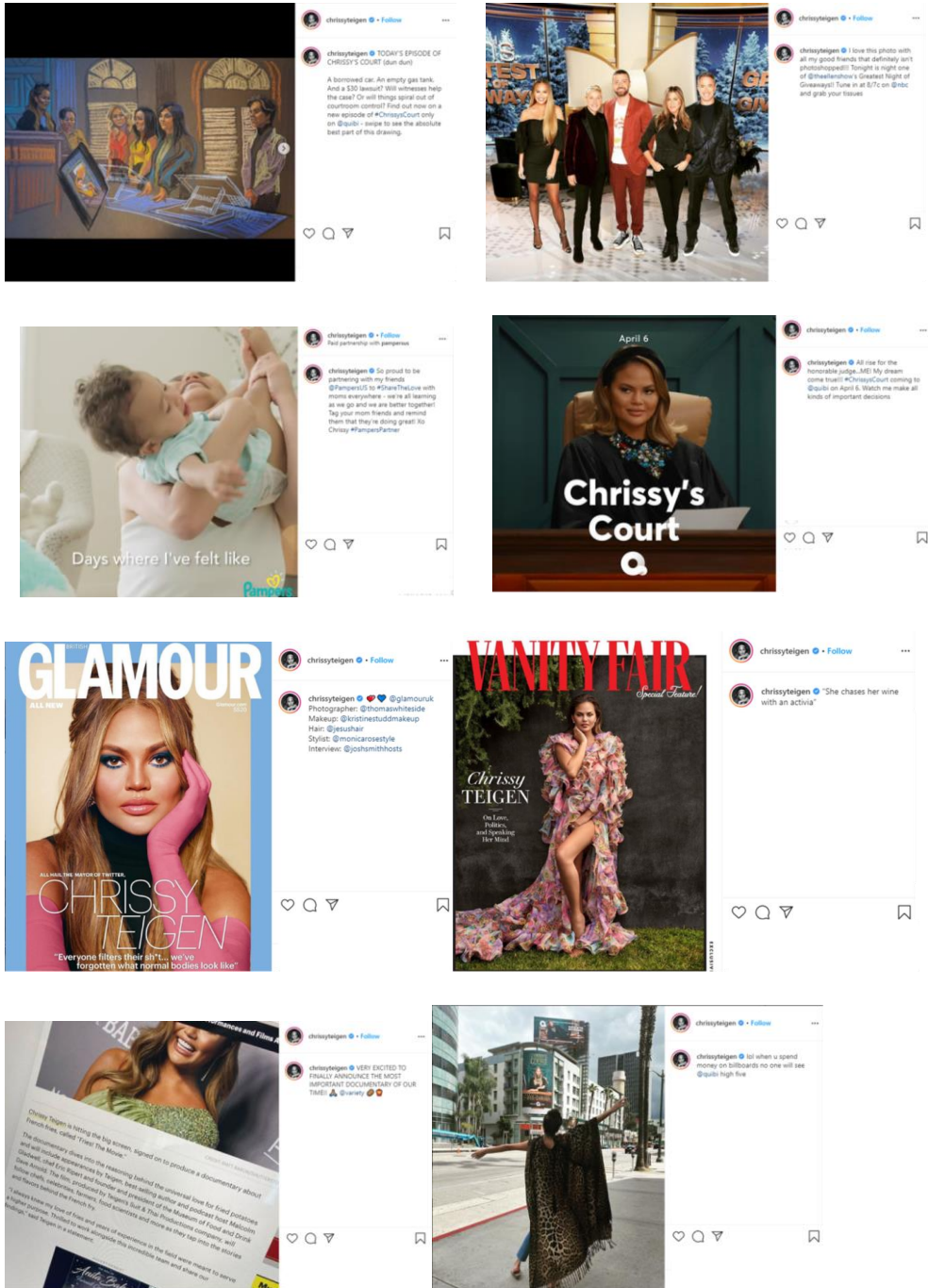
Celebrity Posts – personal disclosure

Niomi Smart (Influencer) – professional disclosure
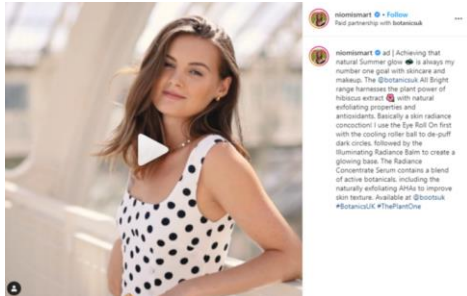
Niomi Smart (Influencer)- personal disclosure

2 9

APPENDIX B - Study 1 Survey Questions

Professional Self Disclosure: (adapted from Kim and Song 2016)

1. The posts are advertising for a third party (1=Never, 7=Always)

2. The posts are advertising her work.

3. The posts are trying to sell me something.

4. The posts show work in general

Personal Self Disclosure: (adapted from Kim and Song 2016)

1. The posts show family and friends. (1=Never, 7=Always)

2. The posts disclose personal habits.

3. The posts disclose personal information.

4. The posts show personal life in general.

Sincerity (adapted from Aaker 1997)

1. The celebrity is honest. (completely disagree=1, completely agree=7)

2. The celebrity is sincere.

3. The celebrity is down-to-earth.

4. The influencer is cheerful.

Parasocial Relationship (adapted from Kim and Song 2016, Tahmasbi 2017, Auter and Palmgreen 2000)

1. Based on the content you just reviewed, how interested are you in learning about Niomi Smart? (not interested at all=1, very interested=7)

2. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "Niomi Smart reminds me of myself." (strongly disagree=1, strongly disagree=7)

3. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "I have the same qualities as Niomi Smart."

4. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "I seem to have the same beliefs or attitudes as Niomi Smart."

5. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "I seem to have the same problems as Niomi Smart."

6. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "I can imagine myself as Niomi Smart."

7. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "I can identify with Niomi Smart."

8. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "I would like to meet Niomi Smart."

9. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "I would interact with Niomi Smart on another platform."

10. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "The postings show me what Niomi Smart is like."

11. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "Niomi Smart's interactions are similar to mine with family."

12. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "Niomi Smart's interactions are similar to mine with friends."

13. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "I would enjoy interacting with Niomi Smart and my friends at the same time."

14. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "I would like to share my ideas with Niomi Smart."

Where you familiar with the celebrity before the survey? Yes/No

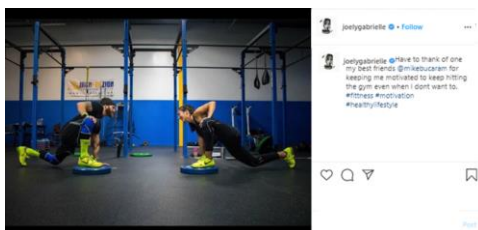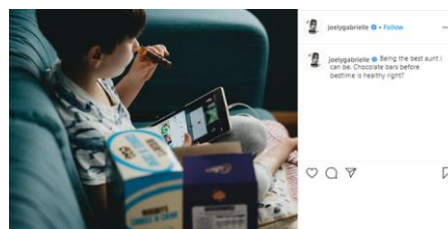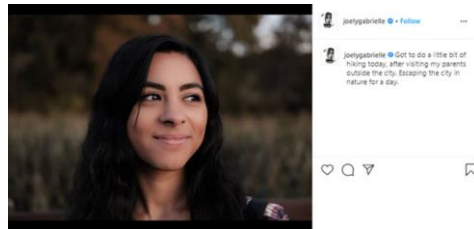Do you currently follow the celebrity? Yes/No

How often do you use Instagram during the week?Never, 1~2, 3~6, 7~10, 10+

APPENDIX C — Study 2 materials

Professional Postings (Celebrity and Influencer)

Personal Postings (Celebrity and Influencer)

APPENDIX D – Study 2 Brand

Product to be Evaluated (Professional and Personal)

Professional

Personal

APPENDIX E – Experiment 2 Survey Questions

Brand Attitude (adapted from Kamins and Marks 1987, and Mackey, Ewing, Newton, and Windisch 2009)

1. How appealing is the brand of sunglasses? (not appealing at all = 1,very appealing = 7)

2. How desirable is the brand of sunglasses?

3. How much do you like the brand of sunglasses?

Intent to Follow (developed for the study)

1. If you do not follow Joely Gabrielle, how likely are you to? (not likely at all= , very   likely=7)

2. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "I would like to meet Joely Gabrielle." (completely disagree = 1, completely agree =7)

3. Based on the content you just reviewed, how interested are you in learning about Joely Gabrielle? (not interested at all =1, very interested = 7)

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Tables and Figures

Figure 1

Conceptual Model for Intent to Follow and Brand Attitude
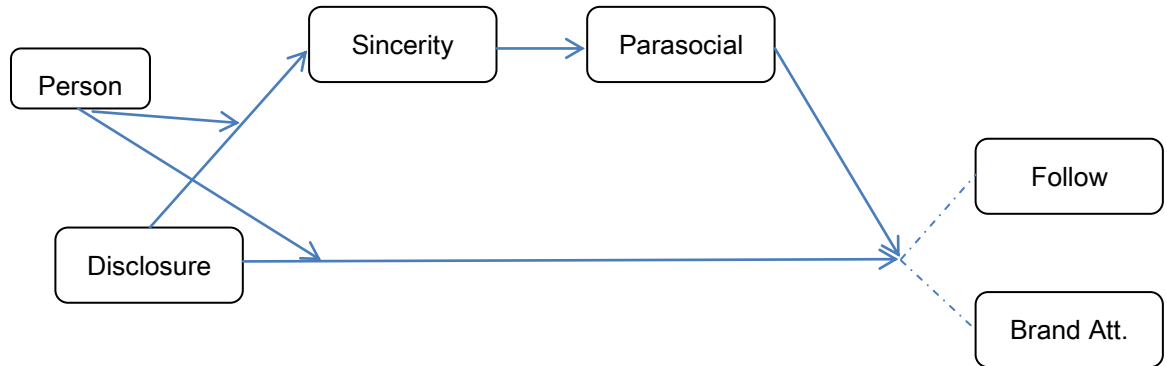
Study 1

Table 1
Study 1 Manipulation Checks

	Personal	Personal	5.47	>	2.59	Professional
Celebrity	Professional	Personal	2.66	<	5.28	Professional
	Personal	Personal	5.27	>	3.18	Professional
Influencer	Professional	Personal	3.34	<	4.91	Professional

Table 2
Study 1 Summary of ANOVA Results

|				
Sincerity	Disclosure	Personal Work	M=4.879, SD=1.282 M=4.025, SD=1.327	p<.001
	Person	Celebrity Influencer	M=4.375, SD=1.449 M=4.176, SD=1.198	p=.260
Parasocial	Disclosure	Personal Work	M=2.959, SD=1.348 M=2.319, SD=.1.237	p<.001
	Person	Celebrity Influencer	M=2.678, SD=1.413 M=2.245, SD=1.019	p<.01

Figure 2 Mediation and Moderation model of Study 1

Sincerity

Person

.2729**

.8542***

4669***

Disclosure

.1430

Parasocial

***=p<001

** =p<.003
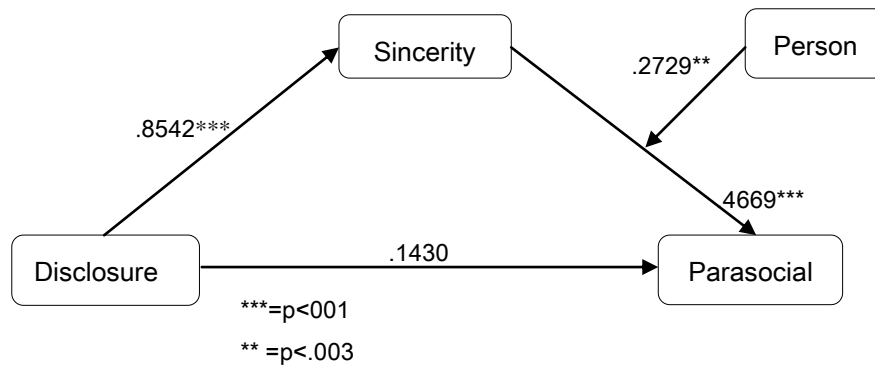
Study 2

Table 3
Study 2 Manipulation Checks

	Personal	Personal	5.18	>	2.45	Professional
Celebrity	Professional	Personal	2.18	<	5.08	Professional
	Personal	Personal	5.13	>	3.11	Professional
Influencer	Professional	Personal	2.52	<	4.54	Professional

Table 4
Study 2 Summary of Results

Sincerity	Disclosure	Personal Work	M=4.534, SD=1.132 M=3.044, SD=.986	$p<.001$
	Person	Celebrity Influencer	M=3.736, SD=1.331 M=3.599, SD=1.232	$p=.345$
Parasocial	Disclosure	Personal Work	M=2.579, SD=1.113 M=1.565, SD=.564	$p<.001$
	Person	Celebrity Influencer	M=2.069, SD=.989 M=1.911, SD=.957	$p=.155$
Brand Attitude	Disclosure	Personal Work	M=3.398, SD=1.449 M=3.239, SD=.1.208	$p=.296$
	Person	Celebrity Influencer	M=3.268, SD=1.349 M=3.339, SD=1.284	$p=.633$
Intent to Follow	Disclosure	Personal Work	M=2.057, SD=1.126 M=1.482, SD=.724	$p<.001$
	Person	Celebrity Influencer	M=1.901, SD=1.033 M=1.558, SD=.846	$p<.001$

Figure 3 Study 2 Mediation and Moderation Model

*** p<001
** p<.008
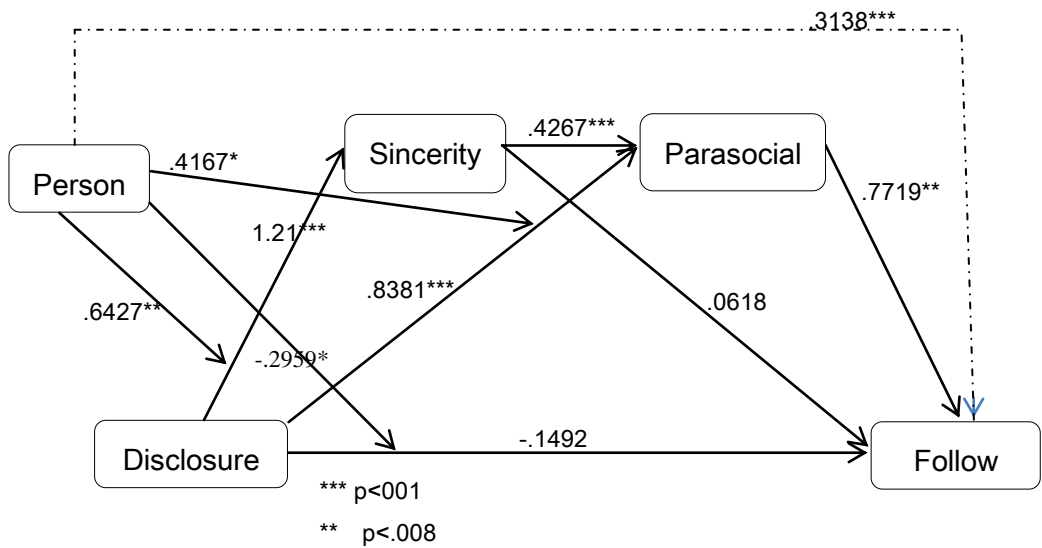
Abstract in Korean

본고는 인스타그램에서 유명인들과 인플루언서들이 게시하는 사적인, 그리고 전문적인 자기노출 정보들의 여러 영향에 대해 살펴보고자 한다. 인스타그램에서 사적인 자기노출 정보가 담긴 정보를 게시하는 사람들이 보다 진실되게 여겨짐에 따라 더 큰 준사회적 관계의 발달이 이뤄진다. 이는 결과적으로 팔로워 수의 증가로 이어진다. 이러한 효과는 노출을 하는 사람의 유형에 따라 차이를 보이는데, 인스타그램을 통해 사적이거나 전문적인 정보를 자기노출할 때 인플루언서보다는 유명인이 더 진실되게 여겨지고, 더 큰 준사회적 관계로 발전해 팔로워 수가 늘어날 가능성이 높아진다. 이는 유명인이 인플루언서를 능가하는 브랜드 가치를 보유함을 입증한다.