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The rise of influencer marketing

A quantitative study that addresses influencer marketing on Instagram together with the impact of sponsorship disclosure, colour characteristics, brand involvement and gender.

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Statement of originality

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Abstract

Due to the increasing popularity of influencer marketing, there is a need for more research that addresses this subject. Furthermore, it appears that there is a lack of studies that examine Instagram as a separate platform. Moreover, since Instagram is a social media platform where influencer marketing is thriving, this study aimed to provide insights surrounding influencer marketing on Instagram. The current study found that when consumers perceive a social media influencer to be more credible, they also have more favourable attitudes towards the brand, attitudes towards the Instagram post and purchase intentions. Moreover, men showed a significantly more favourable attitude towards the brand when they perceived the influencer to be more credible. Furthermore, it was found that when females are exposed to an Instagram post with a sponsorship disclosure, they perceive the influencer to be significantly more credible. At last, results indicated that when an Instagram post has a high as compared to low saturation level, consumers show a more favourable attitude towards the Instagram post.

1. Introduction

With 2.7 billion users worldwide (Chaffey, 2017), social media opened up new ways for organizations to reach the consumer. This can be done through, for example, banner advertisements or creating brand pages on the different social media platforms. However, as Fournier and Avery (2012) state in 'The uninvited brand,' consumers are not always happy to see brand communications appear in their feed, as social media was created for people and not to sell products. Furthermore, the use of ad blockers is becoming more popular as the number of devices that use ad blockers has grown to 615 million in 2017 (Cortland, 2017), which makes it even harder to approach the consumer online and waiting for them to visit the brand page seems not to be a very efficient strategy.

Social media led to a more interactive environment among consumers mutually and between the brand and the consumer (De Vries, Gensler & Leeflang, 2012). Therefore, a remarkable change that social media brought about is the fact that the influence of consumers grew tremendously. This resulted in the consumer partly becoming the creator, as the constant feedback that brands receive from their customers, can to some extent be seen as a collaboration between the two concerning the creation of new products. Furthermore, the opinion of others regarding products became more visible, which led to the consumer also partly becoming the advertiser (Akar and Topçu, 2011).

The latter mentioned development led to appearance of social media influencers, which are consumers that are especially influential on their subscribers or followers on the social media platform on which the influencer is active (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey & Freberg, 2010). Social media influencers can be seen as the contemporary opinion leaders (Jin & Phua, 2014) or micro-celebrities (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2016) and can be used by brands to endorse their product, which is called influencer marketing. This offers a solution to the problems surrounding the rejection of commercial brand content on social media.

Therefore, a lot of organizations are using influencer marketing already, as 86% of marketers stated that they invested in influencer marketing in 2016 (Linqia, 2016). Another sign that influencer marketing is gaining in popularity is the emergence of ‘influencer agencies’ like ‘the Cirque,’ that connect brands with influencers.

According to Phua, Jin and Kim (2016) Instagram is the social media platform with the highest engagement measured as comments and likes per post. Furthermore, with 800 million monthly active users measured in September 2017, it has doubled in two years time and is currently the fastest growing social media platform (Constine, 2017). Furthermore, Instagram is a social media platform where influencer marketing is thriving. However, between the numerous social media studies, there do not appear to be a lot of studies that investigated Instagram separately, let alone influencer marketing on Instagram. Therefore, the aim of this study is to elaborate on the effectiveness of social media influencers on Instagram.

RQ 1: What is the effectiveness of influencer marketing on Instagram?

A frequently mentioned reason for the effectiveness of using social media influencers as a marketing communication strategy, is that consumers perceive them to be a credible source. However, there is a lack of research that addresses the credibility of social media influencers (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2016). Furthermore, the Federal Trade Commission in the U.S. created a law that requires brand endorsers to reveal third-party influence (Arrango, 2009). Moreover, in Germany, so called ‘covert advertising,’ which is not revealing that content is sponsored while it actually is, is also forbidden by law (Fulterer, 2015). Yet, in the Netherlands, Reclamecode Social Media is still an advisory body that advises influencers to disclosure the sponsor (RSM, 2014). Hence, this creates the need for research that examines the effect of these kind of decrees. Although there have been numerous studies that examined

source credibility, most of them focus on advertisement effectiveness in traditional media (Lee, Kim & Ham, 2016). Therefore, this study aims to clarify what the influence of disclosing a sponsor in an Instagram post is regarding the credibility of the influencer, together with how such a disclosure affects the overall effectiveness of Instagram posts.

RQ 2: In what way does sponsorship disclosure influence the effectiveness of influencer marketing on Instagram?

Lichtlé (2007) postulates that the arrangement of colour is an essential task for advertisers. In advertising research, there have been some studies that addressed the influence that the manipulation of the dimensions of colour (hue, brightness and saturation) can have on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. However, the number of studies in this area is still limited and there is a need for more research in other contexts than print advertising (Panigyrakis & Kyrousi, 2015). Furthermore, Instagram is especially focussed on the visual, as it is about users sharing their photos and videos. For that reason, it is essential to find out more about what impact certain visual elements like colour may have. Therefore, the current study objectifies to elaborate on how social media influencers can apply the manipulation of colour characteristics to increase effectiveness of Instagram posts.

RQ 3: In what way do the colour characteristics influence the effectiveness of Instagram posts by influencers on Instagram?

Whether a marketing communication is effective and will result in a positive attitude change of the consumer, is claimed to be highly dependent on how involved that consumer feels (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983). To what extent a consumer feels involved regarding an

object, depends on how high the personal, physical or situational relevance of the object in question is (Zaichkowsky, 1985). In case of influencer marketing, a consumer can feel highly or lowly involved with the object that is endorsed, which is in this case the brand. Although, the effectiveness of involvement has been widely addressed in advertising studies, it appears not yet to be applied to influencer marketing research. Therefore, this study aims to shed light on the consequences of the level of brand involvement that a consumer has in the context of influencer marketing on Instagram.

Past studies suggest that there are significant differences in information processing between men and women (Goodrich, 2014). In general, it is assumed that men tend to be selective processors that base their decisions on heuristic processing and women are, on average, more comprehensive processors that tend to take into account all the available information (Darley & Smith, 1995). The fact that most gender studies in the area of advertising research focus on how informational text that is given in an advertisement is processed (Keshari & Jain, 2016), there is a need for studies that address gender in other contexts. For that reason, the last objective of the current study is to find out what the influence of gender is concerning influencer marketing on Instagram.

RQ 4: What is the influence of brand involvement and gender concerning influencer marketing on Instagram?

2. Literature review

In order to answer the research questions, it is essential to clarify the different theoretical concepts that will have an influence on this process. The coming section will therefore be focussed on discussing different theories from past research surrounding these concepts. As Instagram marketing is a form of social media marketing, the first section of part 2 will focus on social media marketing to briefly introduce the general concept whereupon this study will work towards a more specific context. Subsequently, the literature that is reviewed will form the basis for the expectations that will lead to the development of the hypotheses used in this study.

2.1 Social media marketing

A frequently used definition of social media is provided by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p.61) who describe it as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technical foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content.” Web 2.0 is the current condition of online technology compared to the early Web, typified by improved communication channels and greater user interactivity and collaboration (O'Reilly, 2009). As the use of social media increases rapidly, not only existing social networkers, but also business and governmental organizations are starting to use them as communication tools (Kim & Ko, 2010). They appear in different kind of forms with the inclusion of weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, podcasts, pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking (Kim & Ko, 2012). Different from individual social networkers, organizations actively use social media for advertising and marketing as it provides a way to perform these activities with less cost and effort than before (Kim & Ko, 2010). Furthermore, as the amount of social media users is 2.7 billion, which is more than two third of all internet users (Smart Insights, 2017), nowadays social media is the place where the consumer is and

can be reached. Therefore, brands created their own accounts on Twitter, Facebook, Youtube and other platforms (Godey et al., 2016).

Social media marketing (SMM) is defined by Tuten (2008, p. 9) as “a broad category of advertising spending, including advertising using social networks, virtual worlds, user-generated product reviews, blogger endorsement, RSS feeds of content and social news sites, podcasts, games, and consumer generated advertising.” Ismail (2016) states that SMM activities should be seen as part of online marketing activities that replenish the traditional web-based promotion strategies, such as e-mail newsletters and online advertising campaigns. More importantly, SMM is typically characterized by its two-way communication, which means that the interactivity between the brands and the customer has significantly increased, and replaced the old one-way communication (De Vries et al., 2012; Kim & Ko, 2011). This increased interactivity means that companies now better listen to their customers and in this way brands and customers work together to create new products (Kim & Ko, 2011). Furthermore, an important development is that social media has transformed consumers, in a sense, that they have become marketers and advertisers themselves. They are sharing and exchanging online information regarding companies, products and services (Akar and Topçu, 2011).

2.2 SMM and the influence on attitude towards the brand

Research suggests that the use of SMM positively influences the attitudes consumers have towards the brand performing those marketing activities (Abzari, Ghassemi & Vosta, 2014; Beneke, Blampied, Miszczak & Parker, 2014; Bruhn, Schoenmueller & Schäfer, 2012). As discussed in part 2.1, different scholars argue that SMM leads to an interactive conversation between the brand and the customers instead of a one-way communication executed by the brand only (De Vries et al., 2012; Kim & Ko, 2011). Beneke

et al. (2014) argue that the latter discussed possibility to be interactive with the brand, is an important factor that drives positive attitudes towards the brand. This is also stated by two other studies that found that interactivity indeed positively influences the consumer attitude towards brand communications (De Vries et al., 2012; Liu & Shrum, 2002).

Brand attitude has already been subject of marketing research for many years and for this reason there are several definitions provided by different scholars. Whan Park, MacInnis, Priester, Eisingerich and Iacobucci (2010, p.1) conceptualized brand attitude strength as “the positivity or negativity (valence) of an attitude weighted by the confidence or certainty with which it is held.” Perhaps the most concrete definition is given by Mitchell and Olsen (1981, p.319), who are frequently cited in previous studies that address brand attitude, and describe the term as a “person’s overall evaluation of the brand.”

Brand attitude strength is said to be a predictor regarding consumer’s positive behaviours towards firms including brand consideration, intention to purchase, purchase behaviour and brand choice (Annie Jin, 2012; Priester & Nayakankuppam, 2004; Mackenzie & Spreng, 1992; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). In addition, the results of a study performed by Baldinger and Robinson (1996) indicated that a more positive brand attitude leads to an increase of market share. Furthermore, Aaker and Jacobson (2001) stated that it functions as one of the essential factors concerning the prediction of future term cash-flows.

2.3 Instagram

Instagram is an online mobile photo and video-sharing application that launched in October 2010 (Instagram, 2017). It allows its users to follow other users and, what is most important in the context of marketing, be up to date regarding their favourite brands, their interests and most recent trends (Elliot, 2014). A web article written by Constine (2017) on TechCrunch.com, a website that’s based on profiling start-ups and analysing new internet

products, stated that Instagram is currently the fastest growing social media platform. Furthermore, evidence suggests that Instagram is the social media platform where customer engagement is highest (McCullough, 2015; Phua et al., 2016). Instagram marketing can be executed by brands in a few different ways. The most obvious one is the banner ad that also frequently shows when using other social media platforms. Brands can also conceptualize certain 'hashtags' (#) with, for example, the slogan of a certain marketing campaign and ask customers to put the hashtag in the description of their post. Furthermore, brands can create their own brand pages and communicate about their newest products with their followers (Johnston, 2017). Lastly, there exists the possibility to approach a user with a high number of followers, called a social media influencer (SMI), and pay them to endorse a product (Long, 2016). However, despite the indications for Instagram's high marketing potential, a lot of studies still focus on social media in general and only few studies have investigated Instagram independently.

Lee, Lee, Moon and Sung (2015) argue that it is wrong to assume that the results of studies that investigated Twitter, Youtube and Facebook are also valid for Instagram, because contrary to other social media platforms, Instagram's main focus is on the sharing of pictures and short videos. It is gaining popularity with recent numbers of 400 million global accounts, of which 70.00% exist outside the United States. Daily, 70 million photos are shared and 3.5 billion are liked (Geurin & Burch, 2016).

As described in part 2.1, Akar and Topçu (2011) argue that social media has transformed the consumers into marketers and advertisers themselves and hereby make clear that this is a typical characterization of the social media age. Their theory can be connected to one of the, in this section discussed, forms of Instagram marketing which is product endorsement by SMIs who are, after all, consumers themselves. Since this type of marketing is relatively new and a kind that specifically came into existence, because of the rise of social

media, this study will further focus on SMI Marketing. Part 2.4 will further elaborate on the concept of SMIs

2.4 Social media influencers

As mentioned in part 2.1 and 2.2, consumers have become advertisers and marketers themselves. Nowadays, a frequently used way of marketing on social media is the use of brand endorsers called social media influencers (SMIs) (Freberg et al., 2010). SMIs are people who have assembled a large network of followers and are believed to be reliable experts in one or more niches (Wong, 2014). They represent a new type of independent third-party endorsers who shape audience attitudes through blogs, tweets and the use of other social media (Freberg et al., 2010) and can be seen as modern-day opinion leaders (Jin & Phua, 2014; Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014).

One of the first scholars that aimed to define opinion leaders are Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955, p.3) who describe the concept as “the individuals who were likely to influence other persons in their immediate environment.” Weimann (1994) typifies opinion leaders as individuals that have a wide array of personal connections and can be seen as a guide and an expert. The significance of opinion leaders does not depend on formal power or prestige, but on their capacity to act as the communicative power that informs their network regarding what is important concerning politics, social issues and consumer choices (Nisbet & Kotcher, 2009). Bhutada and Rollins (2015) found that when an expert endorses the product rather than a non-expert, consumers have significantly more favourable attitudes and stronger behavioural intentions.

An additional point of view regarding SMIs is to interpret them as micro-celebrities. Khamis et al. (2016) argue that before the digital age, a celebrity status was only enjoyed by few. It was either meant for those who achieved something remarkable, like famous

sportsmen and political figures, were popular in the culture industries, or were born in a privileged environment, like extremely wealthy people or royalties. However, nowadays ordinary people are enabled to reach a large audience through social media platforms, which, at the same time, are equipped with highly visible metrics of popularity and endorsement (Khamis et al., 2016). A large amount of followers, for example, can be seen as a fan base and in this way, ordinary users find online micro-celebrity status (Khamis et al., 2016; Marwick, 2016).

In the context of marketing, there have been a lot of studies that aimed to examine the effects of celebrity endorsement of a product or brand and the effect on outcomes like brand attitude. For example, Till, Stanley and Piruck (2008) found that brand endorsements by celebrities elicit favourable brand attitudes, because celebrities raise positive emotions. The same is said by Amos, Holmes and Strutton (2008) who state that a positive celebrity image will transfer to the endorsed brand. Another important reason that is said to lead to positive brand attitudes is the fact that the reliability of a product communication executed by a celebrity, or another consumer, is more reliable than the same product marketed by the brand itself (Choi & Rifon, 2012). However, Del Mar Garcia De Los Salmones, Dominguez and Herrero (2013) say that there is still a great lack of research in the celebrity endorsement field.

As research indicates that SMM, as well as celebrity endorsement, lead to positive brand attitudes, it is expected that when a SMI, who can be considered a micro-celebrity, performs these marketing activities on the social media platform Instagram, it will also lead to positive attitudes towards the endorsed brand.

2.5 Attitude towards the Instagram post

As indicated in part 2.2, this study has the objective of finding out more regarding the relationship between Instagram marketing and brand attitude. However, since Instagram is

about posting photos and videos, it would also be relevant to zoom in on Instagram-posts specifically. This offers the opportunity for brands to accumulate new knowledge on what consumer attitudes are towards a specific post.

A term that seems to be applicable, and has extensively been used in prior advertising research, is attitude towards the advertisement. After all, photo's or video's that are shared for marketing purposes by SMIs, are actually a form of advertising. Attitude towards the advertisement is defined as “a pre-disposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion” (Lutz, 1985, p. 46). Former studies have often combined both attitude towards the brand and attitude towards the ad, because they are both principal indicators of ad effectiveness (Belanche, Falvián and Pérez-Rueda, 2016). Furthermore, it was indicated in prior research that the use of celebrities as endorsers in advertisements is a big contributor concerning consumer' attitudes towards advertisements (Lafferty, Goldsmith & Newell, 2002; Ohanian, 1990). Therefore, it is expected that SMI endorsement, being perceived as micro-celebrities and experts as described in part 2.4, also results in more favourable attitudes towards the Instagram post (ATTIP).

2.6 Purchase intention

Besides attitude towards the brand and attitude towards the ad, in most advertising studies, a third ad effectiveness measure is added, namely, purchase intention (PI). Previous findings point out that these three constructs are related and measuring them is a good way to predict purchasing behaviour (Simpson, Brown & Widing, 1998). Eventually, the purpose of marketing a certain product, is that the consumers will buy it. This is not considered to be different when talking about SMI marketing on Instagram.

Purchase intention is defined by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980, p. 102) as “an individual’s readiness and willingness to purchase a certain product or service.” Several studies that have been done in the past suggest that there is a positive relationship between celebrities endorsing a product or brand and a consumers’ purchase intention (Amos et al., 2008; Choi & Rifon, 2012; Ohanian, 1991; Tripp, Jenson & Carlson, 1994). Therefore, it is expected that SMI endorsement will also lead to a stronger purchase intention.

Hypothesis 1: *An Instagram post by a social media influencer will lead to a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention compared to an Instagram post by a brand.*

2.7 SMI credibility

Djafarova and Rushworth (2016), who provided one of the few recent studies that addressed Instagram as a separate platform, stated that future research should focus on source credibility of endorsers on Instagram. O’keefe (1990, p. 181) defines source credibility as “judgments made by a perceiver ... concerning the believability of a communicator.” It refers to how much the message receiver believes in the sender and is an important factor in persuasion effectiveness (Wu & Wang, 2011). Source credibility can be divided into two dimensions; perceived expertise and trustworthiness. The level of expertise is determined by how knowledgeable the receiver perceives the source and the level of trustworthiness is determined by how unbiased the receiver perceives the source (Gotlieb & Sarel, 1991; Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953). Additionally, Ohanian (1990) states that there is a third dimension called attractiveness, which refers to when the sender attracts receivers to consume products or services. Ohanian furthermore explains that he extracted this third dimension from the source-attractiveness model provided by McGuire (1985) and says that this the

addition of this third dimension is necessary since attractiveness has become an important factor through the increase in use of celebrities as brand endorsers. However, there are also researchers who state that attractiveness has no influence on source credibility. For example, Newell and Shemwell (1995) found that attractiveness has no significant influence on how credible the consumers perceive the endorser. Furthermore, Lafferty and Goldsmith (2004) postulate that endorser attractiveness only influences source credibility when the product that is endorsed belongs to an attractiveness-improving product category like hair care, perfume or fashion.

Past studies indicated that source credibility is an essential factor concerning responses towards an advertised brand (Amos et al., 2008; Buda & Zhang, 2000; Gotlieb & Sarel, 1991). A higher source credibility is said to result in more favourable attitudes towards the message, brand attitudes and purchase intentions (Pornpitakpan, 2004). The results of a study performed by Del Mar Garcia De Los Salmones et al. (2013) support this assumption. The authors examined the effect of celebrity credibility on attitude towards the advertisement and found a significant positive influence.

In the current study, the SMI can be regarded as the source and it is therefore expected that the higher the consumer perceives SMI credibility to be, the more favourable the attitude towards the Instagram-post and endorsed brand is. Furthermore, it is expected that a higher perceived SMI credibility leads to a higher purchase intention.

Hypothesis 2: *A higher SMI credibility will lead to a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention.*

2.8 The influence of sponsorship disclosure

In the Netherlands, Reclamecode Social Media (RSM), advises microblogs, under which Instagram posts can be considered, to add a notification in the description when a product that is endorsed, is actually sponsored. This notification has to appear in the form of hashtags like #adv, #sponsored, #paid etc. (Stichting Reclame Code, 2014). While, in the Netherlands, RSM is still just an advisory code, in the United States the US Federal Trade Commission has already regulated in December 2009 that SMI are enforced to disclose “material connections” with endorsed brands (Arango, 2009). Furthermore, YouTube requires their users to indicate paid promotion like paid product placement, sponsorships or endorsements (Google, 2016). Above all, one could argue whether it is ethical to not include such a disclosure when the content is actually sponsored.

Different studies found that when certain content, like blogs, that could be perceived as purely informational, reveals that it is actually sponsored, this negatively influences how credible consumers perceive the source of that information to be (Hwang & Jeong, 2016). Hwang and Jeong (2016) also conducted a research themselves to find support of this claim and found that consumers that viewed a sponsorship disclosure in a blog indeed rated significantly lower on the source credibility of that blogger than consumers who did not view the disclosure. A possible reason for this, is given by Boerman, Van Reijmersdal and Neijens (2012) who postulate that by indicating certain content is sponsored, the viewers of this content may regard it as a persuasive attempt; it initiates their persuasion knowledge. The scholars state that firstly conceptual persuasion knowledge is activated, which means the viewers’ ability to distinguish commercial from editorial content. Secondly attitudinal persuasion knowledge is activated, which means that the consumer experiences distrust in the sponsored content that can be uttered in critical feelings regarding honesty, trustworthiness and, most relevant regarding the current study, reliability. Furthermore, Campbell, Mohr and

Verlegh (2013) examined sponsorship disclosures in blogs and found that it had a negative impact on consumer's brand recall and brand attitudes. A same finding is shown by van Reijmersdal, Rozendaal and Buijzen (2015) who studied advergames. Their results show that sponsorship disclosure concerning advergames, negatively influenced game and brand attitudes. However, this only counted for the participants who were in a positive mood. Additionally, Dekker and Van Reijmersdal (2013) found that a sponsorship disclosure leads to lower brand attitudes, but only for participants that perceived the endorser as less credible already. Furthermore, the results Hwang and Jeong (2016) showed that a sponsorship disclosure leads to significantly lower attitudes towards the message as compared to no sponsorship disclosure.

Recent developments surrounding sponsored influencer content have created a necessity to examine the effects of sponsorship disclosure. Although there have been numerous studies that examined source credibility, most of them focus on advertisement effectiveness in traditional media (Lee et al., 2016; Tutaj & Van Reijmersdal, 2012). It is therefore questionable if these studies are also applicable and relevant regarding marketing activities performed by SMIs on Instagram. Past research indicates that when it is revealed that certain content is sponsored, consumers' persuasion knowledge is activated which leads the consumer to perceive the source as less credible (Boerman et al., 2012). It has also been shown that a sponsorship disclosure leads to lower brand attitudes, attitudes towards the ad and purchase intentions (Campbell et al., 2013; van Reijmersdal et al., 2015). As described in part 2.7, a high source credibility is regarded as an essential factor which eventually may result in a more favourable attitude and purchase intention (Amos et al., 2008; Pornpitakpan, 2004). It is therefore expected that a low SMI credibility is a reason that a sponsorship disclosure results in less positive attitudes and purchase intentions. Thus, SMI credibility

mediates the relationship between a sponsorship disclosure and the effectiveness measures ATTB, ATTIP and PI.

Hypothesis 3: *SMI credibility mediates the relationship between sponsorship disclosure and the effectiveness measures, as such that when there is no sponsorship disclosure it will lead to a higher SMI credibility which will lead to a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention.*

2.9 The influence of saturation level

The choice of colours to include and the way they are presented in advertisements are issues of high importance for advertising experts (Panigyrakis & Kyrousi, 2015). McGann and Snook-Luther (1993), for example, found that an increase in colour intensity leads to an increase in arousal and more positive evaluations of an ad. Another study, performed by Lichtlé (2009), postulated that preferred colours in advertisements increase brand memory and men prefer more saturated and less bright colours. Regardless of its importance, little is actually known about the use of colour in advertising (Lichtlé, 2007, 2009; Panigyrakis & Kyrousi, 2015)

Colours are characterized by three widely accepted dimensions, which are hue, brightness and saturation (Crozier, 1999; Panigyrakis & Kyrousi, 2015). Hue can be defined as terms of wavelength and is the principle quality determinant. Furthermore, brightness refers to the amount of light reflected by a colour. At last, saturation is involved with the complicatedness of the wavelength and is the proportion of hue in a certain colour (Panigyrakis & Kyrousi, 2015). Highly saturated colours have a higher percentage of pigment in them (Gorn, Chattopadhyay, Yi & Dahl, 1997). Every factor of colour (hue, saturation, lightness) influences all the dimensions of emotion which are pleasure, arousal and

dominance (Lichtlé, 2007), or affects the emotions one experiences as they look at an advertisement (Gorn et al., 1997; Lichtlé, 2007). Saturation and brightness are, in general, thought to affect human perception of colour to a greater extent than hue (Aslam, 2006; Camgoz, Yener & Guvenc, 2004).

Gorn et al., (1997) state that the majority of the articles that address the role of colour in marketing are mainly anecdotal instead of empirical which calls for more research. Furthermore, Lichtlé (2007) says that the association between colour and consumer behaviour is still relatively unexplored. Numerous scholars even assert that research on colour in the dominion of marketing is currently still in an early phase (Divard & Urien, 2001). Panigyrakis and Kyrousi (2015) state that more research regarding the role of colour in advertising needs to be conducted to improve the general understanding of this concept. The scholars specifically mention that this should also be carried out in other media than print, like internet and television. The authors refer to McQuarrie (2004) who says that future research in this subject should be “domain specific.” Furthermore, Panigyrakis and Kyrousi (2015) emphasize that future studies should focus on the impact of different levels of saturation, which is also said by Gorn et al. (1997), who state that researchers should, in the future, examine the effect of different levels of saturation in other contexts than print advertisements.

There has only been little research that examined saturation as a separate construct (Lichtlé, 2007; Panigyrakis & Kyrousi, 2015). Studies that did address the colour issue, found for example that colours that are highly saturated will be preferred over lowly saturated ones (Lichtlé, 2007; McManus, Jones & Cottrell, 1981, as cited in Panigyrakis & Kyrousi, 2015). Furthermore, higher levels of saturation are positively associated with arousal (McManus et al., 1981, as cited in Panigyrakis & Kyrousi, 2015; Valdez, 1993; Gorn et al., 1997) and elicit greater feelings of excitement which leads to more positive attitudes towards the ad (Gorn et al., 1997) and a higher intention to purchase (Babin, Hardesty & Suter, 2003). Lichtlé (2007)

also assessed attitude towards the ad and likewise found that attitudes were more favourable when the dominant colour of the ad had a higher saturation level. However, this was specifically found for individuals with a high optimal stimulation level.

There seems to be a need for more research regarding the effects that colour can have in advertising communications, especially in other domains than print advertising. As previous studies have shown, higher levels of saturation of the colours used in advertisements cause the consumer to feel aroused, excited and stimulated which results in favourable attitudes and a higher purchase intention. It is therefore expected that this will also be the case when a SMI posts a photo where the colours are highly saturated compared to a picture in which the colours are significantly less saturated.

Hypothesis 4: *When an Instagram post by a SMI has a high level of saturation, it will result in a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention.*

2.10 The influence of brand involvement

Involvement is stated to be an essential variable regarding advertising effectiveness and has extensively been subject of prior research (Zhang & Zinkhan, 2006). Whether a marketing communication is effective and will result in a positive attitude change of the consumer, is claimed to be highly dependent on how involved that consumer feels (Petty et al., 1983).

According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) the involvement of consumers corresponds with different routes to persuasion. High involvement leads to an attentive state of mind, leading to the viewer having more motivation to process information which means that they are more likely to be influenced by the central route. The central route includes manipulations that require extensive issue relevant thought, like quality of arguments in a

message. In contrast, the peripheral route corresponds with low involvement. In this case, peripheral cues like number of arguments, expertise, attractiveness and credibility of a message source, brand endorsers (Petty et al., 1983) or arousal stimuli like images and the addition of more colour, better graphics (Liu, Li, Ji, North & Yang, 2017; Shaouf, Lü & Li, 2016) or audio-visual materials (Belanche et al, 2016).

How highly involved a certain consumer is regarding an object, depends on how high the personal, physical or situational relevance of the object in question is (Zaichkowsky, 1985). With personal relevance Zaichkowsky (1985) means the “inherent interests, values, or needs that motivate one toward the object” (p. 342). With physical relevance, she means “characteristics of the object that cause differentiation and increase interest” (p. 342) and with situational relevance she means “something that temporarily increases relevance or interest toward the object” (p. 342). According to the earlier discussed ELM of Petty et al., (1983), this high relevance of the object would mean that the consumer has a high likelihood of elaboration. Several things can be regarded as an object such as a product, brand, advertisement or purchase situation (Solomon, 2014).

Since one of the core points of this study is finding out consumer attitudes towards the brand that is endorsed by a SMI, the object that seems most relevant is the brand. Brand involvement is defined by Aaker (1997) as an indication of the consumer’s perceived relevancy of the brand and this is in line with the above discussed work of Zaichkowsky (1985). Therefore, this study will aim to find out what the effects of SMI endorsement, SMI credibility and a high level of saturation is when consumers have different levels of brand involvement.

For viewers who are highly involved with a brand, such that they are attentive to and interested in the ad, the incentive of high-arousal stimuli might not be necessary. It is therefore expected that low brand involvement makes the use of higher image saturation, an

SMI endorsement as persuasion method or a high SMI credibility more effective compared to a high brand involvement.

Hypothesis 5: *Brand involvement moderates the relationship between the Instagram post source and the post effectiveness measures, as such that SMI endorsement will result in a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention when a consumers' brand involvement is low compared to high.*

Hypothesis 6: *Brand involvement moderates the relationship between SMI credibility and the post effectiveness measures, as such that a higher SMI credibility will result in a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention when a consumers' brand involvement is low compared to high.*

Hypothesis 7: *Brand involvement moderates the relationship between saturation level and the post effectiveness measures, as such that a higher level of saturation will result in a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention when a consumers' brand involvement is low compared to high.*

2.11 The influence of gender

Gender is regarded as a crucial segmentation factor in the area of marketing (Darley & Smith, 1995; Goodrich, 2014; Shaouf et al., 2016). The reason for this, is because gender suffices several prerequisites for successful implementation such as; “(1) it is easily identifiable, (2) gender segments are accessible, (3) gender segments are measurable and responsive to marketing mix elements, and (4) gender segments are large and profitable” (Darley & Smith, 1995, p. 41). However, research that focusses on gender differences mainly focusses on how

informational text that is given in an advertisement is processed, but responses to other advertising appeals remains scarce (Goodrich, 2014; Keshari & Jain, 2016).

Meyers-Levy (1989), as cited in several publications regarding gender among which Darley and Smith (1995), Goodrich (2014) and Shaouf et al., (2016), postulates that the way in which the brain works, strongly differs between men and women and developed a theory that is still frequently mentioned in scholarly literature about gender differences. This theory addresses information processing differences between males and females and is called the selectivity model. According to the selectivity model, men are selective processors who do not take into account all available information when viewing, for example, an advertisement, but are selective and rely on heuristics. Heuristic processing, which is also referred to as peripheral processing which is, like formerly discussed in part 2.10, a processing method that involves relatively little processing effort through which decisions are made based on peripheral cues (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994). Examples of peripheral cues are number of arguments, source credibility, graphics, colours or celebrity endorsement (Liu et al., 2017). On the other hand, women are more comprehensive processors that tend to take into account all the available information (Darley & Smith, 1995) and are less sensitive for peripheral cues than men (Shaouf et al., 2016).

In a study conducted by Tsihla, Hatzithomas and Boutsouki (2016), results show that peripheral cues on webpages have more influence on men than women regarding their attitudes towards a website and the promoted brand. This is in line with the research of Leong and Hawamdeh (1999) which indicated that men like animation, graphics, images and colours more than women. Furthermore, Putrevu (2004) found that, compared to women, men showed more favourable attitudes towards the brand, attitudes towards the ad and purchase intentions when viewing imagery advertisements. A research paper that is particularly relevant concerning this study is provided by Shaouf et al. (2016). The scholars studied gender

differences in response to web advertisements visual design which includes the use of graphics and colours. The scholars used the same ad effectiveness measures that will be used in this study; attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the brand and purchase intention. They found that a web advertisements visual design had significantly stronger effect on men than women regarding all the outcomes.

As discussed earlier, celebrity endorsements are also seen as a peripheral cue (Klaus & Bailey, 2008; Liu et al, 2017) and one would expect that this therefore, would have a stronger effect on men than on women. There do not appear to be a lot of studies that empirically examined gender differences in response to celebrity or expert endorsements. Premeaux (2009) investigated differences of middle and upper class male's and female's concerning celebrity endorsement. He found that both genders were influenced, but the influence was stronger on men compared to middle class women. However, the influence was strongest on upper class women. Boyd and Shank (2004) examined the effects between gender of sports celebrity endorsers. They found that athlete endorsers had a bigger influence on men than women, however, the results were not significant. The scholars acknowledge that their study has a few shortcomings and propose that future research should also elaborate on the issue of the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement between gender. Peetz, Parks and Spencer (2004) also studied the effects of sport celebrity endorsements and found that men were more favourable towards the endorsers, even the less well-known one's.

In this part, literature that deals with subject of gender differences was discussed. Prior studies show that the influence of colour is stronger on men than women. Although this has been investigated in an online context, it has not been done in the context of Instagram specifically. Furthermore, based on the selectivity model and few empirical studies, there is a reason to assume that stronger influence on men also counts for source credibility and celebrity/expert endorsements. However, there do not appear to be notable studies that

examined this in particular, let alone in the context of SMI marketing on Instagram. The mixed assumptions that are given in scholarly literature also indicate that there is a high need for more research that tackles gender differences. Therefore, the current study aims to shed light on this matter and addresses this specific issue in the environment of Instagram.

Hypothesis 8: *Gender moderates the relationship between the Instagram post source and the post effectiveness measures, as such that SMI endorsement will result in a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention when the consumer is a male.*

Hypothesis 9: *Gender moderates the relationship between SMI credibility and the post effectiveness measures, as such that a higher SMI credibility will result in a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention when the consumer is a male.*

Hypothesis 10: *Gender moderates the relationship between saturation level and the post effectiveness measures, as such that a higher level of saturation will result in a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention when the consumer is a male.*

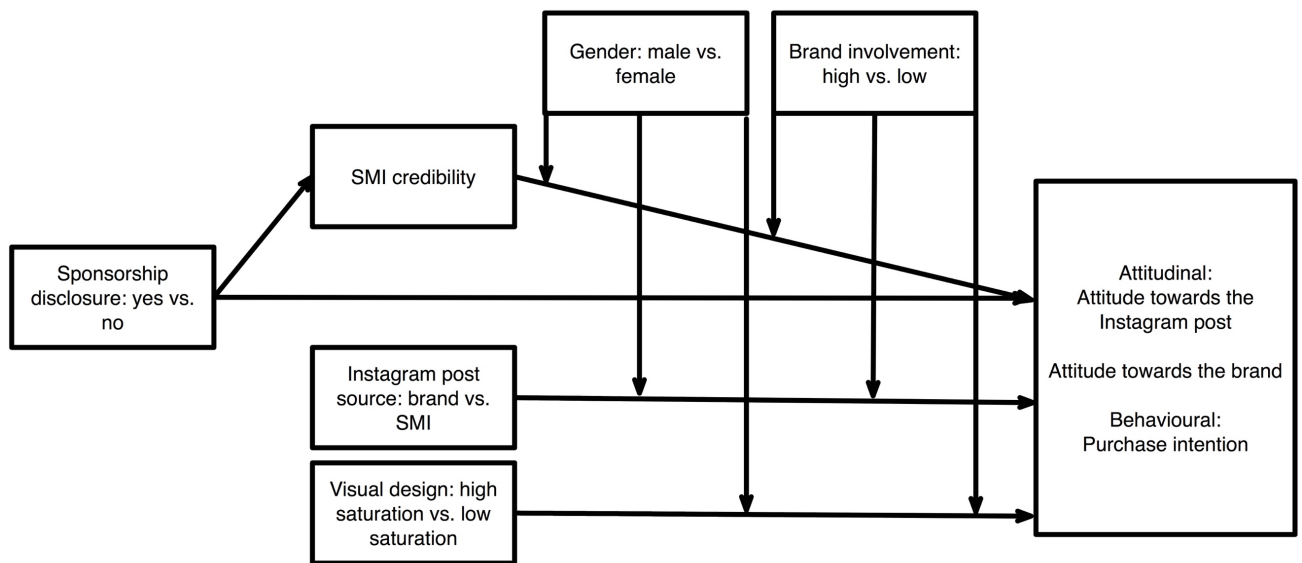


Figure 1. Conceptual model

3. Method

3.1 Sample

Because the research questions are aimed at adding new insights to existing knowledge regarding social media marketing activities on Instagram, the data that will lead to this result has to be acquired from people that use this specific platform. Therefore, the sample that was collected consisted of respondents who are Instagram users. According to Aslam (2017), the largest user group on Instagram is from the age of 18-29. The aim of this study was therefore to let this be the largest group in the sample as well, which turned out to be 84.42%.

The final sample consisted of 180 respondents of which 47.78 % were men and 52.22% were women. However, an issue appeared. 122 participants completed test 1 and therefore their gender was registered, although 11 of them did not finish the survey which resulted in missing values regarding age, education and nationality. Therefore, only the age of 111 participants was registered ($M = 24.59$, $SD = 4.96$). The remaining 58 participants did not

complete test 1 and were therefore excluded from the dataset and their gender was not registered.

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of participants.

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	61	50.0
	Female	61	50.0
Highest education	Middelbare/Secondary school	8	6.6
	MBO/Post-secondary school	7	5.7
	HBO/University of applied sciences	30	24.6
	WO / University Bachelor degree	28	23.0
	WO / University Master degree	38	31.1
	Missing*	11	9.0
Nationality	Dutch	90	73.77
	Non-Dutch European	17	13.93
	Other	4	3.28
	Missing*	11	9.0
Age	18-29	103	84.42
	30-51	8	6.56
	Missing*	11	9.0

*Missing respondents did not fill out the last page where these demographics were asked.

3.2 Methodology

To test the research questions, this study employed an online questionnaire by using the online panel Qualtrics. Wright (2005) argues that survey research gives access to unique populations as internet provides a way to address groups of people that would be hard to reach through other channels. This study aimed to find the effect a post by a SMI has, just because it is a SMI. Therefore, it was chosen to compare an Instagram post by a fictional SMI to one posted by a fictional brand's Instagram account. Furthermore, the influence of credibility of a

SMI with or without including a sponsorship disclosure in their post and the consequence of using a high level of saturation compared low level of saturation were measured. In addition, the moderating roles of brand involvement and gender were examined. Chosen was to use the well-known ad effectiveness measures attitude towards the ad, which was transformed into attitude towards the Instagram post, attitude towards the brand and purchase intention. Participants were asked how strongly they agree with statements regarding SMI credibility, ATTIP, ATTB and PI based on scales that are described in part 3.6.

The questionnaire existed of 3 tests, but before test 1 started, participants were divided between male's and female's and subsequently between low and high brand involvement.

In order to test gender differences, the stimuli material had to be related to an industry that would address both male's and female's. The fashion industry seemed to be the best choice, because it is relevant for both genders. Furthermore, statistics show that 96% of US fashion brands has an Instagram account (Smith, 2016) and the audience size and follower growth of fashion brands were much bigger than that of the brands in other industries on Instagram (Buryan, 2016). Besides, the fashion industry has way more engagement, which is defined by number of comments and likes, than any other industry on Instagram (McCullough, 2015). This increases the likeliness of respondents also being interested in the content of a questionnaire that would be about fashion. It was therefore decided that the questionnaire should be in the context of fashion.

3.3 Procedure

Participants were approached through Facebook, Instagram and e-mail in July and August 2017. On my own Facebook and Instagram, I posted several messages addressed to anyone who met with the inclusion criteria, which were being an Instagram user and preferably, but not necessarily be aged between 18 and 29, to ask if they would like to take part in the study.

With this, a link to the questionnaire was provided. Furthermore, e-mails containing the same message were sent to contacts that were known to suffice the inclusion criteria. In this message, a request was included to share the link with other people that match the inclusion criteria and thus a snowball convenience sample was used in this study. Eventually the questionnaire had 180 respondents of which 86 were male and 94 were female. However, 58 participants did not complete test 1 and were excluded from the dataset.

Before the survey was distributed, a pre-test was conducted among ten participants to test the quality of the questionnaire and this has led to several improvements of the questionnaire. For example, some scales were in the opposite order than they were supposed to be and information that was unclear was adjusted.

When opening the link, firstly, the respondents saw a short introduction where the value of their responses was explained, the purpose of the study was showed and they were asked to agree that their responses may be used for scientific purposes. After they agreed, they had to indicate their gender and whether they are an Instagram user. If the respondent answered yes, they were placed in the high or low brand involvement condition. The division of low and high brand involvement is based on the study of Rice, Kelting and Lutz (2011). The low brand involvement participants were told to focus on the overall appearance and style of the Instagram posts they were about to view and the high brand involvement participants were told to focus on the brand (Appendix Q5-6).

In test 1, the respondents firstly saw either a text that informed them that they were going to view an Instagram post by a fictional brand or they saw a text that informed them that they were going to view an Instagram post by a SMI with a screenshot below that showed an overview of the Instagram page of this certain SMI. Subsequently, the respondents were shown either an Instagram post by the fictional brand or by the fictional SMI and indicated

their ATTIP, ATTB and PI on the next page. Part 3.4 will elaborately discuss the stimuli that were used in the test.

Test 2 was a test that existed within test 1 (Figure 2). The respondents in the ‘SMI condition’ were divided between two conditions. The respondents viewed either the Instagram post of the SMI in which sponsorship was disclosed in the description (SD condition) or an Instagram post of the SMI in which there was no sponsorship disclosure (NSD condition) (Figure 3-4). Subsequently, all the respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on several statements regarding SMI credibility. After filling out the credibility scale, the respondents indicated their ATTIP, ATTB and PI (Appendix Q13-16, 33-36).

In test 3, the effect of two different levels of saturation was tested. All the respondents first viewed an informative piece of text that stated they were going to view a photo posted by a SMI and below the piece of text there was a screenshot with an overview of the Instagram page of that certain SMI. Subsequently, they viewed the Instagram post and indicated their ATTIP, ATTB and PI on the next page (Appendix Q23-25, 43-45).

In order to clarify in what way the number of respondents differ between the different

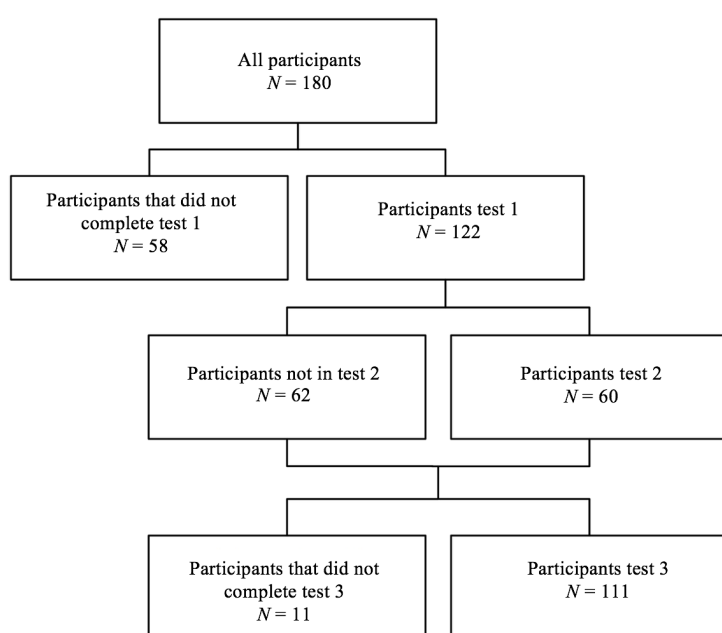


Figure 2. Participants distribution between tests.

tests, a consort diagram is added on the left (Figure 2). In the first test, 122 participants took part. Test 2 was conducted among the participants that were in the ‘SMI condition’ in test 1 and therefore included 60 participants. In test 3, all the remaining participants took part that didn’t decide to stop before the survey ended which resulted in 111 participants.

3.4 Stimuli and Manipulations

3.4.1 Test 1: SMI brand endorsement

In the first part, a picture of an Instagram post by the fictional brand ‘Nemesis’ (brand condition) itself or a picture of a SMI endorsing Nemesis (SMI condition) was shown. In case the respondent was male, a male SMI was shown and in case the respondent was a female, a female SMI was shown. The picture that was shown in the ‘brand condition’ was, in case of both genders, the same picture as in the ‘SMI condition.’ However, in the ‘brand condition,’ the account that posted the picture was the fictional brand Nemesis and in the ‘SMI condition,’ the account that posted the picture was the fictional influencer Ashley Clark, in case of a female respondent, or Andrew Clark, in case of a male respondent (Figure 3-5). The clothing that the SMIs wore in the photo was aimed to be a piece of clothing that the average consumer would wear in daily life. Ashley Clark wore a light pink jacket and Andrew Clark wore a navy blue casual smart suit. To be more certain whether consumers also considered this to be a piece of clothing that the average person would wear, a manipulation check was performed, which is described in part 3.5. Before a respondent is shown the Instagram post, respondents in the ‘brand condition’ were told they were going to view a post of a fashion brand. The respondents in the ‘SMI condition’ were primed with an overview of the Instagram page of the SMI they were about to view a post of. This overview was a simulation of a typical SMI Instagram page and showed that the SMI has a high number of followers (213K) and high-quality photo’s (Figure 3-4). The reason to include a high number of followers is grounded by the fact that a high number of followers typifies a SMI (Wong, 2014). Furthermore, Utz (2010) performed an experimental research using the social network ‘Hyves.nl’ and empirically demonstrated that number of friends indeed influences the perceived popularity and social attractiveness of a user. An identical experiment was conducted by Tong, Van der Heide, Langwell and Walther (2008) who found that number of

Facebook friends also increased the perceived social attractiveness. This is also in line with the reasoning of Hwang (2015) who states that opinion leadership of a Twitter user is positively related to a higher number of followers. Jin and Phua (2014) hypothesized that a celebrity with a higher number of followers on Twitter will be perceived as more credible and found this hypothesis to be supported. Consumers perceived the celebrities with a higher number of followers as more physically attractive, trustworthy and competent. For these reasons, it can be argued that it is more realistic when the number of followers is visible and high.

The picture's that were used in the experiment, were taken from the Instagram accounts of SMIs from Canada with a medium-sized follower base, to lower the chance of respondents being familiar with that certain SMI, as this questionnaire was distributed in the Netherlands. The familiarity was also checked within the questionnaire, which is described in part 3.5. For the 'overview prime' that was shown to the respondents in the 'SMI condition' before viewing the Instagram post, photos were used that did not clearly show the face of that SMI, also to decrease the chances of respondents recognizing that person (Figure 3-4).

3.4.2 Test 2: Sponsorship disclosure and perceived SMI credibility

In the 'SMI condition,' respondents viewed the Instagram post, as described in part 3.4.1, of a SMI with or without a 'sponsorship disclosure' in the description (Figure 3-4).

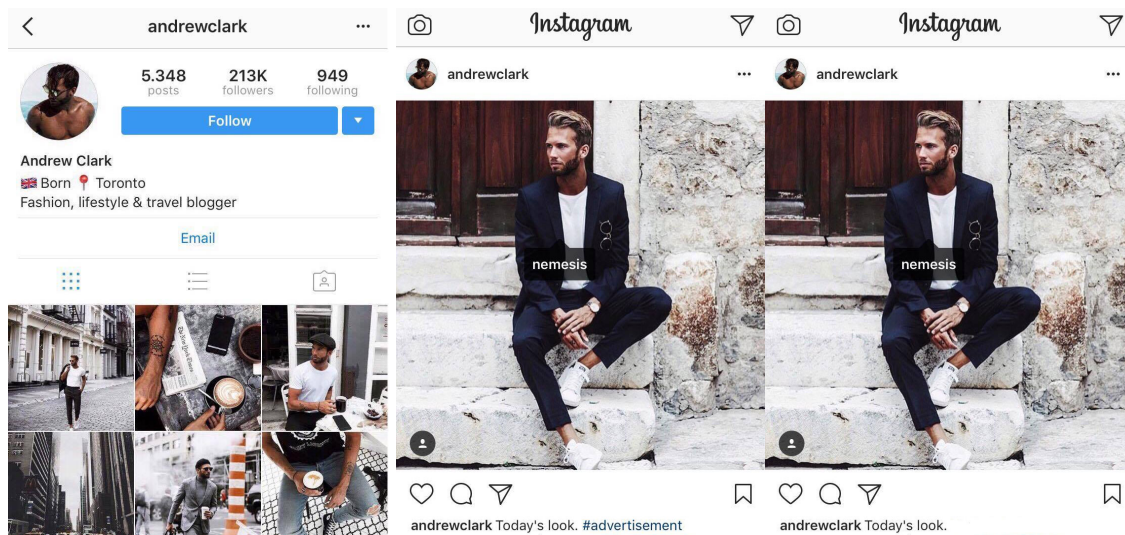


Figure 3. From left to right: Andrew Clark's account overview, 'sponsorship condition,' 'no-sponsorship condition.'



Figure 4. From left to right: Ashley Clark's account overview, 'sponsorship condition,' 'no-sponsorship condition.'



Figure 5. From left to right: 'brand condition male,' 'brand condition female.'

3.4.3 Test 3: Effect of different levels of saturation

In the third experiment, all respondents saw an Instagram post that was posted by a SMI. In case of male respondents, this SMI was a male called Brian Walker. In case of female respondents, this SMI was a female called Briana Walker. Just as described in experiment 1/2, the respondents were, before viewing the Instagram post, primed with an overview of the Instagram page of this SMI (see Figure 6-7). Again, a high number of followers was shown in the overview, which is grounded on the theory discussed in part 3.4.1.

The photo that was posted was either a photo with a saturation level of +50 (high saturation level) or -50 from the original level. The saturation adjustment was made with a smartphone application called ‘Adobe Photoshop Lightroom’ (Figure 8). To make sure that the level of saturation would be clearly visible, chosen was to use colourful pictures. As can be seen in Figure 6-7, this resulted in very different effects. The clothing that the SMIs wear in the photo, was, just as in test 1-2 aimed to be piece of clothing that the average consumer would wear in daily life. This resulted in Brian Walker wearing a light blue shirt with short sleeves and Briana Walker wearing a light blue suit. To be more certain whether consumers also considered this to be a piece of clothing that the average person would wear, a manipulation check was performed, which is described in part 3.5.

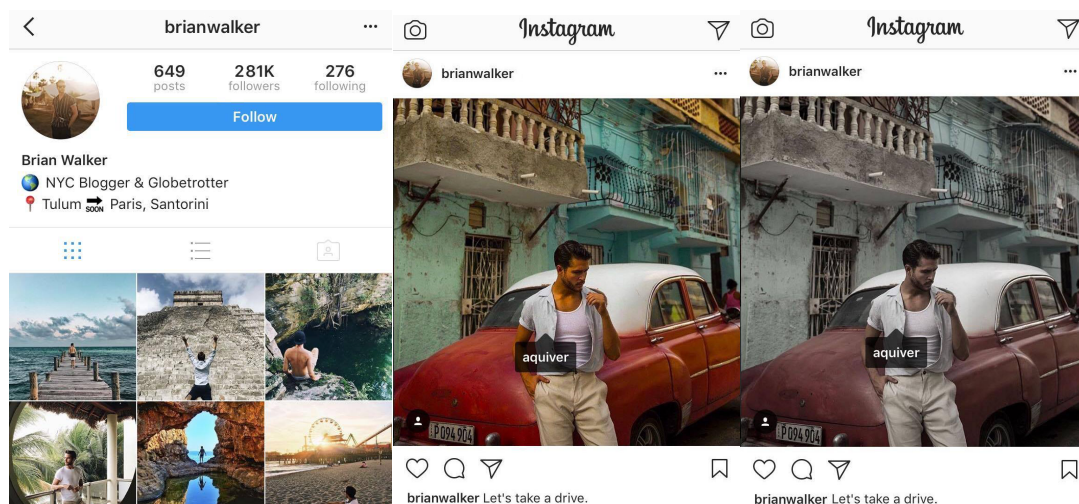


Figure 6. From left to right: Brian Walker's account overview, 'high saturation,' 'low saturation.'

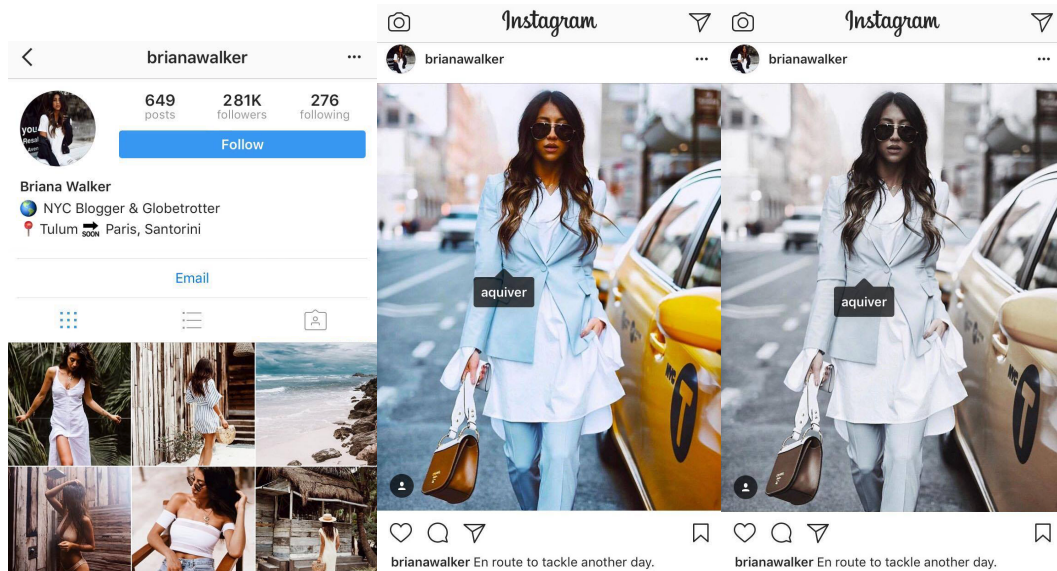


Figure 7. From left to right: Briana Walker's account overview, 'high saturation,' 'low saturation.'

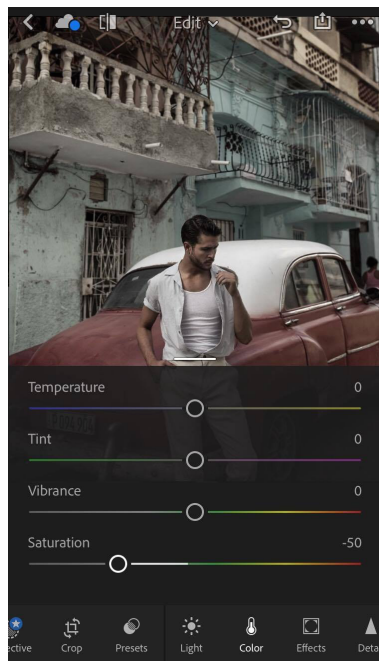


Figure 8. Saturation level adjusted in Adobe Photoshop Lightroom.

3. 5 Manipulation checks

3.5.1 In-test measure: SMI familiarity check

The photos of the fictional influencers were retrieved from the Instagram pages of Canadian influencers with a medium sized follower base. To test whether participants were familiar with these influencer, a familiarity check was performed right after the participants viewed the Instagram post (Appendix Q12, 22, 32 & 42). The participants had to indicate on a five-

point scale ('definitely yes,' 'probably yes,' 'might or might not,' 'probably no,' or 'definitely no') whether they were familiar with the person they just saw. In this case it is favourable for the study when participants indicate 'definitely not' or 'probably not.'

As is indicated in the tables below, for every fictional influencer, a vast majority of the participants indicated that they were not familiar with that person. This means that the results were not biased by familiarity with the SMI.

Table 1. Familiarity check test 1-2

Test 1-2 ($N = 122$)				
Andrew Clark (men $N = 61$)			Ashley Clark (women $N = 61$)	
Answer	N	Percentage (%)	N	Percentage (%)
Definitely yes	0	.00	1	.82
Probably yes	2	1.02	2	1.02
Might or might not	5	4.10	4	3.28
Probably not	13	10.66	10	8.20
Definitely not	41	33.61	44	36.06

Table 2. Familiarity check test 3

Test 3 ($N = 111$)				
Brian Walker (men $N = 55$)			Briana Walker (women $N = 56$)	
Answer	N	Percentage (%)	N	Percentage (%)
Definitely yes	0	.00	0	.82
Probably yes	0	1.02	2	1.02
Might or might not	3	4.10	5	3.28
Probably not	5	10.66	6	8.20
Definitely not	47	33.61	43	36.06

3.5.2 Pre-test measure: clothing check

10 men aged 20-24 were shown the stimuli material of the fictional SMIs Andrew Clark and Brian Walker. In addition, 10 women aged 21-24 were shown the stimuli material of the fictional SMIs Ashley Clark and Briana Walker, however, only the photo was shown. Therefore, the participants could not see the name of the person or that it was a picture from Instagram.

The participants had to indicate on a five-point scale ('definitely yes,' 'probably yes,' 'might or might not,' 'probably no,' or 'definitely no') whether the piece of clothing (suit/shirt/jacket/suit) was something they thought is a piece of clothing that the average male/female consumer would wear in daily life. In this case, the vast majority indicated 'definitely yes' or 'probably yes' and this is supportive of the materials that were used.

Table 3. Clothing check

Men (<i>N</i> = 10)					Women (<i>N</i> = 10)			
Andrew Clark (suit)			Brian Walker (shirt)		Ashley Clark (jacket)		Briana Walker (suit)	
Answer	<i>N</i>	Percentage (%)	<i>N</i>	Percentage (%)	<i>N</i>	Percentage (%)	<i>N</i>	Percentage (%)
Definitely yes	8	80.00	6	60.00	1	100.00	7	70.00
Probably yes	1	10.00	2	20.00	0	.00	0	.00
Might or might not	1	10.00	2	20.00	0	.00	1	10.00
Probably not	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	2	20.00
Definitely not	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00	0	.00

3.5.3 In-test measure: Sponsorship disclosure check

The respondents that took part in Experiment 2 and were in the ‘sponsorship disclosure condition,’ were asked whether they noticed the ‘#advertisement’ in the description (Appendix Q17 & 37). 27 participants were in the ‘sponsorship disclosure condition’ and 17 of them indicated ‘yes,’ which means 63% noticed the ‘#advertisement’.

Table 4. Sponsorship disclosure check

Answer	Men (<i>N</i> = 13)		Women (<i>N</i> = 14)		Total (<i>N</i> = 27)	
	<i>N</i>	Percentage (%)	<i>N</i>	Percentage (%)	<i>N</i>	Percentage (%)
Yes	9	69.20	8	57.10	17	63.00
No	4	30.80	6	42.90	10	37.00

3.6 Measures

Attitude towards the Instagram post

Measured with four five-point Likert scale items that were anchored by “strongly disagree” – “strongly agree.” The items were stated as follows: This Instagram post is 1. Pleasant, 2. Likeable, 3. Irritating (counter indicative), 4. Interesting) stemming from Zhang & Zinkhan (2006). The scale turned out to be very reliable in all tests ($\alpha_{\text{test1-2}} = .772$; $\alpha_{\text{test 3}} = .823$).

Attitude towards the Brand

Measured with ten five-point Likert scale items that were anchored by “strongly disagree” – “strongly agree.” The items were stated as follows: “This is a 1. Pleasant, 2. Good, 3. Positive, 4. Favourable, 5. Likeable, 6. Useless (counter indicative), 7. High quality, 8. Valuable brand” stemming from Batra and Stephens (1994). These were complemented with two items (9. Interesting, 10. Appealing) stemming from Matthes, Schemer and Wirth (2007). The scale turned out to be very reliable in all tests ($\alpha_{\text{test1-2}} = .915$; $\alpha_{\text{test 3}} = .939$).

Purchase intention

Measured with four five-point Likert scale items that were anchored by “strongly disagree” – “strongly agree.” The items were stated as follows: “To buy the (suit/jacket/shirt/suit) is... 1. Something I certainly want to do 2. Something I recommend to my friends, 3. Really something for me” stemming from Hornikx, van Meurs and Hof (2013). The scale turned out to be very reliable in all tests ($\alpha_{\text{test1-2}} = .816$; $\alpha_{\text{test 3}} = .932$).

SMI credibility

Measured with five five-point Likert scale items that were anchored by “strongly disagree” – “strongly agree.” The items were stated as follows: “Andrew Clark/Ashley Clark/Brian Walker/Briana Walker is... 1. Convincing, 2. Believable, 3. Biased (counter indicative) stemming from MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989. These were complemented with two items (4. Trustworthy, 5. An expert) retrieved from Harmon and Coney (1982). The scale turned out to be reliable ($\alpha = .756$).

4. Results

Before the analyses were performed, counter indicative items were recoded. Furthermore, factor analyses were performed which led to the removal of one item. This concerned item number three from the SMI credibility scale. This item was deleted because this would lead to an increase of Cronbach’s alpha from .701 to .756.

Furthermore, baseline differences in the distribution of gender between the participants in the SMI versus brand condition, the sponsorship disclosure versus no sponsorship disclosure condition and high versus low saturation condition were measured by using Chi-Square tests. No significant differences in the distribution of gender were found.

4.1 Test 1

The influence of Instagram post source (SMI vs. brand) on the dependent variables ATTB, ATTIP and PI together with the moderating effects of brand involvement and gender were tested with a 2 x 2 x 3 between subjects multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The results are reported in table 5.

The main effect of Instagram post source on ATTB was not significant, $F(1, 114) = 1.45, p = .232$ ($M_{\text{SMI}} = 3.44, SD = .08; M_{\text{brand}} = 3.31, SD = .08$). Furthermore, the main effect of Instagram post source on ATTIP was also not significant, $F(1, 114) = .16, p = .689$ ($M_{\text{SMI}} = 3.61, SD = .10; M_{\text{brand}} = 3.55, SD = .10$). At last, the main effect of Instagram post source on PI was not significant $F(1, 114) = .28, p = .598$ ($M_{\text{SMI}} = 2.79, SD = .12; M_{\text{brand}} = 2.70, SD = .12$). Therefore, H1a, H1b and H1c were rejected.

The interaction effect of Instagram post source and brand involvement on ATTB was not significant, $F(1, 114) = .01, p = .943$ ($M_{\text{SMI, low BI}} = 3.46, SD = .10; M_{\text{SMI, high BI}} = 3.42, SD = .11; M_{\text{brand, low BI}} = 3.32, SD = .12; M_{\text{brand, high BI}} = 3.30, SD = .13$). Furthermore, the interaction effect of Instagram post source and brand involvement on ATTIP was also not significant, $F(1, 114) = .52, p = .471$ ($M_{\text{SMI, low BI}} = 3.59, SD = .14; M_{\text{SMI, high BI}} = 3.63, SD = .15; M_{\text{brand, low BI}} = 3.43, SD = .15; M_{\text{brand, high BI}} = 3.67, SD = .13$). At last, the interaction effect of Instagram post source and brand involvement on PI was not significant, $F(1, 114) = 3.15, p = .079$ ($M_{\text{SMI, low BI}} = 2.77, SD = .16; M_{\text{SMI, high BI}} = 2.80, SD = .17; M_{\text{brand, low BI}} = 2.39, SD = .18; M_{\text{brand, high BI}} = 3.01, SD = .15$). Therefore, H5a, H5b and H5c were rejected.

The interaction effect of Instagram post source and gender on ATTB was not significant, $F(1, 114) = .02, p = .900$ ($M_{\text{SMI, male}} = 3.56, SD = .11; M_{\text{SMI, female}} = 3.32, SD = .11; M_{\text{brand, male}} = 3.42, SD = .11; M_{\text{brand, female}} = 3.20, SD = .11$). Furthermore, the interaction effect of Instagram post source and gender on ATTIP was also not significant, $F(1, 114) = .66, p = .418$ ($M_{\text{SMI, male}} = 3.68, SD = .16; M_{\text{SMI, female}} = 3.54, SD = .14; M_{\text{brand, male}} = 3.74, SD = .14;$

$M_{\text{brand, female}} = 3.37, SD = .15$). At last, the interaction effect of Instagram post source and gender on PI was not significant, $F(1, 114) = .14, p = .707$ ($M_{\text{SMI, male}} = 3.09, SD = .17$; $M_{\text{SMI, female}} = 2.49, SD = .16$; $M_{\text{brand, male}} = 2.94, SD = .16$; $M_{\text{brand, female}} = 2.46, SD = .17$). Therefore, H8a, H8b and H8c were rejected.

Table 5. The effect of Instagram post source type on the effectiveness measures with gender and brand involvement as moderators.

Source	Dependent variable	Type III sum of squares	Mean square	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i> value
Instagram post source	Attitude towards the Instagram post	.098	.098	.161	.689
	Attitude towards the brand	.509	.509	1.445	.232
	Purchase intention	.230	.230	.279	.598
Instagram post source*Gender	Attitude towards the Instagram post	.402	.402	.660	.418
	Attitude towards the brand	.006	.006	.016	.900
	Purchase intention	.117	.117	.142	.707
Instagram post source*Brand involvement	Attitude towards the Instagram post	.318	.318	.522	.471
	Attitude towards the brand	.002	.002	.005	.943
	Purchase intention	2.594	2.594	3.146	.079

p-values were measured with MANOVA's

4.2 Test 2

According to hypothesis 2, a higher SMI credibility will lead to a more favourable ATTB, ATTIP and PI. Furthermore, hypothesis 3 predicted that SMI credibility mediates the relationship between sponsorship disclosure and ATTB, ATTIP and PI. These hypotheses

were tested with PROCESS model 4 from Hayes (2013) and the results are reported in table 6-8.

The effect of Sponsorship Disclosure on SMI credibility $a_1 = .230$ and is not statistically different from zero, $t = 1.154$, $p = .253$, with a 95% confidence interval from -0.169 to 0.628. Thus, SMI credibility is not significantly influenced by a sponsorship disclosure, which means there is no support for a mediation effect of SMI credibility. The relationships between sponsorship disclosure and the dependent variables can also be observed. The effect of sponsorship disclosure on ATTB $c' = -.035$ and is not statistically different from zero, $t = -.341$, $p = .172$, with a 95% confidence interval from -0.242 to 0.172. Furthermore, the effect of sponsorship disclosure on ATTIP $c' = -.003$ and is not statistically different from zero, $t = .593$, $p = .556$, with a 95% confidence interval from -0.234 to 0.431. Lastly, the effect of sponsorship disclosure on PI $c' = -.110$ and is not statistically different from zero, $t = -.034$, $p = .973$, with a 95% confidence interval from -0.467 to 0.452. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is fully rejected with no significant relationship between sponsorship disclosure and SMI credibility plus no significant relationship between sponsorship disclosure and the dependent variables.

The effect of SMI credibility on ATTB $b_1 = .354$ and is statistically different from zero, $t = 5.257$, $p = .000$, with a 95% confidence interval from 0.219 to 0.489. The effect is positive meaning that a higher SMI credibility leads to a more favourable ATTB. Therefore, H2a is accepted. Furthermore, the effect of SMI credibility on ATTIP $b_2 = .442$ and is statistically different from zero, $t = 4.708$, $p = .000$, with a 95% confidence interval from 0.254 to 0.630. The effect is positive, meaning that a higher SMI credibility leads to a more favourable ATTIP. Therefore, H2b is also accepted. At last, the effect of SMI credibility on PI $b_3 = .442$ and is statistically different from zero, $t = 3.137$, $p = .003$, with a 95% confidence interval from 0.160 to 0.725. The effect is positive, meaning that a higher SMI credibility leads to a higher PI. Thus, H2c is also accepted.

Furthermore, additional findings regarding the relationship between sponsorship disclosure and SMI credibility showed something noteworthy. A one-way ANOVA was performed taking gender apart of which the results are reported in table 9. Results show that for female's, there is a statistically significant effect of sponsorship disclosure on SMI credibility $F(1, 29) = 5.84, p < .05$ ($M_{\text{disclosure}} = 3.61, SD = .66; M_{\text{no disclosure}} = 2.94, SD = .84$). However, the findings indicate that the outcome is contrary to what was hypothesized as the participants that viewed the disclosure, rated significantly higher on SMI credibility.

Table 6. The effect of sponsorship disclosure on attitude towards the brand with SMI credibility as a mediator.

Antecedent		Consequent						
		SMIcred (M)			AttBrand (Y)			
		Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p	
SponsDisc (X)	a_1	.230	.199	.253	c'	-.035	.103	.734
SMIcred (M)	---	---	---	---	b_1	.354	.067	<.001
constant	i_1	3.159	.134	<.001	i_2	2.306	.223	<.001
$R_2 = .023$				$R_2 = .328$				
$F(1, 58) = 1.332, p = .253$				$F(2, 57) = 13.921, p < .001$				

p-values were measured with PROCESS model 4

Table 7. The effect of sponsorship disclosure on attitude towards Instagram post with SMI credibility as a mediator.

Antecedent		Consequent						
		SMIcred (M)			AttPost (Y)			
		Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p	
SponsDisc (X)	a_1	.230	.199	.253	c'	-.003	.144	.983
SMIcred (M)	---	---	---	---	b_1	.442	.094	<.001
constant	i_1	3.159	.134	<.001	i_2	2.173	.311	<.001
$R_2 = .023$				$R_2 = .284$				
$F(1, 58) = 1.332, p = .253$				$F(2, 57) = 11.324, p < .001$				

p-values were measured with PROCESS model 4

Table 8. The effect of sponsorship disclosure on purchase intention with SMI credibility as a mediator.

		Consequent						
		SMIcred (M)			PurchInt (Y)			
Antecedent		Coeff.	SE	p		Coeff.	SE	p
SponsDisc (X)	a_1	.230	.199	.253	c'	-.110	.216	.615
SMIcred (M)		---	---	---	b_1	.442	.141	.003
constant	i_1	3.159	.134	<.001	i_2	2.173	.311	<.001
$R_2 = .023$					$R_2 = .147$			
$F(1, 58) = 1.332, p = .253$					$F(2, 57) = 4.920, p = .011$			

p-values were measured with PROCESS model 4

Table 9. The effect of sponsorship disclosure on SMI credibility when participant is female.

	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig.
SponsDisc	3.41	1	3.41	5.84	.02
Error	16.91	29	.58		
Total	20.31	30			

SponsDisc	Mean	SD	N
Yes	3.61	.66	14
No	2.94	.84	17
Total	3.24	.82	31

p-values were measured with ANOVA

Hypothesis 6 predicts that the level of brand involvement of a consumer will moderate the relationship between SMI credibility and the post effectiveness measures, as such that a low brand involvement will result in more favourable attitudes and purchase intentions. The hypothesis was tested with PROCESS model 1 from Hayes (2013) and results are reported in table 10-12.

When the dependent variable is ATTB, the regression coefficient for XM $b_3 = .154$ and is not statistically different from zero, $t(56) = 1.160, p = .251$. Thus, the effect of SMI credibility ATTB does not depend on the level of brand involvement. Therefore, H6a is rejected.

Furthermore, when the dependent variable is ATTIP, the regression coefficient for XM $b_3 = .123$ and is not statistically different from zero, $t(56) = .657, p = .514$. Thus, the effect of SMI credibility on ATTIP does not depend on the level of brand involvement. Therefore, H6b is rejected. Lastly, when the dependent variable is PI, the regression coefficient for XM $b_3 = .076$ and is not statistically different from zero, $t(56) = .267, p = .790$. Thus, the effect of SMI credibility on PI does not depend on the level of brand involvement. Therefore, H6c is also rejected.

Table 10. The effect of SMI credibility on attitude towards the brand with brand involvement as a moderator.

		Coefficient	SE	t	p
Intercept	i_1	3.442	.050	68.243	<.001
SMIcred (X)	b_1	.352	.066	5.324	<.001
BrandInv (M)	b_2	-.086	.101	-.846	.401
BrandInv*SMIcred (XM)	b_3	.154	.132	1.160	.251
$R_2 = .351$					
$F(3, 56) = 10.075, p < .001$					

p-values were measured with PROCESS model 1

Table 11. The effect of SMI credibility on attitude towards the Instagram post with brand involvement as a moderator.

		Coefficient	SE	t	p
Intercept	i_1	3.610	.071	50.702	<.001
SMIcred (X)	b_1	.441	.093	4.722	<.001
BrandInv (M)	b_2	-.011	.143	-.078	.938
BrandInv*SMIcred (XM)	b_3	.123	.187	.657	.514
$R_2 = .290$					
$F(3, 56) = 7.620, p < .001$					

p-values were measured with PROCESS model 1

Table 12. The effect of SMI credibility on purchase intention with brand involvement as a moderator.

		Coefficient	SE	t	p
Intercept	i_1	2.793	.108	25.970	<.001
SMIcred (X)	b_1	.433	.141	3.068	.003
BrandInv (M)	b_2	-.050	.216	-.232	.817
BrandInv*SMIcred (XM)	b_3	.076	.282	.267	.790
$R_2 = .145$					
$F(3, 56) = 3.173, p = .031$					

p-values were measured with PROCESS model 1

Hypothesis 9 predicts that the gender of a consumer will moderate the relationship between SMI credibility and the post effectiveness measures, as such that being a male will result in more favourable attitudes and purchase intentions. The hypothesis was tested with PROCESS model 1 from Hayes (2013) and results are reported in table 13-15.

When the dependent variable is ATTB, the regression coefficient for XM $b_3 = .262$ and is statistically different from zero, $t(56) = 2.099, p = .040$. Thus, the effect of SMI credibility on ATTB depends on gender. Furthermore, this model explains 14.5 % of variance in ATTB. Looking at the conditional effects, both females (effect = .237, SE = .081, CI: .075 to .398) and males (effect = .499, SE = .095, CI: .308 to .689) are positively associated with ATTB, however the effect is significantly stronger for males. Therefore, H9a is accepted.

Furthermore, when the dependent variable is ATTIP, the regression coefficient for XM $b_3 = -.157$ and is not statistically different from zero, $t(56) = .925, p = .359$. Thus, the effect of SMI credibility on ATTIP does not depend on the gender of the consumer. Therefore, H9b is rejected. At last, when the dependent variable is PI, the regression coefficient for XM $b_3 = .076$ and is not statistically different from zero, $t(56) = -.594, p = .555$. Thus, the effect of SMI credibility on PI does not depend on the gender of the consumer. Therefore, H9c is also rejected.

Table 13. The effect of SMI credibility on attitude towards the brand with gender as a moderator.

		Coefficient	SE	t	p
Intercept	i_1	3.442	.047	73.301	<.001
SMIcred (X)	b_1	.363	.062	5.850	<.001
Gender (M)	b_2	.238	.094	2.527	.014
Gender*SMIcred (XM)	b_3	.262	.125	2.099	.040
$R_2 = .436$					
$F(3, 56) = 14.434, p < .001$					

Conditional effect of SMIcred (X) on AttBrand (Y) at levels of Gender (M)

	Effect	SE	t	p
Male	.499	.095	5.237	<.001
Female	.237	.081	2.933	.005

p-values were measured with PROCESS model 1

Table 14. The effect of SMI credibility on attitude towards the Instagram post with gender as a moderator.

		Coefficient	SE	t	p
Intercept	i_1	3.611	.070	51.326	<.001
SMIcred (X)	b_1	.450	.093	4.841	<.001
Gender (M)	b_2	.130	.141	.923	.360
Gender*SMIcred (XM)	b_3	.173	.187	.925	.359
$R_2 = .306$					
$F(3, 56) = 8.216, p < .001$					

p-values were measured with PROCESS model 1

Table 15. The effect of SMI credibility on purchase intention with gender as a moderator.

		Coefficient	SE	t	p
Intercept	i_1	2.796	.100	28.115	<.001
SMIcred (X)	b_1	.410	.132	3.120	.003
Gender (M)	b_2	.603	.199	3.030	.004
Gender*SMIcred (XM)	b_3	-.157	.264	-.594	.555
$R_2 = .268$					
$F(3, 56) = 6.827, p < .001$					

p-values were measured with PROCESS model 1

4.3 Test 3

The influence of saturation level on dependent variables ATTB, ATTIP and PI together with the moderating effects of brand involvement and gender were tested with a 2 x 2 x 3 between subjects multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The results are reported in table 16.

The main effect of saturation level on ATTB was not significant, $F(1, 103) = .88, p = .350$ ($M_{\text{high sat}} = 3.45, SD = .08; M_{\text{low sat}} = 3.35, SD = .08$). Therefore, H4a is rejected. However, a significant main effect of saturation level on ATTIP was found, $F(1, 103) = 4.43, p = .038$ ($M_{\text{high sat}} = 3.76, SD = .12; M_{\text{low sat}} = 3.42, SD = .12$). The mean shows that participants that saw the photo with a high saturation level, had a more favourable ATTIP. Therefore, H4b is accepted. Furthermore, the main effect of saturation level on PI was not significant, $F(1, 103) = 3.89, p = .051$ ($M_{\text{high sat}} = 2.81, SD = .15; M_{\text{low sat}} = 2.39, SD = .15$).

The interaction effect of saturation level and brand involvement on ATTB was not significant, $F(1, 103) = .32, p = .575$ ($M_{\text{high sat, low BI}} = 3.47, SD = .11; M_{\text{high sat, high BI}} = 3.43, SD = .10; M_{\text{low sat, low BI}} = 3.31, SD = .11; M_{\text{low sat, high BI}} = 3.39, SD = .11$). Therefore, H7a is rejected. The interaction effect of saturation level and brand involvement on ATTIP was also not significant, $F(1, 103) = .18, p = .670$ ($M_{\text{high sat, low BI}} = 3.77, SD = .17; M_{\text{high sat, high BI}} = 3.76, SD = .16; M_{\text{low sat, low BI}} = 3.50, SD = .17; M_{\text{low sat, high BI}} = 3.34, SD = .17$). Therefore, H7b is

rejected. At last, the interaction effect of saturation level and brand involvement on PI was not significant, $F(1, 103) = .14, p = .712$ ($M_{\text{high sat, low BI}} = 2.74, SD = .22$; $M_{\text{high sat, high BI}} = 2.87, SD = .20$; $M_{\text{low sat, low BI}} = 2.41, SD = .21$; $M_{\text{low sat, high BI}} = 2.37, SD = .21$). Therefore, H7c is rejected.

The interaction effect of saturation level and gender on ATTB was not significant, $F(1, 103) = .48, p = .492$ ($M_{\text{high sat, male}} = 3.61, SD = .11$; $M_{\text{high sat, female}} = 3.29, SD = .11$; $M_{\text{low sat, male}} = 3.44, SD = .11$; $M_{\text{low sat, female}} = 3.26, SD = .11$). Therefore, H10a is rejected. Furthermore, the interaction effect of saturation level and gender on ATTIP was also not significant, $F(1, 103) = .29, p = .590$ ($M_{\text{high sat, male}} = 3.74, SD = .16$; $M_{\text{high sat, female}} = 3.79, SD = .16$; $M_{\text{low sat, male}} = 3.48, SD = .18$; $M_{\text{low sat, female}} = 3.35, SD = .18$). Therefore, H10b is rejected. At last, the interaction effect of saturation level and gender on PI was not significant, $F(1, 103) = .74, p = .392$ ($M_{\text{high sat, male}} = 2.75, SD = .21$; $M_{\text{high sat, female}} = 2.86, SD = .21$; $M_{\text{low sat, male}} = 2.52, SD = .21$; $M_{\text{low sat, female}} = 2.26, SD = .21$). This means that H10c is also rejected.

Table 16. The effect of saturation level on the effectiveness measures with the gender and brand involvement as moderators.

Source	Dependent variable	<i>N</i>	Type III sum of squares	Mean square	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i> value
Saturation level	Attitude towards the Instagram post	111	3.282	3.282	4.427	.038*
	Attitude towards the brand	111	.278	.278	.882	.350
	Purchase intention	111	4.755	4.755	3.889	.051
Saturation level*Gender	Attitude towards the Instagram post	111	.216	.216	.292	.590
	Attitude towards the brand	111	.150	.150	.475	.492
	Purchase intention	111	.905	.905	.740	.392
Saturation level*Brand involvement	Attitude towards the Instagram post	111	.136	.136	.183	.670
	Attitude towards the brand	111	.100	.100	.316	.575
	Purchase intention	111	.168	.168	.137	.712

p-values were measured with MANOVA's

4.4 Summary of findings

Hypothesis	Result
1. <i>An Instagram post by a social media influencer will lead to a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention compared to an Instagram post by a brand.</i>	Fully rejected
2. <i>A higher SMI credibility will lead to a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention.</i>	Accepted
3. <i>SMI credibility mediates the relationship between sponsorship disclosure and the effectiveness measures, as such that when there is no sponsorship disclosure it will lead to a higher SMI credibility which will lead to a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention.</i>	Fully rejected
4. <i>When an Instagram post by a SMI has a high level of saturation, it will result in a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention.</i>	4b accepted, 4a & 4c rejected
5. <i>Brand involvement moderates the relationship between the Instagram post source and the post effectiveness measures, as such that SMI endorsement will result in a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention when a consumers' brand involvement is low compared to high.</i>	Fully rejected
6. <i>Brand involvement moderates the relationship between SMI credibility and the post effectiveness measures, as such that a higher SMI credibility will result in a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention when a consumers' brand involvement is low compared to high.</i>	Fully rejected

7. <i>Brand involvement moderates the relationship between saturation level and the post effectiveness measures, as such that a higher level of saturation will result in a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention when a consumers' brand involvement is low compared to high.</i>	Fully rejected
8. <i>Gender moderates the relationship between the Instagram post source and the post effectiveness measures, as such that SMI endorsement will result in a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention when the consumer is a male.</i>	Fully rejected
9. <i>Gender moderates the relationship between SMI credibility and the post effectiveness measures, as such that a higher SMI credibility will result in a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention when the consumer is a male.</i>	9a accepted, 9b-c rejected
10. <i>Gender moderates the relationship between saturation level and the post effectiveness measures, as such that a higher level of saturation will result in a more favourable (a) attitude towards the brand, (b) attitude towards the Instagram post and (c) purchase intention when the consumer is a male.</i>	Fully rejected

5. Discussion

It was expected that when an Instagram post was posted by a SMI compared to a brand, it would lead to a more favourable ATTB, ATTIP and PI. Contrary to the expectations, no significant effect was found on any of the dependent variables. This study built on the premises made in previous literature, suggesting that social media influencers can be compared to opinion leaders (Jin & Phua, 2014; Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014) and (micro) celebrities (Khamis et al., 2016; Marwick, 2016). Furthermore, the assumptions in this study were also based on the findings of past studies that proved that using opinion leaders or celebrities as an advertising tactic leads to consumers showing more favourable attitudes and purchase intentions (Amos et al., 2008; Bhutada & Rollins, 2015; Choi & Rifon, 2012; Till et al., 2008).

It could be that the assumption of high similarity between opinion leaders, (micro) celebrities and social media influencers on Instagram was not applicable to the current study. In case of opinion leaders or (micro) celebrities, there is a high possibility that people are familiar with these people. From this point of view, one could argue that the SMI only has the desired effect when consumers already chose to follow this person in the past or are somewhat familiar with the person. This logic is in line with the reasoning of Erdogan (1999) who states that the effectiveness of a message is highly dependent on the familiarity of the endorser. Moreover, it is in line with the findings of Thomas and Fowler (2015) who examined the moderating effects of celebrity familiarity and found that participants had a significantly more favourable brand attitude and purchase intention when the celebrity was familiar to them instead of unfamiliar. The current study aimed to measure solely the effects that an SMI would have just because it is a SMI, therefore chosen was to use fictional SMIs. This could have caused the respondents to feel indifferent. However, Bhutada and Rollins (2015) examined expert endorsement and found significant positive effects on attitudes and

purchase intention when the product was endorsed by an expert, a doctor, compared to a non-expert, a regular person. In this case, the participants were, just like in the current study, not familiar with the expert. Although, the doctor possesses a higher expertise in the mind of the consumer and therefore one could argue that the negative effects of lack of familiarity can possibly be surpassed when the endorser has visible expertise. To show proof of expertise is also exactly what this study took into account when it was decided to also show a high number of followers in the stimulus material and therefore the explanation for the non-significant findings remain a point of discussion.

One final remark regarding the attitudes and purchase intention of participants has to be made. That is that it could also be argued that participants felt at least not favourable enough towards the SMI instead of not favourable at all, because the findings indicate that the mean of participants in the SMI condition was higher in case of all the dependent variables, however not significant. It could be seen as a sign that something is happening, but due to the limited number of participants in this study cannot be translated into a meaningful result.

The findings show that when consumers perceive a SMI to be more credible, this also results in a more favourable attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the Instagram post and purchase intention. This corresponds with the literature that was consulted and adds to scientific literature that also in the context of Instagram, source credibility is an important factor regarding influencer marketing effectiveness. However, SMI credibility did not mediate the relationship between sponsorship disclosure and the post effectiveness measures, because there was no significant relationship between sponsorship disclosure and SMI credibility. Moreover, there was also no significant relationship between sponsorship disclosure and ATTB, ATTIP as well as PI. This resulted in the rejection of hypothesis 3.

An explanation for the insignificant relationship between sponsorship disclosure and SMI credibility could be the fact that 37% of the participants that viewed the disclosure,

stated that they didn't notice it. This can be caused by the fact that Instagram is mostly used in a rather volatile way and users miss this kind of information, because they scan through the photos and videos instead of profoundly observing them. Furthermore, it is possible that Instagram users are so frequently exposed to hashtags when using Instagram, that they simply don't pay attention to it anymore. This line of reasoning can be supported by a study of Pieters, Warlop and Wedel (1999) who found that visual attention to an advertisement decreased when consumers are more familiar with it. Furthermore, Reynolds and Richards (2005) examined the attention of infants on familiar versus novel stimuli and found that attention increased significantly when a novel stimulus was shown. These studies do not address hashtags specifically, but merely serve as an indication that familiarity with an object like hashtags, due to frequent exposure, can cause Instagram users to not process these hashtags thoroughly, because of their decreased attention towards it. Furthermore, a recent development regarding sponsorship disclosures on Instagram is also supportive of the questionable effect of using a hashtag as disclosure. During the time that the data of this study was already being collected, several new posts of SMIs started to include the sponsorship disclosure above the picture, instead of in the description as a hashtag. The disclosure is now shown below the username and states; "paid partnership with company x." Future research should therefore focus on this new way of disclosing the sponsorship instead of hashtags.

Another line of reasoning that could explain the fact that participants that viewed the disclosure didn't rate significantly lower on SMI credibility than participants that didn't view the disclosure is provided by Carr and Hayes (2014). The authors explain that firstly, honesty is positively related with credibility and since the blogger is showing honesty by disclosing the sponsorship, the decrease in perceived credibility that is caused by this sponsorship, is countered by the positive influence of honesty. Secondly, there is evidence that most consumers are aware or at least sceptical regarding excessively positive reviews and expect

that there is some sort of influence, even when it is not disclosed. Therefore, the absence of a disclosure may result in consumers perceiving the blogger as dishonest.

As indicated in the results, a remarkable finding appeared when executing a one-way ANOVA with sponsorship disclosure as a predictor variable and SMI credibility as outcome variable, taking male's and female's apart. It showed that both male's and female's that viewed the Instagram post with the sponsorship disclosure, rated the SMI credibility higher than the ones that didn't view the sponsorship disclosure. Although this was only significantly higher for female's. This can again be explained by the fact that consumers are already somewhat aware that there must be third-party influence, however not disclosing whether this is the case increases the uncertainty surrounding this blogger. By notifying the consumer that there is a sponsor involved, this uncertainty is reduced and the consumer perceives the SMI as more credible than when there is no disclosure and the ambiguity surrounding the SMI remains unchanged (Carr & Hayes, 2014). Secondly, the consumer may perceive the SMI to be more knowledgeable or professional, because there apparently must be a reason that the brand chooses this specific person to endorse their product. Subsequently, the consumer may also perceive the SMI to be more credible (Carr & Hayes, 2014). However, one could still dispute how relevant the results of test 2 are since there were only 62 participants and of those participants that saw the sponsorship disclosure, 37% stated that they did not notice it.

Regarding the saturation level of a picture, it was expected that a higher saturation would lead to a more favourable ATTB, ATTIP and PI. However, only a significant effect was found on ATTIP. The positive influence of a high saturation level on ATTIP is in line with the findings of Gorn et al. (1997) and Lichtlé (2007) who found that a higher saturation level leads to a more positive attitude towards the ad and therefore also has implications for SMIs and social media marketers.

A reason that there was not such an effect found on ATTB and PI could be that because this adjustment of saturation level means manipulating a picture specific trait, the influence of this alteration only reaches as far as picture specific opinions. This study assumed that ATTB, ATTIP and PI are closely related and often used together as Simpson et al. (1998) postulate. Nonetheless, it is possible that participants liked the Instagram post in general, while being more critical regarding their ATTB and PI, because these two measures have lesser to do with the picture. However, it appears that for both ATTB and PI, the mean was higher for participants that saw the picture with a high saturation level, although not significantly. Thus, there is an indication that something in support of H4a and H4c is happening, but possibly due to a relatively low number of participants did not happen.

Furthermore, numerous studies that investigated colour in advertising, found that arousal plays a dominant role regarding the positive effects on the effectiveness measures (Gorn et al., 1997; Lichtlé, 2007; McGann & Snook-Luther, 1993; Valdez & Mehrabian, 1994). It is questionable whether enough participants can feel a sufficient level of arousal when filling out a survey, which is in general not an activity that triggers people to feel aroused.

Another expectation of this study was that brand involvement would moderate the relationships between Instagram post source, SMI credibility and saturation level and the dependent variables ATTB, ATTIP and PI. The reason for this assumption, was that consumers with a low involvement have been suggested and shown to be more vulnerable to peripheral cues in advertising research. Using a SMI as an endorser, the credibility of the endorser and adjusting colour (settings) are all considered to be peripheral cues. Contrary to the expectations, there was no moderating effect found of brand involvement in any relationship. It appears to be difficult to find an explanation in existing literature that can clarify why brand involvement did not have the hypothesized moderating effect, therefore it is

high likely that it had something to do with the methodology of the current study. As indicated in part 3.3 the division of high and low brand involvement was based on the method in the study of Rice et al. (2011), where the participants were told what to focus on beforehand. It could be that the way in which respondents were divided in high and low brand involvement conditions was not effective. Furthermore, as the participants are Instagram users, there is a possibility that a majority is concerned with fashion and therefore feels highly involved with the pictures anyhow, which could have affected the results. In contrary, it is possible that the majority of participants felt lowly involved, as one could argue whether using a social media platform like Instagram, which is mostly used in a very volatile way, leads to consumers processing the information thoroughly at all.

At last, it was predicted that gender moderates the relationships between the independent and dependent variables. The reason for this assumption, was that men have been suggested and shown to be more vulnerable to peripheral cues in advertising research. However, only hypothesis 9a, that predicted that males would have more favourable attitudes towards the brand when they also perceived the SMI to be more credible, was accepted. hypotheses 8, 9b-c and 10 were all rejected. Although this is in conflict with the literature that was assessed in this study, it is in line with Ohanian (1991) who examined the influence of celebrity endorsements of products on consumers' purchase intention and found that gender had no significant effect on the outcome. Likewise, a more recent study performed by Bhutada and Rollins (2015) addressed gender differences in response to celebrities endorsing a pharmaceutical product and measured the ads effectiveness with attitudinal measures; attitude toward the ad and towards the brand and behavioural measures; intention to seek more information and intention to ask for a prescription. The authors did not find a significant difference in attitudes and behavioural intentions between gender. They state that this outcome could be explained by the fact that men and women have become more alike

regarding behaviour. Their research took place in the United States so it is questionable to what extent this explanation is generalizable to non-western countries. Researchers from India, which can be regarded as a non-Western country, also found no significant difference between the information processing of men and women are Keshari and Jain (2016) and make a same sort of claim as Bhutada and Rollins, stating that men and women have become more equal.

6. Conclusion & Implications

Building on past literature, it can be assumed that influencer marketing is more effective than when a product is communicated by the brand directly. However, in the current study, the findings didn't indicate that when a SMI endorses a brand, this will be more effective than when the brand posts the same picture. Nonetheless, the results show that the mean for participants in the SMI condition was higher for every effectiveness measure (ATTB, ATTIP and PI), however not significant. Thus, after performing this study it is still unclear what the effectiveness of influencer marketing is on Instagram, but there are some indications that it could be effective.

The current study found some answers regarding in what way a sponsorship disclosure influences the effectiveness of influencer marketing on Instagram. Firstly, looking solely at the effect of SMI credibility, it turned out that when consumers perceive a SMI to be more credible, this leads to more positive attitudes and purchase intentions. Besides, this effect is stronger regarding ATTB when the consumer is a male. Based on prior research, it was assumed that SMI credibility would play an important role regarding sponsorship disclosure. It was hypothesized that SMI credibility would mediate the relationship between sponsorship disclosure and the effectiveness measures (ATTB, ATTIP and PI), as such that no sponsorship disclosure will result in a more favourable SMI credibility and therefore a more

favourable ATTB, ATTIP and PI. However, this did not turn out to be true, in contrary, the SMI credibility that both men and women indicated was higher for the one's that saw the sponsorship disclosure, however only significantly higher for women. This could mean that being honest about the third-party influence is more effective on women as compared to men. Furthermore, this indicates that a sponsorship disclosure might have positive influence, instead of negative and therefore increases the effectiveness of posts by SMIs. At the same time the manipulation check shows that there is a chance that Instagram users don't notice a sponsorship disclosure in the hashtags at all, which means there is neither a negative nor positive effect of revealing a third-party influence.

The results furthermore show that manipulating the colour characteristic saturation can be effective as such that a higher saturation level leads to consumers showing a more favourable attitude towards the Instagram post. Moreover, the results indicate that the mean for ATTB and PI was also higher for participants that saw the picture with a high saturation level, and although this is not significant, it does point in the direction of a positive influence that high saturation levels are more effective. For the rest, there was no significant influence found of brand involvement. Hence one could argue that there is a possibility that involvement does not play a meaningful role on Instagram, which is, as argued in the discussion section, possibly caused by the volatile environment of Instagram.

Taking the volatility of using Instagram in mind, it is speculated that when consumers scroll through the pictures and videos on Instagram, they are likely to miss a lot of information like a sponsorship disclosure. As the results show, involvement did not have a significant effect which could be a signal that all users are in fact lowly involved, because of the volatility of Instagram and are therefore inclined to peripherally process the information. However, the visual attractiveness did make a difference, as a higher saturation level of the picture was more effective. Therefore, this would mean that influencers and marketing

communication professionals do not have to worry about showing sponsorship disclosures and they should stick with the law or, in other countries, advisory codes. Besides the fact that it is simply a hygiene factor and not particularly ethical to mislead the consumer by not being honest, it could actually even be more effective. Furthermore, this study indicates that women possibly appreciate it more than men when the influencer is honest about a sponsor, therefore, when targeting women, there should certainly be no doubt whether to reveal the third-party influence.

Instead of worrying about sponsorship disclosures, SMIs and marketing communication professionals should focus more on the visual attractiveness of the content. as this is something that does seem to have an effect on the Instagram user. This would make sense, because Instagram being a medium that is focussed on the visual and likely to be used in a volatile way, the visual is the element that is noticed the most.

7. Future research

Based on the results of this, recommended is that future research should find more clarification concerning the effectiveness of SMIs as compared to communications by the brand itself, because the results give an indication that there is a possibility to find some interesting results, however the current study did not. Besides, the current study only looked at the differences between an Instagram post by a SMI versus a brand, but on social media there is also the possibility to show the consumer banner advertisements. Future research can thus take more kinds of communications into account when comparing them to communications by SMIs. Secondly, regarding sponsorship disclosure, it appeared that while this study was performed, a number of SMIs on Instagram started to include the sponsorship disclosure above the picture as ‘paid partnership with company x.’ This seems like a function that Instagram made available for SMIs and indicates the development and importance

surrounding sponsorship disclosures. In this study, it seemed that a sponsorship disclosure resulted in the contrary effect than what was expected and it is essential for future research to see if there are different ways of disclosing a third-party influence and which type is most effective. Furthermore, it seemed that manipulating the saturation level also resulted in some interesting effects. Future research could therefore check whether these effects are also found when manipulating the other dimensions of colour; hue and brightness.

Fictional SMIs were used as stimuli in the current study. However, this could be a problem, because the effectiveness of a SMI lies possibly in the fact that they are followed by the consumer or at least well known. Future research should therefore consider looking whether studying the effects of existing influencers on their followers leads to more significant results. Furthermore, participants that viewed the Instagram post as if it was posted by a SMI, were primed with an overview of the Instagram page of that SMI. This overview also included a high number of followers, because a number of past studies about other social media platforms emphasized the importance of followers on, for example, Facebook and Twitter. Future research could have a look at what the specific role of followers is regarding the effectiveness of SMIs on Instagram.

Furthermore, the fact that this research was performed in the context of fashion led to the fact that male's and female's viewed different stimuli and the possibility that participants' opinions were influenced by the liking of clothing. Therefore, it would be an idea for future studies to consider the implementation of a gender-neutral product, so that both male's and female's see the same stimulus. Besides, studies that would examine whether products from other on Instagram frequently observed areas like fashion or fitness, immediately address the question if promoting other kinds of products is also effective on Instagram.

8. Limitations

There were several limitations in this study. Firstly, the limitation that could have caused the heaviest bias was the fact that a different stimulus was used for men than for women while their scores on the dependent variables were merged together. When, for example, the stimulus that was used for women would cause the female participants to feel more indifferent in general than men, this would mean that the overall results are biased as the indifference that women felt, influenced all the results. The results would therefore probably be more accurate when all the participants would have seen the same photo, however, as indicated in the methodology part, the number of areas that one can choose from when investigating social media influencers is limited. As fashion is by far the biggest industry on Instagram, it was chosen to let this be the context in which the research would take place and it is not likely that men are influenced by women regarding fashion and the other way around. Furthermore, baseline differences in the distribution of gender between all the different conditions were measured by using Chi-Square tests and no significant differences in the distribution of gender was found. This diminishes the probability that it would have caused heavy bias.

Nevertheless, the results would be more accurate when the participants consisted of only one type of gender. If researchers would want to examine both genders, it is better to use influencers of both genders that endorse gender neutral products, e.g. a coffee machine, and test for the cross-gender effects on consumers of both genders.

Secondly, another limitation can be pointed out in the stimuli materials as the participants in the ‘SMI condition’ were primed with a screenshot that showed the overview of the Instagram page of the SMI. In contrast, the participants in the ‘brand condition’ were not primed with an overview. The reason for doing this, was to give the participants in the ‘SMI condition’ the feeling that it was a real SMI, because of the high number of followers and high-quality photo’s that could be observed. However, this could have caused the

participants in the 'SMI condition' to feel the 'Instagram experience' that this study aimed to imitate more than the participants in the 'brand condition' which could have biased the outcomes.

Furthermore, the number of participants was relatively low. One could argue that when the number of participants would be higher, possibly more results would be significant. For example, in case of hypothesis 1, the mean for participants in the 'SMI condition' was higher for every dependent variable; ATTB, ATTIP and PI. Therefore, there is a small indication that something in support of hypothesis 1 is happening, however, not significantly. The low total number of participants also resulted in an even lower number of participants in test 2, because test 2 found place within test 1 and the number of participants was cut into half for this test. The choice to let test 2 be part of test 1 is therefore also questionable.

Fourthly, the SMIs wore a certain piece of clothing in the picture. There is a chance that the attitudes and purchase intention were influenced by the opinion that consumers had regarding the clothing that the influencers wore and had less or nothing to do with picture specific traits at all. A solution to this problem would be to control for 'attitude towards the clothing.'

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10. Appendix

Start of Block: Info

Q1 Thank you for participating in this survey.

This survey is part of my master thesis in Marketing at the University of Amsterdam and will take approximately 5-10 minutes.

Please note that this survey focusses on Instagram, therefore your response will only be relevant if you are an actual Instagram user.

Participation in this survey is voluntary and anonymous and it is possible to quit at any given moment. Answers and results are strictly confidential and will solely be used for scientific purposes.

By clicking on the 'next' button (bottom right) you confirm that you are aware of the above and agree that your answers may be used for scientific purposes.

Sincerely,

Rutger Schapers

If you have any questions or remarks regarding this survey, please contact me at: rutger.schapers@student.uva.nl

End of Block: Info

Start of Block: Pre info

Q2 Gender

☐ Male (1)

☐ Female (2)

Q3 Are you an Instagram user?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

End of Block: Pre info

Start of Block: High Brand involvement condition

Q4 Notification

You will twice be viewing a photo of a person who is wearing a specific piece of clothing of a certain brand. These brands will start selling their products in several stores in the Netherlands soon and want to know the opinion of consumers.

Therefore, please focus on how good you think these brands are and what type of characteristics these brands and their products have.

End of Block: High Brand_involvement condition

Start of Block: Low_Brand involvement condition

Q5 Notification

You will twice be viewing a photo that was posted on Instagram. Marketeers are interested in the appeal of certain image characteristics. Therefore, please pay attention to the overall appearance and style of these Instagram-posts.

End of Block: Low Brand_involvement condition

Start of Block: Info regular brand post [FEMALE]

Q6 Notification

You will be shown a picture that was posted on the Instagram page of a women's fashion brand called 'Nemesis.' Please observe the picture thoroughly and answer the questions.

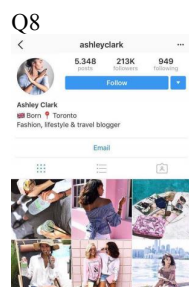
Please be honest when you answer the questions (there are no wrong or right answers).

End of Block: Info regular brand post [FEMALE]

Start of Block: Info SMI post [FEMALE]

Q7 Below you can see an overview of the Instagram page of Ashley Clark. When you click 'next', you will be shown a photo that she posted. Please observe the picture thoroughly and answer the questions.

Please be honest when you answer the questions (there are no wrong or right answers).



End of Block: Info SMI post [FEMALE]

Start of Block: Stimuli 1a Regular brand post [FEMALE]



End of Block: Stimuli 1a Regular brand post [FEMALE]

Start of Block: Stimuli 1b SMI no-sponsor FEMALE

Q10



End of Block: Stimuli 1b SMI no-sponsor FEMALE

Start of Block: Stimuli 1c SMI sponsor FEMALE

Q11



End of Block: Stimuli 1c SMI sponsor FEMALE

Start of Block: Cred_FEM

Q12 Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements by selecting the option that is closest to your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Ashley Clark is convincing (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ashley Clark is believable (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ashley Clark is biased (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ashley Clark is trustworthy (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ashley Clark is an expert (5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

End of Block: Cred_FEM

Start of Block: Dependent variables SD [FEMALE]

Q13 Are you familiar with the person in the photo?

- ☐ Definitely yes (1)
- ☐ Probably yes (2)
- ☐ Might or might not (3)
- ☐ Probably not (4)
- ☐ Definitely not (5)
-

Q14 Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements by selecting the option that is closest to your level of agreement.

The four statements below are about the Instagram post you just viewed.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
This Instagram post is pleasant (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This Instagram post is likeable (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This Instagram post is irritating (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This Instagram post is interesting (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q15 The following ten statements are about the brand of the jacket; 'Nemesis.'

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
This is a pleasant brand (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a good brand (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a positive brand (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a favourable brand (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a likeable brand (5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a useless brand (6)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a high quality brand (7)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a valuable brand (8)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is an interesting brand (9)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is an appealing brand (10)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q16 The following three statements are about the jacket that the person in the photo is wearing.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
To buy the jacket that the person in the photo is wearing is something I certainly want to do (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To buy the jacket that the person in the photo is wearing is something I recommend to my friends (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To buy the jacket that the person in the photo is wearing is really something for me (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

End of Block: Dependent variables SD [FEMALE]

Start of Block: Did you notice #adver

Q17 When the Instagram post of Ashley Clark was shown, did you notice that '#advertisement' was included in the description?

☐ Yes (1)

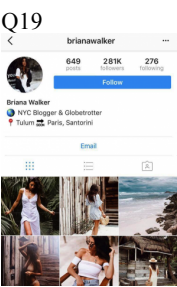
☐ No (2)

End of Block: Did you notice #adver

Start of Block: Info vividness part [FEMALE]

Q18 You will again be shown a photo that was posted on Instagram.

Below you can see an overview of the Instagram page of Briana Walker. When you click 'next', you will be shown a photo that she posted. Please observe the picture thoroughly and answer the questions.



End of Block: Info vividness part [FEMALE]

Start of Block: Stimuli HIGH SATURATION [FEMALE]



End of Block: Stimuli HIGH SATURATION [FEMALE]

Start of Block: Stimuli LOW LOW SATURATION [FEMALE]



End of Block: Stimuli LOW LOW SATURATION [FEMALE]

Start of Block: Dependent variables VIVID [FEMALE]

Q22 Are you familiar with the person in the photo?

- ☐ Definitely yes (1)
- ☐ Probably yes (2)
- ☐ Might or might not (3)
- ☐ Probably not (4)
- ☐ Definitely not (5)
-

Q23 Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements by selecting the option that is closest to your level of agreement.

The four statements below are about the Instagram post you just viewed.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
This Instagram post is pleasant (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This Instagram post is likeable (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This Instagram post is irritating (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This Instagram post is interesting (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q24 The following ten statements are about the brand of the suit; 'Aquivier.'

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
This is a pleasant brand (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a good brand (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a positive brand (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a favourable brand (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a likeable brand (5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a useless brand (6)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a high quality brand (7)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a valuable brand (8)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is an interesting brand (9)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is an appealing brand (10)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q25 The following three statements are about the suit that the person in the photo is wearing.

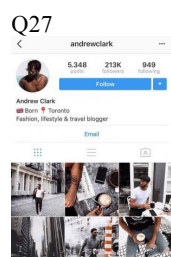
	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
To buy the suit that the person in the photo is wearing is something I certainly want to do (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To buy the suit that the person in the photo is wearing is something I recommend to my friends (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To buy the suit that the person in the photo is wearing is really something for me (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

End of Block: Dependent variables VIVID [FEMALE]

Start of Block: Info SMI post [MALE]

Q26 Below you can see an overview of the Instagram page of Andrew Clark. When you click 'next', you will be shown a photo that he posted. Please observe the picture thoroughly and answer the questions.

Please be honest when you answer the questions (there are no wrong or right answers).



End of Block: Info SMI post [MALE]

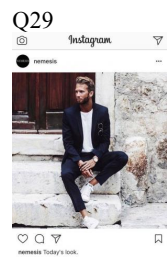
Start of Block: Info regular brand post [MALE]

Q28 You will be shown a picture that was posted on the Instagram page of a men's fashion brand called 'Nemesis.' Please observe the picture thoroughly and answer the questions.

Please be honest when you answer the questions (there are no wrong or right answers).

End of Block: Info regular brand post [MALE]

Start of Block: Stimuli 2a regular brand post [MALE]



End of Block: Stimuli 2a regular brand post [MALE]

Start of Block: Stimuli 2b SMI no-sponsor [MALE]



End of Block: Stimuli 2b SMI no-sponsor [MALE]

Start of Block: Stimuli 2c SMI sponsor [MALE]



End of Block: Stimuli 2c SMI sponsor [MALE]

Start of Block: Cred_MALE

Q32 Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements by selecting the option that is closest to your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Andrew Clark is convincing (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Andrew Clark is believable (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Andrew Clark is biased (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Andrew Clark is trustworthy (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Andrew Clark is an expert (5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

End of Block: Cred_MALE

Start of Block: Dependent variables [MALE]

Q33 Are you familiar with the person in the photo?

- ☐ Definitely yes (1)
- ☐ Probably yes (2)
- ☐ Might or might not (3)
- ☐ Probably not (4)
- ☐ Definitely not (5)

Q34 Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements by selecting the option that is closest to your level of agreement.

The four statements below are about the Instagram post you just viewed.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
This Instagram post is pleasant (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This Instagram post is likeable (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This Instagram post is irritating (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This Instagram post is interesting (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q35 The following ten statements are about the brand of the suit; 'Nemesis.'

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
This is a pleasant brand (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a good brand (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a positive brand (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a favourable brand (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a likeable brand (5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a useless brand (6)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a high quality brand (7)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a valuable brand (8)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is an interesting brand (9)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is an appealing brand (10)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q36 The following three statements are about the suit that the person in the photo is wearing.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
To buy the suit that the person in the photo is wearing is something I certainly want to do (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To buy the suit that the person in the photo is wearing is something I recommend to my friends (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To buy the suit that the person in the photo is wearing is really something for me (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

End of Block: Dependent variables [MALE]

Start of Block: Sponsorship disclosure check [MALE]

Q37 When the Instagram post of Andrew Clark was shown, did you notice that '#advertisement' was included in the description?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

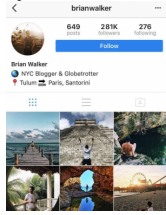
End of Block: Sponsorship disclosure check [MALE]

Start of Block: Info vividness part [MALE]

Q38 You will again be shown a photo that was posted on Instagram.

Below you can see an overview of the Instagram page of Brian Walker. When you click 'next', you will be shown a photo that he posted. Please observe the picture thoroughly and answer the questions.

Q39



End of Block: Info vividness part [MALE]

Start of Block: Stimuli HIGH SATURATION [MALE]

Q40



End of Block: Stimuli HIGH SATURATION [MALE]

Start of Block: Stimuli LOW SATURATION [MALE]

Q41



End of Block: Stimuli LOW SATURATION [MALE]

Start of Block: Dependent variables VIVID [MALE]

Q42 Are you familiar with the person in the photo?

- ☐ Definitely yes (1)
 - ☐ Probably yes (2)
 - ☐ Might or might not (3)
 - ☐ Probably not (4)
 - ☐ Definitely not (5)
-

Q43 Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements by selecting the option that is closest to your level of agreement.

The four statements below are about the Instagram post you just viewed.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
This Instagram post is pleasant (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This Instagram post is likeable (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This Instagram post is irritating (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This Instagram post is interesting (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q44 The following ten statements are about the brand of the shirt; 'Aquiver.'

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
This is a pleasant brand (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a good brand (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a positive brand (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a favourable brand (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a likeable brand (5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a useless brand (6)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a high quality brand (7)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is a valuable brand (8)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is an interesting brand (9)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
This is an appealing brand (10)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q45 The following three statements are about the shirt that the person in the photo is wearing.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
To buy the shirt that the person in the photo is wearing is something I certainly want to do (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To buy the shirt that the person in the photo is wearing is something I recommend to my friends (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To buy the shirt that the person in the photo is wearing is really something for me (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

End of Block: Dependent variables VIVID [MALE]

Start of Block: Demographics

Q46 Age

Q47 Nationality

Q50 In which country do you currently live?

- ☐ The Netherlands (1)
- ☐ Other, namely: (2) _____

Q51 What is your highest educational degree?

- ☐ Basis / Primary school (1)
- ☐ Middelbare / Secondary school (2)
- ☐ MBO / Post-secondary school (3)
- ☐ HBO / University of applied sciences (4)
- ☐ WO / University Bachelor degree (5)
- ☐ WO / University Master degree (6)

End of Block: Demographics
