



Instagram



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The Influence of Entrepreneurial Instagrammers

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Abstract

Overwhelmed by the mass of advertising, consumers turned to new social media influencers, Instagrammers, for trusted product recommendations. Brands capitalized on the marketable potential of Instagrammers, making sponsored endorsements dominate their online activity, which made followers lose interest. Thus, Instagrammers diversify their activity, introducing own brands or products launched in collaboration with other brands. However, the persuasiveness of such Entrepreneurial Instagrammers or the effect of their ventures on sponsor brands is unclear. Thus, this thesis investigates how and why Entrepreneurial Instagrammers affect followers' attitude towards them and sponsor brands.

A proposed conceptual framework illustrates the interrelations between Entrepreneurial Instagrammers, followers, own brand and sponsor brand. An unexplored research area is addressed by connecting concepts pertaining to endorsement, entrepreneurship and social media influence. To investigate chosen relationships between the actors, nine propositions were derived after a careful review of related literature. Each proposition is based on theoretical constructs which help grasp the persuasiveness of Entrepreneurial Instagrammers and their effect of sponsor brands. Propositions are tested with a qualitative study using interviews with relevant parties - followers, brand representatives and experts from influencer marketing agencies, as well as netnography conducted on the profiles of Entrepreneurial Instagrammers and their brands.

The research obtained a deeper understanding of the persuasiveness of Entrepreneurial Instagrammers and their effect on sponsor brands. Moreover, findings reveal an array of communication tactics, new perspectives on endorser attributes and other theoretical and managerial contribution concerning Entrepreneurial Instagrammers. The implications of this study describe how the persuasiveness of Entrepreneurial Instagrammers differs from regular Instagrammers. It also delineates outcomes practitioners should consider when engaging in sponsorships or product launch collaborations. As it is a new and dynamic topic, the research concludes with guidelines for future studies.

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List of Abbreviations

App	Application (a software program)
CIT	Critical Incident Technique
EI	Entrepreneurial Instagrammer, Entrepreneurial Instagrammers
WOM, e-WOM	Word of Mouth, Electronic Word of Mouth
MTM	Meaning Transfer Model
P1 - P9	Proposition 1 - Proposition 9
RB	Respondent - Brand representative
RE	Respondent - Agency Expert
RF	Respondent - Follower
SMI	Social Media Influencers
SNS	Social Networking Sites
UGC	User-Generated Content

1. Introduction

This section will present the general setting of this study and the problem at hand and this study's contribution to existing literature. Further, we delineate the research question and explain how it will be answered.

1.1 Problem & Relevance

Typically, an influencer on the social media platform Instagram, i.e. an Instagrammer, endorses products utilizing the relationship with their audience, i.e. followers (following), to achieve brand objectives. However, the recent boom of Instagrammers' popularity allowed them to move beyond those homogeneous endorsements and engage in heterogeneous practices by launching their own brands or products in collaboration with other brands (e.g. Mediakix, 2017; Wheeler, 2017; Shapouri, 2017; The Fashion Law, 2018; Julius, 2017). Their Instagram profile is a source of wide exposure (Audunsson, 2018), therefore, the majority communicate both sponsored and entrepreneurial endorsements using their personal profile. However, neither Instagrammers nor influencer marketing agencies and brands are fully aware of the potential outcomes of these heterogeneous activities, and so are often left to use intuition to make decisions. Acting in the absence of relevant knowledge might result in misunderstandings between practitioners and followers.

With the marketing environment becoming more digital, an increasing number of marketers abandon traditional tools to instead use Instagrammers who generate perceivably genuine electronic word of mouth (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). Numerous sectors such as fashion, fitness or travel effectively reap the benefits of Instagram endorsements. However, the beauty industry is among the most prominent to consider Instagrammers their top marketing strategy (Statista, 2014; Harrington, 2018). Overwhelmed by the amount of Instagram endorsements, consumers lose interest in sponsored posts which is what challenges brands to consider novel ways of using Instagrammers, such as involving them in product launch collaborations (Melas, 2018). Due to divergent preferences for beauty products, the industry is booming with opportunities for new market entrants. This makes it possible for established beauty Instagrammers to also launch so called “indie” brands, brands independent from corporations (Fasanella, 2018). The emergence of Instagrammers engaging in heterogeneous activity (Entrepreneurial Instagrammers) creates a need for knowledge on the subject. Research should explore how Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI) and mixed endorsements of sponsor and own brands affect consumer behavior. Despite the extensive research on entrepreneurial endorsements of celebrities (Muda, Musa & Mohamed, 2014; Hunter, Burgers & Davidsson, 2009; Hunter, 2009; Hunter & Davidsson, 2007; 2008), the consequences of entrepreneurial Instagrammer activity are unknown.

Brands who may employ an EI must consider the consequences this may have on their own brand. Indeed, research suggests the interrelations between endorsed brands do affect the result of an

endorsement (Till, 1998; Chen, Chang, Besharat & Baack, 2013). Therefore, it is crucial for brand managers and agencies to realize the link between an EI and their own brand, and thus, be aware of the effect this link can have on a sponsored endorsement. Similarly, the understanding of how EI are perceived in relation to regular Instagrammers may benefit brands which consider engaging in sponsorships or launching product collaborations with EI.

Furthermore, an investigation into this topic is relevant for EI themselves. Studies show that certain endorsements affect the perceptions of the endorser (Arsena, Silvera & Pandelaere, 2013; Chen et al., 2013). Moreover, an entrepreneurial endorser may be perceived differently due to their achievements (McCracken, 1989). Since EI' endorsements of own brand might result in a change in followers' perceptions, it is in their best interest to make an educated decision about engaging in heterogeneous activity. Entrepreneurial Instagrammers, aspiring to succeed both as entrepreneurs and endorsers, need to realize the consequences of their entrepreneurial activity on both their influence and the perception of endorsed brands, and accordingly, adapt the way they manage their social media endorsements.

1.2 Contribution to Research

The persuasion mechanism of social media influencers (SMI) has been explored by researchers. Key findings show that influencers use social media to construct a credible personal brand, which they utilize to affect their followers' attitude towards brands and consequent behavior (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). However, literature provides limited insights on entrepreneurial activities performed by such online endorsers.

The perspective of homogenous sponsored endorsements has been challenged as insufficient, and instead, a heterogeneous view was proposed, expanding the focus to two types: sponsored and own brand endorsements. Engagement in the brand by investing, ownership, product development and other operational responsibilities was found to increase the level of perceived involvement, positively affecting the attitude towards the ad and brand (Hunter & Davidsson, 2007). While the study analyzed differences between a sponsored endorsement and an entrepreneurial endorsement separately, it did not consider the possibility of these practices being performed simultaneously.

The practice of endorsing more than one brand, i.e. multiple endorsements, received considerable interest in literature. Research provides evidence for the effect of this practice on consumer attitudes towards the brand (Mowen & Brown, 1981; Rice, Kelting & Lutz, 2012; Chen et al., 2013), the advertisement as well as towards the endorser (Mowen & Brown, 1981; Tripp, Jensen & Carlson, 1994). Moreover, endorsing multiple brands has been shown to impact endorser persuasiveness (Tripp, Jensen & Carlson, 1994). However, multiple endorsements literature provides only limited strategic recommendations concerning the endorsed brands. A key finding proposes that sponsor brands endorsed by the same celebrity should be matched up for optimal consumer attitudes (Chen et al., 2013).

However, there appears to be little academic interest concerning different kinds of endorsements by the same endorser. The common assumption among researchers is that endorsements are homogenous, meaning only sponsored. Other types of endorsements such as of own brand, or a combination of such, are not considered.

This thesis contributes to the research on endorsement in the following ways. Firstly, in recent years, social media has become the most important medium to conduct marketing communication on. The impact of Instagrammers on consumers is indisputable. However, due to the dynamic nature of this issue, theoretical constructs concerning influencer marketing on Instagram are still scarce. This paper attempts to contribute to the existing body of knowledge about the mechanisms of Instagrammers by tackling this novel and constantly evolving issue using theoretical findings from related fields of celebrity endorsement, celebrity entrepreneurship, and marketing communication.

Secondly, it considers the existence of heterogeneous, i.e. sponsor and own brand endorsements and builds up on what is known about their effects. We acknowledge the notorious issue of having a limited view of endorsement activities within research, identified by Hunter (2007), and follow his comprehensive view instead. In practice, more and more SMI engage in entrepreneurial ventures, however, literature rarely investigates the effects of such practices. Thus, this thesis attempts to address the lack of studies analyzing the scenario of SMI engaging in different types of endorsements simultaneously.

Moreover, celebrity entrepreneurship studies focus on how entrepreneurial engagement directly affects consumer attitudes towards brand advertisements. However, the relevance of analyzing how engaging in entrepreneurial activities affects an endorser's persuasiveness is also highlighted. Thus, we explore the validity of the most commonly used endorser persuasiveness framework, TEARS (Shimp & Andrews, 2013) in the context of a new endorser type, i.e. EI. Furthermore, we build up on these insights by attempting to incorporate a new persuasiveness attribute.

Finally, since the majority of studies within celebrity endorsement and entrepreneurship literature used quantitative methods, we believe this topic will benefit from a qualitative investigation. Conducting interviews produces a deeper and more thorough understanding of the underlying reasons for consumer behavior and attitudes. Since the aim of an endorsement is to change consumer attitudes (Shimp & Andrews, 2013), a deeper understanding of this process is pivotal. Additionally, since these methods of data collection facilitates contemplation of the given topic, this instrumentation itself may uncover insights that both the interviewer and the interviewee were not previously aware of (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

1.3 Research Question

We aim to research:

How and why do Entrepreneurial Instagrammers affect followers' attitude towards them and sponsor brands?

For this purpose, we believe it is fundamental to gain knowledge about the issues outlined in the following questions:

1. How do we define Entrepreneurial Instagrammers?
2. How do Entrepreneurial Instagrammers influence their followers?
3. How do Entrepreneurial Instagrammers contribute to the value of the brands they endorse?
4. How can sponsor brands be affected by Entrepreneurial Instagrammers?
5. How does an Entrepreneurial Instagrammer's own brand affect the sponsor brand?

1.4 Delimitations

The following section describes the scope to which this thesis explores Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI), as well as the explanation.

This thesis delimits its focus to Instagram endorsements. Instagram is currently the platform of choice for influencer marketing (Linqia, 2018) as 99% of social media influencers choose to conduct their operations on this platform (Wiltshire, 2018). Thus, it was deemed most suitable to explore the entrepreneurial activities of social media influencers in the context of Instagram.

Beauty products are among the most commonly endorsed on Instagram (Harrington, 2018) as well as one of the main industries within which Instagrammers launch own brands (Shapouri, 2018). Thus, due to the mutual dependence of Instagram and the beauty industry, this thesis chooses to explore EI who endorse and launch products within the beauty industry. We use “beauty products” as an umbrella term for all cosmetics, i.e. any substance meant to be used on the body which aims to correct issues or improve appearance (Regulation EC No 1223/2009), including skin care, makeup, and hair care.

Moreover, we chose to focus on exploring the following dyads from the conceptual framework: EI - Followers, EI - Sponsor brand, and Own Brand - Sponsor Brand. We believe focusing on these dyads is crucial to gain an understanding of EI and their heterogeneous endorsement activities, as the dyads address the areas of this thesis' interest: EI's persuasiveness and the effect of their activity on sponsor brands.

Literature suggests that celebrity endorsers are understood differently than SMI who are usually compared to a relatable peer (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). In order to provide consistent results, we deem it necessary to delimit our focus to Instagrammers whose fame was built on their Instagram activity, excluding traditional celebrities, such as entertainers. We believe the latter could be perceived differently as a result of their traditional professions, and thus, cannot be equated.

This thesis delimits its focus to respondents representing the three major actors partaking in Instagram endorsement processes: influencer agency experts who mediate between brands and Instagrammers (Woods, 2016), beauty brand representatives who employ Instagrammers, and followers of EI, the final consumers.

Lastly, this thesis delimits its choice of methods to qualitative research, specifically semi-structured interviews and netnography. Qualitative methods let us explore relationships between meanings, which is crucial to explore the persuasiveness of EI (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). In this study, netnography is used both to supplement semi-structured interviews by providing more input about themes uncovered during interviews, as well as to provide new observations to answer propositions. For propositions pertaining to the EI – Followers dyad, which are formulated in comparison with regular Instagrammers, netnography was used to challenge the insights provided by the interviewees. This means that the findings were used in relation to what interviewees said about EI. Whereas for propositions pertaining to EI – Sponsor brand and Own brand – Sponsor brand dyads are only concerned with EI' activities, netnographic findings were fully used to test propositions.

1.5 Philosophy of Science

This section presents our philosophical position, including epistemological and ontological assumptions which shaped this study, as well as our approach to theory development. Sensibility and consistency of these decisions help produce a coherent and complementary study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

Research philosophy delineates the assumptions and belief system researchers follow along with the process of uncovering knowledge. Ontological assumptions describe the interpretation of the “nature of reality”, comprehension of the world, and how the topic is investigated. Epistemological assumptions delineate what is considered valid knowledge and how it is obtained (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016, p. 127).

This study follows an interpretivist approach which aims to analyze the meanings people derive from their social world. Its ontological assumptions portray the social world as complex and robust. The reality is created socially, using language and culture, and it constitutes a mass of meanings and interpretations. Factors such as divergent cultural backgrounds or particular circumstances affect the meaning people create, making their social realities vastly different. The epistemological assumptions of interpretivism embrace individuals' perceptions and interpretations, and accept their narratives and

stories as a source of knowledge. Interpretivism aims to generate new and improved “understandings and interpretations of social worlds and contexts” and believes law-like generalizations belittle the complexity of human nature (ibid., p. 140).

We believe interpretivism provides us with the most holistic view of the phenomenon of Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI). Ontologically, we believe social media endorsement is inherently socially constituted, as it is based on subjectively interpreted verbal and visual interactions between EI, followers, brands, and agencies. Thus, we aim to study this topic through the prism of subjective meanings between these actors. We argue that influencer marketing is fundamentally a negotiation of meanings, including persuasive meanings followers derive from EI’ communication, the intended brand meaning or symbolic categories of meaning which likeable endorsers represent. Indeed, research shows that brand perception is individual and “the meanings that a consumer derives from a brand are subjective and the result of individual experiences and perceptions” (Iglesias, Ind & Alfaro, 2013, p. 678). Consequently, epistemologically our choice entails that we produce new and deeper understanding of EI. We believe knowledge about subjective meanings derived by actors involved in influencer marketing is obtained by interpreting their stories, narratives, and reflections, being mindful of each subject’s unique view of the social world.

1.6 Research Approach

This thesis chooses to collect data deductively, adapting a clear theoretical position which it then tests through data collection. While qualitative studies are most often inductive, they may also deductively prove or disprove existing theory (Yin, 2014). Deductive studies aim to confirm or disconfirm theory, as well as explain causality between concepts (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). A deductive approach was chosen due to the fact that we aim to contribute to the understanding of Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI), their persuasiveness and impact on sponsor brands using theoretical frames which proved applicable to other endorsement types. We assume endorsements types share a similar core due to the applicability of social influence theories to both celebrity and social media endorsements (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016; De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). Thus, we believe we can approach this topic deductively and test theoretically based propositions.

In line with Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill’s (2016) guide to a deductive study, we review related literature and select concepts, theories and a model which we deemed suitable to explore the phenomenon of EI. Basing on theoretical arguments, we pre-determine a conceptual framework using Heider’s Balance Theory, and derive nine propositions.

The first part of this thesis presents the setting of the topic of EI. Later, we depict our conceptual framework and explore the chosen dyads using theoretical concepts. Further, the methods of the study

are delineated. Finally, we present the research findings and a discussion of such, ending with a conclusion with academic contribution, managerial implications, limitations, and future research.

1.7 Definitions

Instagrammers	Social Media Influencers who primarily operate on Instagram
Endorsement	A product recommendation
Sponsor brand	A brand which an Instagrammer endorses
Own brand	A brand or product collaboration launched by an Instagrammer
Entrepreneurial Instagrammers	Instagrammers who, besides endorsing sponsor brands, also launch their own brands or products in collaboration with other brands
Regular Instagrammers	Instagrammers who only endorse sponsor brands
Homogeneous activity	Engaging solely in sponsor brand endorsements
Heterogeneous activity	Engaging in dissimilar sponsor and own brand endorsements

2. Setting

The emergence of Instagrammers was possible by the widespread of social media to mainstream communication. It is essential to explain how social media services, particularly Instagram, work, in order to understand how Instagrammers utilize them. Later, Instagrammers and their evolution will be presented.

2.1 Social Media

The traditional media mix experienced a groundbreaking transformation following the invention of social networking sites (SNS) (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Currently, there are countless SNS catered towards a variety of characteristics, interests, and functions (Ellison & Boyd, 2007). Online connectivity was widely adapted by users across all age groups (Chu & Kim, 2011). Indeed, SNS greatly affected the nature of how people interact (Hansen, Shneiderman & Smith, 2011), altering human communication, relationships, and communities (Kietzmann, Silvestre, McCarthy & Pitt, 2012).

The emergence of SNS created new opportunities for brands, as they became a medium for various business processes, such as advertising, promotion, or engagement (Smith, Fischer & Yongjian, 2012). SNS are unique, because they provide extensive demographic (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), personal, and behavioral information about consumers. Such resources elevate the potential companies have to reach their target group (Ganguly, 2015).

Currently, the most popular SNS include the relational and messaging service Facebook (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010), the photo and video sharing service Instagram (IZEA, 2017), the micro-blogging platform Twitter, the video platform YouTube (Smith, Fischer & Yongjian, 2012), and the messaging application (app) Snapchat (Piwek & Joinson, 2016). They are a crucial part of life for most Internet users. Indeed, 42% of the world's population uses SNS (Kemp, 2018). It is particularly popular among adolescents - 92% of teenagers use them every day (Ratner, 2018).

Social media platforms are online services, which facilitate the creation and sharing of content among users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). SNS allow people to virtually connect to others (Ellison & Boyd, 2007), creating *social networks*, i.e. digital structures of members connected via relationships. Members of a network can be individuals as well as organizations. Relations between members can be based on family, friendship, shared experiences, hobbies, interests, etc. (Solomon, 2006).

2.2 User Generated Content

Within social networks, users share opinions, gather information and influence peer members (Kim & Johnson, 2016) in the form of user-generated content (UGC) (Solomon, 2006). UGC is any media-based content created by members of a SNS, including all content that is created, initiated, broadcasted and consumed (Daugherty, Eastin & Bright, 2008). Through UGC, users express themselves and talk to others (Ellison & Boyd, 2007). In fact, the creation of UGC is a predominantly social practice (Smith, Fischer & Yongjian, 2012). UGC can be produced, edited, shared and received by an individual or a group (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Common forms of UGC on social media include statuses such as life updates or commentary about world events, photos of oneself, friends and family, creative outputs such as writing, art, photography or videography. Thus, UGC can be understood as the entirety of people's usage of social media platforms (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

2.2.1 Brand Related UGC

The appearance of brand profiles on SNS caused the spread of a specific UGC type which describes brand-related subject matter (Smith, Fischer & Yongjian, 2012). It is published by consumers who are users of the platform, and has the power to drive product awareness as well as influence purchase decisions (Blakley, 2013). As consumers inform each other about brands, products, and consumption related issues, SNS amass a wide array of Internet-based knowledge and information (Chauhan & Pillai, 2013). Although brand-related UGC includes other forms of brand-related statements, the most prevalent is electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). e-WOM is a digital form of traditional word-of-mouth (WOM), which refers to consumers exchanging marketing information among each other (Chu & Kim, 2011). e-WOM entails any favorable or unfavorable statement made by potential, current or past customers of a brand, broadcast publically via the Internet (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinne, Walsh & Gremler, 2004). It usually describes as an assessment of a certain product, service or interaction with a brand.

Such accounts of encounters between a brand and users are perceived by potential consumers as more authentic than brand emitted content (Yi & Ahn, 2017). Moreover, Internet-based tools make e-WOM's reach much wider than traditional WOM. Thus, e-WOM is an important issue for brands, due to its potential to influence consumer behavior and image.

2.3 Instagram

Instagram is a visual SNS owned by the Facebook group since 2012 (BBC News, 2012). It involves sharing photos and videos with short captions to one's audience, i.e. *followers*. Instagram boomed, amassing over 1 million users 2 months after launch (Desreumaux, 2014) and currently, it is the fastest growing SNS (Begu, 2018). The majority of Instagram users are individual persons, however, having an Instagram profile is increasingly more important for brands. Data shows that 86% of top brands maintain an Instagram profile (Simply Measured, 2014). Correspondingly, their activity is eagerly accepted, as 80% of users on the platform voluntarily follow a brand profile (Monllos, 2017).

2.3.1 Instagram Functions

This section presents a condensed overview of the main functions of Instagram, which is the subject of this study.

Feed

Instagram's interface involves the user switching between full-screen functional displays. The home page, i.e. *feed*, shows new posts from one's followed accounts or *hashtags* (See Appendix 1 for a definition). By *following*, one stays connected with people, brands, topics, and communities they are interested in. The feed can be refreshed to show the newest updates. Instagram keeps searching for the perfect balance of chronological and relevant content in their algorithm (Gollin, 2018), making Instagrammers more relevant due to their engaging content (Instagram Info Center, 2018). Users can express a positive reaction by *liking* posts or discuss by *commenting*. Posts created by users show up on the feeds of their followers and in the user's photo collection in their *Profile*.

Above the feed lie *Instagram stories* - daily updates visible for up to 24 hours from posting. Followed Instagrammers' stories appear on followers' feeds. *Highlighting* saves selected stories and embeds them permanently to the profile. Thus, an Instagrammer can decide whether to delete or save those personal updates. A user can create a story with a picture, text, or use animated *face filters* which appear on their face to entertain viewers. Instagram keeps expanding stories, e.g. recently by adding the option to insert songs or feed posts (Instagram Info Center, 2018). A story can be edited and decorated using various options, allowing the user to personalize them and help amateur photographers achieve a desired aesthetic style (See Appendix 1 for an overview). Followers can reply to stories with a direct message.

Instagram live video is in real-time broadcast within stories, which helps connect with followers at the moment. They can be saved for up to 24 hours or deleted, which creates a sense of urgency for followers to live watch. Once a live video starts, a notification is sent to followers which increases the chance of them watching from the very beginning. During the stream, support can be expressed via comments and likes (Read, 2018).

Search

Within *Search*, one can look for people, tags, places or brands. This section also contains pictures, videos and profiles suggested to a user, including stories made nearby or most popular live videos.

Activity

The *Activity* display has two sections. *Following* shows the activity of followed Instagram users, while *You* shows activity directed at the user, i.e. likes, comments and follows they receive in response to posted content.

Profile page

The top of the *profile* page shows one's username and profile picture. Below, in their *bio*, one can post a short description of themselves or the nature of their profile. A bio can also include hashtags and profile links which lead to hashtag pages or another profile. Major brands and recognizable public figures are given a *verified checkmark*, which helps users differentiate a real profile from fan accounts and imposters. Below lie highlights - saved Instagram stories, and underneath, the entire collection of pictures and videos posted by a user. Users can acknowledge one another's presence on a photo by *tagging* - placing a label with their Instagram name on the photo. Tagged photos will be visible in their "Photos of You" section in profile (Instagram Info Center, 2018).

2.3.2 Instagram Commerce

Instagram users have access to multiple options suitable for creating commercial posts, which is ideal for Instagrammers who balance their personal content with paid endorsements. Recent updates introduced a number of options which facilitate commercial activity on Instagram. The app now allows users to direct to another Instagram profile within their bio. Instagrammers often utilize this option and direct followers to profiles of companies they are affiliated with, or profiles of their own brands.

There are multiple ways to direct followers to endorsed brands. Notably, users can *tag* brand profiles on their content. Tagging a brand on a product visible in the content helps followers identify the brand and gives them the information needed to purchase the item. *Brand content* tags highlight paid partnerships, which are usually labelled as "paid partnership with". Moreover, according to Instagram policy, paid partnerships should be indicated by hashtags *#ad*, *#sp* or *#sponsored* (Hutchinson, 2017).

Companies or Instagrammers may also switch to business profiles. Business profile users are able to promote posts, as well as access *Instagram Insights* which are analytics about follower activity, such as reach and impressions. They can also implement an email, a call, and directions tab which respectively automatically starts an email, initiates a call, or starts navigating to a company's office or the nearest selling point. These options provide all the necessary information directly in the app, making it easier for Instagram users to complete both an online and offline purchase (Instagram Business, 2016).

In Instagram stories, one can direct followers to external sources such as e-shops, company websites or blogs without leaving Instagram, by embedding a product-related story with an outbound link. To access it, followers simply have to *Swipe up* while a story is playing. The swipe up option is available only for business accounts with more than 10k followers, and is most often used to direct followers to e-shops, a newsletter signup page or a company blog (Barker, 2018).

Business profiles can also include a *Shop tab*, which functions similarly to an in-app online store. It showcases product-related posts with detailed information. Such posts are labelled with a shopping bag icon. By tapping, users can access a description of tagged products, pricing, and a link, which directs to an e-shop where they can finish a purchase (Instagram Business, 2018).

2.3.3 Motivation for Instagram Use

Scholars often analyze the motives for participating in SNS using the uses and gratification theory (Whiting & Williams, 2013; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016; Chen, 2011; Hanson & Haridakis, 2008; Johnson & Yang, 2009). Originally developed for traditional media, uses and gratification went against the belief that mass media affects the entire audience in the same manner. It proposed that media receivers are active in their choices, diverse in their characteristics and motivated when using. The theory shifted the focus from the influence of social media, to the various motivations behind its usage (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010).

Interestingly for a SNS, Instagram users focus on the creation and presentation of self, rather than building relationships (Marcus, 2015). Indeed, Instagram users are strongly driven by the need to elicit a response from others. This social motive has been dubbed *coolness*. Users post to gain popularity, be part of a movement that is cool and promote themselves (Sheldon & Bryant, 2015; Moon, Lee, Lee, Choi & Sung, 2015). Interactions such as showing vacation pictures, notifying about life changes have moved online, gaining the ability to generate social approval. As a result, the content of one's social media became the reflection of one's social life (Dijck, 2013). Respondents, thus, depict their life and share it with their social circle (Sheldon & Bryant, 2015). Users strive to be noticed by others and brag about their lives (Moon et al., 2015). They present an edited digital version of themselves in hopes of being validated by peers through likes and comments (Allwood, 2018).

Instagram users also consume the presentation of others. As found by Sheldon and Bryant (2016) users are most strongly motivated by *surveillance*, i.e. to know what people are doing and to keep up with their life. Respondents reported the need to react to such updates, describing their habits as creeping on others' personal moments (ibid.; Moon et al., 2015). Many browse to *escape* their reality, and instead, look at a version of life they desire, not needing to put in effort to achieve it (Moon et al., 2015). This motive can be linked to the phenomena of FOMO, or the fear of missing out, which is the overwhelming anxiety about one missing out on great life experiences that their peers are participating in (JWT Intelligence, 2012). Driven by FOMO, users follow other's lives closely via Instagram as a substitute for participation (Safronova, 2015).

2.4 Instagrammers

Instagrammers emerged in a novel context of increasing media distrust and simultaneous emergence of SNS, a tool ideal to gain social approval. Overwhelmed by the amount of advertising, consumers are in need of a filter (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2018), thus they increasingly value authentic consumer reviews (Carmody, 2016). In fact, more and more often, consumers turn away from what is dictated in media and listen to influential peers (Brown & Hayes, 2009), in industries such as beauty especially (Strugatz, 2016). At the same time, SNS let people with any level of technical skill showcase their preferences, opinions, and styles in an entertaining way (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). Exceptionally persuasive users manage to amass a large, engaged following of even thousands of people, and thus, become online opinion leaders. They are able to spread ideas among their followers quickly and impact their preferences and actions (Piskorski & Brooks, 2017). At that, their channels become an alternative to ads in traditional media.

The phenomenon of Instagrammers lies in their authenticity. They allow followers to see aspects of their private lives by sharing raw, intimate and genuine moments which their audience is drawn to. The content they post is seen as unscripted and realistic, and thus, more relatable than, for instance, celebrities (Forbes, 2016). Instagrammers engage in digital interaction with followers (Abidin, 2015) creating an illusion of a real relationship (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). Consequently, followers see Instagrammers as close to themselves, i.e. trustworthy peers (Lu, Chang & Chang, 2014) not unlike a friend. Thus, they become tastemakers in certain product categories (Abidin, 2014; De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017; IZEA, 2017). Followers react to the content by viewing, liking, sharing or commenting (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2016). The attention from followers allows influencers to grow (Hearn & Schoenhoff, 2016; Abidin, 2014), as well as being a measure of success (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2016).

Marketers swiftly recognized the persuasive power of Instagrammers and began working with them to promote products. As a result, a new approach to marketing emerged. Influencer marketing places branded products and services within the SNS content of influential users (Pöyry, Pelkonen, Naumanen

& Laaksonen, 2018). As a form of third-party endorsement (Freberg, Freberg, Graham, & McGaughey, 2010), Instagrammers express support for the products, usually in exchange for compensation, such as financial remuneration (Abidin, 2015), free products (Wischhover, 2017) or invitation to events (Carbone, 2018). By seamlessly blending highly-personalized adverts with personal content, Instagrammers make ads look like highly credible eWOM, rather than a marketing strategy (Abidin, 2014).

2.4.1 Instagrammer Evolvement

Instagrammers generate positive business results, such as boosting sales volume, driving traffic to a website, increasing brand awareness or developing a brand's social community (Kinski, 2017). Moreover, using Instagrammers proves highly beneficial to a company's bottom line. According to market assessments, investment in marketing returns sevenfold (Fastenau, 2018). Thus, it is no surprise that the use of Instagrammers spread dynamically, and today, 92% of marketers deem influencer marketing effective (Linqia, 2018). As brands rushed to benefit from the impact and potential of influencer marketing (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017), Instagrammers grew in scale and importance. While initially their profiles were used for homogeneous activities, i.e. similar endorsements of sponsored products, with time, Instagrammers expanded their endeavors to include heterogeneous, i.e. divergent activities such as also endorsing their own brands or products launched in collaboration with existing brands. We call Instagrammers who engage in such entrepreneurial ventures Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI).

The evolution of an Instagrammer into an EI is based on the access they have to resources crucial to successfully launch a product into the market. A strong social media community gives them a solid groundwork for new market entry. Engaged followers, closely tuned in to new updates, mean instant product awareness. Moreover, their unique narrative is a perfect fusion of brand personality and meaning for a new product (Audunsson, 2018). As a result of this evolution, brands no longer only commission Instagrammers for sponsored posts, but also work with them as equal business partners. While some EI start their own independent brand, most co-create products with existing brands. Both, however, use their personal brand, i.e. their established, recognizable public image that is charismatic and appealing to the audience (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017) to create their product (IZEA, 2017; Shapouri, 2017).

2.4.2 Beauty Instagrammers

Beauty Instagrammers endorse beauty products by recommending them in Instagram posts. They provide their followers with a seemingly honest review of the product. Besides simply appearing with them, beauty Instagrammers often explain their benefits or post detailed how-to-use instructions (Forbes, 2016). Such Instagrammers rise spectacularly fast, and more often than others get the

opportunity to transfer their digital influence into real life contracts and positions with big brands (IZEA, 2017). Indeed, a significant portion of consumers admit that their makeup and skin care purchases are influenced by social media content (Holmes, 2018).

The agreement between a beauty Instagrammer and a beauty brand usually entails a form of compensation for the endorsement posts. Forms of remuneration range from the less official gifting of free products, exclusive event invites (Heald, 2017) or paid vacations (Connell, 2017) all the way to monetary payment (Bruculieri, 2018). In some cases, beauty Instagrammers become brand ambassadors, receiving salaries in exchange for such long-term partnerships (Sussman, 2015). Regulations in most countries require all financially sponsored endorsement to be labelled as such (Chamberlain, 2018). Commonly, influencer agencies often act as an intermediary between beauty brands and Instagrammers, recommending Instagrammers suitable for an endorsement. They are responsible for matching the parties together, and negotiating specific conditions of the potential partnership (Woods, 2016).

Some established Instagrammers launch *indie* brands independent from corporations (Fasanella, 2018). However, the beauty market is quite concentrated and competitive, and thus, some Instagrammers opt to launch beauty product collaborations with existing brands instead (The NPD Group, 2016). They receive a degree of creative control over the design of their own product and promote it using their personal channels (Shapouri, 2017).

3. Conceptual Framework

This chapter explains the foundation and structure of our conceptual framework. Firstly, balance theory, along with its relevance and critique is presented. Later, we discuss our adaptation of the theory. Lastly, we present which dyads of the conceptual framework we focus on and explain the paper's structure.

3.1 Balance Theory

Balance theory is a person perception and attitude change theory (Colman, 2008) which investigates relations between entities. Its main premise is that people are inclined to seek balance in relationships with others. Its founder, Fritz Heider (1946) proposed that one's attitude towards an object can be influenced by another person's attitude towards the object. Achieving a balance depends on how many objects are involved in the relationship. In the case of two objects, a balance can be achieved if the relation between them is either entirely positive or negative. If there are three objects, balance can be achieved by having either three positive relations or two negative and one positive (Heider, 1946).

When there are two positive and one negative relation between three objects, an imbalance occurs. A person striving to achieve balance will aim to reconsider their attitude towards one of the objects. The same happens when there are two positive and one neutral attitude among the objects. For example, an

imbalance will be created when a celebrity, towards which the person holds a positive attitude, endorses a brand towards which the person has a negative attitude (Woodside & Chebat, 2001). In this case, the theory argues that due to people's inclination to seek a balance, the person might alter their attitude either favorably towards the brand or unfavorably towards the celebrity. The person might also refuse the validity of the relationship between the brand and the celebrity (Heider, 1946).

The underlying critique of balance theory is that it looks solely at the three entities and does not consider situational factors, such as the intensity of relationships (Flament, 1963) or the effect of sentiments (Anderson, 1979). Therefore, balance theory might misrepresent the extent of true causal effects between the relationships. Our reflection on this criticism will be presented in the next section, after explaining our application of balance theory.

The Adaptation of Balance Theory

Balance theory has been widely examined in the context of celebrity endorsements (e.g. Woodside & Chebat, 2001; Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2016; Roy, Gammoh & Koh, 2012) and brand spokespeople (e.g. Wang, Liu, Xie & Zuo, 2013), to understand the threefold relationship between consumers, brands, and an endorser, as well as how an endorser affects consumer attitude towards brands. Balance theory is relevant for this thesis, due to our interest in the interrelatedness between EI (endorser), followers (consumers), own brand and sponsor brand (brands), and the goal to explore how and why EI affect follower attitude towards them and sponsor brands.

We chose to use the Heider's Balance theory as an informational foundation for the development of our conceptual framework. Similarly to balance theory, our conceptual framework (Figure 1) depicts the relationships between components. However, we believe that own and sponsor brands endorsed by EI are understood through different categories of meaning and, thus, should be explained using different

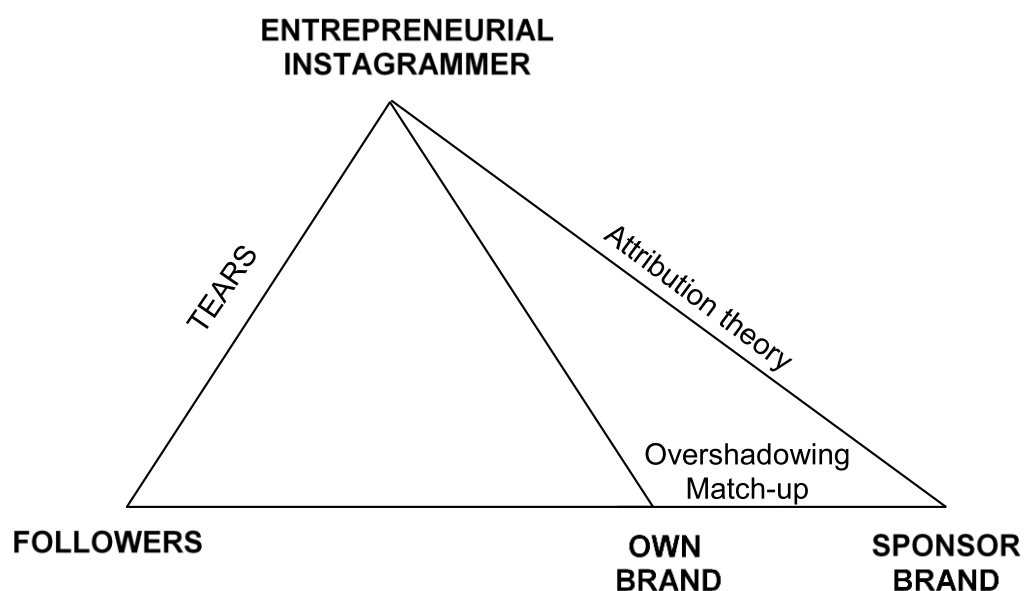


Figure 1. Conceptual framework. Source: authors' own work based on Heider (1946).

theoretical considerations. In order to present the situation where an EI endorses both their own brand and a sponsor brand, we added an extra *own brand* component. The conceptual framework is thus built using four components: *followers* (object 1), an *EI* (object 2), a *sponsor brand* (object 3) and *own brand* (new object 4). Thus, balance theory is supplemented by two extra dyads: *Entrepreneurial Instagrammer - Sponsor brand* and *Own brand - Sponsor brand*.

Our application of balance theory assumes that followers will seek an attitudinal balance when met with EI, sponsor brand and own brand. If they have a negative or nonexistent attitude towards a brand, they will, thus, align their attitudes with EI' attitude towards the endorsed brand.

Theoretically speaking, the balance achievement process will be based on the Follower - EI relationship, and influenced by either EI - Own brand or EI - Sponsor brand relationships (Russel & Stern, 2006). When a follower sees EI' recommendation of sponsor brand, they will be inclined to form an attitude towards that sponsor brand, depending on the nature of both the Follower - EI relationship and EI - Sponsor brand relationship. The same applies to the formation of attitude towards the own brand. In order for an EI to positively influence follower brand attitude, EI must have a positive attitude towards the brand they recommend, and followers must have a valid and positive attitude towards EI.

As we follow an interpretivist approach, it is important to stress that our application of balance theory does not take on a deterministic approach. Indeed, our goal of applying the theory is not to prove causal effects between relationships, but rather to explore the significance of each relationship and their potential interconnection. In other words, our conceptual framework visualizes a set of analytical relations to be explored, rather than a causal set of connections. Due to these reasons, we believe balance theory can still effectively be used, despite its criticism.

We chose to focus on exploring the following dyads from the conceptual framework: EI - Followers, EI - Sponsor brand, and Own Brand - Sponsor Brand. On the chosen dyads, we have placed theories and concepts used in celebrity endorsement and celebrity entrepreneurship literature, which we believe are suitable to explain relationships between the respective components. To provide a reader with clear guidance, we placed the conceptual framework before the theoretical argumentation. All theoretical choices will be explained in the literature review, within sections which address each of the explored dyads. Based on that, nine propositions, which reflect the research question will be formulated.

4. Literature Review

This section presents the reflection on the theoretical concepts we deemed most suitable to explore the persuasiveness of Entrepreneurial Instagrammers and their effect on sponsor brands. The theoretical considerations are used to explain each component of the conceptual framework and formulate propositions pertaining to the three chosen relational dyads.

4.1 Entrepreneurial Instagrammers

The following section presents the concepts needed to comprehend Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI) and the particular mechanism of their influence. In order to improve our understanding of EI, we first present reference groups and the features of the three endorser types. Relevant concepts from celebrity endorsement and celebrity entrepreneurship literature are also discussed.

4.1.1 Reference Groups

The influential factor of EI can be explained through the concept of reference groups, which are groups of individuals whose attitudes, beliefs and behaviors are embraced for the formulation of own, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. The premise of the concept is that groups are one of the primary actors in the process of socialization and learning (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2005), thus, behavior is driven by peer actions. Considering the mechanism of Instagram endorsements which is based on peer-to-peer interactions and sharing, the knowledge of how reference groups facilitate this relationship is significant. Reference groups are classified basing on consumers' membership, attraction, and degree of contact.

A *disclaimant* reference group is a group consumers belong but feel negative attraction towards, and thus, desire to disassociate from, while consumers consider themselves members of, and are positively attracted to a *contactual* reference group. The last two reference groups are similar since consumers do not consider themselves belonging to either *aspirational* nor *avoidance* reference group. The difference between these groups is the type of attraction consumers hold towards them, which is positive towards the aspirational group, and negative towards the avoidance group. Moreover, these groups could be differentiated even more based on the degree of their interpersonal contact with consumers. A group is called primary if there is frequent contact, whereas limited encounters between a group and consumers categorise it as secondary (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2005). However, reference groups could be criticized due to their categorical attribution of a person to just one group. Due to EI' complex actions, statements and endorsements, their influence may be explained using more than one reference group.

4.1.2 Endorser Types

Traditional or social media influencers are people who have the power to impact others' preferences or actions. They are able to spread a particular belief or practice in a large population quickly. Such social influence effects are large, and exist in many environments across various disciplines (Piskorski & Brooks, 2017). Endorsers, who are influencers expressing support for a product, are commonly categorized into three types: expert, celebrity and typical consumer endorsers (Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Till & Busler, 2000).

Expert Endorsers

An expert endorser is an individual who has an elevated level of knowledge. Such endorsers are seen as professionals, since their knowledge was acquired through efforts in studying, training or engaging in other activities which allowed them to gain experience. Typically, expertise endorsers have a well-recognized profession, such as doctors and athletes, which make them experts in related product classes (Friedman & Friedman, 1979). Experts might be attributed to an aspirational reference group, since their expertise makes them seem attractive but, at the same time, less similar to consumers (nonmembers). Characteristics such as honesty, sincerity, and expertise describe the profile of an expertise endorser (Kelman, 1961).

Celebrity Endorsers

Celebrity endorsers are famous, liked and respected by the masses (Shimp & Andrews, 2013). They are known for their recognized achievements in acting, sports, entertainment, etc. Unlike expertise endorsers, celebrity endorsers often use their recognition to endorse consumer goods beyond their area of expertise (McCracken, 1989; Shimp & Andrews, 2013). Their popularity and recognition depend on their performance, which is expressed by achievements “a celebrity attains at any given time in their chosen profession” (Amos, Holmes & Strutton, 2008, p. 213). Celebrity endorsers can be deemed an aspirational reference group, since most often consumers are positively attracted to celebrities, but they are not celebrities (they are nonmembers). Studies confirm that celebrities serve as an aspirational reference group and affect people by increasing their purchase intention (Magnini, Honeycutt & Cross, 2008).

Typical Consumer Endorsers

Typical consumer endorsers, contrary to expert and celebrity endorsers, do not possess special knowledge about products they endorse, and do not have wide recognition. Such endorsers are unique in a way that their knowledge about products is obtained through usage. Endorsements by typical consumer endorsers portray their real experience, feelings, and opinions about the products (Friedman & Friedman, 1979). Consumer endorsers could be seen as a contactual reference group due to similar initial product knowledge and consumption behavior as consumers (membership), and a positive attraction due to the ability to relate (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2005).

4.1.3 Entrepreneurs

Defining concepts such as “entrepreneur”, “entrepreneurship” and “entrepreneurial” is a topic of constant discussion. While it is not difficult to identify successful and well-known individuals such as Elon Musk and Steve Jobs as entrepreneurs (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010), listing core features which allow us to call one an entrepreneur is more complex. Attempts at defining entrepreneurship are present in early research, describing it as using proactivity and creativity to combine existing things, and thus,

generate new opportunities. This process facilitates innovation and value creation, contributing to economic development (Black, Burton, Wood & Zimbelman, 2010). Entrepreneurial activity is defined as different strategic pursuits, leading to the introduction of new goods, production methods or markets, as well as new supply sources or even industrial reorganization (Gartner, 1988; Sexton & Smilor, 1986).

Entrepreneurs were also studied within competency research. Although some researchers distinct between entrepreneurial and managerial competences needed to start and grow the business respectively, it is believed that entrepreneurs need to possess both. Scholars identify three common groups of entrepreneurial competencies: attitudes/traits, knowledge/experience, and skills/abilities (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010). Although the perception of these skills is individual and may depend on one's cultural background or upbringing, we still think it is relevant to consider light of EI.

Attempts at showing how entrepreneurs differ from non-entrepreneurs keeps resulting in an identification of distinct characteristics. Entrepreneurs are consistently deemed to have higher achievement motivation (Black, Burton, Wood & Zimbelman, 2010), exhibit an inclination to notice opportunities, come up with new ideas and convert them into value for the entity (Baron, 1998). All of it demands creativity, opportunism, and persuasiveness which are traits that can be either inherent, developed, or both (Autio, 2007). Experience plays an important role, since new ventures are often released in industries in which entrepreneurs are already knowledgeable about (Smith-Hunter, Kapp & Yonkers, 2003).

4.1.4 Celebrity Capital

SMI use social media to accumulate a form of *celebrity capital*, conceptualized as fame, favorability, personality, reputation and all the publicly available knowledge about their past behaviors, which brings to one's name "attention-getting, interest-riveting and profit-generating value" (Hunter, Burgers & Davidson, 2009, p. 140). By concentrating mass attention around their person, they gain the ability to bring value to a company by effectively circulating authentic marketing messages (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017).

Celebrity capital gives SMI a competitive advantage. Through celebrity capital, they gain the power to deem products desirable, an ability comparable to the phenomenon of opinion leaders (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2016) or market mavens (Shimp & Andrews, 2013). Celebrity capital also helps brands establish legitimacy, support or re-define its positioning, generate customer awareness and favorability (Hunter & Davidsson, 2007). People like Bill Gates and Richard Branson obtain celebrity capital through entrepreneurial activities and successfully leverage it to reach even greater results for their ventures (Hunter, 2009). Whereas traditional celebrities, who obtained their fame for reasons other than engaging in entrepreneurial ventures, often use their acquired celebrity capital to

capitalize on entrepreneurial opportunities (Tozzi, 2007). Consequently, their celebrity capital is associated more with personality and personal achievements, rather than with specific companies.

Celebrity capital is originally associated with traditional fame, recognizable professions and achievements, and thus, is limited as it does not encompass modern popular personas who gain fame in alternative ways. However, we still deem it suitable to explain the influence of EI, who are a type of SMI operating on Instagram, and also uses their recognition to help marketers reach and influence consumers. In fact, celebrity capital is arguably especially relevant in the case of Instagram, where the status and development of Instagrammers is measured in views and publicity (Abidin, 2014). EI build their celebrity capital over time and collect a significant amount of fans by showcasing their personalities, as well as communicating about topics of interest. Thus, prior to launching their product lines individually, or in collaboration with other brands, EI acquire celebrity capital via their Instagram presence.

4.1.5 Meaning Transfer

The way brands recognize the impact of digital influencers such as EI is through their ability to generate follower interest and purchase intention (Uzunoğlu & Misci, 2014). We argue that the influence of Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI) can be explained using McCracken's (1986) meaning transfer model (MTM).

MTM illustrates how meaning from the culturally constituted world is transferred to "the life and experience of the consumer" (McCracken, 1989, p. 314). Meaning transfer begins in the culturally constituted world, which is comprised of the principles and categories of the predominant culture. Then, meaning moves to consumer goods and ends up retrieved by the individual consumer. The meaning from the culturally constituted world is transferred to consumer goods through advertisements or fashion systems, and subsequently to the individual consumer by the four rituals: possession, exchange, grooming, and divestment.

In advertising, the meaning transfer begins when the advertiser determines which cultural meanings, such as gender, age, status, a way of living or place, are intended for the consumers good. As soon as the meaning has been moved to the good, it starts progressing towards consumers. According to Belk (1988), consumers use products both to serve their needs, as well as to form an image of themselves and the world they live in. Thus, consumers acquire consumer goods embedded with cultural meaning and use them to define the self and the aspects of their world. Thus, the movement of meaning is complete (McCracken, 1986).

McCracken extends the MTM to celebrity endorsement and demonstrates that the effectiveness of celebrities as endorsers emerges from the cultural meanings they personify. He declares that celebrities

embody various sociocultural meanings which are sourced from the culturally embedded world through their personal and professional roles. As a result of an endorsement, the product is embedded with cultural meaning possessed by the celebrity endorser. Recent studies identified six dimensions of celebrity meaning which are transferable to the brand via endorsement: personality, credibility, physical appearance, feelings, performance and values (Jain & Roy, 2016). Consequently, upon recognizing the embedded meaning, a consumer becomes attracted to the endorsed product and purchases it to acquire the aspirational or ideal self-image which is consistent with the image of the celebrity.

This thesis argues that the mechanism of MTM could also be applied to EI endorsements, since EI, just like celebrities, accumulate celebrity capital, i.e. wide attention, reputation and recognizability, which enables them to deem products desirable (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2016; Hunter & Davidsson, 2008; Hunter, Burgers & Davidsson, 2009). We believe this ability stems from the sociocultural meanings they earn from the culturally embedded world through their public roles and accomplishments. Akin to celebrity endorsements, EI endorsements can also be seen as the three-part meaning transfer process described above. A consumer becomes eager to acquire the product that EI endorses to advance themselves to an ideal self-image, congruent to the image of the EI.

MTM may be seen as limited, as it does not consider moderating factors that may impede the transfer, such as consumer knowledge about the product category or brand (Jain & Roy, 2016). Therefore, it is suggested that to fully explain the process of endorsement, MTM should be discussed in conjunction with other theoretical considerations. Regardless, we believe MTM serves as a good foundation to understand the influence of EI on followers.

4.2 Followers

This section presents our understanding of the characteristics and processes applicable to followers of EI. In order to analyze the behavior of a typical EI follower, we apply theoretical constructs pertaining to mental heuristics, particularities of consumer attitudes and discuss brand communities.

4.2.1 Social Validation

Social validation is the most common heuristic, i.e. cognitive shortcut, evoked as a result of complex environments (Cialdini, 2007). In the presence of social media, people face excessive amounts of product-related information. Thus, decision making becomes complicated due to the endless possibilities. Schwartz (2004) explains that, paradoxically, this overload of options is limiting, rather than liberating our choices. This thesis agrees with Cialdini (2007) who proposes that faced with complex decision making situations, people use heuristics to guide their behavior. We, thus, use social validation to justify the decision making process of Instagram followers.

Social validation is the inclination to follow what is popular, or follow the crowd. This principle is based on social evidence, which indicates that the appropriateness of one's actions is determined by others behaving similarly (ibid.; Guadagno, Muscanell, Rice & Roberts, 2013). Social validation is supported by the nature of humans as social beings, eager to band together. The instinct to adapt and act sensibly causes one to join a group and copy the behavior of the majority (Coultas, 2004).

Faced with a shortage of time to make extensive research, a consumer decides to purchase by looking at what others are buying. The popular opinion validates that the merchandise is good enough to purchase (Cialdini, 2009). The heuristic was found to be prevalent in online environments (Postmes, Spears, Sakhel & De Groot, 2001) and confirmed in the case of blogs (Guadagno et al., 2013). Blog content is usually produced by one person whom readers support via comments and likes. Instagram posts operate on a similar mechanism, as Instagrammers also share content which is supported by their followers with views, likes and comments. The shortcut of social validation might be invoked after seeing the majority of followers praise or express excitement about the products. Followers might be inclined to follow the crowd when seeing an Instagrammer recommendation obtains a strong positive response from their following.

However, this thesis challenges social validation as being too straightforward for the Instagram environment. Due to public cases of Instagrammers buying followers, likes or comments, users are more conscious about artificial ways of gaining popularity. Therefore, other factors influencing follower decision making should be taken into account.

4.2.2 Attitude Functions

Attitudes are feelings, beliefs and actions in relation to an object (Szmigin & Piacentini, 2015). Research on attitudes and persuasion yields consistent evidence that people form attitudes quickly, whether it is about a product, person or any issue. People persistently protect and maintain those attitudes, and form their consumption needs on the basis of them (Katz, 1960; Kelman, 1958, 1961). These needs can be manipulated using the functional approach, which recognizes different motivational functions people attribute to attitudes (Schiffman, Hansen & Kanuk, 2008).

Katz (1960) identified the utilitarian function which maximizes rewards and minimizes punishments, the ego-defensive function which protects one's self-esteem, the value-expressive function which expresses one's values and identity, and the knowledge function which maintains consistency in one's frame of reference. Attitude functions can be expressed in advertising message to enable attitude change (Shavitt, 1989).

Due to the argued power of Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI) to influence followers, we believe that similarly to regular advertisements, it is valuable to recognize the followers' attitude functions. Research agrees that the influence these functions have on consumer behavior depends on specific

product and personality characteristics. Differences in personalities need to be considered, because attitude functions are unique to an individual (Shavitt, 1989). Thus, we consider different attitude functions that followers may have in relation to beauty products.

Firstly, it could be argued that for some people, beauty products serve a utilitarian purpose due to their interest in “outcomes intrinsically associated with” those products (Shavitt, 1989, p. 300-305) such as moisturized skin, pleasant smell, covered acne etc. Consequently, when buying beauty products, they aim for maximized rewards, e.g. achieving well moisturized skin or minimized punishments, e.g. having dry skin.

However, products can serve more than one function. Since the use of make-up products, contrary to skin care products, is more apparent to the public, they might also be associated with the value-expressive function, i.e. symbolize social classifications and values (Shavitt, 1989). Similarly, the hype around beauty products promoted on Instagram often encourages customers to make a purchase to “impress others”. Indeed, predominant societal or cultural descriptions of make-up brands, such as *stylish*, *cool*, *luxurious* and similar, portray the value these products can bring to users (Shavitt, 1989).

Attitudes towards beauty products may also perform a knowledge function. Knowledge function helps one’s environment be organized and structured, providing understanding and consistency (Katz, 196). It allows users to foresee what might happen, giving them a sense of control. In the case of beauty products, especially skin care, attitudes serving a knowledge function may be elicited due to people’s consciousness about what benefits ingredients provide, and what is the product combination one needs to use to achieve the desired effect. People, when aware of potential results of using certain ingredients, develop a sense of consistency in their frame of reference.

Lastly, consumers’ attitudes towards beauty products may also perform an ego-defensive function, which, through the protection of one’s ego, creates distance between internal feelings and external threats. For example, products may save a consumer from embarrassment by providing a solution to an insecurity (Knight Lapinski & Boster, 2001). Accordingly, the ego-defensive function might manifest when using products or services to avoid compromising their self-image (Shavitt, 1989). For example, people might defend themselves against feeling self-conscious when they are wearing no make-up having untreated skin problems, by adopting a positive attitude to such categories of beauty products.

However, Shavitt (1989) argues that to rely solely on product and personal characteristics is not sufficient, and stresses the relevance of situational characteristics concerned with information related with attitude or message manipulations. In order to fully understand the underlying functions of consumers’ attitudes, considering all three categories of factors is recommended. However, the application of personality characteristics and situational characteristics must correspond with the specific product, making the first category of factors - product characteristics - essential (Shavitt, 1989).

4.2.3 Brand Communities

In this section, we apply the concept of brand communities to analyze Followers of Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI). Firstly, the concept of brand communities is introduced, along with the context of online brand communities and our criticism. After, we present our arguments about how followers of EI resemble members of brand communities.

SNS allow users to keep up with brands and their spokespersons, such as EI. This interactive environment facilitates the organic grouping of brand users into online brand communities (Iglesias, Ind & Alfaro, 2013; Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2016). The concept of brand communities argues that brand users form groups based on their relations to the brand and each other (McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig, 2002). Members feel a sense of belonging and actively perform brand-related rituals and traditions. (Arnould & Price 2005). Brand communities can be a key source of one's cultural identity, often revolving around a particular style or fashion. Online brand communities "use electronic mediation to overcome real-life space and time limitations" (Dessart, Veloutsou & Morgan-Thomas, 2015, p. 32). Members of the community discuss, network, share opinions, interests, information, and help (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2016). Their affinity towards the brand is multifaceted. They hold dear the branded products they own, giving them symbolic value (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) and feel attached to owners and marketers, seeing them as a personal manifestation of the company (McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig, 2002).

The concept of brand communities may be seen as limited, as it does not consider how the dynamics of the community are affected by the roles of users or the hierarchy among them. We believe that this will not affect our study, as we explore the relationship between a single follower and EI rather than group dynamics. Brand communities are still deemed useful to explore followers of EI in the context of beauty products. beauty Instagrammers facilitate the interaction and sharing of knowledge, which is the life force of a brand community. They appear with the products and "provide consumer educational information and application tutorials" (Weinswig, 2018, p. 4). They interact directly with users and start discussions among followers. Moreover, the beauty industry is driven by a diverse array of trends, capable of building a sense of one's individuality (Montell, 2018), which aligns with brand communities building follower identity.

EI's role in a brand community can be seen as twofold. Brand community members form valuable ties with marketing agents who represent the brand (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Dwyer, Schurr & Oh, 1987) and those who own and manage a brand (McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig, 2002). Thus, in relation to sponsor brands, an EI can be equated to a marketing agent who promotes it, while in relation to their own brand EI may play the role of a party who owns and manages the brand. What strengthens a customer integration into a brand community is the growing presence of the community relationships in his life experience (ibid.). As explained before, followers constantly view intimate aspects of

Instagrammers' personal lives, illusive of a real-life relationship (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). Thus, followers see EI as a constant presence in their daily life, which in turn may bind them closer to the endorsed brand community. Both in cases of own and sponsor brands, EI may be seen as an employee who personifies the brand and interacts with followers, forming relations and facilitating the community.

EI can also be linked to brand communities through the flow of brand meaning. Members of a brand community feel a strong sense of shared meaning (Aaker, 1996; Aaker, 1997), due to joint consumption and use of branded products (Arnould & Price, 1993) and shared aspirations on the basis of promotional materials (McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig, 2002). As aforementioned, Instagrammers personify desirable cultural meanings which they transfer into an endorsed brand, to be retrieved by consumers in a quest to construct their desirable self (McCracken, 1986; 1989). Thus, it can be argued that through promotional posts featuring the endorsed brands, Instagrammers embed them with a sense of meaning that is then retrieved by the brand community. Meaningful consumption experiences strengthen community relations and increase the appreciation of facilitators, in this case, the EI (McAlexander, Schouten & Koenig, 2002). Thus, to followers, EI is a significant source of shared brand meaning that binds the community.

4.3 Brands

This section presents our view on the concept of a brand in relation to Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI) using brand value co-creation analyzed through the Organic View of the Brand (OVB). First, the stakeholder focus brand era, among which OVB is situated will be presented. Later, we present our arguments for how an EI contributes to brand value in relation to their own brand as an employee stakeholder, and in regard to sponsor brands, as a key stakeholder in contact with a brand community.

4.3.1 Organic View of the Brand

The understanding of a brand was first conceptualized as a set of attributes differentiating it among competitors. As the reality in which the market and consuming society exist changed, so did the view of the brand. Thus, with time, the brand focus has been placed firstly on identifying the product, then on providing value sought by a consumer, and then on relations between the consumer and a brand (Merz, He & Vargo, 2008). Most recently, however, scholars have started to adapt a new logic which considers a brand to be an ever-changing process where multiple stakeholders produce value in a cooperative way (Jones, 2005; Pitt, Watson, Berthon, Wynn & Zinkhan, 2006; Boyle, 2007; Payne, Storbacka & Frow, 2008). This perspective has been named the Stakeholder Focus Brand Era (Merz, He & Vargo, 2008).

The OVB model of brand value co-creation (Iglesias, Ind & Alfaro, 2013) proposes that brand meaning, and consequently, brand value, is co-created by stakeholders in a dynamic, interactive way. The stakeholders contributing to brand value range from the employees, through the actual products and services, to various partners and consumers themselves. The consumers take part in the meaning and value co-creation process by interacting with other stakeholders, such as brand partners and other consumers, or by joining brand communities. This happens via brand interfaces where various brand agents and consumers meet and create consumer experiences.

This thesis' critique of the OVB model is that it vaguely describes ways in which managers can collaborate with stakeholders to co-create value. While OVB advises more participatory and humble management, it simply states "techniques of influence must be found" (Iglesias, Ind & Alfaro, 2013, p. 684). However, OVB is still very applicable to the unique conditions of EI endorsements. Not only does it realize how the Internet allows consumers to exchange information and communicate with brands, but it also recognizes the impact influential persons have on consumer buying behavior.

As argued, Instagrammers, as endorsers, already take part in the brand meaning creation by embedding the endorsed brand with social meaning (McCracken, 1986; 1989). According to OVB, "the creation of brand value depends on the interactions established between consumers and the organization that manages the brand – through frontline employees and brand interfaces" (Iglesias, Ind & Alfaro, 2013, p. 677). Thus, the profiles of EI, who establish a highly convincing illusion of human interaction with their followers (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017) may be considered digital brand interfaces through which the customers and the stakeholder interact, and thus, co-create meaning.

EI as Employee Stakeholder

The concept of an employee stakeholder helps understand how the EI may contribute to the value of their own brand. Employees engage with consumers via multiple brand interfaces (Iglesias, Ind & Alfaro, 2013) also called touchpoints (Dhebar, 2013). As the stakeholder focus era delineates, brands shifted their focus from providing products to services, and thus, the experiences consumers have with brand representatives are of growing importance.

According to OVB, an effective employee stakeholder "lives and breathes the brand values and fights for these values for every product we [the brand] introduce" (Iglesias, Ind & Alfaro, 2013, p. 679). In order to bring value to the brand, an employee's actions should reflect a deep understanding of the brand vision. Moreover, employee stakeholders who exhibit high commitment and empowerment are crucial to the success of a brand. The authors reiterate how employees who feel involved with a brand significantly impact its bottom line (ibid). As aforementioned, EI use multiple aspects of their personal brand to create and promote their own brand. The brand is often signified by their name and they have a degree of control over its aesthetic style. Moreover, it is promoted on their Instagram profile, among

content featuring their personal lives. Thus, EI can be considered to be a source of their own brand's values and vision. Being widely recognized as a crucial employee who personifies the brand's values and vision, their actions are in alignment with the brand, and thus, can co-create the desired brand meaning. EI present themselves as highly involved with their own brand, showing their role in planning, creating and launching the brand. They are also employees with high decisive power, which can be considered empowerment. In line with that, EI can be considered committed and empowered employee stakeholders of their own brand, which, as proposed by OVB, significantly contributes to brand value.

EI as Key Stakeholder in a Brand Community

OVB's view of stakeholders being intermediaries of brand communities is useful in understanding the way EI, through endorsement, co-create meaning and bring value to sponsor brands. Iglesias, Ind, and Alfaro (2013) highlight how persons who become online opinion leaders share their brand experiences via social networks, which attracts other consumers who use them to shape their opinions about the brand, forming communities. OVB encourages brands to work with key stakeholders to help them navigate consumer opinions. If managers achieve a cooperative relationship with brand community representatives, their brand story can be told by an external, credible person - being more effective than brand messages (ibid.). This view also pertains to Instagrammers, as they also share their product reviews on social media. As argued, beauty brand users form naturally occurring online communities around sponsor brands. Instagrammers affect consumers' buying behavior through opinion leadership and social influence, and thus, become key stakeholders who intermediate between the brand and the community, contributing to brand value.

EI's specific contribution to the sponsor brand value co-creation is twofold. Firstly, as argued, they transfer desirable social meaning into sponsor brands they endorse (McCracken, 1988). Secondly, during endorsement, they showcase the brand in an attractive way. Being a seemingly external and trusted opinion source, their presentation of the brand benefits can contribute to brand value more effectively than brand communication.

4.4 Followers - EI dyad

This dyad concerns the relationship between followers and Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI). We apply the TEARS model adding an additional attribute of Emotional Involvement to explain the persuasiveness of EI. Consequently, six propositions are derived.

4.4.1 TEARS

From a branding perspective, EI are a tool used by marketers influence follower attitudes towards the brand. Attitudes are significant because people act in alignment with them, which is why marketers strive to change consumer attitudes via tools of influence that appeal to reason and emotion. Notably,

they use likeable endorsers to transfer a message to consumers (Shimp & Andrews, 2013). The effectiveness of an endorser is commonly evaluated using the socially influential attributes of a message source by Kelman (1961). The attributes - Trustworthiness, Expertise, Respect, Attractiveness, and Similarity - are referred to as the TEARS model (Shimp & Andrews, 2013).

The source attributes were criticized as insufficient in explaining endorsement (McCracken, 1989). Namely, they do not consider how a specific product category (Friedman & Friedman, 1979) or memory associations held about the endorser (Kamen, Azhari & Kragh, 1975) affect endorsement. However, they are still “a necessary part of our understanding of the endorsement process” (McCracken, 1989, p. 311). We deem TEARS clear and intuitive, and thus, suitable to discuss persuasiveness with respondents. By supplying TEARS with other concepts we hope to gain a more holistic explanation of EI endorsement. Moreover, TEARS may serve as a frame to discuss other factors the respondents deem valuable.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the extent to which people believe a source makes valid claims about the advertised object (McCracken, 1989; Shimp, 2003). It equates to being honest, integral and believable. Trustworthiness affects a source’s persuasion and depends mainly on the evaluations of a source’s intent. Whether the audience sees a source as trustworthy, and thus, persuasive, depends on the level of their self-interest regarding certain actions. If they are seen as highly self-interested, their persuasiveness will be lower compared to the source which seemingly does not gain benefits from actions such as endorsing a brand. People earn trust through their projected professional or personal experience. EI project such experience using social media. Personal experience is perceived in any kind of daily experience revealed to the public. Their portrayed professional experience constitutes career achievements, competences or relevant knowledge (Andrews & Shimp, 2018).

When endorsers release their own brand, they start being perceived as entrepreneurs (Hunter, 2007). People are inclined to associate entrepreneurial people with superior skills and knowledge. They perceive entrepreneurs compared to non-entrepreneurs to have consistently higher achievement motivation (Black, Burton, Wood & Zimbelman, 2010), inclination to notice opportunities, come up with new ideas and convert them into added value for the entity or society with a corresponding risk (Baron, 1998). This demands creativity, opportunism, and persuasiveness which are traits that can be either inherent and developed or both (Autio, 2007). Thus, there is reason to believe that having launched a business venture, EI will be associated with the aforementioned attributes as well. These newfound positive judgements are likely to contribute to their projected professional experience, thus deeming them more trustworthy opinion leaders than regular Instagrammers.

Moreover, it could be argued that personal experience projected by EI also builds trust through integral, and thus, trustworthy actions. Experience plays an important role in the perception of entrepreneurs since new ventures are often released in industries which entrepreneurs are already knowledgeable about from past work-related or other experience (Smith-Hunter, Kapp & Yonkers, 2003). Similarly, EI most often launch own brands within an interest niche their social media profile is focused on, such as beauty, fashion or sports. Launching a brand in line with that niche may be seen as consistent behavior, suggesting integral actions and interests, making their future claims seen as valid, and thus, trustworthy (McCracken, 1989; Shimp, 2003).

Based on the presented arguments, the following proposition is formulated:

P1: Entrepreneurial Instagrammers are more Trustworthy, and thus, more persuasive

Expertise

Expertise is considered the extent to which an endorser is a source of valid assertions, which persuades the audience to internalize, i.e. accept an endorser's opinion firmly into their personal belief and value system (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). An endorser's expertise pertains to their knowledge, experience, skills (Shimp & Andrews, 2013) or competence (McGinnies & Ward, 1980). A source has expertise when they are deemed experienced, knowledgeable, qualified or skilled in the relevant discipline (Ohanian, 1990) that is relevant to the endorsed brand, i.e. fitness, when endorsing sport products (Shimp & Andrews, 2013; Liu, Jiang, Lin, Ding, Duan & Xu, 2015). An endorser seen as an expert is, therefore, more persuasive in altering the audience's opinions than one whose communication does not imply expertise (Shimp & Andrews, 2012).

An Instagrammer's expertise is judged by their knowledge about the specific, niche area that they are considered leaders in (IZEA, 2017). An EI being a brand owner communicates to followers their involvement in the creation of the brand, as well as participation in product development activities such as product design, packaging design, marketing. Having had this role in their own brand, the EI is likely to be seen as having gained valuable skills concerning the development as well as inside knowledge about effective and quality products. Whether their knowledge actually increases is of less importance, as expertise is a perceived phenomenon, meaning it relies on the audience's judgement about a source's competence, not their factual competence (Shimp, 2013).

Indeed, EI actively make their role in the creation of a brand known to followers, posting about their engagement in the process, sharing first-hand information (Battle, 2018; Mychaskiw, 2017). Thus, followers are exposed to information which implies that EI had multiple experiences likely leading to an increase in their knowledge about the products and industry. Whereas, regular Instagrammers who do not launch brands instead share the information about consuming and reviewing products. As a

result, EI are likely to be seen as possessing more expertise within their category than regular Instagrammers.

Based on the presented arguments, the following proposition is formulated:

P2: Entrepreneurial Instagrammers have more Expertise, and thus, are more persuasive

Attractiveness

An endorser's attractiveness refers to characteristics that make them attractive to the audience. When the audience perceives endorsers as attractive, they are influenced by identification (Shimp, 2007), meaning they hope to imitate these alluring aspects of their persona, in order to increase their social position (Kelman, 1961). The audience, thus, accepts the endorser attitudes, behaviors, and preferences into their own belief system. These attractive characteristics can be diverse and range from physical looks to virtuous qualities, personality properties, an attractive lifestyle, and more (Shimp, 2007).

An EI leads a lifestyle that is highly likely to be perceived by their followers as more attractive than a regular Instagrammer's. Indeed, they become an entrepreneur in a field their followers are interested in and they work independently within their hobby, which is regarded as the most desired employment, especially for Millennials age cohort (Burnett, 2018) making up most of Instagrammers' following (Hubbard, 2017). Entrepreneurship tends to be favorably perceived in western cultures (The Gallup Organization, 2010), making this lifestyle is likely to be deemed more attractive by followers than only being an endorser hired by brands.

Moreover, an EI is likely to be perceived as more attractive in the eyes of their followers in regards to newfound aspects of their personality. Studies show that entrepreneurial individuals are often associated with highly attractive traits such as passion, resilience, a strong sense of self, adaptability, and vision (Rampton, 2014). Therefore, we argue that EI' involvement in a business venture will imply to their followers that they possess appealing qualities, typically associated with being an entrepreneur. Endorsement literature supports this, arguing that endorsers who are entrepreneurially involved with the product do adapt certain personal characteristics, i.e. of being self-employed, risk taking, creative, responsible and hard-working, which are likely to be deemed attractive by the audience (Hunter, 2009).

Based on the presented arguments, the following proposition is formulated:

P3: Entrepreneurial Instagrammers are more Attractive, and thus, more persuasive

Respect

An endorser's respect refers to the quality of being admired or esteemed due to personal accomplishments and achievements. Respect also influences the audience through the process of identification (Shimp, 2007) where followers hope to mimic what they find admirable in an endorser to

benefit socially (Kelman, 1961). Endorsers can be respected for their achievements and success, as well as their abilities or particular stances on social and political issues (Shimp, 2007).

Followers are likely to respect how an EI accomplished launching and managing their own brand. From childhood, people learn how higher investment yields better results, and thus, they develop a tendency to hold in high regard things that are more difficult to acquire, compared to those which are easy (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2005). Successfully launching an own business venture is widely understood to be an accomplishment requiring a lot of efforts (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010). Thus, it is likely that followers will admire EI who achieved this goal.

The vast majority of Instagrammers still work by simply endorsing brands. An Instagrammer who takes part in bringing a new product into the market is likely to be seen as a step above this position, or progressing in their career. Studies show that consumers respect an endorser due to the difficult journey they have undertaken to achieve their current social standing (Jain & Roy, 2016). Thus, it is likely that followers may feel newfound respect for an EI.

According to the theory of meaning transfer, endorsers personify desirable cultural meanings which they acquire through their accomplishments and roles they perform in their lives. Endorsers who successfully construct their personal image with a set of highly desirable meanings are admired by consumers (McCracken, 1989). Becoming involved in an own business venture is by most regarded as a positive role, which is likely to provide EI with additional desirable cultural meaning, improving their construction of self-image. Thus, an EI's image, augmented by being an entrepreneur is likely to earn more followers' respect.

Based on the presented arguments, the following proposition is formulated:

P4: Entrepreneurial Instagrammers are more Respected, and thus, more persuasive

Similarity to Followers

Similarity is the extent of a match between an endorser and their audience. The relevance of this attribute lies in the common belief that individuals prefer people who share the same or similar traits (Shimp, 2010). People perceive strangers similar to them as more intelligent, liked and moral than dissimilar strangers (Batchelor, Gibson, Harris & Simpson, 2011). Moreover, as classical conditioning theory suggests, the more two stimuli are similar, the easier an associative link between them is created (McSweeney & Bierley, 1984; Till, 1998). Thus, the perceived similarity between an endorser and audience affects the effectiveness of the message (Hunter, 2009) and consequently their persuasiveness (Kahle & Homer, 1985).

Regular Instagrammers have a high degree of similarity with their followers, because of shared demographics (age, gender), psychographics (lifestyle) or behavioral habits (consumption patterns)

(ibid.; Shimp & Andrews, 2013). Due to similar initial product knowledge and preference, they are considered trustworthy, relatable peers (Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Hunter, 2009). However, when Instagrammers release their own brand, they become entrepreneurial, thus, becoming associated with unique positive entrepreneurial traits (Hunter, 2009). Since such traits can be developed or acquired (Autio, 2007), the extra effort put into gaining these competences can make EI perceived as more knowledgeable, experienced, skilled and qualified.

Such qualities are commonly attributed to experts (Ohanian, 1990). Basing on the concept of reference groups, experts seemingly having substantial knowledge and expertise make people positively attracted to them. However, due to their relatively superior knowledge, it is likely that people do not associate themselves with the same group as experts, i.e. they consider themselves non-members (Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2005). Thus, it can be argued that followers see Instagrammers who launched brands as more similar to experts and consequently less similar to themselves. This makes them seem as less relatable and similar to followers than regular Instagrammers which, according to the theoretical argumentation, lowers their persuasiveness. Therefore:

P5: Entrepreneurial Instagrammers are less Similar, and thus, less persuasive

4.4.2 Emotional Involvement

As endorsers evolve, existing source attributes are may be incomplete. Typically, when analyzing endorsement effectiveness, environmental factors were kept constant and observable events were not linked to potential motivational causes. As endorsers engage in heterogeneous endorsement activities, situational forces between an endorser and products are arguably critical. Consequently, an empirically novel characteristic, emotional involvement, was proposed. It was found to be distinct from the commonly accepted source attributes (Hunter & Davidsson, 2007).

Emotional involvement addresses such situational and dispositional information, namely whether the endorser uses, has experience with, is paid to use or is somehow differently related with the product (Silvera & Austad, 2004). It is believed that all endorsers are emotionally involved with products they endorse to a varying extent (Hunter & Davidson, 2007). Emotional involvement proposes that people will be naturally inclined to attribute reasons to any encountered event (Kelley & Michela, 1980). In this case, the audience, when exposed to an endorsement, forms a belief about the extent to which the endorser really uses, likes, is passionate, excited thrilled or dedicated to the endorsed product. This describes the endorser's perceived emotional involvement, and accordingly affects their brand and ad attitude (Hunter, 2009).

Researchers agree that emotional involvement boosts communication effectiveness (Hunter & Davidson, 2007; Silvera & Austad, 2004). Indeed, the extent to which an endorser is persuasive vastly depends on how their actions are perceived. Thus, emotional involvement, i.e. genuine liking and using

of endorsed products is seen as personal motivation, contrary to being motivated by environmental forces, such as the prospect of reimbursement (Kelley & Michela, 1980). When emotional involvement increases, people are more inclined to attribute the activities of endorsers to personal motivations, thus making them perceived as more persuasive (Hunter & Davidson, 2007).

The level of an endorser's emotional involvement is found to be affected by their entrepreneurial engagement. Entrepreneurial engagement is perceived through activities an endorser executes in connection with a product, such as ownership, managerial and operational activities, involving holding a position, receiving remuneration, participating in development and initiation. Studies show that when people trust celebrity endorsers to be highly engaged in their business ventures, a deeper mental relationship between the endorser and endorsed brand is inferred, which, in turn, increases the endorser's perceived emotional involvement (Hunter & Davidsson, 2007; Hunter, 2009). In celebrity entrepreneurship literature, emotional involvement is concluded to be a distinct characteristic of communicators, which provides a unique explanatory power of attitude towards an advertisement and a brand. Thus, an Instagrammer's emotional involvement should similarly affect the endorsements they conduct, including those of sponsor brands.

The validity of emotional involvement is limited, as it was not tested in multiple endorsement situations. However, we still deem it highly suitable for the analysis of EI, due to its premise that involvement is increased by entrepreneurial engagement with own brand. We believe emotional involvement is not exclusive to celebrity entrepreneurship. We argue that in the case of EI, perceived emotional involvement will also be increased by entrepreneurial engagement with their own brands. Since celebrity entrepreneurs are presumed to have higher involvement than regular celebrities (Hunter & Davidsson, 2007), we argue that the same can be true when comparing entrepreneurial and regular Instagrammers. Due to their entrepreneurial engagement with their own brand, they may be perceived as more emotionally involved, and thus, be more effective communicators.

Based on the presented arguments, the following proposition is formulated:

P6: Entrepreneurial Instagrammers are more Emotionally Involved, and thus, more persuasive

4.5 EI - Sponsor brand dyad

This section applies theoretical constructs to analyze the effect Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI) have on attitudes towards sponsor brands they endorse. We combine theoretical arguments to analyze consumer perceptions of sponsored EI endorsements and derive a proposition about the result.

4.5.1 Associative Learning

The cognitive mechanism behind an endorsement of a product can be analyzed from the perspective of associative learning (Till, 1998; Till & Busler, 2000; Ilicic & Webster, 2014). It argues that an

association with one mental stimulus can benefit another stimulus when they are linked together (McSweeney & Bierley, 1984; Shimp, 1991). This perspective is based on the widely accepted associative network memory model, which assumes that information is stored in memory as nodes connected by associative links. The strength of links between nodes determines what can be retrieved from memory (Keller, 1993). Several researchers pose that associative learning is lacking, as it does not consider the effect of non-associative factors, and thus, does not fully explain complex behavior. However, it is still successful in explaining learning and human behavior (Thorwart & Livesey, 2016). Since we use associative learning as only a base of concepts widely recognized as true in endorsement literature, we believe we can still benefit from it.

Associative learning gives an insight into how brand knowledge is stored in a consumer's memory. Consumers learn information about a brand by consuming the brand's products and viewing marketing messages (Ilicic & Webster, 2014). They conceptualize brands in their mind using mental categories of meaning and mental associations which they attach to brands (Boush & Loken, 1991). To give an example, the brand Pepsi should bring on mental associations of not only the product category, but its taste, sugar, and caffeine content, and even advertisements or past campaigns. The favorability, strength, and uniqueness of such mental associations attached to a brand are fundamentals of the brand's presence in a consumer's mind (Keller, 1993).

Similarly, endorsers are also entities which have certain properties and are able to form a set of associations (Motion, Leitch & Brodie, 2003). Thus, the pairing of those two mental stimuli - an EI with a brand - should result in the creation of an associative network between them. In the case of endorsement, marketers intend that favorable associations, e.g. positive feelings and attitudes that followers hold about an Instagrammer, as a result of this pairing, will now also be attached to a sponsor brand (Till & Shimp, 1998; Till, Stanley, & Priluck, 2008). Thus, an endorsement can result in the transfer of perceptions from the endorser to the endorsed brand (Kamins, 1989).

4.5.2 Motivation

According to attribution theory, in order to organize and understand their environment, people attribute observable events to different categories of reasoning (Smith & Hunt, 1978). The underlying reason for an occurrence can be attributed to one of two causal forces, or motivations. If the explanation is based on personal forces which are within an individual - it is internal, whereas explaining the occurrence by situational forces means the assigned motivation is external (Kelley & Michela, 1980). Upon seeing an Instagrammer's endorsement of a brand, a follower may believe that the Instagrammer's underlying motivation is external, i.e. wanting to receive payment (Sørsum, Grape & Silvera, 2003) or internal, i.e. they personally prefer, like or even are involved in the making of the product. An external attribution would yield more negative attitudes towards that endorsement, whereas an internal one forms a more positive attitude (Silvera & Austad, 2004).

Attribution theory has been called out for overly simplifying people's reasoning, assuming they are driven solely by logic and rationality. However, followers are prone to judging endorsements, and upon recognizing persuasion in posts may "develop critical and distrusting feelings" (Boerman, Willemsen & Van Der Aa, 2017, p. 86). Thus, it is fair to assume that while evaluating endorsements, a certain dose of rationality is employed. We argue that it is even more apparent in cases when Instagrammers are also entrepreneurs, and engage in twofold endorsements - of own and sponsor brands. Nowadays, social media users are aware of various possible reasons behind multiple endorsements. Moreover, they can review and critically examine brands endorsed in the past via an EI's profile.

The process of assessing the motivation behind EI endorsement can be further explained from the categorization perspective. Categorization theory states that "brands are conceptualized as cognitive categories and comprise the meanings and associations consumers relate to them" (p. 852). With an increase in the number of endorsed brands, associative links between an endorser and endorsed brands get more complicated, and newly introduced instances of categories are compared to the knowledge of already existing categories (Chen et al., 2013). It is because the first presented association results in a deeper cognitive processing (Krosnick & Alwin, 1987) which, in the endorsement situation, would be the first brand they endorsed (Chen et al., 2013). Since an Instagrammer becomes an EI when they launch their own brand, we consider EI's first endorsed brand to be their own one.

We argue that upon comparing the motivation of EI endorsing own brand and sponsor brands, followers will perceive a difference. Literature shows that entrepreneurial engagement with a brand increases the perceived emotional involvement of an endorser, i.e. the perception of how much they like and use the brand (Hunter & Davidsson, 2007). An EI demonstrates their entrepreneurial engagement with own brand by posting about it via their profile - sharing sneak peeks of the creative and manufacturing process, as well as presenting it as their own business venture. The followers are thus aware of EI's entrepreneurial engagement, and moreover, in line with the categorization perspective, will be naturally inclined to compare the endorsed brands (Chen et al., 2013). The absence of entrepreneurial engagement between the EI and sponsor brand, when compared to own brand, may cause followers to attribute sponsored endorsements more to an external motivation, i.e. financial gain or popularity. Therefore, we propose:

P7: Entrepreneurial Instagrammers' sponsored brand endorsements are mainly externally motivated, and thus, less persuasive

4.6 Own brand - Sponsor brand dyad

This section presents our explanation of the dynamics between Entrepreneurial Instagrammer's (EI) own brand and sponsor brands they endorse, supported by relevant theoretical arguments. Two

propositions are formulated within this dyad, basing on own brands overshadowing sponsor brands, as well as the match up between endorsed brands.

4.6.1 Overshadowing

Overshadowing occurs within the process of associative learning, where numerous stimuli are present and compete for the association with the favorable stimuli (the endorser), preventing associative links from forming between two stimuli the advertiser intends to connect, i.e. the endorser and a brand. If another stimulus is the stronger element present within an endorsement, it overshadows the intended stimulus. As a result, the associative link is formed between the endorser and the predominate stimulus, which may not be the intended brand (Till, 1998).

We argue that in the case of EI, an endorsement of sponsor brand occurs in the presence of other stimuli, namely endorsements of own brand. That is because all past endorsements are easily accessible via the Instagram post history. Thus, in a follower's mind, it is possible that all endorsement posts compete to form a link with the EI. Multiple endorsement studies further support this notion, suggesting that consumers are naturally inclined to compare brands endorsed by the same endorser (Chen et al., 2013).

It can be argued that when sponsor brands compete with own brand endorsements to form an associative link with the EI, it is the own brand that will be the predominant stimuli overshadowing the sponsor brand. This is because, arguably, an EI forms the strongest associative link with their own brand. As aforementioned, an Instagrammer uses their personal brand in the creation of their own brand of products. The use of personal brand is evident to a follower because an EI and their brand often share brand identities, which are elements that signify a brand, such as a name, term, sign, symbol or design (Keller, 1993). EI's own brands are usually created using their public name and aesthetic style. This makes the EI and their own brand have multiple common characteristics, which, according to the associative network theory, should make the own brand's network of associations more complex and thus more strongly embedded in a follower's memory (ibid.).

Moreover, an EI's own brand is launched into a community of engaged followers, who view EI's content and, thus, are already familiar with their personal brand identities. Studies show that such familiarity with a brand creates more developed and richer knowledge structures, and makes consumers more certain in their knowledge of a brand (Bettman & Suja, 1987; Swaminathan, Fox & Reddy, 2001). Thus, we believe that EI's own brand, which utilizes their established personal brand, will create a stronger and more complex network of associations within a follower's mind compared to the sponsor brand. Following this line of argumentation, EI's own brand is likely to be the predominate stimulus which overshadows the sponsor brand.

More support for the dominance of own brand can be found in the rule of repetition. According to the associative learning perspective, repetition is the crucial condition under which two stimuli may be

successfully paired. Upon repeatedly pairing the stimuli together, the mental confidence in the connection between the stimuli is achieved, leading to a stronger associative link (Till, 1998). It is typical for an EI to post about their own brand more frequently than they do about sponsor brands. While a sponsorship usually involves one to a few posts featuring the sponsor brand (Suja, 2018), EI tend to post about their own brands repeatedly. They share numerous types of posts, featuring product design (Panecasio, 2018; Connell, 2017), manufacturing facilities (Battle, 2018; Mychaskiw, 2017), announcements (Bargh, 2017; Taras, 2017) and teasers (Rodulfo, 2017; Dall'Asen, 2017). Consequently, followers are exposed to frequent pairings of the own brand with the EI, and comparably, to a single or sporadic pairing of the sponsor brand with the EI. Thus, in line with the importance of repetition in associative learning, it is likely that own brand has the potential to dominate the process of associative learning between sponsor brand and EI.

Based on the above, the following proposition will be explored:

P8: Entrepreneurial Instagrammers' own brand will overshadow an endorsement of sponsor brand

4.6.2 Match up

It is widely accepted within endorsement literature that the degree of match up (also called fit or congruence) between the endorser and the endorsed brand is important to the effectiveness of an endorsement (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Kamins & Gupta, 1994; Misra & Beatty, 1990; Tingchi Liu & Brock, 2011; Walker, Langmeyer & Langmeyer, 1992). However, recent studies have also begun to explore a related concept, the match up between brands endorsed by the same endorser.

The concept match up between brands endorsed by the same endorser is explained as the combined effect of shared product category and similar brand image. Researchers argue that concept match up between brands is achieved by having attributes in common (Lanseng & Olsen, 2012). Findings suggest that high degree of concept match up between brands endorsed by the same celebrity is important for the consumers' perception of both endorsements. Moreover, multiple endorsement literature uncovered that the presence of concept congruence between endorsed brands offsets the negative effects of multiple endorsements being carried out by the same endorser (Chen et al., 2013).

This thesis follows the findings concerning the importance of high concept match up between brands coined by Chen et al. (2013) and argues that concept match up may also be an important factor influencing the endorsements of sponsor and own brand by an EI. The conditions between the two endorsement situations are similar, as EI are endorsers who share common traits with celebrity endorsers, and also endorse multiple brands. Findings about the benefits of brand concept congruence, though extensive, have mostly looked at brands with positive rather than negative features. Thus, little is known about the effect of negative attributes or negative information about the new brand (Loken,

Barsalou & Joiner, 2008). This is something we believe we are able to filter out, as our choice of qualitative research allows us to analyze whether a respondent is discussing positive or negative attributes.

Moreover, the phenomenon of concept match up is strongly supported by general theories of cognition which can also be applied to the case of EI. Firstly, consumers are said to perform brand schema maintenance when faced with any two brands, which is argued to “produce less thoughts” when the brands are congruent (p. 852). When schemas are maintained, in line with associative learning, positive attitude held towards one of the endorsed brands transfers onto the other endorsed brand. Secondly, following the categorization perspective, the initially endorsed brand becomes the category example against which consequent endorsements’ attributes are compared, and that concept match up between them results in more favorable perceptions of both (Chen et al., 2013). This thesis considers the first endorsed brand to be the own brand since this is the moment regular Instagrammers become Entrepreneurial Instagrammers. Thus, it can be argued that the degree of concept match up between the own brand and sponsor brand will result in a more likely acceptance of sponsor brand.

Therefore, we propose:

**P9: The better the match up between sponsor and own brand, the more accepted
Entrepreneurial Instagrammers' sponsor brands endorsements are**

5. Methodology

This chapter presents the methods and techniques used in this research, along with arguments explaining why the choice of was suitable to study the topic of Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI). We begin by presenting our research design and move on to discuss the usage and data analysis of each method. We conclude by presenting our ethical considerations.

5.1 Research Design

Research design involves organizing the research process by selecting and justifying research activities that will be undertaken to achieve research objectives. While research design takes many forms, a commonly used distinction is between quantitative and qualitative studies (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008). This thesis adapts a qualitative research design. Qualitative research explores words to uncover meanings people attribute to events and their reality. It allows a high degree of flexibility in the research process to obtain results organically and interactively. The data is analyzed on the basis of its richness and fullness and produces a contribution to theory (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

Qualitative research is in line with our selected philosophy of science, interpretivism. The adoption of an interpretivist ontological position is a key feature of qualitative studies (Bryman & Bell, 2015) as interpretivism assumes that the social world is constructed by people's various meanings, and aims to create new and rich understandings of those individuals. Qualitative studies employ interpretivism because in order to study subjective meanings, a researcher needs to understand the individual realities of participants. This choice lets us look deeply at the relationships between meanings, which is crucial to explore the persuasiveness of EI. However, such methods require access and skill on the interviewers' side, to establish trust and guide the discussion to obtain the right data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

5.2 Research Method

This study uses two qualitative methods, semi-structured interviews and netnography. The design and considerations of each will be explained next. Using multiple methods is effective in management research. It helps the researcher overcome the limitations of a single method, and widens the scope for a more robust interpretation (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). However, multiple methods are more time-consuming.

5.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a non-standardized type of interview with a medium level of structure and formality. The researcher prepares a list of themes or key questions to be asked, but is free to edit, add, omit and reorganize them. Semi-structured interviews provide the opportunity to get in-depth, detailed answers from the interviewee while making sure to keep organized and cover all general themes. They are suitable for our case as they allow us to explore meanings, enhancing the validity of data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). We chose semi-structured interviews as, due to our deductive approach, we had pre-determined thematic areas we needed to cover. Their semi-formal nature helps us stay on track, allowing us the flexibility needed to organically collect qualitative insights.

Semi-structured interviews may be challenging, as a good rapport and trust with the interviewee is needed. The clarity and relevance of the conversation depend on the researchers' skills and efforts (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). However, semi-structured interviews can still be effective in our case, as we tried to minimize these disadvantages. We made sure to be fully transparent with our participants and communicate in a respectful and relaxed way.

Selection of Participants

Thirteen semi-structured interviews were conducted, with five followers of Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI), three experts from influencer marketing agencies and one from a multi-media agency, as well as four brand representatives of various beauty and cosmetic brands. We aim to consider

multiple perspectives from different actors involved in Instagrammers' operations. EI endorsements require co-dependent relations between influencer marketing agencies who represent EI, brand representatives, and followers. The result of the campaign is a mix of expectations, decisions, and feedback from all parties. Thus, we believe that to gain a holistic view of this topic, it is crucial to analyze those different perspectives. Due to their co-dependency, it is also valuable to compare the answers and thus, identify any disagreements between the parties. Any misunderstandings between followers, agency experts, and brand representatives may be a potential source of relevant implications.

Moreover, our respondents offer multiple cultural perspectives, belonging to three different European regions: Northern, Eastern and Western Europe (United Nations, n.d.). In total, they represent seven nationalities: Swedish, Danish, Lithuanian, Polish, Bulgarian, Austrian and Dutch. We believe this multinational perspective is an accurate representation of today's multicultural organizations.

Followers

Followers were interviewed as they are a part of brand communities and the audience of all EI communication. Followers have inside knowledge about specific meanings between them and EI, and opinions about their influence. Their acceptance is crucial for Instagrammers to maintain their impact and conduct effective endorsements (e.g. Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). Thus, analyzing followers' perception is key to understand EI and how they differ from regular Instagrammers.

The participants were Instagram users familiar with regular and entrepreneurial beauty Instagrammers. In order to access the followers' true opinions, we asked them to reflect on the EI they follow or are familiar with instead of EI provided by us. We strived to avoid their insights being influenced by the particular posts we show them. By asking them to reflect on EI they know, we were able to analyze general tendencies they observed.

We focus on people in their early 20s, as studies show that 19-24 year-olds are particularly likely to follow Instagrammers (Connolly, n.d.). Moreover, this age group falls into the Millennial demographic cohort, which eagerly trusts Instagrammers' opinions (Hubbard, 2017). Respondents who satisfied the condition of being knowledgeable about EI happened to be female. This is in line with women leading the consumption of social media influenced beauty products (Shapouri, 2016; Mintel Press Team, 2015). Information about follower respondents can be seen in Appendix 2.1.

Experts

We interviewed influencer marketing agency experts as they are professionals highly knowledgeable in the area. They know the practical side, as they take part in negotiations between brands and Instagrammers. They hold significant influence over decisions regarding collaborations and sponsorships. Moreover, they are in tune with Instagrammer trends, thus their insights are valuable in

describing this very novel phenomenon - EI. They were contacted through the business-oriented social media service LinkedIn. Information about expert respondents can be seen in Appendix 2.2.

Brand Representatives

We interviewed brand representatives because they are influential actors who are in regular communication with Instagrammers. They are involved in the selection of Instagrammers for collaborations or sponsorships, as well as the negotiation of specific requirements for Instagrammers. They monitor the results of endorsements and draw conclusions accordingly, thus, they can see differences between the strategies, both when working with regular Instagrammers and EI. Participants were brand managers, digital managers, and marketers of known beauty brands which use Instagrammers. They were also contacted via LinkedIn. The information about brand respondents can be seen in Appendix 2.3.

Development of Themes & Questions

In line with Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) directions for a semi-structured interview, for each respondent group: followers (Appendix 3.1), agency experts (Appendix 3.2) and brand representatives (Appendix 3.3) we developed a separate set of key questions sorted into general themes. We adapted the sets to be appropriate and relevant to the experiences of each respondent group, in order to get a better understanding of their subjective reality. The propositions served as the interview themes, while the specific theoretical arguments for the propositions were used as guidelines for the development of questions.

To answer the propositions, we constructed a mix of specific and closed questions, and open questions. Specific and closed questions are recommended to obtain specific information and to confirm opinions and facts while open questions allow respondents to answer in their own way (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Moreover, specific and closed questions were followed up by open “Why?” questions to understand the respondents’ reasoning and the conditions that make up a particular opinion. They were formulated in our interview guide as simply “Why?”, but we always phrased them in a non-intrusive way, such as “Why is that?” “How come?” or “What specifically makes you feel this way?”, which is recommended in order to obtain true reasons, and not pressure people to rationalize their actions (Belk, Fischer & Kozinets, 2013).

For sections pertaining to Proposition 1 - 6, we began with questions about regular Instagrammers, before moving the conversation to EI. This was necessary to confirm that our respondents shared our assumptions about the concepts which contribute to an Instagrammer’s influence before we could investigate whether and how these concepts were perceived differently in the case of EI. Moreover, funneling the questions from general to specific helps establish a good rapport with the interviewee and avoids making them feel “drilled” (Belk, Fischer & Kozinets, 2013).

After the questions were developed, a pilot-test was conducted. Pilot testing helps avoid problems with respondents misunderstanding the questions or having a hard time answering. It also helps test whether the questions produce valid and reliable data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). The pilot-test was conducted with a young marketer from our network, who, to our belief, represents the respondents of this thesis sufficiently enough. Although the file was corrupted, changes were applied based on our notes. The pilot proved valuable in multiple ways. We learned we need to update the preparation text by explaining that we focus on non-celebrity EI. Moreover, the formulation of multiple questions was changed to ensure better understanding. Lastly, extra questions including examples and visualization were added to help respondents grasp the themes. In the process of data collection, we observed that the questions produced varied responses ranging from agreement to disagreement with diverse content. Thus, we believe we formulated them in a correct and neutral manner.

Conducting the Interviews

Three days prior to the interview, a preparation text was sent to each respondent. The text asked them to recall specific EI, revise their posts and focus on ones where they endorse own and sponsor brands. Some experts and brand representatives also requested and were provided with a list of interview topics (RE3, RB1, RB3). Providing the respondent with interview themes and information about the research helps them prepare for the conversation and adds value to the discussion (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

Follower interviews were all conducted in person, while expert and brand interviews were conducted partially via the free audio-video chat application Skype (RE2, RE3, RB2 & RB4) and partially in person (RE1, RE4, RB1 & RB2). Interviews were audio recorded, additionally, notes were taken. Audio recording allowed us to focus fully on the respondent, as well as ensured correct collection of information and thorough analysis. Notes provide backup if technology fails and help stay focused (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). The conditions were recreated to the best of our ability.

At the beginning of the interview, an Introduction (see Appendix 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3) was read, explaining the purpose of the research and what is expected of the respondent. Preparing an introductory text is recommended to reduce respondent anxiety, spark their interest in the research and start the discussion (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). The interview was divided into thematic sections according to the explored propositions. Interviewees were informed about the topic of the next section, in order to shift their focus. Each discussed concept was first explained, in order to ensure that the respondents' and our definitions were aligned. The interviews were ordered but flexible, as semi-structured interviews can freely be adapted (ibid.). Participants were asked about their honest thoughts and opinions on the researched topic. Additional questions or prompts were added when needed, in order to fully explore key aspects of each proposition. When they forgot the gist of the question and strayed

away from the topic, as advised, we gently re-directed the conversation on the right track (Belk, Fischer & Kozinets, 2013).

Each section featured a question developed in line with the critical incident technique (CIT), which is a questioning approach aiming to anchor the answer in an authentic life experience, rather than abstract speculation. It involves asking the interviewee to recall a specific event from their past which they are clear on the intent and effects of (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). CIT has proven very effective in qualitative research, helping gain insights into actions, motives, and strategies (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2008). Participants were requested to talk about a past incident in the form of an observed post, or a company decision, which had clear consequences and was in line with their stated opinion. This was used to bring up specific examples of behaviours in relation to Instagrammers, which allowed us to identify EI characteristics and helped confirm the respondents' opinion.

In each section, the last question was designed according to photo elicitation. Photo elicitation is the practice of introducing pictures into social interviews (Harper, 2002), provided by researchers or respondents (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004). Photo elicitation helps obtain a deeper understanding of the respondent's consciousness and help in discussing meaning (Harper, 2002) which makes this method suitable for an interpretivist study. Moreover, the use of photo elicitation jointly with interviews can unveil new insights (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004). Respondents showed us Instagram posts and profiles which illustrated their answers, helping us get a deeper understanding. Photo elicitation also provided us with a list of profiles for netnography that was consistent with semi-structured interviews.

Some followers exhibited signs of not wanting to admit to being influenced by Entrepreneurial Instagrammers. In those cases, projective techniques were used. Projective techniques are a method of data gathering where questions are asked indirectly, and thus, the respondent feels safely distanced from the answers. Such techniques are found to be appropriate to use when aiming to extract "deep-seated beliefs" about certain topics or objects (Morrison, Haley, Sheehan & Taylor, 2002, p. 63). We used a tactic called "third-person role playing" which allows the respondent to project themselves into a third person (Hyman & Sierra, 2016). To apply the technique, instead of asking "do you (...)?" we asked an impersonal question about "do followers (...)?". Such techniques are effective in allowing the respondents to remove personal responsibility from the answer and uncover unconscious opinions (Morrison et al., 2002).

For RE3 (Polish), RE1, RB2, and RB4 (Lithuanian), the interviews were conducted partially in English and partially in the native language. The answers were translated by the researchers who are native Polish and Lithuanian speakers. This was requested by the respondents and made them more comfortable in the interview, and thus, we believe, made their answers more natural. Conducting interviews by native speakers in a language that is comfortable for both parties is highly advised (Belk, Fischer & Kozinets, 2013).

Analysis

The analysis of interviews was conducted simultaneously with data collection. We used Thematic Analysis, which is a generic and recommended approach to analyzing qualitative data. It is universally applicable, enabling one to logically structure data with a considerable degree of flexibility (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). It aims at finding patterns or themes corresponding to the research question within a dataset, by coding, i.e. categorizing data units into labelled categories for further analysis. Thematic Analysis helps grasp large amounts of diverse information (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016), which we can benefit from, as our data comes from three different perspectives - followers, experts, and brand representatives. It also supports the process of drawing and verifying conclusions (ibid.), which fits with our aim to test nine theoretically derived propositions.

The premise of Thematic Analysis bears a risk of bias, as distributing data units into codes is subjective and dependent on our individual interpretation of the respondents' answers. Another person might have assigned the same data unit to a different code. However, we believe Thematic Analysis is still applicable in our case since by choosing interpretivism, we inherently set out to interpret the subjective meanings of our respondents. Moreover, the first three steps of Thematic Analysis, i.e. familiarizing ourselves with our data, coding and searching for themes were done separately by both researchers, and then compared and discussed until an agreement was reached. Using multiple coders helps achieve a refined and more reliable coding system (Berends & Johnston, 2009).

In line with step one of Thematic Analysis, we familiarized ourselves with our data by transcribing the interviews and carefully studying the transcripts. The audio was transcribed and coded using NVivo 11. NVivo is an effective software which allows users to organize and analyze various types of qualitative data, such as documents, images, audio and more. It helps bring order and structure to the analysis, in a way that is intuitive to the user and time-efficient (Edhlund & McDougall, 2016). In order to increase the clarity of each excerpt, off-topic conversation and laughs were edited out from the transcript. Afterwards, both researchers read the transcripts and prepared notes with ideas for coding.

In line with the second step of Thematic Analysis, the data was coded (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016) by each researcher, using the *Nodes* function in NVivo. Nodes allow a researcher to assign data units, which in our case were conversation excerpts, into thematic and relational categories (Edhlund & McDougall, 2016). We developed a pre-determined list of a-priori codes, i.e. codes derived from literature (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Firstly, we used interview themes based on nine propositions as main *mother* nodes, within which we placed sub-nodes to organize fragments according to whether their content *Confirmed* or *Disconfirmed* a certain proposition. In order to analyze the answers which emphasized specific conditions, an additional category named *Depends* was added. Moreover, each thematic section contained a *Specific in Posts* node, to which we assigned answers which delineated strategic actions within Instagram. As we were coding, we noticed that multiple

respondents indicated their belief in the interrelations between discussed concepts, thus, we coded them using the *Relationship Nodes* function in NVivo.

Following the third step of Thematic Analysis, each researcher searched for patterns and commonalities within the coded data units in order to derive themes, i.e. single codes or groups of related codes which communicate an idea relevant to the research question. The search began while we were collecting and transcribing our interviews. When data was fully collected, we attempted to “immerse ourselves” into the content and analyze it. We aimed to identify key concepts behind each code and find themes that were repeating or appeared to be interrelated (ibid., p. 584). We analyzed the meaning behind each theme, composed a list of words to describe them and labelled each accordingly (see Appendix 4).

The last two steps of Thematic Analysis, refining themes, and testing propositions were conducted by both researchers together. Through brainstorming and deliberation, we arrived at an agreement about the preliminary list of themes. To refine them, we reviewed our dataset and re-organized the data units according to the new themes. Re-reading the data and comparing it to a theme helps assess whether the themes are distinct enough, and to what extent data supports the continuation of a chosen theme (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). After careful consideration, we assessed each theme’s relevance to our research question and merged those which carried a similar meaning. Collapsing themes which have a common meaning is advised (ibid.). By discussing and referring back to our research question, and having in mind the constraints of our thesis, we excluded the weakest and unfitting themes.

In order to test our pre-defined propositions, in line with Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill’s (2016) guide to Thematic Analysis, we juxtaposed our themes against the premises of our propositions. We made sure to focus equally on arguments which support our propositions, as well as those which discredit them, so called negative cases. Negative cases help refine explanations, which is crucial for future research considerations (ibid.). As a result of these actions, we determined whether the findings corroborate or undermine the premise of each proposition.

5.2.2 Netnography

The use of netnography included observing and recording relevant Internet activity of online communities. Netnography studies people in a shared online environment, driven by shared interest such as a brand or a lifestyle (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Netnography provides free access to a large amount of qualitative data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Moreover, the data is relatively honest, as it is produced in an unobtrusive way (Kozinets, 2002), e.g. under the disguise of an Instagram profile. Netnographic data may, however, be misinterpreted (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016), as our interpretation of the posts and comments was based on how we understood the content (Appendix 4). Moreover, netnographic data does not provide the researchers with key information such as tone of voice and emotions (ibid.), which may have helped with the analysis. As delimited, due to time and resource constraints, the application of netnography is only supplementary

to interview insights in the exploration of Propositions 1 - 6, excluding comparison with regular Instagrammer profiles.

Selection of Profiles

Instagrammers included in netnographic research were the ones most commonly mentioned by respondents. We believe it provides continuity and consistency to our research, since the methods both concern the same profiles. Moreover, our respondents held affinity towards EI they mentioned. The role of personal liking is crucial, yet often ignored in endorsement literature (Tantiseneepong, Gorton, & White, 2012). Thus, we believe that by focusing on mentioned profiles we could fully complement their answers with netnographic data. We selected five Entrepreneurial beauty Instagrammers who best fit out the definition of EI.

EI	Instagram name	Role	Own Brand	Followers
Negin Misralehi	@negin_misralehi	Founder	Gisou - a honey based hair care line	4.9m
Caroline Daur	@carodaur	Co- Creator; Campaign face	MAC Cosmetics Matte Lipstick SS17; MAC Cosmetics Oh, Sweetie - flavored lip glosses (#MACxCaroDaur)	1.6m
Isabella Löwengrip	@isabellalowengrip	Founder	Löwengrip - a premium skin care brand	434k
Marianna Hewitt	@marianna_hewitt	Co- founder	Summer Fridays - cruelty free vegan face masks	823k
Elif Acar	@cocoelif	Founder	Elivya Hair - a vegan hair care line	737k

Table 1. Entrepreneurial Instagrammers used for netnographic research.

Source: Instagram (2018); Löwengrip (2018); Demopoulos (2018); Sofi (2017)

Data Collection

We analyzed the public profiles of selected EI, looking into brand communities centered around EI personal and brand profiles. By analyzing the content and scrolling through comments, we examined the opinions expressed by followers in regard to the answers of interview respondents. As data from profiles is longitudinal, it is possible that the generated insights may not hold over time (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

Analysis

To truly provide valid answers to propositions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016) we took note of relevant opinions which both agreed or differed from insights collected during interviews. While analyzing comments, we tried to understand the specific narrative between the EI and their followers by interpreting their statements. We only considered comments written in English, to avoid translation issues. We made sure to consider each message in the context of accompanying emojis, which are cartoon icons expressing emotions. Emojis are an important communication tool in online communities, as they express personality and nonverbal cues (Tigwell & Flatla, 2016), which may affect the interpretation of a message (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). We considered each insight's specific relevance to our research question, the strength of the expressed opinion and the frequency of likeminded opinions among the comment sections. As a result, we narrowed down to several posts and comments discussing them. We then matched them to interview coding themes which expressed related meaning and analyzed how they are related.

5.3 Ethical Considerations

This section presents the main ethical issues raised by chosen research methods, along with our explanation of how we addressed them. Ethics are behavior principles which researchers are expected to abide by to avoid misconduct and ensure they respect the rights of participant and others affected by the study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

5.3.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Interviewees were asked for participation upon firstly learning the aim of the study, the general research topic as well as their role as a data source. They have been informed that their data will be subjectively analyzed, and the thesis will be read and evaluated by the examiner and censor, moreover, they were given the option to read the thesis. All were clearly asked for consent to the audio recording of the interview. We strived to keep transparency about the way every participant was portrayed in the thesis.

Followers were assured of their full anonymity in the process of the study, and that they will simply be known as RFX (Respondent Follower Number). Expert and brand respondents were asked for permission to include their name and place of work. All but one agreed, who, according to his wish is described as *Unnamed*.

All participants were informed of the option to exclude any unwanted information that emerges with the flow of the conversation. Experts and brand representatives were asked for examples from their past, but we made a conscious effort not to inquire about specific names of companies or clients. That way, we hoped to ensure that this study would not compromise any of their professional networks.

5.3.2 Netnography

A key issue when conducting netnography is the honesty of the researchers. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) state that when the researchers' role is limited to being complete observers, as is in the case of this thesis, there exists an ethical risk of infiltrating the community without making their purpose known. We made sure to only collect data only from fully public Instagrammer profiles.

6. Findings

This section presents the research findings concerning the persuasiveness of EI and the effect of their activity on sponsor brands. The findings will be structured according to selected dyads of the conceptual framework and the relevant propositions formulated within them. Interviewee quotes will be labelled according to their unique code name: followers (RF1-RF5) (See Appendix 5), agency experts (RE1-RE4) in Appendix 6 and brand representatives (RB1-RB4) in Appendix 7. Exploration of the interview and netnographic findings within each proposition will be concluded with a verdict specifying whether the propositions were confirmed, partially confirmed or disconfirmed.

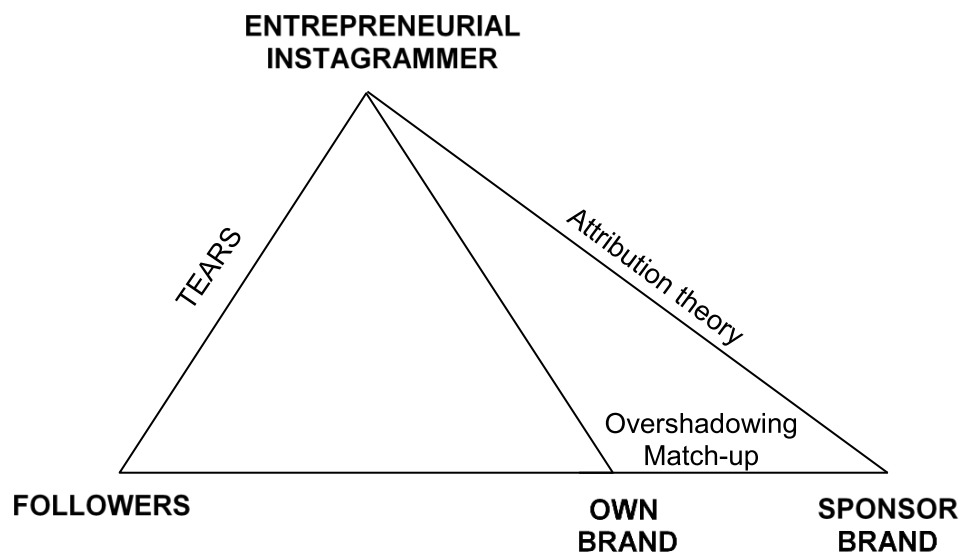


Figure 2. Conceptual framework. Source: authors' own work based on Heider (1946).

6.1 Followers - EI dyad

This section will present findings concerning the persuasiveness of EI in comparison to regular Instagrammers, determining the result of P1-P6.

6.1.1 Trustworthiness

P1: Entrepreneurial Instagrammers are more Trustworthy, and thus, more persuasive

Interviews confirmed that an Instagrammer's trustworthiness affects their persuasiveness. In line with our argumentation for Proposition 1 (P1), trustworthiness determines whether followers believe their claims (Andrews & Shimp, 2018): *"If I consider them as trustworthy, yes, of course, I would say that their recommendations are more reliable"* (RF4, line 1). Indeed, trustworthiness decreases followers' skepticism towards endorsements: *"They start (...) supporting the opinion of Instagrammers even without putting extra efforts in figuring out whether that opinion is correct"* (RB2, line 1). We uncovered that trust is highly individual: *"But what does trustworthiness mean for you, guys. That's a big question it is about what you decide and you think is honest"* (RB1, line 1).

Multiple respondents agreed that EI are more trustworthy, and thus, more persuasive. They shared several reasons. P1 argued that EI's own brand may be a source of additional professional experience expressed by sharing competences, knowledge, and accomplishments, leading to increased trustworthiness (Andrews & Shimp, 2018). Respondents deemed EI more trustworthy due to aspects of their professional life as a brand co-creator, i.e. being hardworking and employed: *"yes, because you know that they are hardworking people, and they're not fake influencers or just doing it for all the perks, they actually also work"* (RE2, line 2). Similarly, an expert expressed how *"People don't perceive the job Instagrammers do as serious"* and gave an example of an EI using her brand to help her image: *"Currently, she is keeping it (...) so she is able to answer that does something more than being on Instagram"* (RE1, line 24). Interestingly, the lack of a real profession seems to make Instagrammers less long-term trustworthy than celebrities: *"with a celebrity I think there's an assumption that they are actually good at something, they are an actor, that's what they do for a living (...) you don't know where you have this Instagrammer for one year (...) You know where you have an actor, more or less"* (RB3, line 14). Indeed, launching a brand is seen as a step above being an Instagrammer, increasing trust: *"they had to have built their position in the market in order to have the possibility of launching their own brand (...) I think that such people are already more trustworthy because they have reached that position"* (RE3, line 2). Followers, in line with experts, also found EI more trustworthy because of their professional position: *"It could have an effect on your legitimacy if you have your own brand. I think it increases the trustworthiness because you're a respected person. Or a famous person, or a high-up person"* (RF1, line 15).

Nevertheless, some dismissed the notion of EI being more persuasive as a result of their increased trustworthiness, e.g. *"Specifically extra for Instagrammers who have their own business... I don't think it becomes more relevant than other influencers that you trust"* (RE2, line 3). An expert expressed how EI' trust may be undermined by their excessive focus on own brand: *"Instagrammers who have own*

brands in a specific industry, e.g. beauty or fashion, are more inclined to talk about that specific industry only in relation with own brand. This, in turn, narrows down the extent of their (...) recommendations which minimizes the value their followers get” (RE2, line 2). A follower confirms: “sometimes I also appreciate that they don’t have a brand because that means that they can focus more on researching about those brands that they are actually behind” (RF1, line 2). However, this is contested by experts who expressed that, in their experience, recommending multiple brands actually negatively affects trust: “we can see them as human advertising columns who had to endure a very long journey of engaging in sponsorships with other brands” (RE3, line 2) and “might even be more difficult to navigate in that area of who do you work with, isn’t it too many brands” (RE2, line 3).

Netnographic findings show that people do attribute positive qualities to EI (Figure 2). Comments under posts presenting entrepreneurial success praise EI for being hardworking, dedicated, determined and organized. Followers acknowledge EI’s elevated competences, requesting her to be their mentor. They also value EI’s “bossiness”, i.e. leadership or managerial skills. The response to the post confirms interview findings suggesting that communicating about relevant accreditations conveys trustworthiness: “she has finished studies about fashion history in Florence (...) which gives her trustworthiness about her career because people then see that she has a related background” (RB2, line 9).

Moreover, findings confirm that EI may be associated with superior skills or knowledge as a result of being entrepreneurial (Smith-Hunter, Kapp & Yonkers, 2003). A brand’s perspective shows how EI are more trustworthy due to their ability to develop a product: “A person who is able to create something deserved a higher trust and respect than the one who is only taking advantage of his or her platform to increase their following” (RB2, line 7). Similarly, a follower strongly believed EI are more trustworthy because of the knowledge obtained as a result of launching a brand:



Figure 2. EI praised for entrepreneurial qualities. Source: Instagram @negin_mirsalehi

“Yes, both. Because they have knowledge enough to actually create a brand themselves (...) Because they are entrepreneurial, it feels like they have some like more extra knowledge, they are more into the things that are writing and posting about, so I would say, that makes them more trustworthy”. They

argued EI become specialists: *“I think they have like, become nerds in that topic (...) I would say that it make their content a little bit more trustworthy”* (RF4, line 2).

P1 also argued that EI launching a brand consistent with their interests and knowledge indicates integral, trustworthy actions (McCracken, 1989; Shimp, 2003). Our study found strong support for that argument. As a brand representative summarized: *“if there is an Instagrammer that was famous for her craft beforehand, and got famous for that, and then launched the brand, it becomes very trustworthy”* (RB3, line 2). Followers strongly agreed, expressing how important this consistency is for trust: *“you know their interests in some kind of specific area that they are experts in (...) if a product is just like not connected, doesn't fit with a personality with an Instagrammer, when you would lose trust in that person”* (RF2, line 2) and *“For me it depends if the brands or if their own brand fits to their personality. If it's authentic and if it matches somehow then yes”*. When asked if that is usually the case, she says *“I actually think they do it pretty well”* (RF5, line 2).

The quality and success of own brand was another significant condition for increased trust in EI. An expert claimed: *“the advertising agency of this company would know that he or she has had success from prior sponsorships of her own brand. So they would know that the success ratio of their campaign would probably be higher”* (RE4, line 2). Interestingly, followers held EI to the same standard: *“if (...) they try to actually produce a product that is of high quality, maybe new on the market that people would genuinely love and enjoy - then yes”* (RF2, line 2). Similarly, another follower based her trust and future expectations on the quality of own brand: *“she would maintain the level of trustworthiness. So if I used it and it would be like ok, yeah, check, that's exactly what I thought it's gonna be like (...) I could also identify "ok, she is not trying to hide something, she is not trying to beautify something". But if it was a failure (...) I wouldn't do this again”* (RF3, line 3). Thus, if EI's brand is successful, they will be trusted more.

Findings confirm our theoretical assumptions, i.e. that EI is perceived as more trustworthy than regular Instagrammers because of their increased professional experience, due to EI being associated with superior skills and competences of entrepreneurs (Autio, 2007; Hunter, 2007) and integral, trustworthy behavior as a result of launching their brand in line with their interests (McCracken, 1989; Shimp, 2003). Thus, Proposition 1 is confirmed.

6.1.2 Expertise

P2: Entrepreneurial Instagrammers have more Expertise, and thus, are more persuasive

According to the theoretical premise of Proposition 2 (P2), the perception of an endorser being an expert contributes to their persuasiveness (Shimp & Andrews, 2012). Before diving into the analysis of how the level of EI' expertise is perceived in relation to the expertise of regular Instagrammers, we aimed to

find out whether the impact of expertise on endorsers' persuasiveness is also apparent in the context of Instagram. All respondent types unanimously acknowledged this relationship. Followers and agency experts based their judgements on the Instagrammers' ability to justify the quality of recommended products: *"You can just look through like ten Instagrammers or YouTubers and they will be all probably talking about the same product. [...] But then you would go to a channel of somebody like this Lisa Elridge [...] she is an expert in the field [...] she can also maybe explain a science behind it, like ingredients, the way of application a bit better"* (RF2, line 6); *"The more knowledgeable they are and able to present the newest tendencies, relevant information, the more their recommendations are relevant"* (RE1, line 5). A brand representative stressed the advantage of recommending a product from EI's area of expertise: *"If a fitness Instagrammer starts talking about a protein drink, then that is more trustworthy"* (RB1, line 5).

Respondents perceived EI as having more knowledge about the industry, supporting the theoretical assumptions of P2. Experts claimed: *"Instagrammers who own brands can be seen as having more expertise within a particular product group. Especially, when Instagrammers [...] produce more educational posts which reveal how and why their products are good"* (RE1, line 6); *"if the brand they start is in that same niche, then I would expect that their expertise on that subject is bigger"* (RE2, line 7). A follower agreed: *"The ones that have their own brand maybe have more expertise in whatever products they are creating, a lip gloss or whatever, sure"* (RF1, line 7). A brand representative elaborates about the industry-specific knowledge in relation to a sponsor brand: *"if it's in the category for the product, that would make her a bigger expert [...] So if you are a beauty brand and, e.g. she has a beauty product... That would make her an expert"* (RB1, line 6).

EI's higher expertise is also perceived through their business acumen: *"how to start a business, because if you haven't done that, you maybe don't know it"* (RF1, line 7) and a brand representative deems EI knowledgeable enough because they were able to create something more than just a fan base: *"If you would think from the perspective that a person is able to create something, it means that they are not a loser. So these Instagrammers are not only nice people who have created a big following but also developing something"* (RB2, line 7). An expert specifies: *"I think a follower thinks this Influencer has launched their own brand, which means [...] they gained knowledge about manufacturing, distribution, mixing ingredients, and so on. [...] if they had completed it, it means their product may be worth testing out"* (RE4, line 7).

The followers further admit that this extra knowledge within the field or industry makes them more interested in the recommended products. A follower, who considers proof about the recommendations important, claims to be interested in the recommendations of EI due to their ability to provide evidence: *"Yes. As I said, I do believe proof, or I like hearing the proof. If it's something that looks good in a picture, that's fine, but if it's proof where somebody's saying that it's good because of that, then yes"*

(RF1, line 8). Another follower stresses the advantage of EI being more involved in the industry than regular Instagrammers: *“I would say that the recommendations of an Entrepreneurial Instagrammers are more relevant than maybe an ordinary Instagrammers' recommendations because they are in that circle of that field. [...] it feels that it should be relevant because they are in that topic or in that circle”* (RF4, line 7). The correlation between the EI' increased expertise and the relevance of their recommendations is also observed by brands: *“And that it's just more relevant because he is a kind of a spokesperson within this category”* (RB1, line 7).

However, there were opinions declaring that Instagrammers do not necessarily need to launch brands in order to get more expertise. A follower explains that, giving an example of a regular Instagrammer whose expertise has been built by giving good recommendations: *“If I'm looking for expertise in a certain area [...] or I know that Instagrammer usually makes good recommendations. Then whether she or he has their own brand or not, I don't think that affects whether I think that they're experts or not”* (RF1, line 8). An expert concludes that the level of expertise depends on an individual level: *“when I think about a beauty influencer who works with cosmetics from different brands and has to test them, and in order to stay believable needs to know about these products. Because those Influencers are successful. So I think it's a thin line and it really depends on an Influencer, their knowledge, experience, and approach to business”* (RE3, line 6). A follower gave an example of a brand ambassador whose systematic work with a brand makes her a bigger expert within that category, despite not having her own brand: *“she doesn't have her own brand because she works for the salon but she uses all these different products which are quite upscale and luxurious and her recommendations and her expertise makes me wanna think that those brands and those products [...] are also relevant to me as a person, as a user* (RF3, line 7). Moreover, a brand representative pointed out that the expertise gained from trying out other brands builds a foundation for the EI to launch a brand: *“I think it's more going from expertise to launching a brand than starting a brand and then becoming an expert”* (RB3, line 6).

The perception of an EI being more of an expert than a regular Instagrammer was often claimed to be formed by seeing the EI' involvement in a brand creation process. A follower stresses the importance to portray EI' involvement: *“If they are really involved in a brand creation process, they gain expertise by producing it. [...] If you present that information to your followers, they would know that you have expertise”* (RF2, line 7). An expert shares a similar view: *“Instagrammers who own brands can be seen as having more expertise within a particular product group. Especially, when Instagrammers introduce the making process of their products, reveal manufacturing details and in general produce more educational posts which reveal how and why their products are good”* (RE1, line 6).

The perception of EI gaining knowledge from launching a brand was also observed through netnography where the absence of chemical knowledge was justified by the efforts of @marianna_hewitt put into the development of a beauty brand (Figure 3).

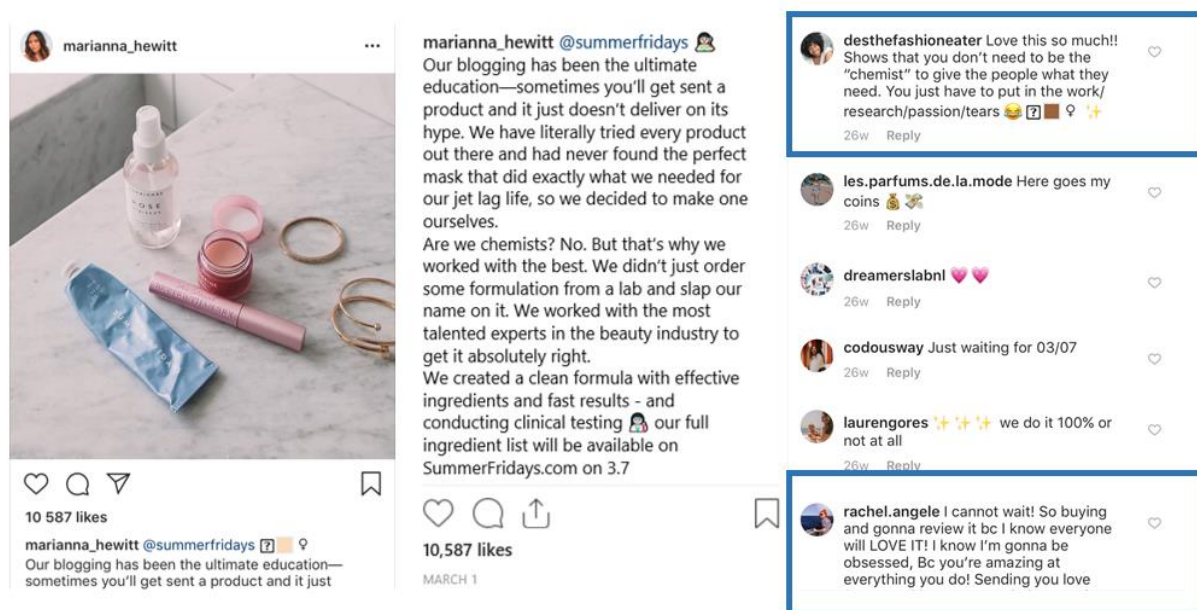


Figure 3. EI knowledge. Source: Instagram @marianna_hewitt

All respondent types agreed that inviting the audience to follow the story of the brand create)on process is a valuable tool to prove EI' engagement, and thus, the possession of expertise. A follower and an expert mentioned showing decision making: *"So basically she posted content showing how it was mixed, which types of tones she wanted, they showed her going through the lab, how it is produced... so it gave me at least the impression that [...] she can come up with her own one"* (RF5, line 7); *"They, more often and much more easily, communicate about parts of the process. Such as in order to create this cream, such and such ingredients or oils were needed"* (RE3, line 8). A brand representative noted that a common practice of showing phases of the manufacturing process also increases EI' perceived expertise: *"Of course, the majority of them is sharing some kind of manufacturing information and other relevant details about product quality which shows their level of expertise"* (RE1, line 8). Additionally, specific moments shared by EI which were found to contribute to their perceived expertise were business meetings: *"posts about business meetings [...] can make to boost their expertise, so perceived expertise"* (RF2, line 9) or engaging the followers in the creation process: *"allowing the followers to choose a design for the upcoming product, e.g. via Instagram stories, contributes the expertise and trustworthiness a lot"* (RB4, line 8). Figure 4 portrays behind the scenes shared by the EI's own brand page @gisou which suggest her skills and knowledge about the production process.

Interestingly, a follower confirmed that EI' expertise is a perceived phenomenon which often relies not on their factual knowledge but on the followers' judgements about EI' competence (Shimp, 2013): *"I think that it makes them more credible and that they have more knowledge but, of course, it also makes them maybe seem like they have more knowledge than they actually have, if they have an*

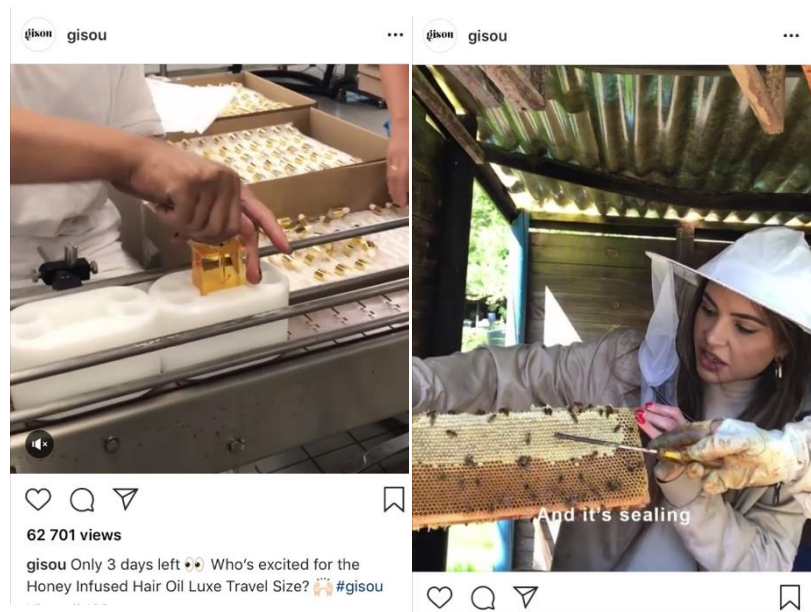


Figure 4. EI posting behind the scenes. Source: Instagram @gisou

own brand, but maybe I'm sitting home by my phone and actually have even more knowledge that they have, but I'm just not an entrepreneur. But still, I would consider them having more expertise because they are working with it" (RF4, line 6). Netnography revealed a similar observation where followers praised @negin_mirsalehi's marketing skills in the promotional video she posted. The video featured her travelling around the world and using her hair oil. Even though the EI has not proved her creative input in the video, she was assumed to be creative for making it (Figure 5).

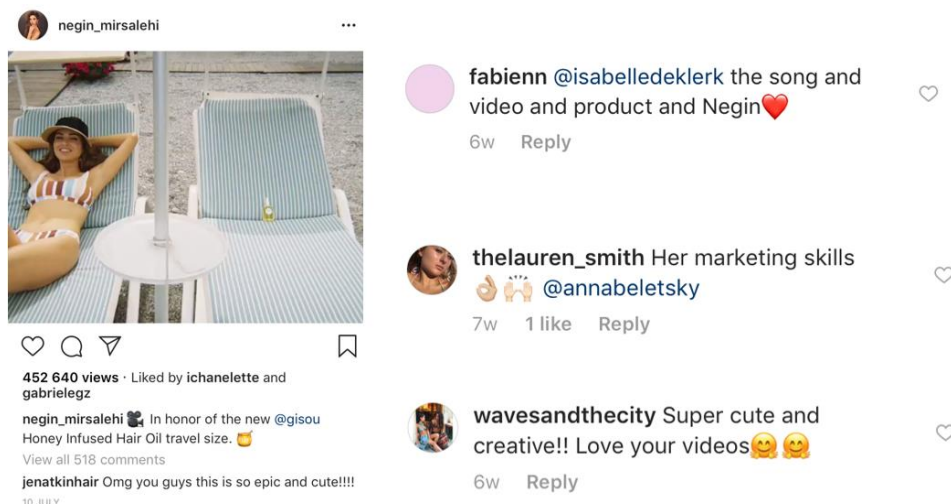


Figure 5. EI business expertise. Source: Instagram @negin_mirsalehi

On the basis of the above discussion, we assert that EI are perceived as having more expertise than regular Instagrammers. The main reasons correspond to those discussed in the theoretical argumentation: increased knowledge within the product category (McGinnies & Ward, 1980; Shimp & Andrews, 2013) and increased business expertise. Even if there were opinions stating that expertise can

be obtained also by regular Instagrammers, it was found that a perception of EI having more expertise, regardless of being true or not, also contributes to their persuasiveness. This, altogether, allows us to **confirm** Proposition 2.

6.1.3 Attractiveness

P3: Entrepreneurial Instagrammers are more Attractive, and thus, more persuasive

Respondents agreed with the premise of Proposition 3 (P3), i.e. how Instagrammers' attractiveness makes them persuasive. We found physical attractiveness more relevant for the beauty industry than personality, as it reflects the products' performance: *"It might sound a bit harsh but this is what beauty business is about, you need to glow, your skin needs to be bright and healthy - you need to represent the philosophy of your brand"* (RB4, line 9). Followers supported this, saying Instagrammers' attractive looks make them want to achieve the same using recommended products – in line with the argued influence by identification (Kelman, 1961): *"if I'm looking at a skincare Instagrammer, and that person has attractive skin, of course (...) I think I can get that if I use her product recommendations. I think we're trying to be what we're seeing. And I wouldn't want to be anything that is, to my standards, unattractive"* (RF1, line 10). Experts agreed with followers, stating: *"the more attractive Instagrammers are, the more followers want to be like them"* (RE1, line 9). The vast majority of respondents agreed that personality must be attractive in order for the audience to consider Instagrammers' recommendations, e.g.: *"if they are attractive in their kind of personality, I would say that their recommendations are more relevant because I like them as a person"* (RF4, line 10). Moreover, personality found significant to keep people loyal, despite major changes in Instagrammers' communication. A brand representative shared she would unfollow an Instagrammer who changes to a "mommy" blog, except: *"I love Negin [@negin_misralehi] as a person, if she will get a child, I'll still follow her (...) because she has a nice personality and she is very authentic"* (RB1, line 12).

We argued EI gains alluring aspects of their personality and lifestyle (Shimp, 2007) due to launching a brand, making them more attractive. We found strong confirmation of EI's increased attractiveness due to this reason. Firstly, all respondent types agreed that EI successfully starting their own business makes them more attractive. Followers expressed how *"you are perceived more successful if you have your own brand and that can be attractive"* (RF2, line 11) and similarly that when EI *"achieved something, they are successful, they drive their own business (...) I think it's a really cool thing if you have your own brand, if you are able to do that, so yes personally for me I would say yes it is more attractive"* (RF5, line 12).

Moreover, as argued, followers do see EI being self-employed in the industry they love as more attractive: *"I think that oh, shit, they actually work with their passion and the things that I love, they love and they can just do that for a living, and you find that attractive"* (RF4, line 11). Experts agreed:

“currently in Europe, there is a tendency to believe that having your own brand or business means peaking in your career. Due to this tendency, some people might perceive such Instagrammers as more attractive” (RE1, line 10). Many respondents deemed EI as more attractive due to entrepreneurial aspects of their personality, such as responsibility and competence (Hunter, 2009): *“it makes them look more serious (...) more smart”* (RB1, line 10) being self-motivated (Rampton, 2014): *“she is really cool and really driven person”* (RF4, line 13). EI were also deemed responsible and professional (Hunter, 2009) *“maybe they are a little bit more professional often (...) they might be a little bit more mature”* (RE2, line 4).

Respondents indicated EI communicating their success on Instagram makes them more attractive. Both by sharing their new “cool” lifestyle: *“they start to travel more, just be more popular (...) so they get invited to more events (...) it’s attractive to people because everybody wants to be famous, meet celebrities, party and drink champagne, or whatever they post”* (RF2, line 13) and evidence for their entrepreneurial identity and development: *“If with their communication they stress their entrepreneurial features, show their attendance in various conferences with their products, then they make themselves seem more attractive”* (RE2, line 12). Another reason for EI’s increased attractiveness was consistent storytelling. An expert summarized: *“A follower pays attention to what is pretty, consistent, believable, easy to look at. At what allows them to follow a storyline, allows them to form an emotional connection. That benefits all parties because consistent communication has a positive flow and is well-received”* (RE4, line 35). Followers confirm this notion, explaining that EI launching a brand is attractive because it is a manifestation of their journey: *“yes in a sense that then they create and live up by the stories that they make. So then they have to maintain their image, pursue what the brand is talking about”* (RF3, line 10). Findings from netnography (Figure 6) indicate the audience reacts highly positively to an EI’s brand being an authentic extension of their story.



Figure 6. EI storytelling. Source: Instagram @gisou

The importance of EI's own product being aligned with their profile mattered for followers: *"if that line or product is in line with your image and with your overall profile, then it will boost your attractiveness as well"* (RF2, line 11) and brands: *"you shouldn't make a 1000 DKK perfume or high heels if you're going to launch it in a mom community. But if you are in the luxurious end, it definitely makes sense"* (RB3, line 9). Similarly, EI were deemed consistent, and thus, attractive, because of their profiles' consistency. A brand representative shared: *"their profile is changing, it becomes more professional. (...) You determine your style, making consistent posts, hire a photographer who for making pictures and thus, naturally attractiveness is increasing"* (RB2, line 11). An example is shown in Figure 7, where an EI @cocoelif who owns a haircare brand curates her feed in a consistent style of earth-toned filters and natural portraits, showcasing her attractive hair.

Interestingly, a follower noted that as more EI emerge, attractiveness wears off: *"I think there are so many people on Instagram now who have their own products (...) it's kind of become not as novel and (...) you tend to brush it off as not as difficult to achieve which makes it less attractive"* (RF2, line 12). This was supported by a brand representative: *"It's also because there's some news about it, not many have done that. So... you know, imagine that next year you see 20 brands in one category coming in that way. Then it starts losing effect. So I think there is some newness factor in this"* (RB3, line 39).

Only an expert rejected the idea of EI' increased attractiveness, explaining: *"the attractiveness they present, the way they are, is built from the beginning. By creating their channel and building their personal brand, they constantly use their attractiveness, be it their content, personality, looks, whatever. So I think this is embedded in their own personal brand and does not change when they launch their own brands"* (RE4, line 10).



Figure 7. EI consistently portraying attractive hair. Source: Instagram @cocoelif

The presented findings indicate that EI can indeed be perceived as more attractive both because of positive qualities attributes to their personality as a result of becoming entrepreneurial, as well as their lifestyles becoming more attractive. This, being in line with our theoretical argumentation allows us to **confirm** Proposition 3.

6.1.4 Respect

P4: Entrepreneurial Instagrammers are more Respected, and thus, more persuasive

Respondents generally supported the assumption of Proposition 4 (P4), i.e. that respected Instagrammers are more persuasive. As a follower explained, respect based on shared values increases the relevance of the Instagrammer's recommendations: *"Because then I would probably share some basic values and that, I think, would reflect the recommendations as well"* (RF4, line 14). An expert elaborated by explaining benefits of respect: *"Respect is very important for Instagrammers since it contributes to the trust of Instagrammers and a perception of some kind of authority or opinion leader within a particular industry or area. [...] If an Instagrammer is trustworthy and have expertise within a particular area, then, as a result, they are also respected and thus, their recommendations are more relevant"* (RE1, line 13).

Experts and brands expressed that respect is earned not by having a brand, but rather from the Instagrammer's personality and communication: *"I think respect is not so much related with having a business or a brand as with the communication in general. You can be significantly respected both when having or not having a business. Respect depends on what is the communication of Instagrammers and what it provides to followers. I don't think that the fact they become or are entrepreneurs, does make them seem as more respected"* (RE1, line 14). Other ways to earn respect were specified by a brand representative: *"but in case of respect, you don't necessary need to create something. Maybe you are involved in some kind of social projects which are very valuable and appreciated. So despite creating a private label, you can be a socially responsible person who is respected and trusted by others"* (RB2, line 15).

However, the majority of respondents agreed that EI' personal achievements make followers respect them more than regular Instagrammers. A follower's thoughts reflect the societal opinion that starting an own business is an effortful and admirable achievement (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2005): *"they have put a lot of passion and effort into making their own brand, and I think I would have more respect for an entrepreneurial Instagrammer because I feel like they have achieved something [...] they have actually made their own brand or a collection or whatever, that itself gives them some respect"* (RF4, line 15). Confirming our theoretical basis of P4, i.e. EI being more respected due to people's tendency to admire things that are difficult to acquire (ibid), agency experts stressed: *"Because, especially today, all of us kind of admire a person that can actually produce something herself or himself"* (RE4, line 10) and *"it has to do with knowing that they have a professional life, that they run a business, that they have to take care of that. That's something that people always admire - people running their own business. So I think the same will apply to influencers, that knowing that they also run a business really installs respect with their followers"* (RE2, line 14). Netnographic findings support the notion that EI'

bringing a new product into the market is seen as a step above the regular activity on Instagram, or as a progress in their career. As seen in Figure 8, followers of @carodaur react to the launch of her collaboration with respect and admiration.

Respondents stressed the importance of showcasing the hard work put into the brand: *“People tend to forget that because all you see is the end result and not all the time spent on meetings or in front of the computer, editing and all that stuff. If people see more of it, then they will be more respectful”* (RF2, line 15). A brand



Figure 8. EI respect. Source: Instagram @carodaur

representative mentioned storytelling as a tool to convey it: *“But if you have all these other things and you can tell a story [...] Then it makes sense. And then because you have this brand, then you start to get this respect because there's actually some work behind it”* (RB3, line 14).

A follower showed use of cognitive shortcuts, looking towards the crowd when forming the perception of an Instagrammer's respect, which reflect Cialdini's (2007) social validation: *“I would say in general, yes, because then I would also feel community support, the people, not only me but others who believe in them and [...] that way, the expertise also grows and the respect. I can feel that there are more people who respect the person who has a brand and I can feel that ok, I might belong to those people”* (RF3, line 14). EI' increased respect was found to increase their persuasiveness as people spend more time looking at Instagrammers they respect: *“You would probably spend more time looking at the person's posts or Instagram videos, they have Instagram TV now, like, you might spend more time if you respect a person more. I feel like, automatically, if you are willing to do that, recommendations would be more relevant to you”* (RF2, line 16) and believe more in the content they post: *“could have an effect on your legitimacy if you have your own brand”* (RF1, line 15).

The research revealed the admiration of EI' achievement in their professional career yields higher respect than regular Instagrammers. Starting a business was perceived as a step above regular Instagram activity, requiring more efforts, and thus, increasing EI' persuasiveness. Even though other

factors were deemed important for the respect of Instagrammers, only an EI has the possibility to earn respect on the basis of developing a brand. This, in turn, lets us **confirm** Proposition 4.

6.1.5 Similarity to Followers

P5: Entrepreneurial Instagrammers are less Similar, and thus, less persuasive

Interviewees agreed with the premise of Proposition 5 (P5), i.e. that similarity between an Instagrammer and their audience makes them persuasive. As argued, similarity is achieved through common characteristics such as age, gender, lifestyle, consumption patterns (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Shimp & Andrews, 2013). Indeed, respondents admitted that persuasiveness is affected by shared traits: *“if they have the same problems as you as well, or the same hairstyle, then their recommendations would be very relevant to you”* (RF2, line 18) or a similar lifestyle: *“if they are more like the followers that means that the lifestyle that they have is more in sync with the lifestyle that the followers have. So products that are relevant to their lifestyle, are relevant products in the followers' lifestyles”* (RE2, line 17). Similarity was also found to be built on shared values: *“that shows to me she's authentic because she stands behind her family (...) that also may be related somehow with similarity? Because I really highly appreciate my family”* (RF5, line 21).

However, all respondent types strongly stated that rather than perfect similarity, the relevance of recommendations is affected by the Instagrammers having aspirational qualities: *“Instagrammers can't be as a completely regular people because they need to have something attractive that followers would like to have or achieve. Something that they would feel jealous about. That something that followers would like to have - a feature, characteristics or an achievement, contributes to the relevance of their recommendation”* (RE1, line 16). A follower agreed: *“maybe if it's something that I want to achieve or something that I'm not but I want to be, then their recommendations will be relevant to me even if we are not similar”* (RF4, line 18). Similarly, brand representatives confirmed this notion, adding: *“diversity can actually be inspiring”* (RB3, line 17.)

Respondents agreed that they find EI less similar to them than regular Instagrammers. As a follower explained: *“if you own a brand, then you are definitely not similar because you made something by yourself and I didn't. I'm just here to follow you (...) it's about how much efforts it took for them to develop a brand and make sure that everything goes in place (...) like a signature, it's something about that person”* (RF3, line 18). This view aligns with the premise of P5 which assumes that characteristics such as high achievement motivation reflect on the EI and make them closer to an expert than a regular person.

Our findings reveal that EI are less similar to followers due to their changed, more brand-like communication. Experts concluded that *“the feed and communication of Instagrammers who own*

brands are much more similar to the communication brands, i.e. one tone, the same theme of posts” (RE1, line 17). In some cases, such changes may undermine their persuasiveness: *“they can unfollow the influencer, of course - but I think this is very rare. For example, because the content they publish is now different, and the follower no longer likes it”* (RE3, line 17).

We have also found that evolving from a regular Instagrammer to EI may also make the EI more similar to certain followers who have a business drive and ambition: *“driving, being successful, those characteristics I hope I am as well, so... that would relate to me and be more relevant”* (RF5, line 20). Brands, aware of this factor, explained: *“if your group of people that are following you are inspired of (...) being entrepreneurial, how you can do small things to make things better in life, these kind of things, then you know, in a broader sense you have similarity”* (RB3, line 18). Interestingly, we also found that the significance of similarity depends on the initial reason for following: *“depending on why I follow that person. If I follow somebody because I want to get rid of my skin concern, then I would say it is more important that they are similar to me. But if I'm just searching for make-up inspiration, for going out this Friday, then maybe would be better to follow somebody that is not similar to me”* (RF4, line 18).

While we encountered general confirmation of EI becoming less similar, respondents did not indicate that this makes EI less persuasive. Followers strongly expressed that even as EI' lifestyles and knowledge improves, their recommendations still are relevant due to aspirational qualities: *“if they are more glamorous and more extravagant and also have more expertise, if they work in that field of beauty, then you would also perceive their posts as relevant (...) we look towards glamorous Instagrammers for inspiration or for something which is unreachable, that everybody dreams of”* (RF2, line 18) and *“if it's something that I aspire, that is different from us, then I think the recommendation would be relevant”* (RF4, line 20). A follower admitted to seeking out aspirational Instagrammers: *“I also wanna believe in some kind of fairytales and stories that they put in an imaginery, beautiful, luxurious life (...) if there is someone that I can look up for, then I think that's the next level I'm going to be, and then I'm going to be surrounded by those people, then I'm gonna go and search for the high level”* (RF3, line 17). We found that honestly showing the transformation over the years may be useful to manage the change from a regular Instagrammer to EI: *“If you see a person who is relatable to you and you see them throughout the years evolving and growing and still being transparent what they do and what they sell, you kind of build your relationship. Even though this person is more successful than you, so less relatable to you, you might still feel strongly about them and their products and try to support them. So in that sense, it would be still relevant”* (RF2, line 20).

Through netnography, we have found that EI indeed use this tactic. As shown in Figure 9, EI @isabellalowengrip is authentically sharing her entrepreneurial journey, which makes her appear more similar and down to earth. She shares both the imperfect (outdated outfit, immature pose), aspirational

(company, wealth) and educational (financial advice) messages creating what an expert summarized as a: *“combination of being the coolest kid in class, and you really aspire to be like her... together with the possibility of actually being like her”* (RE2, line 18).



Figure 9. EI evolvement. Source: Instagram @isabellalowengrip

On the basis of the uncovered findings, we have concluded that while EI are, indeed, seen as less similar due to their entrepreneurial knowledge and lifestyle, they are not less persuasive. The aforementioned aspirational qualities were found to affect the relevance of the recommendations more significantly than perfect similarity with the audience. Therefore, Proposition 5 is **partially confirmed**.

6.1.6 Emotional Involvement

P6: Entrepreneurial Instagrammers are more Emotionally Involved, and thus, more persuasive

All respondent types confidently supported the premise of P6. An expert revealed that portraying liking and using recommended brands is one of the main suggestions for Instagrammers, elaborating further: *„Instagrammers must recommend products that they like and use, or at least that it would be seen they like and use them [...] In order to make their recommendations relevant, Instagrammers should genuinely love and use products”* (RE1, line 20). The perception of liking and using was related by a brand representative to authenticity: *“Yes, cause if they by nature like this product, they really adore it, their content is also more authentic. Cause then it leads to a more real content [...] And that you can quickly feel”* (RB1, line 20). Another brand representative presents the benefits of the endorsement done by an emotionally involved Instagrammer: *„When they do a more genuine review, then followers engage more, discuss what is working and what is not”* (RB4, line 18). Interestingly, a follower denoted that, currently, when people are aware of Instagrammers getting paid for recommendations, it is even more important to portray genuine liking and using: *“I would say for me it is, like, really important that they are genuine, in order for like their recommendations to be relevant for me. It was different, I would*

say, two years ago because then it was not like that obvious but today I feel like you can directly see ok, she would never buy this product if she didn't get half a million to do this post" (RF4, line 22).

When assessing whether EI like and use recommended brands more than regular Instagrammers, as assumed in the theoretical argumentation, respondents considered EI' engagement with own brand. It was found that respondents determine EI' involvement with own brand on the basis of various rationales, such as the belief that EI made the products according to their own preferences: *"They should use their products if they make them"* (RF2, line 22); EI' effort put in and affection towards their brand: *„Because their ideas, everything, the effort“* (RF5, line 29) and *„they have put so much effort, ok not everybody but you would think that they put a lot of effort and love into these things and that would make the relevance like higher“* (RF4, line 23), as well as EI' connection to own brand: *„the facts that Instagrammers are connected to the brands they've created makes it their baby. [...] I think they feel a strong connection to it and recommend it more genuinely than sponsor brands“* (RE3, line 21).

Further, a similar product category between own and sponsor brands may in some cases increase EI' apparent emotional involvement with a sponsor brand. A follower concluded: *"When talking about sponsor brands, depends on a product category... And then if you continue to do sponsored posts, something that is connected to your brand, maybe that would make you more genuine - the combination of the two. But if it's nothing to do with your brand, then it doesn't"* (RF2, line 23). Another follower supports this view, and specifies how recommending the brands within the same product category benefits an Instagrammer: *"if it's an Instagrammer having their own face wash and recommending another face wash, I would say ok, this needs to be really good because otherwise, there would be no win in actually recommending this product"* (RF4, line 23). Some inconsistencies were observed among experts. One expert agreed on the importance of endorsing brands within the same category, giving an example: *"So if he's made his own headset line, and he's later on commenting on or recommending another headset from another brand, then we'd assume that there is some sort of similarity between the two, and we would also see his message as more credible and reliable"* (RE4, line 22). Contrarily, two other experts criticise this approach and judge recommendations within the same product category as: *"somewhat a clash"* (RE3, line 21). One expert explains the consequences: *"Instagrammer owns an under eye cream and recommends a sponsor brand which is a face cream, then the sponsored recommendation might be perceived as much less liked and used by that Instagrammer"* (RE1, line 21). Another expert upholds by giving an example: *"If @redlipstickmonster had her own lipstick already and then recommended an Inglot lipstick [...] If I was her, I would not take on this sponsorship to protect my image. And I think consequently, such a recommendation seems less genuine"* (RE3, line 21) and adds that the recommendations would seem much more genuine if own and sponsor brands would not compete with each other: *"In my opinion, if it's a different product category, people don't mind and it may even have positive influence"* (RE3, line 25).

It was found that EI becoming entrepreneurs and having own brands does not change their perceived involvement with recommended brands: *“But obviously if they are actually liking and using products, it's way better. And being an entrepreneur I don't think really changes that”* (RE2, line 22) and similarly: *“No, that doesn't matter at all. So they have their own brand and then they use this product, would I think they like the product even more just because they have a brand, compared to those who are only sponsored? No.”* (RB1, line 21). Followers and experts mentioned three factors affecting the perceived emotional involvement, which were the authentic communication: *“she is able to communicate any kind of recommendations in an honest way. [...] When accepting a recommendation, this effort is usually noticed and appreciated by followers”* (RE1, line 26), showing the timespan of using them: *“If they've used the product over the few years, maybe you can definitely tell that they like it and that's genuine”* (RF2, line 22), as well as frequency: *“if you are thinking about like the repetitiveness, of how much they post about it. [...] Then you see ok within three weeks - 2 posts, half a year - nothing, then I wouldn't say it's very genuine cause you never see it again”* (RF4, line 25).

A follower lists aspects which make a genuine recommendation: *“The way she talks, the way she interacts with a product, all the body language, voice, the way she touches a product. [...] just be natural”*

and as a good example demonstrates a video of a Danish beauty Instagrammer



Figure 10. EI genuine recommendation. Source: Instagram @gunbrittcoiffure

@gunbrittcoiffure (Figure 10) who: *“is not using it [the product] fast just to do it, the way she talks is just being cute and I don't know, she doesn't really bother not to use make up, she just shows that she is also a normal person [...] She models sometimes, so usually she has her hair volumized so there is a huge difference between how I see her in this picture of having her hair done and then she is not afraid of showing her hair just kind of pretty wet, dry hair and just being herself”* (RF3, line 24).

EI' perceived emotional involvement, i.e. genuine liking and using the recommended products, was indeed found to increase the persuasiveness. However, we did not find evidence supporting the claim that emotional involvement is a characteristic of EI. Indeed, EI' emotional involvement with own brand was found more significant than with a sponsor brand, due to entrepreneurial engagement with own brand. Since this perception does not make EI more persuasive in their endorsements of sponsored brands, P6 is only **partially confirmed**.

6.2 EI - Sponsor brand dyad

This section will present findings concerning the interrelation between EI and endorsed sponsor brands, determining the result of P7.

6.2.1 Motivation

P7: Entrepreneurial Instagrammers' sponsored brand endorsements are mainly externally motivated, and thus, less persuasive

Proposition 7 (P7) argued that followers, upon observing EI's entrepreneurial engagement with their own brand and the lack thereof when it comes to sponsor brands, are likely to see EI's endorsement of sponsor brand as mainly externally, i.e. financially motivated. Our respondents generally agreed that EI's motivation affects the relevance of recommendations. A follower explained: *"I think in so many cases today, when Instagrammers can get a lot of money for promoting stuff and sponsored posts (...) So I would say for me it is, like, really important that they are genuine, in order for like their recommendations to be relevant for me"* (RF4, line 22). Agency experts also valued genuine liking: *"this is one of the main rules in influencer marketing. Instagrammers must recommend products that they like and use or at least that it would seem they like and use them. They shouldn't recommend products that they use only once for the marketing purposes and then give away for their friends or family members. In order to make their recommendations relevant, Instagrammers should genuinely love and use products"* (RE1, line 20).

Respondents, in line with our theoretical argumentation, confirmed that EI's endorsements of own brand appear internally motivated. EI's role in the creation of the brand and their passion towards were said to make them appear internally motivated. These factors can be considered a result of EI's entrepreneurial engagement, i.e. endorser's ownership, managerial and operational activities, holding a position, receiving remuneration, participating in development and initiation of the brand (Hunter & Davidsson, 2007; Hunter, 2009). Respondents believed that *"they developed them because they really love them so I would guess that they used them a lot, more than sponsor ones because it's something that they have made out of their passion"* (RF4, line 28). Similarly, another follower expressed that if EI's own brand is *"their passion (...) then it would be more genuine, more personal as a motivation"*. However, the respondent specified that EI needs to share their brand story in order to appear internally motivated: *"I think if you don't know the story behind the person (...) then you would assume immediately that is just about the money"* (RF2, line 26). Experts confirmed the use of this tactic, saying: *"In order to make or keep themselves and their products trustworthy, they [EI] communicate that they love and use their products, believe in and that it's their "baby" which is very important to them and that only because of these reasons, they recommend those products. In my opinion, they not only communicate that motivation but, in most cases, genuinely possess it"* (RE1, line 24).

Results indicate that sponsored brands endorsed by EI may be seen as motivated both externally and internally. A follower expressed that while EI' sponsored brands may seem financially motivated, long-term collaborations with strong brands may be internally motivated: *"the sponsored ones I would say is more externally because they are basically paid for doing that, and... depends how long the sponsorship goes, I mean if it's a really strong brand and a really trustworthy Instagrammer for me, then it could be less external, but I would still say money is the first they think about and compensation"* (RF5, line 28). The motivation was found to depend on whether sponsored brands are in the same category as EI's own brand, by brand representatives: *"if it's the same category, yes. If it's complementary or not the same category, no. Then it seems natural"* (RB3, line 28) and followers alike: *"she probably got a lot of money to recommend it if it's in the same product category"* (RF4, line 27). Experts confirm that, contrarily, *"if it's a different product category, people don't mind and it may even have positive influence"* (RE3, line 25).

Several responses were doubtful of the premise of P7. Brand representatives were certain that if an EI recommends another brand, it must mean they truly like it: *"When you already have your own brand and recommend another one, then you really need to like that product"* (RB4, line 22) and *"If an Instagrammer has her own brand and starts talking about another product which is not her product, I would say she likes the product because why she talk about the competitors. If it's within beauty, if she is a beauty Instagrammer and then she starts talking about another beauty product, that would be because she really likes the product. Otherwise, I would be like why mention the competitor"* (RB1, line 24). More importantly, we noticed that much like endorsements of own brands, EI often communicate their endorsements of sponsor brands in a way that appears genuine to respondents. Experts stressed that EI can put effort into presenting a convincing story of them using and liking the product: *"when we talked about recommending own brands, their genuine liking and using is pretty strong since Instagrammers recommend something that they have created and what they love. Whereas, when recommending sponsor brands, liking and using is more product-focused since usually, Instagrammers communicate more about product features or physical aspects and less about the idea behind the brand and its concept. The communication sounds more like, I have tried this product, I liked, this is the result and, therefore, I recommend"* (RE1, line 25), and *"they can still sell the story, or the fairytale. It's all about the image, the branding and the storytelling"* (RE2, line 27). Moreover, having your own brand does not disprove a genuine love for other brands: *"sometimes it can be a brand that you truly know that this person just loves and got the chance to promote. You know, it's like you get your dream job"* (RB3, line 26).

Netnography revealed the tendency among EI to endorse sponsor brands more from a product-focused perspective which supports the aforementioned finding from the interviews. Figure 11 portrays a sponsor brand endorsement of @marianna_hewitt which highlights product features such as the *"full coverage but weightless"* formula. The post also confirms the use of the following tactic described by

an interviewee: *“I have tried this product, I liked, this is the result and, therefore, I recommend”* (RE1, line 25), as in the description of the endorsements the EI specifies: *“when they launched their new foundation I had to try. I love how formula looks and feels on my skin. [...] You can get it now at @sephora”*. The followers comment demonstrating their interest in the product by asking specific questions and showing interest in buying the product, which suggests that the perceived motivation is internal.

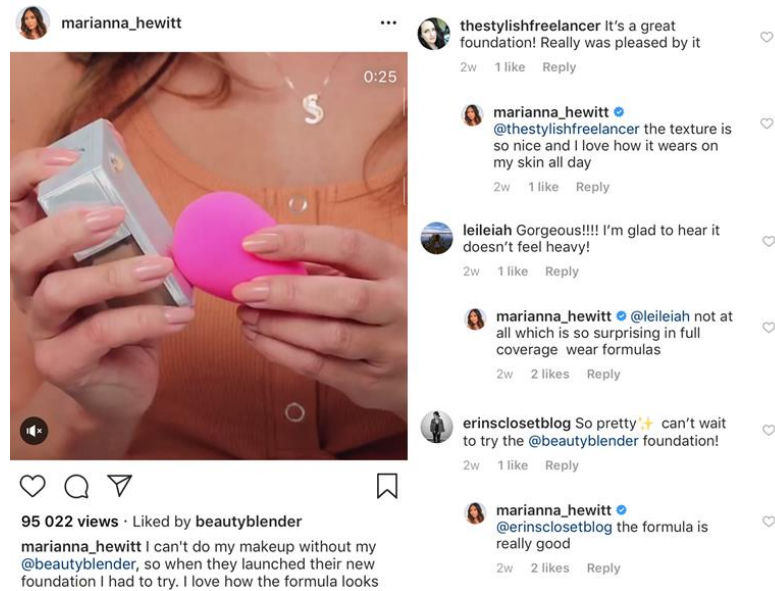


Figure 11. EI stressing product features. Source: Instagram @marianna_hewitt

The findings suggest that while there is a relationship between EI's motivation and their persuasiveness, EI's endorsements of sponsor brands do not appear mostly financially motivated, and there is an array of factors, such as the length of a collaboration, genuine product-focused communication, and storytelling, which may make them appear internally motivated. Thus, P7 is **rejected**.

6.3 Own brand - Sponsor brand dyad

This section will present findings pertaining to the relationship between EI's own brand and endorsed sponsor brand, determining the validity of P8 and P9.

6.3.1 Overshadowing

P8: Entrepreneurial Instagrammers' own brand will overshadow an endorsement of sponsor brand

We aimed to observe whether overshadowing happens in the setting of Instagram endorsement. More specifically, we meant to find out whether Instagrammers' recommended brands, when forming associative links, compete with the already created associations between EI and own brands (Till, 1998).

An expert emphasized how in order to keep the focus on the recommended brand, it is crucial to not include a strong brand next to the recommended one: *“One of the main rules when recommending any brand is to not include other strong brands because, otherwise, the focus will be lost. If own brand is stronger and much more recognized than sponsor brand, then it might happen”* (RE1, line 30). A brand

representative pointed out that in order for the brand to be recognized, brands should be cautious when choosing an Instagrammer whose own brand is well known within the same product category: *“It's difficult, let's say that I have a beauty brand and I have started a small business with lipsticks and then I have an opportunity to collaborate with Kylie [...] I think then her followers wouldn't even recognize that it's not Kylie's products, they would get confused and I wouldn't get a valuable reach out of it. Because, of course, a lot of people would be the post, if I go with "ok, the reach is this, engagement rate is high", but do they know that it's my product and not her product. [...] there is a risk and I don't think that I would actually take this risk, to be honest”* (RB1, line 2).

There are mixed opinions about which brand - own or sponsor - stands out more within the Instagram feed. A follower concludes that since launching own brands is still less common on Instagram than doing sponsorships, own brand stands out more than sponsor brand: *“the sponsored posts, like even if they stand out, you kind of just scroll down like you don't pay much attention to them and if you see that somebody has released their own brand, you're just interested out of curiosity, I guess, to see what they did and how it is made, if it's a collaboration and then you remember more”* (RF2, line 33). It is argued similarly by a brand representative who claims EI' own brands stand out more because Instagram is one of the main platforms, and often the only one where own brand is presented: *“People are more interested in the recommendations of own than sponsor brand - they ask more questions, press more often a like button. They are not so interested in sponsor brands, discuss less about them. However, people might see the recommended products somewhere else as well, maybe advertised in print advertisements or other traditional marketing tools so that's why they don't have so many questions about them. Whereas, the advertisements of Instagrammer's private label they see only on Instagram [...] the concentration of consumer feedback is higher in this channel; when an Instagrammer is releasing and advertising own brand, it's exciting and interesting, people want to know more and asking questions. While the knowledge of sponsor brands is much higher, thus there are not so many questions needed to ask. So the recommendation on Instagram is just as a reminder and incentive”* (RB2, line 29).

Several followers argued that sponsor brands are in fact easier to notice, due to the tag on sponsored posts: *“I think actually the sponsored ones stand out more [...] Because if you have the sponsored ones there's always a tagline - sponsored by”* (RF5, line 33), as well as due to the resemblance of sponsored posts to magazines: *“I think that sponsor brands stand out more in a profile when you are scrolling. [...] it looks more like a magazine usually, I think that there is some kind of guidelines and things that just make it look out of place sometimes. [...] E.g. of @songofstyle obviously a sponsored post. Because it's very zoomed in on a product, like you don't show much context in the image, I think that's a sign [Figure 12]”* (RF2, line 32); *“if it's sponsored [...] I think it would stand out more because I would see that directly: ok, this really product-focused picture which has all of the right elements. Again, it's an orange face cream and there is, oopsie, oranges besides it because it includes oranges and it's also in*

the text so it's very very well thought through. I would say you see that stands out more than, I think, own brand” (RF4, line 31).



22 000 likes

songofstyle If you've seen my stories, you know I've been living with the #nomakeupmakeup look thanks to @armanibeauty's new Neo Nude collection. Been a huge fan of this new line since I did my unboxing video! #sponsored by #armanibeauty available at @nordstrom. Products used: Ecstasy Balm - shade 02, A-Line Blush - shade 53, A-Line Highlighter - shade 10, Compact Powder Foundation - shade 5.5.



Most respondents agreed that EI are more associated with own brand than sponsor brand. A consistently mentioned argument was that own brand is more personal: *“it is more personal, I guess, and it's this one thing in comparison to just multiple random brands”* (RF2, line 34); *“The one that they have, just because it's their own baby. And the new stuff is just for the sake of variety. So you would perceive own brand as the main one”* (RF3, line 31). An expert mentioned several Instagram aspects which also portray the personal link: *“Their own brands are often intertwined with their profile, their content, their Instagram bio, so that association is often huge, because it benefits them if people know about the connection between them and their brands”* (RE2, line 31). Moreover, a brand

Figure 12. A magazine style sponsored post. Source: Instagram @songofstyle

representative explains her unwillingness to choose an EI for a sponsorship due to the risk of EI being associated with own brand: *“I would go with the one who doesn't have a brand. Cause then I wouldn't be sure that she would highlight my products more than her own brand. [...] there are too many risks to go with an Instagrammer who has own brand. [...] Cause I don't know who is her target, who is buying this product, do I want to be associated with this brand, what about my loyal buyers, will they stop buying my products because they don't like this brand? What about the reviews of her products? Are they good products? She has to be very big to avoid the risks* (RB1, line 36).

However, netnography revealed that own brands which are still in the early stage can also be “overshadowed” by other brands. Figure 13 shows an EI @carodaur during the launch party of her lipstick collaboration with MAC (#MACxCaroDaur), an event which commences the own brand's introduction to the market. The followers' focus on the bag that the EI wears, rather than the lipstick collaboration she presents, can be interpreted as a result of a lesser known brand being overshadowed by another brand which is already trending on a market.

Another finding suggests the importance of own brand's frequent appearance within the EI' profile which, based on the theoretical considerations of P6, contributes to the formation of stronger associative links and is heavily supported by respondents. As followers explain: *"I just looked at Marianna Hewitt [...] she has a face mask and you can see that directly because in her feed, it's there, and there, and there - so many times. While, for example, here it's Kim Kardashian's brand and it's only once"* (RF4, line 31); *"When Gun-Britt has her posts, I can see the product in the same style, it's a white bottle with black letters and it's clearly seen and when I just scroll I can see: ok, another white bottle. And then there are lot of white and black pictures and that's her name in the background [...]"* and *that maintains the same font and the same color so [...]"* whenever I'm walking on the street, I see them in the shop window: *oh, I saw it somewhere, that's exactly what I've seen on Instagram so it caught my attention by constantly having the same image in the back of my mind.* (RF3, line 32) (Figure 14).



Figure 13. A bag overshadows collaboration. Source: Instagram @carodaur

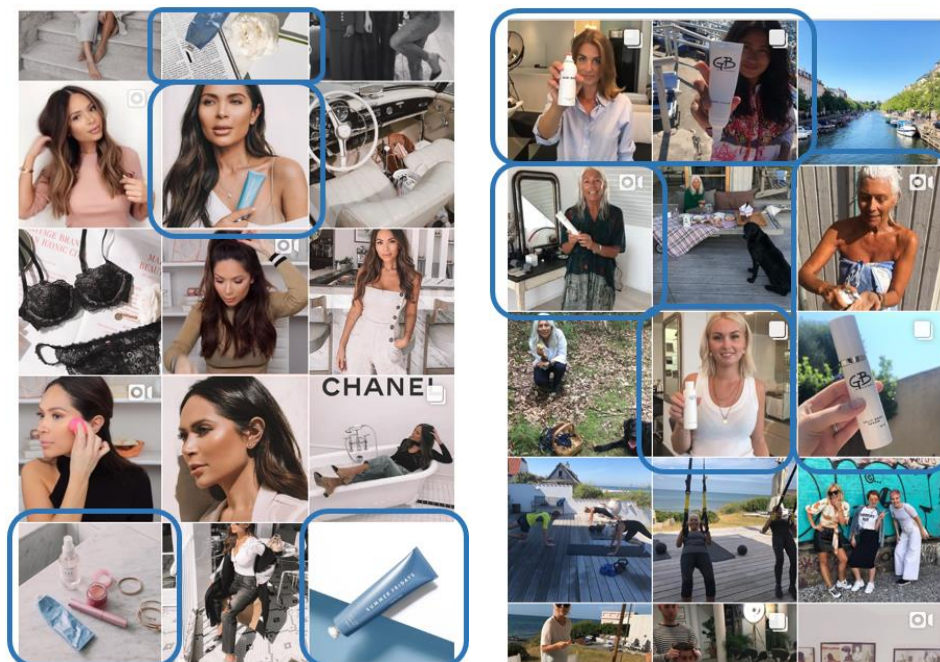


Figure 14. Frequency of own brand posts. Source: Instagram @marianna_hewitt; @gunbrittcoiffure

Netnography (Figure 15) revealed that EI consistently and frequently fosters the association with own brand not only throughout their personal profiles but also within the Instagram profiles of their own brands. The portrayed own brand page's bio features the name of the EI @negin_mirsalehi behind the brand. Moreover, instead of posts picturing own products alone, EI include themselves in the own brand content. This repetitive personal pairing, in line with our argumentation, contributes to the formation of stronger associative links between two stimuli - EI and own brand.

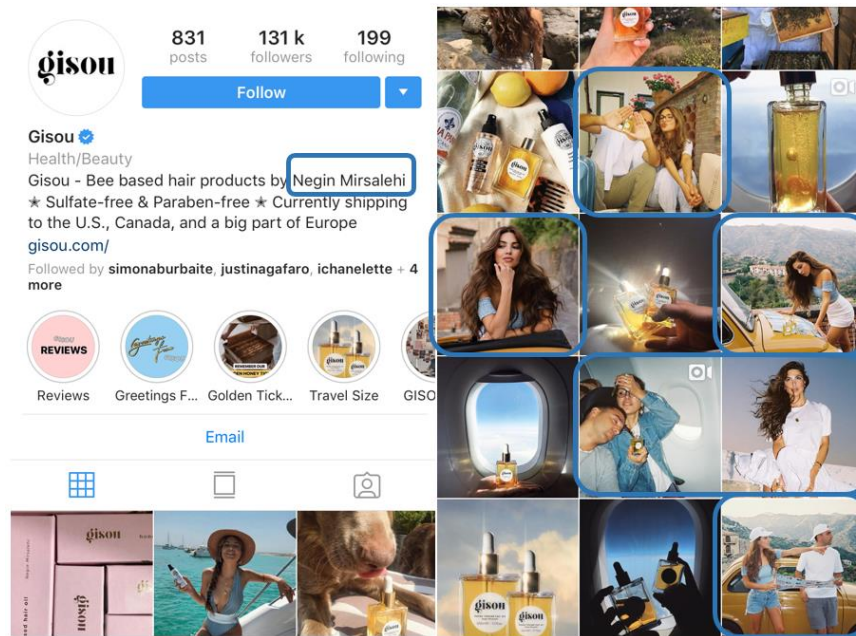


Figure 15. Frequent EI image within own brand profile. Source: Instagram @gisou

The findings presented above **confirm** the Proposition 8. Overshadowing is found to occur within Instagram, as well as specifically in the EI' endorsements of own and sponsor brands. Even if respondents had mixed opinions about whether own or sponsor brand stands out more, the findings confidently revealed a higher association between an EI

and their own brand which, as theoretically argued, makes own brand the predominant stimuli. It was found that personal connection between own brands and EI, more frequent and consistent mentions of own brand within EI' personal profiles and EI being featured throughout own brands' Instagram profiles make the own brand's network of associations more complex and thus, more embedded in people's memory. This, in turn, dominates the process of associative learning between sponsor brand and EI.

6.3.2 Match up

P9: The better the match up between sponsor and own brand, the more accepted Entrepreneurial Instagrammers' sponsor brands endorsements are

Respondents strongly confirmed the importance of similarity between brand endorsed by EI, comparing it to a common "thread", i.e. consistency within the profile: *"if there is a match between both sponsored content and own brand, then I would say it's more trustworthy because there is like one thread that goes through the whole thing"* (RF4, line 35) and *"there is a bigger difference in the red thread, the one with the own brand. Because they talk about the same all the time, you know, they have a base that they can talk about. Here, one day it's about shoes, the other day it's about HBO, the third day it's about... food."*

So it's less red thread" (RB3, line 30). A major finding, confirmed strongly by all respondent types was that when endorsed products are well-matched to the EI, there will also be a match between them. As experts explained: *"there's probably a brand identity that matches your own identity. And working with brands that complement that is important, so naturally, the brands that you work with will have sort of similar brand identities"* (RE2, line 33) and *"it is necessary to choose partners-brands which are not contradicting to each other. Since an Instagrammer must also choose partners-brands based on their values, the chosen brands automatically should be similar"* (RE1, line 32). This was confirmed by followers, who described match up between brands as: *"the products are not all the same, but the vibe is the same with her own or her person (...) because the products share similar personality to the person promoting them"* (RF1, line 35) and *"basically, if there's a fit between the product and the personality of the person, then I think the sponsorship, the success is guaranteed. But if there is no fit, I don't believe that"* (RF5, line 39). A brand representative extended this insight, adding that Instagrammers align products with their style using communication tactics: *"They're very good at trying to develop their own style, so whenever we send a product to them, they are very good at taking that sometimes ugly product and putting it into their setting to make it beautiful. It's their visuals, it's their way of communicating, it's them explaining their situation"* (RB3, line 4).

All respondent types also confirmed that well-matched endorsed brands will keep a consistent Instagram profile: *"to build a strong profile being an Influencer, yes, go for brands that have a similar brand identity, because there's probably a brand identity that matches your own identity"* (RE2, line 33). A follower confirms they prefer when brands match: *"it's more appealing to the eye if your whole feed has a theme and that means everything that you promote or you produce should be in the same field"* (RF2, line 37). Similarly, a brand representative confirms that consistency of recommendations is needed to create a profile that satisfies followers: *"I think people choose Instagrammers based on their interests and it would be very strange if on day Instagrammers shop in Ali Express [low price online retailer] and the other say in Harrods [premium store]"* (RB4, line 29). Moreover, we found that by endorsing similar brands, EI become clear experts within this area of products: *"They would become experts within the field. Then the followers would think "oh, she has a broad knowledge within beauty, it's a specialist, instead of being a generalist about different products (...) consumers would follow the ones with expertise within the category they have an interest in. And that is built by posting about similar stuff, same topics"* (RB1, line 33). Thus, when a specialist EI endorses a brand similar to their own, a follower is likely to infer that the sponsor brand has similar positive qualities own brand has: *"you trust the opinion of an Instagrammer who you relate with and suddenly they recommend you something, then you know that you should like this product too because it has "that thing [has the qualities own brand has] (...) If followers like these aspects and my brand speaks to them, it means that they will be interested in my brand too"* (RB4, line 30-31).

Results show that followers expect a match in terms of brands belonging to a related industry: *“she sometimes promotes skincare, sometimes it's a shoe brand... the more differences there are in terms of product, I can't trust everything she says”* (RF1, line 37) and having a similar level of quality: *“it should just maintain the same level of confidence for me of the product quality (...) if she promotes that, then I would expect the product to have the same quality level and would be more confident in buying those natural things because I would believe she wouldn't promote them, otherwise”* (RF3, line 33). However, we found that the level of similarity between own and sponsor brands should be moderated. A follower expressed the endorsed brands needed a differentiating factor, such as alternative ingredients: *“her own shampoos, (...) I would guess it's a lot of chemicals. Let's say she just promotes something with clean and (...) explain how they are made of, I would be like oh, it's interesting because it's a little bit different, they use for these shampoos natural ingredients and that's a bit different from what she sells herself but that enriches her collection and that makes her more open for innovation and different things.”* (RF3, line 33). Other respondents also rejected the idea of endorsing own and sponsor brands within the same category. A follower, when asked about it, replied: *“I wouldn't believe that it would happen, this sponsorship, because they would never... I don't think that the brand owner would support... So first of all, it wouldn't fit I would say. But I'd also doubt that it would happen because they would be in competition. So maybe they would do a collaboration, putting both brands kind of together, coming up with new products, yes. But I don't think they would sell the same type of product”* (RF5, line 37). A brand representative recalled an example: *“we collaborated with an influencer and we had a product, and then she posted about the product, it was nice, cool - all this, and two weeks later she posted the same product from another brand. And that was just weird because she said this is the best product within this category and then the next time hey, I'm using this product. As a consumer, it would be wtf, which brand”* (RB1, line 35).

Instead, endorsing complementary own and sponsor brands was praised: *“It can be different but it can be supplementary somehow (...) they are similar or complimentary but having different features”* (RF4, line 35). This is confirmed by a brand representative, who described that communicating: *“Cause, hey, I've just tried this cleansing gel - so cool, and the next time I've just tried this cleansing tonic - it's still within beauty, you still need both - cool”* (RB1, line 35). Netnographic findings strongly confirm that endorsing sponsor brands that are complementary, yet different to EI's own brand result in high acceptance of the sponsored recommendations. As seen in Figure 16, EI @marianna_hewitt recommends another face mask to be used in combination with her own [Summer Fridays] face mask, due to their complementary cleansing and hydrating qualities. The exemplary responses are predominantly positive. Interestingly, we found inconsistent opinions about consumers' loyalty towards beauty products. Some brand representatives admitted that endorsing own and sponsor products within a similar industry is acceptable, because *“In a beauty world, you don't have loyal consumers, you know it from yourself, you don't have make up from one brand, you have make up from so many brands”*

(RB1, line 34) and similarly, “everyone knows that people are using different products in their daily skin care routine, e.g. Glossier, Vichy, economy and premium products. Very rarely women are buying all the necessary products solely from one brand” (RB4, line 2). Another brand representative’s opinion was different: “Because what followers would think when one day you claim that you’re obsessed by one skin care brand and the next day you would praise another skin care brand. Then I would not understand what is the truth (...) harm would be done not only for my brand but for the other too (...) with cosmetics, you can use mascara from one brand and lipstick from the other. But with skin care it is different. In order to get the best result, very often it is very important to use a combination of the same brand products” (RB2, line 33).

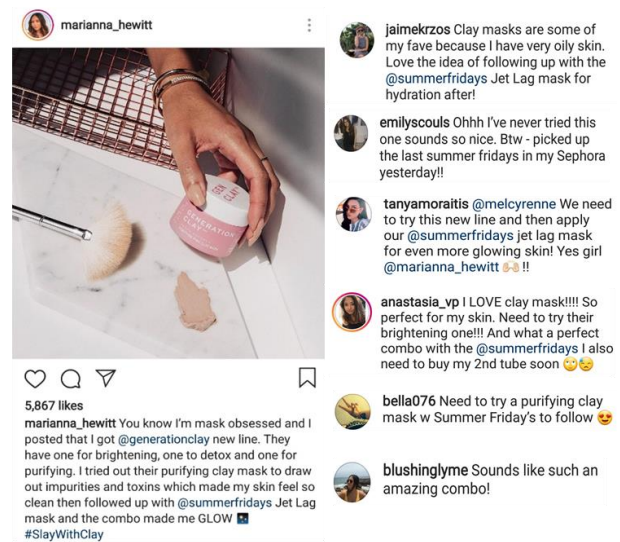


Figure 16. EI endorsing complementary products.
Source: Instagram @marianne_hewitt

The presented findings indicate that, indeed, the acceptance of sponsor brand will be greater when there is a match between EI’s own brand and sponsor brand. However, it is important to satisfy the condition of a differentiating factor between the brands, which can be met either through different characteristics or the products being complementary. Thus, P3 is **confirmed**.

7. Discussion

This section will discuss the main insights derived from the research. To provide a clearer view of this study, the section is organized into themes emerged as a result of the analysis. In line with our research question, the themes will be grouped into two sections pertaining to the persuasiveness of Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI) (P1-P6) and their effect on sponsor brands (P7-P9). Later, the section will culminate in the reflection on the potential misalignments among the chosen perspectives: agency experts, brand representatives, and followers.

7.1 Persuasiveness

This study aimed to analyze the persuasiveness of EI. The results of P1 – P6 show that EI are superior to regular Instagrammers in various aspects of their persuasiveness. EI were described to have increased levels of trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, and respect. The main reasons were their integral behavior, increased experience, and knowledge, as well as positive entrepreneurial qualities, such as competence, responsibility and passion, gained during the process. Even though EI were deemed less

similar than regular Instagrammers, their newfound aspirational qualities had a positive effect on their persuasiveness. Moreover, we confirmed that as a result of their entrepreneurial engagement with own brand, followers believe they genuinely like and use their own brand more than sponsor endorsements.

7.1.1 Instagrammer Evolvement

Respondents acknowledged the argued evolvement of EI from regular Instagrammers. EI were described as above regular Instagrammers, having achieved a certain market position and fame. We found that, during this shift, an Instagrammer, who was primarily a typical consumer endorser, gains traits of expert and celebrity endorsers.

Expert endorsers use their professional knowledge about a product or product niche obtained through educational experiences to influence consumers (Friedman & Friedman, 1979). Respondents strongly supported the view of EI having more expertise than regular Instagrammers as a result of being engaged in the inception and creation of a brand. We confirmed launching an own brand was considered an educational experience. EI' elevated expertise was found to affect followers' interest in the sponsored recommendations only if sponsor brands belong to the same category as own brand. Moreover, EI were found to be bigger experts due to their elevated business-related competences. This had a significant effect on followers who were interested in business, as well as brand representatives who considered EI more valuable partners. Thus, we find that as a regular Instagrammer evolves into an EI, their influence becomes more similar to that of an expertise endorser.

Celebrity endorsers are famous personas who use their widespread popularity, likeability, and respect to influence (Shimp & Andrews, 2013). They are recognized for the quality of their achievements in a given profession (Amos, Holmes & Strutton, 2008). Respondents agreed that EI gain respect as a result of starting a brand, considering it an effortful professional achievement. Consumers consider the opinions of celebrity endorsers because they "aspire to live and look like" them (Magnini, Honeycutt, Cross, 2008, p. 61). In line with that, we found that as Instagrammers become EI, their personality and lifestyles become more aspirational. While this decreases their similarity with the audience, it does not decrease their persuasiveness, in fact, making them more attractive. The validity of aspirational factors is supported by the meaning transfer model. Celebrities personify cultural meanings which they embed products with, making them desirable to consumers who use them to construct their aspirational self-image (McCracken, 1986; 1989). Thus, an endorser should possess those aspirational, impressive and desirable qualities (Duraipandian & Sethi, 2016). We find that due to their aspirational persona and lifestyle, EI can influence consumers similarly to a celebrity endorser. A positive attraction towards EI is maintained through their consistent uploads of aesthetic, inspiring visuals which makes their followers look up to them (Braatz, 2017).

The underlying assumption of our research was that own brand's performance affects the perception of the EI behind it. Indeed, we found that most respondents attributed the success of and effort put into the own brand personally to EI's personality and disposition. A similar tendency has been observed in the case of CEO celebrities, where media tends to praise the CEO for the success of the brand s/he is affiliated with, bringing them public acclaim and fame. As a result, CEOs enjoy improved credibility, legitimacy and self-perception in the eyes of stakeholders (Hayward, Rindova & Pollock, 2004), which aligns with our findings showing that EI behind successful brands gain trustworthiness and legitimacy. It appears that a similar mechanism occurs in the cases of a CEO celebrity and EI when it comes to the reaction of consumers, as the association process between their business ventures and their personal value seems to operate similarly.

7.1.2 TEARS

The following section presents two research observations found in relation to the TEARS model. Firstly, we will reflect on the relevance of TEARS in the context of Instagram and the reason for following. Later, the interrelation between three attributes of the model will be discussed.

Reason for Following

We found that in the context of Instagram, TEARS attributes are not universal i.e. their impact on an Instagrammer's persuasiveness is not identical for all followers. Findings suggest that the significance of each attribute depends on an individual level. Respondents were found to differ based on their reason for following Instagrammers which were: for inspiration, to discover new products, for entertainment or for information about products. The reasons for following were found to be related with specific TEARS attributes. Respondents who follow for suggestions and solutions appreciate a higher degree of similarity, as they are likely to turn to people with similar problems, issues or characteristics. However, when looking for inspiration, they gravitate towards a lesser degree of similarity and a larger degree of aspirational qualities. For respondents who follow Instagrammers to discover new products, trustworthiness was unnecessary. Similarly, respect was obsolete when the reason to follow was entertainment. Whereas expertise was relevant for followers who follow Instagrammers for knowledge about products.

The inconsistencies in the relevance of TEARS attributes resemble Shavitt's (1989) notion about the importance of personality characteristics in understanding the underlying functions of consumers' attitudes. Consumers form attitudes which are served by various functions and, thus, for followers may determine the decision to follow an Instagrammer basing on the belief that they provide recommendations directed towards these functions. To find out which attitude function should dominate in an endorsement, considering personal preferences is equally as important as product characteristics. This is in line with findings within celebrity endorsement literature, which identified that the same

endorser recommending a product may have various effects on consumers due to their different beliefs (Kang & Herr, 2006).

We found that respondents who admitted they search for proof regarding the effectiveness of products or knowledge about ingredients deemed expertise one of the main EI' attributes. This view resembles attitudes driven by the utilitarian function - which aims to maximize rewards and minimize punishments - or knowledge function - which provides understanding and consistency - respectively (Katz, 1960). In the decision-making process, attitude functions have a direct effect on whether the endorsement will be seen as relevant, thus, the more Instagrammers provide relevant information and demonstrate their expertise, the more such followers will be interested in following them, and consequently, in their recommendations. This insight supports the importance of advertisements which depict the relevant function for a follower (Shavitt, 1989; Schiffman, Hansen & Kanuk, 2008). Therefore, an Instagrammer's posts formulated around an irrelevant function may be ineffective. In this particular case, posts about emotional rather than factual aspects of products may not affect utilitarian consumers.

Interestingly, the utilitarian function of beauty products was found to be irrelevant for a different product category: *"she also talks about what is trending on Summer or Autumn and [...] she said girls, it doesn't matter that all the shops are selling these types of earrings, it's really getting out of the trend and you will see them in supermarkets and everywhere and they are going away. And then I was like oh yeah, then I'm not going to buy those"* (RF3, line 9). This supports the claim that attitude functions depend on the type of product (Shavitt, 1989). The follower's willingness to stay in touch with trends corresponds with predominant cultural descriptions of being stylish or cool, which indicate her attitude towards fashion items is served by a value-expressive function (Shavitt, 1989). Therefore, the relevance of recommendations may be affected by potential inconsistencies between attitude functions among an Instagrammer's followers. The validity of this claim is supported by Stafford, Stafford and Day (2002) who found that the three attributes of a celebrity spokesperson: attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness, perform effectively under both utilitarian and hedonic motivational conditions.

Interrelation of Attributes

Our study found evidence for the potential interrelatedness of source characteristics, i.e. Trustworthiness, Expertise and Attractiveness and the effect of it on an Instagrammer's persuasiveness. As an agency expert expressed: *"I think this is kind of like a three-legged stool, and all these three aspects that we kind of talked about kind of follow each other. If you remove one leg, the stool falls. So, all three legs are at the same level, I believe. So if the attractiveness increases, the other legs increase as well, and vice versa. So I think all three dimensions really go hand in hand"* (RE4, line 11). Similarly, a brand representative shared: *"If you're trustworthy, if you have expertise, if you're attractive (...) you have a good base of being successful with the brand you want to launch (...) But if you take one of these*

things out, you're less likely to succeed. Not just because it's one of them is taken out, it's also because they have an effect on each other. So because you have expertise, you're more trustworthy, but because you were attractive before, that makes you trustworthy. Because you're trustworthy, you're also more attractive" (RB3, line 11). Moreover, other respondents stressed the links between source attributes. The most common was the association of expertise and trust, which is expected since those two attributes are related and conceptualized as source credibility (Hovland & Weiss 1951; McGinnies & Ward, 1980). However, we have also seen trust associated with respect. These findings challenge the typical view of the model. Shimp (2003) poses that the TEARS attributes facilitate effective communication, thus, the persuasiveness of an endorser amounts to the sum of separate attributes (T+E+A). However, based on our findings, an endorser's score in each attribute should not be explored separately, but instead treated as a result of an interrelated mechanism (TxExA).

7.1.3 Communication Tactics

Our findings showed an array of factors affecting the perception of EI in comparison to regular Instagrammers, and their consequent persuasiveness. We consolidated techniques and tactics repeatedly deemed beneficial to the perception of the EI into three key areas (Figure 17). Our research suggests that these can help manage major changes in an Instagrammer's activity, such as transitioning from homogeneous sponsor endorsements to heterogeneous endorsements of both sponsor and own brands or introducing EI's audience to a new own brand.

The three areas suggest that, while it is undeniably important to research the effect of endorsers' specific actions on their persuasiveness, in the context of Instagram endorsements, it may be also valuable to focus on communication strategies that may actually help manage and strategically shape the effects of such actions.

Storytelling

Storytelling engages viewers in a story with a plot, characters and a setting, to convey a persuasive message. Ads using storytelling are deeply processed and remembered by consumers, particularly in social media settings (Shimp & Andrews, 2013). Immersing viewers into a narrative evokes a strong emotional response (Percy & Rosenbaum-Elliott, 2016). SMI use convincing narratives of "inspirational, relatable, instructive, cautionary" nature, attracting followers and building a pseudo-



Figure 17. Communication tactics. Source: authors' work based on the findings and Literature Review

personal relationship (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017, p. 196). Similarly, our findings show that immersing followers into the story of the brand's inception improves various aspects of EI persuasiveness. We found that EI sharing regular updates of the brand creation process creates an informational narrative, inviting followers to find out what is the product, as well as why and how the EI made it. This caused the audience to perceive EI as more expert, and thus, persuasive. Similarly, netnography revealed how EI can justify their lack of expertise with a compelling story (Figure 3). Moreover, respondents indicated that EI ask followers for feedback on specific decisions regarding the brand, making them feel involved in its creation. Indeed, in line with theoretical assumptions, respondents indicated that followers derive their opinions on perceived expertise rather than actual expertise (Shimp, 2003). This gives us even more ground to conclude that the level of perceived expertise may be enhanced using communication tactics such as storytelling.

Presenting a narrative was also found to enhance EI attractiveness. Our research uncovered that EI can appear more attractive by creating an inspirational narrative, allowing followers to follow their life as a brand owner, posting about glamorous parties and meeting celebrities. We also identified that storytelling can be used to increase attractiveness by showing EI' development as an entrepreneur, e.g. sharing their participation in conferences and business activities. Interestingly, we found that launching an own brand consistent with EI's interests and expertise may be used as a storytelling device, as it is seen as another step of the journey that the followers have been tuned to.

Authenticity

Researchers acknowledge the significance of authenticity to a SMI persuasiveness. The concept of authenticity refers to natural and believable communication. It is based on an underlying motivation which encompasses originality and separation from financial rewards (Banet-Weiser, 2012). The audience perceives authenticity through actions such as real liking and using of endorsed product and honest opinions about product characteristics (Weinswig, 2018). Moreover, EI sharing aspects of their private life makes them seem more transparent, and thus, authentic (Boerman, Willemsen & Van der Aa, 2017). Indeed, by allowing the audience to follow their private life, and interacting with them, SMI cultivate an authentic online persona (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017), suggesting a link between storytelling and authenticity. Authentic communication makes an endorsement more persuasive because messages from trusted individuals are more believable than from brand sources (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017).

Moreover, upholding authenticity makes EI closer to followers (Weinswig, 2018). We found that authentic communication can uphold similarity between an EI and their audience. Respondents shared that when EI is driven by similar values as them, such as being family oriented or entrepreneurial, they will be perceived as more authentic and closer to their followers. Thus, followers may be more likely to accept own brands which reflect the opinions and interests they value in an EI. Moreover, we found

that an EI's decreased similarity with their audience can be moderated by being transparent and showing the stages of their evolution over the years. On the contrary, if an EI's content becomes less authentic and more brand-like, i.e. scripted and generic, EI will appear less similar to their audience.

Authenticity was also deemed a key factor when assessing the motivation behind EI endorsements. Unlike our theoretical assumptions, we found that EI sponsored endorsements may also portray genuine liking and using of the product. In line with Weinswig (2018), respondents agreed that when EI focuses on honestly reviewing product characteristics, their affinity towards a sponsor brand is authentic. Netnography supported this notion, showing that when EI take a product-focused perspective in sponsored endorsements, their liking of a product is more authentic, as it does not clash with their ultimate preference for their own brand. Thus, our findings indicate that authentic communication can help produce a genuine, and thus more persuasive endorsement.

Entrepreneurial Engagement

Entrepreneurial engagement describes the nature of an endorser's affiliation with a given brand, including activities such as investing, ownership, product development, and operational responsibilities. It can be perceived through the type of remuneration an endorser receives, the position they hold, as well as their role in the brand's initiation and product development. Increasing entrepreneurial engagement with an endorsed brand results in the audience being more likely to infer that the endorser genuinely recommends a product (Hunter & Davidsson, 2007; Hunter, 2009).

In line with the aforementioned research, we found that entrepreneurial engagement with their own brand increases EI' perceived trustworthiness. As a result of EI communicating that they are entrepreneurially engaged in developing and managing their own brand, people associated them with competence, leadership skills, creativity, and innovativeness. These attributions are consistent with an increase in an endorser's level of professional experience, which leads to increased trustworthiness (Andrews & Shimp, 2018). Moreover, we found that when EI share their entrepreneurial engagement in the creation process, by posting themselves designing a product, being in the production facility, taking part in the manufacturing process, they seemingly have more expertise. Similarly, respondents stressed that EI personally taking part in managerial activities such as business meetings increased their perceived business competence. Thus, findings suggest that when EI strategically display their entrepreneurial engagement with their brand, their persuasiveness increases.

7.2 Effect on Sponsor brands

This section will elaborate on the findings of P7 and P9 concerning the effect of EI activity on sponsor brands.

7.2.1 Brand Knowledge

Our theoretical considerations assumed that EI's own brand will cause sponsor brands to be less associated with the EI, as well as less noticed and remembered, thus overshadowing the sponsor brand endorsement (Till, 1998). While we confirmed that associations between an EI and their own brand are stronger and deeper because the brand is more personal to the EI, we found that sponsored posts could also be more noticed. The reasons given were noticeable sponsored tags and a more aesthetically distinct, commercial look of the endorsements. These findings can be interpreted using the brand knowledge concept from Keller's (1993) model of customer based brand equity. Brand knowledge is the entirety of brand-related information in a consumer's memory, comprised of two components - brand awareness and brand image. Consumers' brand awareness describes their level of brand recognition, i.e. the ability to remember a prior exposure to a brand, as well brand recall, i.e. the ability to name a brand as an instance of a category (ibid.). We believe our finding of sponsored endorsements being more distinctive aligns with the pursuit of brand awareness. Indeed, brand representatives confirm this when addressing awareness, stating: *"for some people it would be oh, it's too commercial or it's too much product in your face, but that is actually what is working for the brands and we don't mind if it looks too commercial in a way* (RB1, line 8). Brand image, on the other hand, is the entirety of brand perceptions and associations of differing favorability, strength, and uniqueness, held about a brand in a consumer's memory (Keller, 1993). Thus, our findings suggest that personal connection, as well as frequent and consistent posting facilitate a stronger association between EI and own brand and, thus, contribute to the creation of brand image. It was found that a similar result can also be achieved for sponsor brands through long-term collaborations. Such partnerships involve similar practices, such as frequent brand presentation in the profile and formation of a personal connection with an EI, and, thus, are perceived as more genuine than single endorsements.

7.2.2 Match up & Meaning Transfer

Our findings confirm the multidimensional validity of match up theory between various endorsement parties. In line with multiple endorsement literature, the study revealed that match up between own and sponsor brand is, indeed, important for the consumers' perception of endorsements (Chen et al., 2013). We found that similarity between the sponsor and own brand contributes to the acceptance of the sponsor brand. Match up between brands was proven to depend on the shared product category, similar brand image and common attributes (Lanseng & Olsen, 2012) such as quality. Indeed, we confirmed that own brand is the category example against which sponsor brand is compared, and in turn, validating the categorization perspective (Chen et al., 2013) within multiple endorsements on social media.

Our findings suggest a close link connecting the perceived match up between: Entrepreneurial Instagrammer (EI) - Own brand match up, EI - Sponsor brand match up and Own Brand - Sponsor brand

match up. The results show that the perceived match up between own and sponsor brands depends on the match up between an EI and each endorsed brand. This finding supports the endorsement literature which claims that the match up between an endorser and a brand is crucial for the effectiveness of an endorsement (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Kamins & Gupta, 1994; Misra & Beatty, 1990; Tingchi Liu & Brock, 2011; Walker, Langmeyer & Langmeyer, 1992) and contributes further, stressing that it is also important for the effectiveness of multiple endorsements on Instagram.

This finding can be related to McCracken's (1986) meaning transfer model. The interrelation of match ups was found to help the transfer of meaning to occur, supporting similar findings within celebrity endorsement literature (Chen et al., 2013). We found that when EI endorse a sponsor brand which is perceived as similar to own brand, the qualities of own brand are expected to be more efficiently transferred to the sponsor brand. Same applies in the presence of match up between EI and the endorsed brand. Moreover, this research finds that meaning transfer is fostered even more when EI, besides having strong associations with own brand, are also perceived as entrepreneurially engaged with the endorsed brand. This was supported by brand representatives, who provided an example of planning to launch a natural and affordable cosmetics line in collaboration with an EI: *“When we were choosing Beata Nickolson [a Lithuanian food Instagrammer, 70k followers on Instagram] for our collaboration, we saw her association with her own brand and her products as a strength which will help us to communicate [...] Because she has already built her audience which like more natural and healthier products, she has a strong position which depicts an affordable quality* (RB4, line 27). Respondents support the finding within celebrity entrepreneurship stating that the more perceivably involved the celebrity endorser is, the more their associations are transferred to new ventures (Hunter, Burgers & Davidsson, 2009). They described the EI as highly engaged, and consequently: *“easier to develop a new product with”* (RB4, line 32).

7.2.3 Follower Expectations

We found evidence for the validity of disconfirmation theory in the context of Instagram endorsements. Disconfirmation theory states that the comparison of prior expectations with actual quality determines the level of satisfaction through the process of disconfirmation. It is a fundamental theory within consumers' expectation research, widely applied in various fields such as marketing (Oliver, 1980; Diehl & Poynor, 2010), psychology (Gotlieb, Grewal & Brown, 1994), or tourism (Fallon & Schofield, 2003). According to disconfirmation theory, negative and positive disconfirmation takes place when the quality falls behind or exceeds prior expectations respectively. Real quality perfectly matching prior expectations results in simple confirmation (Oliver, 1977). We observed a follower experiencing simple confirmation as a consequence of an EI creating the right expectations for the recommended product, which sustained the level of perceived trustworthiness. Thus, our findings indicate that followers also

determine their level of satisfaction by comparing prior expectations raised by EI with the real quality of the recommended brand.

This observation encourages us to invoke the Motivator-Hygiene theory which argues an existence of two sets of factors, so-called satisfiers and dissatisfiers, responsible for satisfaction and dissatisfaction respectively. It declares that certain factors or needs - hygiene factors - are expected, and must be met, in order to avoid dissatisfaction, while others - motivators - have to be met in order to feel satisfaction (Herzberg, 1987). Our findings show that pre-purchase expectations from the theory of disconfirmation act as a certain level of quality that the consumer needs the recommended product to provide. We found that when the quality followers experience is as expected, based on EI's recommendation, they avoid dissatisfaction and, thus, experience simple confirmation. Thus, simple confirmation of expectations functions as a hygiene factor. In turn, they maintain the same level of trustworthiness and keep following the Instagrammer: *"I mean if that product fit well [...] she would maintain the level of trustworthiness"* (RB3, line 3).

Due to the confrontation of their expectation with real quality, consumers gain an idea of what future experiences will be like (Oliver, 1977). Similarly, as a result of a simple confirmation, followers would consider the expectations raised by the same Instagrammer when considering future endorsements: *„Because I mean if that product fits well, then I would say ok, that shouldn't be so much of the difference for the other products, and next time I would consider the next one"* (RF3, line 3). Whereas, when followers experience negative disconfirmation, their hygiene factors are not met and they experience dissatisfaction, followed by a decrease in the perceived trustworthiness of an EI or even unfollowing: *"But if it was a failure, then it also be like, I wouldn't do this again. I could unfollow her or follow only for the nice pictures or to see the way she brands and advertises. It's nice for my eye but I wouldn't believe in the products she recommends"* (RF3, line 3).

The disconfirmation process was also found to be valid when evaluating the consistency in the content provided by EI. If people follow them because of make-up tutorials, in order to stay satisfied, they expect Instagrammers to produce the same content that people started to follow them for. Due to the alignment between the expectations and actual performance levels, this behavior can be related with simple confirmation, i.e. may be considered a hygiene factor. If EI change the direction of their content, followers are found to experience a negative disconfirmation, i.e. find it to be a dissatisfier. Consequently, the result of both simple confirmation and negative disconfirmation results in sustaining a stable relationship or stop following the Instagrammer respectively.

7.3 Influencer Marketing Silos

Our investigation of Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI) from the perspectives of brands, agency experts and followers found misalignments among their views. Even though the parties work within

influencer marketing in seemingly similar markets, their opinions about certain tactics and events differed. This occurrence can be compared to the concept of organizational silos, which are structural units whose mindsets about a brand or objectives are inconsistent, causing miscommunication and hindering marketing efforts (Gyrd-Jones, Helm & Munk, 2013).

7.3.1 Consumption Patterns

Brand representatives had disagreeing opinions about the consumption patterns of beauty brands and consequently the perception of endorsing beauty brands within the same product category. When discussing the match up between endorsed brands, a brand representative posed that consumers feel very little loyalty towards beauty brands, especially within make up, and consequently, do not use products from just one chosen brand. However, another brand representative contested this view, stating that consumers are loyal since optimal skincare results are achieved by using products from the same brand.

Our findings show that followers do not reject the idea of an EI endorsing products from different brands, even within the same category, provided that they have a factor which differentiates them. Examples include products with an alternative selection of ingredients or different functional value. Interestingly, both methods revealed the positive perception of endorsing products with complementary aspects, such as a purifying mask followed by a hydrating mask. Thus, even when the endorsed products belong to the same category, they may be differentiated enough for followers to accept them.

This suggests that the first brand representative opinion is more representative of true consumption patterns. Seeing as the contrasting answer was issued by a representative of a skincare brand, her answer may be biased due to her mindset being detached from reality and affected by the brand's intended consumption patterns. Since EI endorsements are usually product-focused, reviewing single products rather than the whole brand line, this misalignment within perspectives is especially relevant to consider within Instagram.

7.3.2 Endorsement Design

We encountered a clash between perspective perspectives regarding the type of preferred posts. While followers appreciated unscripted posts with natural pictures, brands strived to produce more editorial looking ones. This can be interpreted as managers having a hard time letting go of control over the brand's image. Indeed, as identified by Iglesias, Ind and Alfaro (2013) managers may prevent the organic creation of meaning from happening by wanting to preserve the intended image of the brand. Our findings show that managers rarely see EI as key stakeholders who co-create the brand meaning and thus, bring value to the brand (ibid.), treating them more as tools to achieve objectives instead: *"for me, she is just a medium, she is just a channel"* (RB1, line 8). Indeed, our findings show that brands

seem to strive to maintain the composed and consistent perception of their brands, whereas followers seem to be drawn to personality, authenticity, and humor.

We also observed that when Instagrammers release their own brand and become entrepreneurial, their communication becomes more brand-like. Specifically, the choice of words becomes more official and consistent, pictures are more professional looking, descriptions below the posts are well thought out, etc. This change is perceived differently by brands and followers. Followers do not appreciate such a shift in communication style, whereas brand representatives praise the higher quality of the content produced by EI. This was especially apparent among brand representatives having a longer partnership with EI. Interestingly, agency experts did not have a unified opinion on this issue.

8. Conclusion

This section closes our study of the persuasiveness of Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI) and the effect of their activity on sponsor brands. Firstly, a research summary is presented. We continue by specifying our academic contributions and propose managerial implications. Then, we detail the limitations of the study and finish with recommendations for future research.

8.1 Summary of Research

As influencer marketing begins to lose impact, Instagrammers diversify their activities, starting entrepreneurial ventures by launching their own brands or collaborations with other brands. They endorse own and sponsor brands on their personal Instagram profiles. With a growing number of such Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI), brands are in need of proven knowledge on their specific persuasive qualities and the effects of employing them on sponsor brands. Faced with a lack of proof, influencer marketing agents, such as agencies and brands, base their decisions on intuitive or circumstantial insights.

We attempted to clarify this issue by exploring EI' persuasiveness and effect on sponsor brands. We used Heider's balance theory to map out relationships between the following components: EI, followers, own brand and sponsor brand. We focused on the exploration of the Followers - EI dyad, which describes the persuasiveness of an EI, as well as the EI - Sponsor brand and Own Brand - Sponsor brand dyads, which delineate the effect of EI' activity on sponsor brands.

The persuasiveness of EI was explored using TEARS attributes, i.e. trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, respect, and similarity. We confirmed that EI' entrepreneurial engagement with their own brand results in people associating them with various positive entrepreneurial traits. Consequently, the perception of an EI's TEARS attributes is generally more positive than a regular Instagrammer's. Our findings confirm that although EI are less similar to their audience, they gain a highly persuasive

aspirational factor. Thus, as a result of becoming entrepreneurial, EI gain properties which allow them to influence followers in a manner similar to both expert and celebrity endorsers. We bring attention to a new perspective on the TEARS attributes, highlighting their potential interrelation and dependence on the reason for following. Additionally, we used an attribute sourced from celebrity entrepreneurship literature, emotional involvement, which describes the genuine liking and using of endorsed products to further analyze the persuasiveness of EI. While we confirmed that because of EI' entrepreneurial engagement with their own brand respondents believe that EI like and use their own brand to a larger extent, we found that this effect did not pass onto sponsor brands, showing a lack of evidence for emotional involvement being a separate endorser attribute.

We considered multiple concepts to analyze the effect of EI' on sponsor brands. Firstly, we investigated the perceived motivation of sponsor brand endorsements in relation to own brand endorsements. Disconfirming our proposition, we found that of sponsored endorsements can be designed to portray a genuine motivation using the same factors that made respondents perceive own brand endorsements as genuine, namely long-term collaborations, honest reviews of product characteristics and narrative creation. Overall, we identified three main areas of communication strategies - storytelling, authenticity, and engagement, which aid to achieve acceptance of major transitions, such as an Instagrammer becoming an EI. We analyzed the effect the presence of own brand in EI profile has on sponsor brands, using the concept of overshadowing, i.e. a dominating stimuli preventing the intended association from occurring (Till, 1998). We found that the personal connection between an EI and their own brand, frequent and consistent own brand endorsements, as well as EI' image being featured in own brand' Instagram profile may cause own brand to overshadow endorsements of sponsor brands. However, sponsor endorsements were found to often generate more awareness due to their distinctive, commercial feel. Lastly, we investigated the significance of match up between own brand and sponsor brands. We confirmed that match up is important, concluding that brand-to-brand match up is moderated by EI-to-brand match up. We also identified the necessity of having a differentiating factor between endorsed brands, in the form of alternative ingredients or functionality. Satisfying this condition results in followers accepting EI endorsements of sponsor brands which belong to the same industry or category as their own brand.

In conclusion, the proposed model of four component interrelations between an EI, their own brand, sponsor brand, and followers provides a deeper understanding of the persuasiveness of EI as well as the effect of their activity on endorsed sponsor brand. An EI is deemed an evolved Instagrammer who possessed qualities of a consumer, expert and celebrity endorser. EI' entrepreneurial activity is found to affect sponsor brands through potential overshadowing as well as the necessity to select sponsor brands fitted to the EI's own brand. Negative perceptions of such effects may be mitigated using uncovered communication tactics.

8.2 Academic Contributions

This study adds to the body of literature by merging existing research strains of celebrity entrepreneurship, celebrity endorsement, and social media influencers (SMI) to investigate this new phenomenon of an entrepreneurial Instagram endorse. In order to answer the research question, we selected theories and concepts from relevant literature strains and applied them to the case of an Entrepreneurial Instagrammer (EI). This process resulted in several theoretical contributions.

Firstly, this study contributes to the literature on multiple endorsements by the same endorser, examining them in the social media context. It provides a new perspective, considering heterogeneous entrepreneurial and sponsor endorsements performed simultaneously on Instagram.

Secondly, this research expands the existing body of knowledge about endorsers by analyzing the persuasion of a new type of social media influencer, the EI, basing on the widely applicable TEARS attributes of endorser effectiveness. It follows existing findings on the influence of SMI, and contributes by analyzing the evolution of Instagrammers into entrepreneurs. Moreover, it provides a frame of reference between Instagrammer types by comparing EI with regular Instagrammers.

The study also provides two new perspectives on TEARS attributes. Firstly, we find that in the setting of Instagram, the TEARS attributes may have a varying importance depending on the reason why people follow an Instagrammer. Secondly, we bring attention to the view of Trustworthiness, Expertise and Attractiveness as an interrelated mechanism resulting in persuasiveness (TxExA), rather than separate attributes amounting to persuasiveness (T+E+A).

Moreover, this study contributes to celebrity entrepreneurship literature. It investigates the claim of emotional involvement being a separate endorser attribute and finds no evidence for its validity in the setting of multiple Instagram endorsements. Moreover, it adds to the understanding of entrepreneurial engagement positively affecting perceived emotional involvement.

Furthermore, our findings on the match up factor contribute to the endorsement literature. Not only do we confirm the validity of match up between endorsed brands, but also observe the interrelation of match ups between EI, endorsed brands and followers. We pose that this relationship benefits meaning transfer (McCracken, 1986; 1989), and thus, the effectiveness of an endorsement.

Ultimately, this study is beneficial to brand management literature. It provides a deeper understanding of the effect of using a new endorser type - the EI - on brands. It also adds to the known influencer marketing strategies, by delineating communication tactics which result in consumers positively perceiving an endorsement. Moreover, the study contributes to consumer expectations management by confirming the validity of disconfirmation theory (Oliver, 1977) in the context of Instagram endorsements.

8.3 Managerial Implications

Our findings can be beneficial to brand managers, agency experts, and Entrepreneurial Instagrammers (EI) in multiple ways. Firstly, our analysis of EI and the factors of their persuasiveness suggest that as Instagrammers evolve, their perception changes. Brands engaging in long term partnerships with Instagrammers may become biased towards their effectiveness, and overlook such changes in perception. This is evident in the identified silos in mindsets among followers, agencies and brands. Thus, we suggest that brands constantly monitor followers' feedback on Instagrammer campaigns.

Findings revealed that followers do not value Instagrammers' attributes to the same extent because they are driven by their reason for following. It shows that the audience is diverse, e.g. some might expect an Instagrammer highly similar to them, while others might be drawn to more aspirational factors.

Thus, we recommend that managers focus on the target group's preferences when deciding which Instagrammers to employ for the endorsement of a particular brand. For instance, if trustworthiness is relevant to the target audience, pick an Instagrammer who has a reputation for being trustworthy. Whereas if attractive and aspiring qualities are of the biggest importance for the target group, then such Instagrammers should be considered. A brand may choose to select an Instagrammer basing on the majority of the audience. Alternatively, they can employ several Instagrammers who excel in different attributes that audience is drawn to.

In line with those findings, we stress that Instagrammers also need to be aware of the risks of drastically changing their behavior, content or stance on particular issues, as it might change their perception or inspire negative reactions from followers. According to respondents, if an Instagrammer is followed mostly for relatable content and suddenly switches to more brand-like communication, or if a beauty Instagrammer is followed for inspiring make-up tutorials and transforms into a „mommy blog“, followers may react negatively or even unfollow. This thesis advises that, in order to effectively manage such transitions, Instagrammers can use the communication tactics of storytelling, upholding authenticity and projecting entrepreneurial engagement, which can help mitigate those negative consequences.

Our study revealed several insights useful for brands seeking to enter sponsorships with EI. Firstly, we propose that brands do not need to avoid using EI who own brands within the same product category. Provided that there is a differentiating factor between the endorsed brands, followers can accept the sponsorship. However, this factor needs to be clear in EI' communication so that followers would be aware of the possible use of both brands.

Moreover, multiple respondents expressed how they find longer partnerships between brands and Instagrammers more believable. By engaging with an Instagrammer long-term, a brand appears within their profile repeatedly, which, as we found, establishes a deeper connection with them and makes the

endorsement seem more genuine. Moreover, our findings suggest that portraying frequent usage of a brand increases the perception of an EI's emotional involvement, i.e. genuine liking and using a brand. Thus, a longer collaboration with a brand may increase the EI's perceived emotional involvement, and thus, make them more persuasive. Extended partnerships can benefit both brands and EI. However, as aforementioned, brands are weary to enter a long-term partnership with regular Instagrammers, as a lack of a clarified profession makes their further actions seem unpredictable. As we found, Entrepreneurial Instagrammers' activity was deemed more serious and they were associated with various positive entrepreneurial qualities, such as professionalism and discipline. Thus, we propose that in order to engage in more reliable long-term partnerships with Instagrammers, managers should consider choosing EI who have already launched their own products, or try facilitating a higher level of Instagrammers' entrepreneurial engagement with endorsed brands, e.g. by involving them in the brand creation process.

Furthermore, our findings provide insights into how endorsement posts should be designed depending on brand objectives. We found that professionally made, commercial looking "magazine" posts stand out to followers. Additionally, respondents admitted their attention is drawn to posts featuring a sponsored tag. Thus, designing endorsement posts in an editorial and transparent way may be beneficial to pursue brand awareness. However, when the goal is brand attitude formation or change, creating a magazine look may not be suitable, as other respondents deemed it less trustworthy and more reminiscent of external communication.

Our results provide insights useful for brands engaging in sponsorships with EI who have a brand within the same product category. Due to the deep association between an EI and their own brand, and the short attention span on Instagram, followers may fail to recognize the sponsored endorsement as different and, in turn, overlook the sponsor brand. This is less likely to occur if a sponsor brand has high awareness and recognition. Thus, we propose that if a brand is not yet well known it might be more suitable not to choose an EI whose brand belongs to the same product category. Alternatively, a brand may choose to stress the differentiating factor between brands, which may help followers process and accept separate endorsements within the same product category.

Also, we found that, in some cases, brands may benefit from launching product collaborations with EI. Firstly, EI have increased business expertise due to their entrepreneurial venture, which might ease the technical part of the product launch process. Moreover, EI whose own brands are associated with qualities that sponsor brand also desires to be associated with, such as affordable quality, may be more efficient in creating such associations. However, we also found that similarly to a celebrity CEO, EI personally gain positive inferences based on the success and quality of their brand. Literature suggests that because celebrity CEOs are the face of the organization, negative results will also be personally attributed to their decisions, and affect their perception accordingly (Sinha, Inkson & Barker, 2012).

The similarities between celebrity CEOs and EI, as well as findings, suggest that EI may be facing the same threat. This may be especially significant for brands which launch collaborations with EI who are already tied to another brand, as the other brand's negative performance may have an effect on the legitimacy of EI in regards to the collaboration as well.

As an Instagrammer transitions into an EI, they tend to post significantly more own brand than sponsor brand recommendations. Our research showed that followers prefer the content to be mixed, as they value EI' recommendations of sponsor brands, and thus, may find the number of own brand posts excessive. Followers shared that this makes the EI' profiles become brand-like, decreasing the perceived similarity between the EI and their audience. Therefore, this thesis advice keeping a balance between own brand and sponsor brand communication within EI' personal profiles. Moreover, based on our findings, we propose that this issue may be addressed by the EI creating a separate Instagram channel for their own brand, and placing the majority of their own brand posts there ~~instead~~. Brand representatives and agency experts agreed on the benefits of this strategic choice. A follower admitted that this solution satisfies both her need for the Instagrammer's personal content and own brand recommendations.

8.4 Limitations & Future Research

This research is constrained by certain limitations, and thus, could be expanded upon using different considerations.

Firstly, this thesis analyzes the Entrepreneurial Instagrammers' (EI) activity solely on Instagram. While Instagram is most relevant for influencer marketing, Instagrammers' online activity is omnichannel. Practically, followers are not only influenced by EI's Instagram activity, but also by the content produced on other social media platforms. Thus, an exploration of EI including their other social media profiles may produce a more encompassing view of their influence.

Moreover, as mentioned in the Delimitations section, we focused only on Instagrammers who became famous mainly as a result of their Instagram activity and excluded traditional celebrities. However, we observed that in the context of Instagram, respondents often equated these types of endorsers. Since our role as interpretivists is to understand and interpret respondents' realities, not question or disprove them, we did not dictate and followed the respondents' thought process. This, in turn, means the findings may include reflections on both types of Instagrammers. We propose that similar future research does not delimitate the exploration of SMI based on the origin of their social media popularity.

This thesis also held constant the factor of the number of followers, choosing to explore EI provided by respondents to ensure the validity of their answers. However, Instagrammers have varying amounts of

followers and are often categorized into size categories such as micro, macro and mega (Detert, 2017). Future research on EI can benefit from analyzing Instagrammers with varying following sizes.

Our aim was to analyze the perception of EI's persuasiveness and their effect on sponsor brands, thus, a qualitative study which allows one to explore subjective meanings was deemed most appropriate. The explored relationships could also have been identified using a quantitative survey, and then explored using qualitative data. Considering how EI is a novel and unexplored phenomenon, testing the validity and strength of the relationships first, before moving to the exploration of meaning would also have been a reasonable research path. As a result of choosing qualitative research, our findings should not be generalized to larger populations (Lewis, Saunders & Thornhill, 2016). However, they still provide valuable information about the meanings attributed to EI.

Due to time and access constraints, this thesis only interviewed EI' followers from the largest Instagram age cohort, Millennials. However, increasingly larger communities gather around Instagrammers beyond this age group, from young adults to seniors (Graafland, 2018). Thus, this thesis could gain a more holistic view of EI by interviewing followers from a wider range of age groups.

Although we explored the perspectives of agency experts and brand representatives, at times they were answering from their personal point of view, rather than from a professional one. These answers differ, as they present what the respondents think as a follower versus what they think as a practitioner. Therefore, there is a risk that some answers represent a different perspective than intended. Indeed, as argued by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) ambiguity within answers is often a true representation of contradicting beliefs existing within the interviewee's perception. Additionally, to gain an even more in-depth understanding of the topic, this study could be enriched with insights from EI themselves. Besides agency experts, brand representatives and followers, it would be relevant to identify how EI view and manage the process of evolving from a regular Instagrammer, and to what extent do uncovered factors and techniques align with their opinions.

Due to time and resource constraints, for Propositions 1 to 6, netnographic findings were explored only using EI's personal and brand profiles, without comparing them to regular Instagrammers. Since netnography was not used to independently answer these propositions, this choice could have potentially affected our findings. Further exploration of this topic can benefit from using netnography to compare EI to regular Instagrammers.

Lastly, to fully explore the issue of EI and their brands, this study could be repeated taking into consideration personal differences between respondents. Our findings showed several cases where differences in perception highly influenced the answers. Namely, we observed differences in the respondents' attitude functions towards beauty products, revealing vastly divergent meaning attributed to the persuasiveness of EI.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Editing Tools on Instagram

STICKERS	
Location, Temperature, Time	Customized stickers which add contextual information such as current time, weather or geotag location.
GIF	Animated stickers which are found in the extensive library through the Search bar.
@Mention	A function which allows to tag other users by adding their Instagram names which by tapping take to their Instagram profiles.
Insert selfie	An instant customised selfie which can be moved within a story.
#HASHTAG	Hashtags can be recognized by the prefix # and describe content with trackable themes which allows for easy navigation among the mass of generated content. Hashtags can be clicked on to discover all content posted with the same hashtag or followed, which allows to keep users constantly updated concerning a specific topic.
Poll	An interactive poll sticker which allows to ask a question and see answers from one's following.
Emoji Slider	An interactive emoji put next to one's question to add a layer of emotional context and find out the following's opinion.
Emoji	Graphic symbols and smiley faces.
DRAW & TEXT	FILTERS
Styles, fonts, eraser, colours	Oslo, Lagos, Melbourne, Jakarta, Abu Dhabi, Buenos Aires, New York, Jaipur, Cairo, Tokyo, Rio De Janeiro

Source: Instagram Info Center (2017), Instagram Info Center (2018)

Appendix 2 Respondent Information

2.1 Followers

Code name	Duration	Age	Nationality	Occupation
RF1	01:11	25	Swedish	Fashion brand employee
RF2	01:39	25	Bulgarian	Employee at an electronics company
RF3	01:56	25	Lithuanian	Bank employee
RF4	01:38	26	Swedish	Skin care brand employee
RF5	01:36	24	Austrian	Employee at a health, hygiene & home products company

Source: shared by respondents

2.2 Agency Experts

Code name	Name	Duration	Nationality	Occupation
RE1	Laura Aleksandravičienė	01:03	Lithuanian	Influencer marketing strategist, founder & CEO at Influenceriai.lt – influencer marketing agency
RE2	Milan Van Vugt	01:18	Dutch	Influencer Marketeer, worked in IMA Influencer Agency and now works in OneFit – the largest health- and fitness network in the Netherlands
RE3	Katarzyna Bielińska	01:42	Polish	Senior Social Media Specialist at Havas Media Group, the biggest media house in Poland
RE4	Kristoffer Holtermann	01:33	Danish	Account Manager at Social Works Copenhagen – influencer marketing agency which specialises on Instagram

Source: LinkedIn (2018)

2.3 Brand Representatives

Code name	Name	Duration	Nationality	Occupation
RB1	Eda Delibal	01:36	Danish	Nordic Digital Manager at L'Oréal Consumer Product Division <i>Note: Her insights represent her private observations, and not L'Oréal's strategy</i>
RB2	Kristina Mačiuitienė	01:30	Lithuanian	Brand Manager for SENSAI – a prestigious anti-ageing skin care brand
RB3	Unnamed	01:43	Danish	Brand Manager for personal care brands (Dove, Neutral, Axe, Rexona) at Unilever <i>Note: This respondent wished to remain anonymous</i>
RB4	Ieva Čėpononė	01:32	Lithuanian	Head of Marketing at BIOK Laboratorija – a producer of natural and organic oral care and skin care brands

Source: LinkedIn (2018); SENSAI Cosmetics (2018); BIOK Laboratorija (2018)

Appendix 3

Interview Guides

3.1 Followers

Preparation text (*3 days before the interview*):

“An Instagrammer is an influencer who became famous mainly for their activity on Instagram (i.e. celebrities who mainly got famous for their activity outside Instagram are excluded). We are exploring beauty Instagrammers who have their own brand, or launch own products in collaboration with existing brands.

Please think about 2-3 beauty Instagrammers who besides promoting their own brand, also promote other brands (which are called sponsor brands). Please make sure you are familiar with the content such Instagrammers share on Instagram, especially with posts where they promote their own brands and posts where they promote sponsor brands. Please take screenshots of the specific posts you familiarize yourself with.”

Guidelines (*right before the interview*):

1. Respondents are informed that they are welcome to give answers the way they prefer, ask for a better explanation of questions and elaborate at any point of an interview
2. Respondents are asked for permission to be recorded
3. Respondents are familiarized with an *Introductory text*:

“An Instagrammer is an influencer who became famous for their activity on Instagram. We are exploring beauty Instagrammers who have their own brand, or launch own products in collaboration with existing brands. We look at the persuasiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brand in comparison with regular Instagrammers. We would first like you to compare Instagrammers who have their own brand or launch own products in collaboration with existing brands with regular Instagrammers (who do not have their own brand). When answering questions, you can look at your Instagram and reflect on specific posts. Please take screenshots of the posts you choose to discuss.”

1. Trustworthiness

In the following section, we are going to discuss an Instagrammer's trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is the extent to which Instagrammers are honest and believable in their claims. Please focus on trustworthiness when answering the following questions.

1. When Instagrammers are more trustworthy (meaning more honest, believable), are their recommendations more relevant? (*so would you be more interested in recommended products?*)
2. Why?

Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.

3. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more trustworthy, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand make them seem like they have more trustworthiness?
4. Why?
5. Do you think:
 - a. that increased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more interesting? (*so would you be more interested in recommended products?*)

(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as more trustworthy)

- b. that decreased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations less relevant? (so would you be less interested in recommended products?)
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as less trustworthy)
- 6. Why?
- 7. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes the recommendations seem:
 - a. more believable?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as more trustworthy)
 - b. less believable?
(a question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as less trustworthy)
- 8. Why?
- 9. Can you give us an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram where you noticed that?

2. Expertise

In the following section, we are going to discuss an Instagrammer's expertise. Expertise is the extent to which Instagrammers have knowledge, experience, skills or competence about the products they recommend. Please focus on expertise when answering the following questions.

- 10. When Instagrammers have more expertise (about the products or industry), are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)
- 11. Why?
Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.
- 12. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands have more expertise, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more expertise?
- 13. Why?
- 14. Do you think:
 - a. that increased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as having more expertise)
 - b. that decreased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations less relevant? (so would you be less interested in recommended products?)
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as having less expertise)
- 15. Why?
- 16. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that shows:
 - a. more expertise?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as having more expertise)
 - b. less expertise?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as having less expertise)
- 17. Can you give us an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram where you noticed that?

3. Attractiveness

In the following section, we are going to discuss an Instagrammer's attractiveness. Attractiveness means not only their looks, but also desirable aspects of their life and personality. Please focus on attractiveness when answering the following questions.

18. When Instagrammers are more attractive, are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)

19. Why?

Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.

20. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more attractive, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are more attractive?

21. Why?

22. Do you think:

a. that increased attractiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)

(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as more attractive)

b. that decreased attractiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations less relevant? (so would you be less interested in recommended products?)

(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as less attractive)

23. Why?

24. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem:

a. more attractive?

(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as more attractive)

b. less attractive?

(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as less attractive)

25. Can you give us an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram which made you feel this way?

4. Respect

In the following section, we are going to discuss an Instagrammer's respect. Respect is the extent to which Instagrammers are admired or esteemed due to personal accomplishments, achievements, opinions on various issues and values. Please focus on respect when answering the following questions.

26. When Instagrammers are more respected, are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)

27. Why?

Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.

28. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more respected, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more respect?

29. Why?

30. Do you think:

a. that increased respect of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)

(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as more respected)

- b. that decreased respect of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations less relevant? *(so would you be less interested in recommended products?)*
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as less respected)
- 31. Why?
- 32. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their post or on Instagram in general that makes them seem:
 - a. more respected
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as more respected)
 - b. less respected
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as less respected)
- 33. Can you give us an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram which made you feel this way?

5. Similarity to Followers

In the following section, we are going to discuss an Instagrammer's similarity to their followers. Similarity with their followers is the extent to which they have common characteristics, are relatable and seem to be a "regular person". Please focus on similarity with their followers when answering the following questions.

- 34. When Instagrammers are more similar to followers like you, are their recommendations more relevant? *(so would you be more interested in recommended products?)*
- 35. Why?
Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.
- 36. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more or less similar to followers, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are more similar to followers?
- 37. Why?
- 38. Do you think:
 - a. that increased similarity of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? *(so would you be more interested in recommended products?)*
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as more similar to followers)
 - b. that decreased similarity of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations less relevant? *(so would you be less interested in recommended products?)*
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as less similar to followers)
- 39. Why?
- 40. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem:
 - a. more similar to followers like you?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as more similar to followers)
 - b. less similar to followers like you?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as less similar to followers)
- 41. Can you give us an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram which made you feel this way?

6. Emotional Involvement

In the following section, we are going to discuss Instagrammer's liking and using the products they recommend. Please focus on liking and using the recommended brands when answering the following questions.

42. When Instagrammers seem to like and use recommended products more, are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)
43. Why?

Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.

44. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands seem like they use and like the products they recommend more, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they like and use recommended products more?
45. Why?
46. Do you think that difference makes their recommendations:
 - a. more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as more emotionally involved)
 - b. less relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as less emotionally involved)
47. Why?
48. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts on Instagram in general which shows that they:
 - a. more honestly like and use the products they recommend?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as more emotionally involved)
 - b. less honestly like and use the products they recommend?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as less emotionally involved)
49. Can you give us an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram which made you feel this way?

7. Motivation

In the following section, we are going to discuss the motivation behind endorsement. Motivation could be perceived as Instagrammers endorse own products mainly because they:

- *genuinely like and use them, or*
- *they are motivated by financial or other compensation*

Consider a situation where Instagrammers who have their own brands also promote other brands which they do not own. As we already mentioned, we call them sponsor brands.

50. What do you think is the Instagrammer's motivation when they promote their own brands?
51. Why?
52. What do you think is the Instagrammer's motivation when they promote sponsor brands?
53. Why?
54. Do you believe Instagrammers like and use their own brand more, or sponsor brands more?
Or do they like and use both their own and sponsor brands equally?
55. Why?
56. How does that affect your opinion about the recommendations?

57. Is there anything they say or show in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes you feel this way?
58. Can you give us an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram which made you feel this way?

8. Overshadowing

Please focus on the posts where Instagrammers promote their own brand and posts where they promote sponsor brands.

59. When you think of Instagrammers who have their own brand, do you think recommendations of own brand stand out more than recommendations of sponsor brands?
60. Why?
61. Which type of brands do you remember more clearly?
62. Why?
63. When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, which brand do you associate with the Instagrammer more?
(By associated with an Instagrammer we mean more related, connected in memory)
64. Why?
65. What do you think are the specific aspects of posts or on Instagram in general that make you remember:
 - a. own brand more?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent is more interested in the Instagrammer's posts about their own brand)
 - b. sponsor brand more?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent is more interested in sponsored posts)
66. Why?

9. Match up

In the following section, we are going to discuss the importance of similarity between endorsed brands. By similarity we mean the endorsed brands sharing a similar idea, vibe, concept, brand personality. Please focus on similarity between brands when answering the next questions.

67. When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, do you think there needs to be a common theme between them (brands)?
68. Why?
69. Do you prefer if Instagrammers who have their own brand recommend brands that are similar to each other, or that differ from each other?
70. Why?
71. How does the similarity between brands affect your opinion about the recommendation of sponsor brand?
72. Why?

3.2 Agency Experts

Preparation (3 days before the interview)

“An Instagrammer is an influencer who became famous mainly for their activity on Instagram (i.e. celebrities who mainly got famous for their activity outside Instagram are excluded). We are exploring beauty Instagrammers who have their own brand, or launch own products in collaboration with existing brands.

Please think about 2-3 beauty Instagrammers who have their own brand that you and your colleagues have worked with or you have observed on Instagram. You are also welcome to recall Instagrammers who have their own brand from other industries, as long as the observed insights are applicable to the beauty industry. Consider those Instagrammers who promote not only own brands but also other brands, i.e. sponsor brands.

Guidelines (right before the interview):

1. Respondents are informed that they are welcome to give answers the way they prefer, ask for a better explanation of questions and elaborate at any point of an interview
2. Respondents are asked for permission to be recorded
3. Respondents are familiarized with an *Introductory text*:

“An Instagrammer is an influencer who became famous for their activity on Instagram. We are exploring beauty Instagrammers who have their own brand, or launch own products in collaboration with existing brands. We look at the persuasiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brand in comparison with regular Instagrammer. While answering, you can visualise your thoughts by showing specific Instagram posts. You are welcome to reflect on Instagrammers outside beauty industry too. In this case, please try to comment on how much your insights are applicable to beauty industry.”

1. Trustworthiness

In the following section, we are going to discuss an Instagrammer's trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is the extent to which Instagrammers are honest and believable in their claims. Please focus on trustworthiness when answering the following questions.

1. When Instagrammers are more trustworthy/ honest/ believable, are their recommendations more relevant? (*so, would that make people more interested in the products?*)
2. Why?

Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.

3. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who their own brands are more trustworthy, compared to regular Instagrammers? (*does the fact that they have their own brand change their trustworthiness?*)
4. Why?
5. Do you think:
 1. that increased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (*so, would that make people more interested in the products?*)
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as more trustworthy*)
 2. that decreased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations less relevant? (*so, would that make people less interested in*

- the products?)*
*(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** trustworthy)*
6. Why?
 7. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers have their who own brands do in their posts that makes their recommendations seem:
 1. more believable?
*(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** trustworthy)*
 2. less believable?
*(a question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** trustworthy)*
 8. Why?
 9. Can you recall an example of a post where you noticed that?

2. Expertise

In the following section, we are going to discuss an Instagrammer's expertise. Expertise is the extent to which Instagrammers have knowledge, experience, skills or competence about the products they recommend. Please focus on expertise when answering the following questions.

10. When Instagrammers have more expertise (about products or industry), are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)
11. Why?

Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.

12. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands have more expertise, compared to regular Instagrammers? *(Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them see like they have more expertise?)*
13. Why?
14. Do you think:
 1. that increased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? *(so, would that make people more interested in the products?)*
*(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as having **more** expertise)*
 2. that decreased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations less relevant? *(so, would that make people less interested in the products?)*
*(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as having **less** expertise)*
15. Why?
16. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts that shows:
 1. more expertise?
*(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as having **more** expertise)*
 2. less expertise?
*(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as having **less** expertise)*
17. Can you recall an example of a post where you noticed that?

3. Attractiveness

In the following section, we are going to discuss an Instagrammer's attractiveness. Attractiveness means not only their looks, but also desirable aspects of their life and personality. Please focus on attractiveness when answering the following questions.

18. When Instagrammers are more attractive, are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)
19. Why?

Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.

20. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more attractive, compared to regular Instagrammers? (Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem more attractive?)
21. Why?
22. Do you think:
 1. that increased attractiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** attractive)
 2. that decreased attractiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations less relevant? (so, would that make people less interested in the products?)
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** attractive)
23. Why?
24. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts that makes them seem:
 1. more attractive?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** attractive)
 2. less attractive?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** attractive)
25. Can you recall an example of a post where you noticed that?

4. Respect

In the following section, we are going to discuss an Instagrammer's respect. Respect is the extent to which Instagrammers are being admired or esteemed due to personal accomplishments, achievements, opinions on various issues and values. Please focus on respect when answering the following questions.

26. When Instagrammers are more respected (admired), are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make you more interested in the products?)
27. Why?

Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.

28. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more respected, compared to regular Instagrammers? (Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem more respected?)
29. Why?
30. Do you think:
 1. that increased respect of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** respected)

2. that decreased respect of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations less relevant? (*so, would that make people less interested in the products?*)
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** respected*)
31. Why?
32. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts that makes them seem:
 1. more respected?
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as **more** respected*)
 2. less respected?
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives EI as **less** respected*)
33. Can you recall an example of a post where you noticed that?

5. Similarity to Followers

In the following section, we are going to discuss an Instagrammer's similarity to their followers. Similarity with their followers is the extent to which they have common characteristics, are relatable and seem to be a "regular person". Please focus on similarity with their followers when answering the following questions.

34. When Instagrammers are more similar to followers (peers), are their recommendations more relevant? (*so, would that make people more interested in the products?*)
35. Why?

Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.

36. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more or less similar to followers, compared to regular Instagrammers? (*Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem more / less similar to followers?*)
37. Why?
38. Do you think:
 1. that increased similarity of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (*so, would that make people more interested in the products?*)
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** similar to followers*)
 2. that decreased similarity of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations less relevant? (*so, would that make people less interested in the products?*)
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** similar to followers*)
39. Why?
40. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts that makes them seem:
 1. more similar to followers?
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** similar to followers*)
 2. less similar to followers?
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** similar to followers*)
41. Can you recall an example of a post where you noticed that?

6. Emotional Involvement

In the following section, we are going to discuss Instagrammer's liking and using the products they recommend. Please focus on liking and using the recommended brands when answering the following questions.

42. When you believe that Instagrammers like and use recommended products more, are their recommendations more relevant? *(so, would that make people more interested in the products?)*
43. Why?

Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.

44. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands seem like they use and like the products they recommend more, compared to regular Instagrammers? *(Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they like and use the recommended product more?)*
45. Why?
46. Do you think that difference makes their recommendations:
 1. more relevant? *(so, would that make people more interested in the products?)*
*(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** emotionally involved)*
 2. less relevant? *(so, would that make people less interested in the products?)*
*(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** emotionally involved)*
47. Why?
48. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts which shows that they:
 1. more honestly like and use the recommended products?
*(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** emotionally involved)*
 2. less honestly like and use the recommended products?
*(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** emotionally involved)*
49. Can you recall an example of a post which made you feel this way?

7. Motivation

In the following section, we are going to discuss the motivation behind endorsement. Motivation could be perceived as Instagrammers endorse own products because:

- *they genuinely like and use them, or that*
- *they are motivated by financial or other compensation*

Consider a situation where Instagrammers who have their own brands also promote other brands which they do not own. As we already mentioned, we call them sponsor brands.

50. What motivation Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing their own brand?
51. Why?
52. What motivation Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing sponsor brands?
53. Why?
54. Do you believe the Instagrammer likes and uses both their own and sponsor brands equally?
55. Does the presence of own brand in the profile make sponsored endorsements seem mainly financially motivated?
56. Why?

57. Does that negatively affect the effectiveness of sponsor endorsements?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent believes that the presence of own brand in the profile make sponsored endorsements seem mainly financially motivated)
58. Is there anything they say or show in their posts that creates that feeling?
59. Can you recall an example of a post which made you feel this way?

8. Overshadowing

Please focus on the posts where Instagrammers promote their own brand and posts where they promote sponsor brands.

60. When you think of Instagrammers who have their own brands, do you think endorsements of own brand stand out more than endorsements of sponsor brands?
61. Why?
62. Do you think endorsements of sponsor brand are as much associated with such Instagrammers as endorsements of own brand are?
(By associated with an Instagrammer we mean more related, connected in memory)
63. Why?
64. Have you ever experienced endorsements of Instagrammers' own brand being more associated with an Instagrammer than sponsored endorsements? Can you tell us about that?
65. What do you think are the specific aspects of posts including:
 1. own brand that make them more preferred?
 2. sponsor brand that make them more preferred?
66. Why?

9. Match up

In the following section, we are going to discuss the importance of similarity between endorsed brands. By similarity we mean the endorsed brands sharing a similar idea, vibe, concept, brand personality. Please focus on similarity between brands when answering the next questions.

67. When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, do you think there needs to be a common theme between them (brands)?
68. Why?
69. How important is it to endorse own and sponsor brands similar to each other?
70. Why?
71. How does the similarity between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of sponsor brand?
72. How does the difference between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of sponsor brand?

3.3 Brand Representatives

Preparation text (3 days before the interview):

“An Instagrammer is an influencer who became famous mainly for their activity on Instagram (i.e. celebrities who mainly got famous for their activity outside Instagram are excluded). We are exploring beauty Instagrammers who have their own brand, or launch own products in collaboration with existing brands.

Please think about 2-3 beauty Instagrammers who have their own brand that that your brand has worked with or you have observed a similar brand to yours working with. You are also welcome to recall Instagrammers who have their own brand from other industries, as long as the observed insights are applicable to the beauty industry. Consider those Instagrammers who promote not only own brands but also other brands, i.e. sponsor brands.”

Guidelines (right before the interview):

1. respondents are informed that they are welcome to give answers the way they prefer, ask for a better explanation of questions and elaborate at any point of an interview
2. respondents are asked for permission to be recorded
3. respondents are familiarized with an *Introductory text*:

“An Instagrammer is an influencer who became famous for their activity on Instagram. We are exploring beauty Instagrammers who have their own brand, or launch own products in collaboration with existing brands. We look at the persuasiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brand in comparison with regular Instagrammers. While answering, you can visualise your thoughts by showing specific Instagram posts. You are welcome to reflect on Instagrammers outside beauty industry too. In this case, please try to comment on how much your insights are applicable to beauty industry.”

1. Trustworthiness

In the following section, we are going to discuss an Instagrammer's trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is the extent to which Instagrammers are honest and believable in their claims. Please focus on trustworthiness when answering the following questions.

1. When Instagrammers are more trustworthy/ honest/ believable, are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)
2. Why?

Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.

3. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more trustworthy, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more trustworthiness?
4. Why?
5. Do you think:
 - a. that increased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** trustworthy)
 - b. that decreased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations less relevant? (so, would that make people less interested in the products?)
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** trustworthy)
6. Why?

7. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes their recommendations seem:
 - a. more believable?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** trustworthy)
 - b. less believable?
(a question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** trustworthy)
8. Why?
9. Can you recall an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram where you noticed that?

2. Expertise

In the following section, we are going to discuss an Instagrammer's expertise. Expertise is the extent to which Instagrammers have knowledge, experience, skills or competence about the products they recommend. Please focus on expertise when answering the following questions.

10. When Instagrammers have more expertise (about products or industry), are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)
11. Why?

Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.

12. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands have more expertise, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more expertise?
13. Why?
14. Do you think:
 - a. that increased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **having more** expertise)
 - b. that decreased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations less relevant? (so, would that make people less interested in the products?)
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **having less** expertise)
15. Why?
16. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that shows:
 - a. more expertise?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **having more** expertise)
 - b. less expertise?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **having less** expertise)
17. Can you recall an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram where you noticed that?

3. Attractiveness

In the following section, we are going to discuss an Instagrammer's attractiveness. Attractiveness means not only their looks, but also desirable aspects of their life and personality. Please focus on attractiveness when answering the following questions.

18. When Instagrammers are more attractive, are their recommendations more relevant?
(so, would that make people more interested in the products?)
19. Why?

Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.

20. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more attractive, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are more attractive?
21. Why?
22. Do you think:
- a. that increased attractiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (*so, would that make people more interested in the products?*)
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** attractive*)
 - b. that decreased attractiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations less relevant? (*so, would that make people less interested in the products?*)
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** attractive*)
23. Why?
24. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem:
- a. more attractive?
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** attractive*)
 - b. less attractive?
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** attractive*)
25. Can you recall an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram where you noticed that?

4. Respect

In the following section, we are going to discuss an Instagrammer's respect. Respect is the extent to which Instagrammers are being admired or esteemed due to personal accomplishments, achievements, opinions on various issues and values. Please focus on respect when answering the following questions.

26. When Instagrammers are more respected (admired), are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make you more interested in the products?)
27. Why?

Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.

28. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more respected, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are more respected?
29. Why?
30. Do you think:
- a. that increased respect of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (*so, would that make people more interested in the products?*)
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** respected*)
 - b. that decreased respect of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations less relevant? (*so, would that make people less interested in the products?*)
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** respected*)

31. Why?
32. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem:
 - a. more respected?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** respected)
 - b. less respected?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** respected)
33. Can you recall an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram where you noticed that?

5. Similarity to followers

In the following section, we are going to discuss an Instagrammer's similarity to their followers. Similarity with their followers is the extent to which they have common characteristics, are relatable and seem to be a "regular person". Please focus on similarity with their followers when answering the following questions.

34. When Instagrammers are more similar to followers (peers), are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)
35. Why?

Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.

36. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more or less similar to followers, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem more / less similar to followers?
37. Why?
38. Do you think:
 - a. that increased similarity of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** similar to followers)
 - b. that decreased similarity of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations less relevant? (so, would that make people less interested in the products?)
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** similar to followers)
39. Why?
40. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem:
 - a. more similar to followers?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** similar to followers)
 - b. less similar to followers?
(the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** similar to followers)
41. Can you recall an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram where you noticed that?

6. Emotional Involvement

In the following section, we are going to discuss Instagrammer's liking and using the products they recommend. Please focus on liking and using the recommended brands when answering the following questions.

42. When you believe that Instagrammers like and use recommended products more, are their

recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)

43. Why?

Now think about Instagrammers who have their own brands.

44. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands seem like they use and like the products they recommend more, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they like and use the recommended product more?

45. Why?

46. Do you think that difference makes their recommendations:

- a. more relevant? (*so, would that make people more interested in the products?*)
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** emotionally involved*)
- b. less relevant? (*so, would that make people less interested in the products?*)
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** emotionally involved*)

47. Why?

48. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general which shows that they:

- a. more honestly like and use the recommended products?
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **more** emotionally involved*)
- b. less honestly like and use the recommended products?
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent perceives them as **less** emotionally involved*)

49. Can you recall an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram which made you feel this way?

7. Motivation

In the following section, we are going to discuss the motivation behind endorsement. Motivation could be perceived as Instagrammers endorse own products because:

- *they genuinely like and use them, or that*
- *they are motivated by financial or other compensation*

Consider a situation where Instagrammers who have their own brands also promote other brands which they do not own. As we already mentioned, we call them sponsor brands.

50. What motivation do you think Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing their own brand?

51. Why?

52. What motivation Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing sponsor brands?

53. Why?

54. Do you believe the Instagrammer likes and uses both their own and sponsor brands equally?

55. Does the presence of own brand in the profile make sponsored endorsements seem mainly financially motivated?

56. Why?

57. Does that negatively affect the effectiveness of sponsor endorsements? Have you experienced or heard of such a situation happening?

- a. If so, would that affect your choice of doing a sponsorship with such an Instagrammer?
(*the question will be asked only if the respondent **believes** that the presence of own*

brand in the profile make sponsored endorsements seem mainly financially motivated)

58. Is there anything they say or show in their posts or on Instagram in general that creates that feeling? (have you noticed in your experience?)
59. Can you recall an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram which made you feel this way?

8. Overshadowing

Please focus on the posts where Instagrammers promote their own brand and posts where they promote sponsor brands.

60. When you think of Instagrammers who have their own brands, do you think endorsements of own brand stand out more than endorsements of sponsor brands?
61. Why?
62. Do you think endorsements of sponsor brand are as much associated with such Instagrammers as endorsements of own brand are? (By associated with an Instagrammer we mean more related, connected in memory)
63. Why?
64. Would that affect your choice of selecting an Instagrammer who has their own brand to do a sponsorship?
65. Why?
66. Have you ever experienced endorsements of Instagrammers' own brand being more associated with an Instagrammer than sponsored endorsements? Can you tell us about that?
67. What do you think are the specific aspects of posts or on Instagram in general including:
 - a. own brand that make them more preferred?
 - b. sponsor brand that make them more preferred?
68. Why?

9. Match up between sponsor and own brand

In the following section, we are going to discuss the importance of similarity between endorsed brands. By similarity we mean the endorsed brands sharing a similar idea, vibe, concept, brand personality. Please focus on similarity between brands when answering the next questions.

69. When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, do you think there needs to be a common theme between them (brands)?
70. Why?
71. How important is it to endorse own and sponsor brands similar to each other?
72. Why?
73. How does the similarity between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of sponsor brand?
74. How does the difference between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of sponsor brand?
75. Would you be more likely to do a sponsorship with an Instagrammer who has a similar brand to the brand you work for?
76. Why?

Open Questions (to sum up, to get extra insights)

77. In what situations do you consider using Instagrammers who have their own brands rather than regular Instagrammers? Please reflect on which type of Instagrammer would be more appropriate for:
 - i. Doing a sponsorship
 - ii. Launching a product in collaboration with an Instagrammer
78. In what situations do you consider using regular Instagrammers rather than Instagrammers

who have their own brand? Please reflect on which type of Instagrammer would be more appropriate for:

iii. Doing a sponsorship

iv. Launching a product in collaboration with an Instagrammer

79. How the choice is related with the goal of a campaign? (E.g. building awareness, increasing social engagement and interactions, improving conversions, gaining customer insight and data etc.)

Appendix 4

Key Words for Analysis

Theme	Key Words
Trustworthiness	Trust, trustworthy, believable, compelling, honest, dependable, sincere, reliable, integrity
Expertise	Know-how, knowledge, specialist, learn, expert, smart, information, competence, qualified, skilled, creative
Attractiveness	Respect, admire, look up to, achievement, proud, inspiration, dedicated, supporting causes
Respect	Attractive, impressive, interesting, amazing, physical appearance, look, personality, power
Similarity to Followers	Similar, relatable, peer, regular person, funny, like me, same
Emotional Involvement	Like, use, can't live without, routine, must-have, necessary, genuine
Motivation	Like, use; paid, financial, sponsored, sell-out, revenue, make money,
Overshadowing	Associate, stand out, remember, have in mind
Match up	Similar, consistent, congruent, in line, fits

Source: authors' own preparation based on Jain & Roy (2016)

5.1 RF1

Line	Timespan	Content
1	2:04.9 - 2:54.3	<p><i>1,2 - When Instagrammers are more trustworthy (meaning more honest, believable), are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes, they are. The ones I follow I know give a lot of recommendations on a lot of Brands and they also tell me something that some brands are doing bad, or this brand did me this, and this is good, and this is bad... and for me that increases their trustworthiness because I know they're not always just getting paid, getting paid, getting paid to talk good stuff about the products. Definitely. Trustworthiness makes me also want to, you know, keep following them.</p>
2	2:54.3 - 4:03.6	<p><i>3,4 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more trustworthy, compared to regular Instagrammers? Why?</i></p> <p>Not necessarily. I wouldn't say yes or no. I would say no. But it's not that they are less trustworthy or not necessarily. Because I do follow a lot of other Instagrammers that don't have their own brands that I also trust. So no it doesn't really affect me. Maybe it's because I kind of know how it is to start a brand, it's hard, and just because you're interested in beauty doesn't mean you have to start a beauty brand in order for you to be trustworthy. Then sometimes I also appreciate that they don't have a brand because that means that they can focus more on researching about those brands that they are actually behind.</p>
3	4:33.6 - 5:32.3	<p><i>5,6 - Question modified because she was "in the middle": Do you think that trustworthiness is somehow related with the recommendations they are giving?</i></p> <p>Yeah. Definitely. The trustworthiness is more in the captions and in the pictures and in the way in which they have used the product. I look mostly at skincare, and I know that you need to use skincare products for a longer time in order for them to kind of give a result, and then I trust those bloggers or posts more when I know that they write "I tested this for 3 months now, and this and this is the result" for example. So then I trust the actual post more than whether they have a brand or not.</p>
4	5:32.3 - 8:04.0	<p><i>7,8 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts that makes the recommendations seem more believable? Why?</i></p> <p>No, not that I've thought of. The ones that I follow it's more that they post more about their own stuff, obviously, because it's what they're passionate about. But also I know that those Instagrammers who have their own brand have a different Instagram for that brand. The brand has an Instagram. So, those I follow mix content, own brand content and also other brand recommendations. So, I wouldn't say that the relevance goes down because I know that there's another channel for that if I'm interested. When they post about their own stuff, of course they do it more because it's their own stuff. But it's not affecting my trustworthiness or the relevance.</p> <p>The ones that I follow usually have both - so they mix their own photos in their own channel, private channel, but of course it's not private because they're big influencers. But then there's the brand page, like an Instagram brand page, for that. I think [this strategic choice] increases trustworthiness because then I, as a follower, know that that Instagrammer is not all about her own brand, because I'm not interested only in her brand in these cases. I'm interested also in her other opinions about other beauty care brands. So yes, that increases trustworthiness.</p>
5	8:04.0 - 11:12.0	<p><i>9 - Can you give us an example of a post where you noticed that?</i></p> <p>I follow this girl; she's called Trinny Woodall. Do you remember when Trinny and Susannah used to style the whole Europe? So Trinny, she has her own make-up line but she is very very interested in skincare. So she blogs a lot about skin care but also a lot about fashion and stuff. Usually every morning she does something live in her bathroom and she shows all the products. For example, every time she does like all these outfit videos, she's very very funny and weird, she always kind of ends with "I usually put this on my lips" and that's her own brand. And she's like in her bathroom, you know, washing her face, recommending this product and this, and this, and this, I've been trying this all my life, and this has worked and yeah. She's also very cuckoo and weird and old which is kind of fun cause she's a little bit... it feels genuine. I like hearing instead of reading. Or that's just me, personally. I've never really liked reading, and I like when somebody tells me "this is good". It's kind of quicker, and then it's over, instead of "Oh, read about these 15 great brands"...Then I just don't care.</p>
6	11:36.3 - 12:29.4	<p><i>10,11 - When Instagrammers have more expertise (about the products or industry), are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?) Why?</i></p> <p>Yes, 100%. I am a total science person so yes if you don't have proof then I don't really believe it. I think why Instagram works as this kind of platform is you can easily get a message across without having proof. You can kind of fool everybody so it kind of depends on what you want to know and what your answer wants to be. A lot of people probably believe everything they see. And maybe I also do that, but I really like to hear about why, why, why this works and who says that.</p>
7	12:29.4 - 14:14.5	<p><i>12, 13 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands have more expertise, compared to regular Instagrammers? (does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more expertise? Why?)</i></p> <p>Not necessarily. You can gain expertise from different ways. I would just say The ones that have their own brand maybe have more expertise in whatever products they are creating, a lip gloss or whatever, sure. But it's just very narrow to their brand and to that product. I follow people who don't have their own brand and they make great recommendations and they know a lot, because they've been doing it for 15 years. Maybe business expertise, or how to start a business, because if you haven't done that, you maybe don't know it. But I don't think that's relevant for me and my following behavior. I don't care if they have started a business or not because it doesn't necessarily have to be them working a 100%, maybe they're just a name behind it the brand?</p>
8	14:14.5 - 16:00.0	<p><i>14,15 - Do you think that increased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes. As I said, I do believe proof, or I like hearing the proof. If it's something that looks good in a picture, that's fine, but if it's proof where somebody's saying that it's good because of that, then yes.</p>

		If I'm looking for expertise in a certain area, I want that post... or I know that that Instagrammer usually makes good recommendations. Then whether she or he has their own brand or not, I don't think that affects whether I think that they're experts or not.
9	16:03.5 - 17:16.0	<p>16 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts that shows more expertise?</p> <p>The only thing I can think of is that, again, they're pushing their own brand. Not in a sneaky way, but here and there, they're like: "I'm using this, and it happens to be my own". But that is not necessarily negative, because I'm following them because they talk about beauty, and yes they have their own brand so why wouldn't they talk about their own brand? The only difference is that they talk more about one brand, which is their own.</p>
10	17:32.7 - 19:03.8	<p>(17 was skipped)</p> <p>18,19 - When Instagrammers are more attractive, are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</p> <p>Yes. It should have an effect, because we use our eyes, so I think so. I guess it's because for example if I'm looking at a skincare Instagrammer, and that person has attractive skin, of course I also want that attractive skin, so I follow her, because I think I can get that if I use her product recommendations. I think we're trying to be what we're seeing. And I wouldn't want to be anything that is, to my standards, unattractive. So I only follow what I think is attractive in terms of lifestyle, appearance, personality.</p>
11	19:03.8 - 19:52.5	<p>20, 21 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more attractive, compared to regular Instagrammers? Why?</p> <p>No, that's a no. It doesn't play into the equation. The only thing I think can be a little 'maybe' is that I'm interested in business and branding, and it's cool to follow what they do on that term, but in terms of following a beauty brand, it doesn't make them more attractive if they have their own business.</p>
12	19:59.8 - 21:02.4	<p>(22,23 was skipped, since she was 'in the middle')</p> <p>24. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts that makes them seem more attractive?</p> <p>Maybe a sense of pride? But then again, the other ones that I follow that don't have their own brand are also kind of proud of what they do. But I would say maybe that's different, that they're proud of it, trying to project that 'This is my thing, and this is good because I created it because I know so much'.</p>
13	21:05.9 - 24:31.1	<p>25 - Can you give us an example of a post which made you feel this way?</p> <p>For example, this Farrah D (@farahdhukai). She has a lot of "grandma" tips. Using natural stuff, like putting avocado on your face, a lot of natural beauty tips as well. Usually when she does a beauty routine, it's mostly videos, she uses her products kind of in-between, here and there. She usually ends her routine with putting her own product on her face. I think that's kind of smart, because the focus is not her product, the focus is whatever she's doing here. It is very quick, and it's kind of "what did she do there?" It's a pink liquid that you put on your face, what is that? I think that's kind of interesting. When she uses her product together with other products, I think that creates more interest, because you can't make a product that is perfect for all situations.</p>
14	24:57.1 - 26:52.7	<p>26, 27 - When Instagrammers are more respected, are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</p> <p>Yes. But then I'm thinking - if it's a joke account, like a comedian person, I don't know if you can use the word 'respected' to describe that person, but their jokes are still relevant. But if we're talking about functionality, stuff, maybe beauty or health Instagrammers, I would say that if you're more respected, your recommendations are more relevant. It has to do a little bit with the personal brand. If your personal brand is good, whatever you say or do is also legit. If you as a person brand yourself and appear to be as a respected person. If you are a person that is respected and knowledgeable, I think that increases the relevance of the recommendations.</p>
15	26:52.6 - 29:33.8	<p>28,29 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more respected, compared to regular Instagrammers? Why?</p> <p>In general, yes. I actually would say so. Maybe because you trust them more? It could have an effect on your legitimacy if you have your own brand. I think it increases the trustworthiness because you're a respected person. Or a famous person, or a high-up person. That would increase the trustworthiness and why you would want to listen to that person. It can go hand-in-hand with all these lists of 'Successful Entrepreneurs', and if you made it to one of those lists, or if your business is respected, or highly valued, I think that has an effect, because again, it's about the personal brand. If I were to follow somebody who has their own business, who have been Forbes 30 under 30 or whatever, that would make me feel like they're a respected person, or a high-up person with their own business. And then I would think that that increases the relevance of their content, because they are on this list. It has to do with the personal brand of that Instagrammer, because that person is respected and successful.</p>
16	29:46.0 - 31:28.2	<p>(30,31 was answered together with 28,29)</p> <p>32. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their post that makes them seem more respected?</p> <p>It would be a little bit about the business side of it. For example, a person who has their own brand maybe takes you behind the scenes sometimes, or shows you a little bit of that, which is interesting and fun, compared to a person who doesn't have their own brand, and only shows you the products and talks about the products. But never how it's made, because they don't have access to that knowledge. For some people this can increase trustworthiness and relevance of recommendations.</p>
17	31:32.7 - 33:06.8	<p>33 - Can you give us an example of a post which made you feel this way?</p> <p>[About Trinny] Sometimes she brings experts from her own brand into her bathroom and talks about the product. That's a little "behind-the-scenes". These are her employees or factory people. And sometimes it's just experts in the field, or sometimes customers.</p>
18	33:32.0 - 34:57.7	<p>34,35 - When Instagrammers are more similar to followers like you, are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</p>

		<p>Yeah, I would say so. I think it makes it more interesting and closer to you, easy to touch on in a way, if they're more everyday people. For example, in terms of general Instagrammers, for me, I don't care when it's very very perfect photos and everything is very unrealistic, you know. I like to imagine what's behind the camera, and it's kind of fun to think of, there's probably some stupid boyfriend standing here and taking this picture, I also have him, you know? He [my boyfriend] also takes my pictures. You probably take like a billion photos and it's supposed to be so natural and so bloggy and Instagrammy, and for me, that doesn't do it. I don't care about that. So I kind of like when it's more 'Can you film me now? Yeah, Yeah' So he's filming and... I don't know, it's more fun.</p>
19	34:57.7 - 37:45.2	<p><i>36,37 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more or less similar to followers, compared to regular Instagrammers? Why?</i></p> <p>I don't know if I don't have two answers to this question, because in a way... I don't think that it matters whether you have your own brand or not, depending on whether you aspire to that person or feel similar... But it can also be that the ones who have their own business are less similar to their followers, because they have businesses and they're famous or whatever. Or they're like big corporate people. But then again, even if you're an Instagrammer, and don't have a business, but you travel the whole world, you have this Instagrammer life, I would say that's also not similar to your followers. So I would say depends on the type of... I don't think it depends on whether you have a business or not. Or your own brand or not.</p> <p><i>36,37 R: Can you elaborate a bit on WHAT it depends on then? You mentioned already that Instagrammer life, and...</i></p> <p>Maybe it depends on, like, the realness of the people or the posts, that we've talked about before. Whether they are... Even if this is like a super-rich Instagram Influencer who has many businesses and beauty brands, if the posts are kind of real, like she's sitting in a taxi, or sitting on a train or whatever, then I would say that is more relevant, compared to somebody who just has a very very beautiful Instagram profile. If it's more homey and less pretty. Of course the photos need to be pretty because then the attractiveness plays a huge role, but still it needs to be... I need to be able to touch it.</p> <p><i>K: So this lack of realness can happen also if you don't have your own brand?</i></p> <p>Yes.</p> <p><i>K: But is there a tendency of the ones who do have their own brand?</i></p> <p>No, not necessarily. Because it could be the other way around too. Maybe if you don't have your own brand, maybe you feel like you need to be extra-extra in order to... yeah.</p>
20	37:49.3 - 40:32.2	<p><i>(38,39 were not asked - she was 'in the middle')</i></p> <p><i>40-41 Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts that makes them seem more similar to followers like you? Why?</i></p> <p>It's more maybe the one that I told you about, Trinny... It's more that you can kind of see her everyday work life, she's going to a meeting, she's sitting in a taxi... And that would maybe identify with me more? But I don't know if that depends on her personality or whether she has her own brand or not. But she has her own brand and I think that's interesting that she shows a little bit of her work life and business life, and now I'm going to the production in this country, etc.</p> <p><i>R: If you would think about them as two categories: regular Instagrammers and those who have their own brands. Would you see, when you compare these two, that Instagrammers who have their own brands do something that makes you feel like they are more or less similar to followers like you?</i></p> <p>Then again it would be the business side of it. That I'm interested in business, and the ones who have their own brand, kind of show me how they built their brand, what they're doing to keep their brand going forward, in a way, mixed with recommendations about other stuff - products or lifestyle or whatever. So you see a little bit more glimpse into a successful entrepreneur or a successful business person. And that I think is more in line with what I like to follow.</p>
21	40:32.2 - 42:30.6	<p><i>41 - Can you give us an example of a post which made you feel this way?</i></p> <p>She's not a beauty recommendation-er. Her name is Babba (@babba.c), she's Swedish, I think she has her own marketing agency or something in New York, and she started like her own... and she's one of those very successful under 30 people. Founder of by babba and something else. And she posts very silly pictures of her and her employees, but still also "This is my skincare routine" or "This is my new outfit" or something like that. So she's very fashion sometimes, but then she's also very silly sometimes with her and her dog. But then she also gives recommendations, but I know that they're also ads and paid partnerships. But I think since it's her, and I know that she's a successful person, I would buy it. In a way. So it's having its effect on me.</p> <p><i>K: So you like the fact that she also shows you her silly side and her humor?</i></p> <p>Yes, a 100%. And she's like... the thing is she's a really cool boss and she takes her employees everywhere, and I think that's really fun to see.</p>
22	42:30.5 - 44:41.9	<p><i>42, 43 - When Instagrammers seem to like and use recommended products more, are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes. I feel like it shows more than just this "paid ad" in a way. Even if it is a paid partnership, which is usually the case, but they use.. if they are like agreeing more and more to this partnership, I think it's because they like and use them themselves? For example, I follow this person called Jessica something (@barebeautyblog). Yeah, and she has a partnership, or not a partnership but with True Botanicals? I think it's a Swedish brand. And I've seen her doing a lot of True Botanicals posts, and she's always writing "Yes, I really really love these products, and I hated when they discontinued this" and... but she has a partnership with them. But just an Influencer partnership. I've read a little bit about her and that brand is the one she likes the most, and that's why she likes to partner with them.</p>
23	44:41.9 - 48:07.7	<p><i>44, 45 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands seem like they use and like the products they recommend more, compared to regular Instagrammers? Why?</i></p> <p>Not necessarily again, because this person I just showed you, she doesn't have her own brand in terms of beauty. I think it's more about the post and the way she uses the product, and if they use them for a longer time, and not whether they have their own brand or not.</p> <p><i>R: What else can they do to make you feel like they really use & like the products?</i></p> <p>I think it also depends on their expertise, how well they know about what's inside the products. I follow a lot of organic beauty stuff, and the way they're able to say what affects you and, that it helped them for this specific problem. And they're not saying "This is a great product, everybody has to use it because it works". That for me is bullshit. The fact that they're knowledgeable and even if they're no dermatologist they can still talk about beauty products and their ingredients. And for me that increases the trust.</p> <p><i>After more prompting - if you compare the two groups</i></p>

		<p>It's also one of those two-answer questions. If you have your own brand, and I know you have your own brand, I know that you will push your own brand on me. Maybe that will decrease the trustworthiness. But then if you're showing other brands, I think that could increase the trustworthiness. <i>What about sponsor endorsements? Do they seem liked and used by EI?</i></p> <p>Not, not necessarily. I think it has to do with the person. For example, Jessica has written very clearly that she doesn't like to do partnerships and sponsorships with these specific brands, she's also a little older so maybe she doesn't need the sponsor money, she's not looking to get Instagram famous. So for me, when she does a sponsorship, I trust that more. Whereas, if an Instagram model does sponsorship after sponsorship after sponsorship, I don't find that interesting at all.</p>
24	48:06.7 - 50:14.5	<p>(46/47 were not asked). <i>48. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts which shows that they more honestly like and use the products they recommend?</i></p> <p><i>R: So what do they do, that makes you think "Oh, they really use and like these products"</i></p> <p>I think it's again, captions. And if I know that I've seen this brand before. Also, if it's in line with what they usually do. If one day it's gummy bear vitamins for hair, and another day it's skin solar cream, it's not really consistent. But if they do consistent partnerships with an explanation why they are doing a sponsorship with this brand, for me, that increases the trustworthiness.</p> <p><i>R: Does that make them seem like they really and use these products?</i></p> <p>Yes. And also the way they write about it. For example, now there's a law which says you have to say it's a sponsored post - I think they like and use the products less if they write "Sponsored content: I like and use this product every day, it's my best friend..." It's fake, in a way. Whereas, when you write "This is sponsored content, I'm doing a partnership with these people". Give me the details of the sponsorship, because then, I can make a judgement of whether this person is sincere.</p>
25	50:18.7 - 53:16.1	<p><i>49. Can you give us an example of a post which made you feel this way?</i></p> <p>This is a good example for me - she's saying "True Botanicals has just released their subscription service, and it's everything". And for example - this one makes hair vitamins. She's very into fashion. This is very weird for her to post about HP. This is her feed and it says "Here comes the summer mood lifter - a mini printer from HP Europe that you can easily use". It's so fake for me. Of course she's been given a printer, she's been printing stuff, she got paid - but she doesn't use this normally, unless she is paid. I think that's silly. I really don't like this type of Instagramming.</p>
26	54:21.0 - 56:40.9	<p><i>50, 51 - What do you think is the Instagrammer's motivation when they promote their own brands? Why?</i></p> <p>Obviously to get sales, bottom line. I'm thinking of that Trinny again - and she's doing many posts that she does not get paid for - I know that people send her a lot of stuff, but she's the one who's trying everything within skincare. I think she's very trusted because she doesn't do a lot of sponsored things. So when she has her own make-up line, you believe it more, because she's very not fake in the rest of her posts. I think the ones who have their own brands, I think they promote other products because they like and use them, and also for research purposes. Because Trinny talks about how she's had very bad skin, and she's been trying to find good products all her life. So she's not financially compensated. It doesn't sound like it.</p> <p>And when she endorses her own brand, it's sincerer, because she's not financially compensated for endorsing other brands.</p> <p><i>R: I will just repeat, to clarify: So when she endorses her own brand, you think it's sincerer. But when she endorses sponsor brands?</i></p> <p>I think it's sincerer.</p> <p><i>R: As well?</i></p> <p>Yes, because she doesn't get financially compensated from them. Or at least not from all of the brands that she talks about.</p>
27	56:36.8 - 57:56.0	<p>(52,53 were contained in the previous question)</p> <p><i>54,55 - Do you believe Instagrammers like and use their own brand more, or sponsor brands more? Or do they like and use both their own and sponsor brands equally? Why?</i></p> <p>Their own brand more. The ones that I follow, they manage to sneak in their own brands a little bit here and there, for example Trinny talks about other brands a lot, but every time she posts a video of her outfit which she does every day, she ends it with "And then I put this make-up own" and that's her own brand.</p> <p>And Farah, she's also always sneaking in her own brand, in a way. Sometimes she makes a whole post about her own brand, but they always kind of sneak it in. I think it's fine, and kind of natural, because I would also do that if I had my own brand.</p> <p><i>R: Does that make you feel that they like and use these products?</i></p> <p>Yes. But I think they should - they created a brand because they were probably missing something in their life.</p>
28	57:56.0 - 58:22.5	<p><i>56 - How does that affect your opinion about the recommendations?</i></p> <p>Not in any negative way. I wouldn't say positively either. I haven't really reflected on this. I don't know.</p>
29	58:22.5 - 58:50.5	<p><i>57. Is there anything they say or show in their posts that makes you feel this way?</i></p> <p><i>R: You already mentioned that they "sneak in" their own brand...</i></p> <p>It makes me feel like I also want to buy that. Or that I want to also buy her own brand. Because she looks good in the of make-up she uses. So yes, I could buy it. I'm not against it.</p>
30	58:50.5 - 59:09.5	<p><i>58 - Can you give us an example of a post which made you feel this way?</i></p> <p><i>R: You already showed us a couple of examples of videos [where they sneak in their own brand together with other products]. Would you consider that a good example?</i></p> <p>Yes, that's what I mean.</p>
31	59:09.5 - 1:00:18.9	<p><i>59, 60 -When you think of Instagrammers who have their own brand, do you think recommendations of own brand stand out more than recommendations of sponsor brands? Why?</i></p>

		No. I don't think they stand out more "by some percentage". But I also think that, as I said, the own brand is kind of "sneaked in" in a better way. But I think it's natural, I don't think they think about it because it's products that they use every day. Whereas the recommended products, either they have been sponsored to make a post about it or... they try out so many brands, they can't be doing one brand at a time.
32	1:00:18.9 - 1:01:23.5	<p>61,62 - Which type of brands do you remember more clearly? Why?</p> <p>It varies depending on the influencer, depending on how often they do it. For example, with Trinny, I do remember her other recommendations more than her own brand.</p> <p>R: Why?</p> <p>It's because her own brand is about makeup, and I don't really care about makeup, I care more about skincare. For example, with Farah, I also notice her other stuff more than her own brand, because I don't care about that kind of product. This part is not relevant for me, I like more her tutorials, I care more about that, than her pink serum.</p>
33	1:01:23.5 - 1:02:47.8	<p>63, 64 - When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, which brand do you associate with the Instagrammer more? Why?</p> <p>Their other brands. For both of these persons I mentioned, I follow them because they do recommendations of other products and other beauty recommendations. If they would've stopped doing that, I wouldn't like the content anymore. If they would only recommend their own products.</p> <p>R: Do you have any Instagrammer in your mind, that you have started following because of her own brand?</p> <p>Then it would be Babba. But not only for her own brand, more because she's kind of a successful entrepreneur. That's why I follow her. And following her has kind of introduced me to the fact that she also likes skincare, and organic skincare. But I wouldn't say I follow her because she does skincare, I follow her because she's a cool business person.</p> <p>R: So which brand do you associate with her more, own or sponsor?</p> <p>Own, definitely. I don't know much about her own brand, but since she's a successful entrepreneur, I follow her "entrepreneurship" rather than the brands that she recommends.</p> <p>R: So would you say there is a connection between how you associate that Instagrammer and why you started following them?</p> <p>Yes, I would say so. That's true.</p>
34	1:03:46.8 - 1:05:47.8	<p>65, 66 - What do you think are the specific aspects of posts that make you remember own brand more?</p> <p>I would say if you use own brand together with other brands, or use it to complete a look, to style something. When you have a whole outfit, and you finish with that make up for example. That would make me remember it more, than just saying "Look at this new lip gloss!". Because it's a "finished product" in a way. I like the outfit, the make-up, the whole package.</p> <p>R: What can you say about specific aspects of posts that make you remember own brand more?</p> <p>Ingredients, proof as to why this should work. For example, I actually bought something that Trinny recommended - and I won't buy anything she recommends - did I tell you about that cleanser? She recommended a cleanser brush, and I thought that was really cool, and I researched and I bought it - basically because she recommended it. But she had her reasons as to why this works, why this is better than whatever else exists, so then I remembered that sponsored posts. Because it was fact-based.</p>
35	1:05:47.8 - 1:08:25.3	<p>67, 68 - When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, do you think there needs to be a common theme between them (brands)? Why?</p> <p>Yes, but still, for example - if I think generally about this entrepreneur lady - I mean, her brand does not have anything to do REALLY with what she is sponsored for. But I still follow her because of her personality, and the brands she endorses also go in line with her personality and lifestyle. So yes, there should be a similarity.</p> <p>R: And by saying theme, what do you mean, that vibe?</p> <p>Yes, the products are not all the same, but the vibe is the same with her own or her person, lifestyle.</p> <p>R: Why?</p> <p>Because...</p> <p>K: You already touched upon this 'consistency' aspect before?</p> <p>Yes, that's of course important. Because the products share similar personality to the person promoting them. It's kind of weird... For example, this Trinny person, her brand is also very science focused, and she cares about the ingredients...but it's make-up. I don't care about make-up, but I still enjoy her talking about it, because I like her saying "This contains this, and it's good for that". And then when she talks about the products that she is endorsing, she's also talking about them in the same way, even though they are make-up and skincare.</p> <p>R: Does that make you feel that these brands are somehow similar?</p> <p>Yes, or at least it makes sense that they're coming from the same person.</p> <p>K: So she kind of makes them similar?</p> <p>Yes. Or the way she talks about them makes them similar.</p>
36	1:08:25.3 - 1:08:48.0	<p>69,70 - Do you prefer if Instagrammers who have their own brand recommend brands that are similar to each other, or that differ from each other? Why?</p> <p>Similar in terms of brand, vibe or personality - not necessarily similar in terms of "actual product".</p>
37	1:08:48.0 - 1:11:03.4	<p>71, 72 - How does the similarity between brands affect your opinion about the recommendation of sponsor brand? Why?</p> <p>I think in the same way as I said, if they talk about their own products with the ingredients and proof behind it, and if they do talk about their sponsor products in a similar way, that would be good. But if they only talk about their own products that way, and not about their endorsed products, that would not make me like it, because then they're only sponsored and they don't care about the products.</p> <p>K: What if we took away the aspect of how they present the product, and just look at product vs product. Is there some kind of consistency you expect?</p> <p>I would say I like it more when there's a consistency, because the further away in terms of similarity... but also variety. For example, this Babba person, she sometimes promotes skincare, sometimes it's a shoe brand... the more differences there are in terms of product, I can't trust everything she says, I don't trust that.</p>

But for example this Trinny person, she only recommends skincare products, and kind of style and fashion. If she was to start recommending cars, that would be weird. Or printers. It's weird, and it's probably not something she knows anything about. So that would kind of decrease my trust, or at least my interest.

5.2 RF2

Line	Timespan	Content
1	2:17.4 - 3:11.3	<p><i>1-2. When Instagrammers are more trustworthy (meaning more honest, believable), are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>My first instinct is to say yes because, obviously, all of the recommendations that they make, whether it is own brand or another brand, is towards making a profit, no matter what. So there has to be some kind of a result at the end of purchase and I would assume that people would be more likely to purchase a product if the recommendation comes from the person they trust: in their opinion, style, intentions. So yes, for sure.</p>
2	3:11.3 - 5:33.1	<p><i>3-4. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more trustworthy, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand make them seem like they have more trustworthiness?</i></p> <p>It depends on the type of product that they are selling. If you've been following a person for a while and you know their interests in some kind of specific area that they are experts in; and they try to actually produce a product that is of high quality, maybe new on the market that people would genuinely love and enjoy - then yes. But if a product is just like not connected, doesn't fit with a personality with an Instagrammer, when you would lose trust in that person. You wouldn't necessarily purchase it.</p> <p><i>Do you have any specific examples of these two cases?</i></p> <p>Maybe it is more applicable to YouTubers, but a lot of them are Instagrammers as well so it's hard to separate them, but everybody is publishing books; it's kind of like a thing to publish a book, memoirs. And when you are 25 and you're publishing a memoir - I'm sorry but what you are actually talking about. I wouldn't necessarily buy a book from an Instagrammer. But there is this make-up artist - Lisa Elridge - she published a book about a history of makeup and it seemed a bit more unique, not something that you find on a market so that's something what you interest me and that I find more genuine. Because it is her profession, her genuine interest in the history of make-up (from Cleopatra times) so she did a lot of research on it and you can tell by the things she is posting.</p>
3	5:33.0 - 9:42.3	<p><i>5-6a. Do you think that increased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more interesting?</i></p> <p>Maybe. That's the thing. For example, she has the book, I haven't purchased it, I know a friend who did, and I would be still interested in reading it. She also started selling jewelry, she started doing rings and they are very nice, gemstone rings (I wouldn't necessarily buy them because it's not my style). So it goes both ways. Generally, I would say yes but some things are too specific to say for sure - yes I would buy this because I trust this person.</p> <p><i>5-6 (extra) Does that somehow depends on a product category she recommends?</i></p> <p>Yes, for sure it depends on a product category. I mean, I was buying a lot of make-up when I was younger in my teens I would try out new things and would buy too much stuff that I would not use at the end. I think girls at a young age would be more inclined to buy products from famous people on Instagram. Now I try to minimize what I am using and really just buy the quality product that I know work, instead of just a lot of things that pile up in my house and then I need to clean out afterwards. And they have an expiration date so it's not so good.</p> <p><i>5-6 (extra) So you mentioned quality. Does somehow this Instagrammer who has own brand makes you think that the recommendations she does are of products which have a higher quality?</i></p> <p>Not necessarily. I would still say that it is high because I know that they collaborate a lot with existing companies and bring out a line in collaboration with another big brand so then you would assume the same quality. Sometimes, I think it's more a case that it could be of lower quality if the Instagrammer is not trustworthy, then you would assume a lower quality.</p> <p><i>5-6b. Do you think that decreased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations less relevant?</i></p> <p>Yeah, if you are following a person, you invested in their story, you see them all the time on your phone and then they start releasing products which, you think, are not good quality, not appealing to audience, then everything else kind of diminishes as well (any other recommendation they make). A lot of people say - oh they only look after money.</p>
4	10:37.1 - 16:09.9	<p><i>7-8a. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes the recommendations seem: more believable?</i></p> <p>I guess if they post about the process of creation. That would make them seem more believable because then you can kind of see that they are investing time in that, not just hiring somebody else to do it. They all post a lot of like the actual text below the posts, thanking their followers and talk about the journey they went through to get there which is a nice touch and it shouldn't be overlooked.</p> <p><i>Does that gives believability?</i></p> <p>Yeah, for sure. Instead of just hiding the product before they launch it (maybe because of a legal matter), but they still tease the audience with some kind of behind the scenes or little snippets of information. And if it's something that they've been talking about doing over a certain period of time and you know that it's their passion and their dream to do it, then it is more believable. Instead of just like "oh I do make-up on Instagram or on YouTube and then all of the sudden come out with jewelry like" - ok, why? Why it's that you are interested?</p>

		<p>7-8 (extra) What about the recommendations of sponsor brands? Does Instagrammers do anything specific that would make these recommendations look more believable?</p> <p>Yeah, for sure. I was looking at some posts before and a lot of them are very "magazine style" - just posing with a watch in a very unnatural position. Maybe that has something to do with the requirements of the brand if the Instagrammer is not given much of the freedom in how to present a product and how to talk about it. Then it would seem very fake with all those slogans and stating all of the qualities of the products very precisely below the post, instead of giving you their own personal opinion.</p> <p>7-8 (extra) Would you say it is even more visible when they have own brand?</p> <p>When I was looking before, I could quite clearly usually spot the sponsored posts and when I was trying to see if that Instagrammer has own brand somewhere hidden in the posts, it was quite difficult to see, unless you click on a post and read it below. So I think there is a difference, I am not sure if I can pinpoint exactly what it is about it. I mean, obviously, it is about the photography, the filters on it, the re-touching maybe - all of those kinds of details that would make a post look more like a magazine, instead of as a real life picture. It is more present with the sponsored posts.</p>
5	16:09.9 - 16:33.2	<p>9. Can you give us an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram where you noticed this "magazine looking sponsorship"?</p> <p>(showing an Instagram post on the phone)</p> <p>This is very sponsored. Very unnatural pose, there is also a long text which obviously often goes with a sponsorship deal. Looks like a photo shoot.</p> <p>(showing another Instagram post on the phone)</p> <p>This is her own bag that she designed in collaboration with another company and you still have a description below but it is more in line with what she usually posts so it blends in with everything else. Whereas, the first picture stands out from everything else.</p> <p>Do you think these examples are applicable to the beauty industry?</p> <p>Make-up and stuff? Yeah, yeah for sure.</p>
6	17:53.5 - 19:50.8	<p>10-11. When Instagrammers have more expertise (about the products or industry), are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</p> <p>Yes, for sure. Because you want the highest quality of products, if you are looking to buy something, then you would go specifically to that person who has the most experience and you trust most for a recommendation. That's how I do at least. Like with beauty Instagrammers, we are talking about make-up, there are a lot of ... there are so many. You can just look through like ten Instagrammers or YouTubers and they will be all probably talking about the same product. But then you would go to a channel of somebody like this Lisa Elridge and you would know, you can see that she knows what she is talking about because she is an expert in the field, she works with celebrities, she like uses a ton of products, which they all do, but then she can also maybe explain a science behind it, like ingredients, the way of application a bit better - so you can kind of tell. And also, if you are talking about maybe skin care as well, like if you follow a person who has the same skin issue as you, you trust them more than somebody else because they know what the experience is, e.g. if you have dry skin, you would look for products from that person, not somebody else.</p> <p>So would you consider these people having more expertise?</p> <p>Yeah yeah. Some people have expertise from a just personal condition if we are talking about skin care, while others from a professional point of view.</p>
7	20:28.0 - 20:29.6	<p>12-13. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more expertise? Or can it?</p> <p>It can, I guess. If they are really involved in a brand creation process, they gain expertise by producing it. Obviously it is not necessarily the case. If you present that information to your followers, they would know that you have expertise. It's important to explain them. Yeah, I think it can. But if it's something that you can't back up or that people challenged and then ... I think, there was a lot of backlash in the beauty community as well with that Zoella girl who is just pushing out products, a lot of them are targeted to teenagers who are more impressionable and more inclined to buy products. She also pushed the book which was highly criticized, I think they claimed that she didn't write it, she didn't really manage to give a counterargument or to convince people that it was all rumors. So something like this comes up and like some people do challenge it and if you can see that a person invested their time and energy to the product they are selling, then it can have an opposite effect.</p>
8	22:34.2 - 27:19.6	<p>14b-15. Do you think that decreased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations less relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</p> <p>For me yes. I would maybe even stop following that person on Instagram so their recommendations will not reach me.</p> <p>14a-15. Do you think that the increased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</p> <p>Yeah, if you do care about the quality of a product, if you care about ethically produced product as well - that would be very important to be transparent and to show you as a business owner and you as a person / Instagrammer care about those things and you get involved in the process and you communicate that to your followers, then it would influence you like on a greater scale - not just your own products but everything else you do. If you say that "oh, I'm not going to collaborate with L'Oréal anymore because I don't believe in animal testing", you should be consistent in your beliefs and in your execution - everything you do. Because people are very critical, they don't forget, especially on the internet anymore, all these posts just stay there forever, it's like evidence everything you do so you have to be consistent.</p> <p>14a-15 (extra) Is that somehow related with expertise?</p> <p>Yes, I mean depends on how you define expertise. If you are talking about being an expert in beauty or being an expert as a businesswoman. Being an expert as a woman is very inspiring and motivational for people to see; when women in this industry succeed and do it also in an environmentally friendly or ethical way or also promoting other women. So that's one part of being an expert. The other part is maybe more technical, like make-up application, ingredients or whatever, I guess. So it depends on which one people focus.</p>

9	27:19.6 - 31:02.5	<p><i>16. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that shows more expertise?</i></p> <p>Yeah, behind the scenes shots. If you're creating lipsticks and you're going to the lab, you can document that. You can document your choices as well, just the process of deciding because if you are actually the one behind driving decision making, even if it's like a few people, you can still document that and you can show that you're involved. I don't think a lot of people post about their business meetings, it's usually like just the fun stuff, traveling and the outfits, but not actually business meeting. Maybe they are not allowed, I'm not sure, but that would be also some kind of post that they can make to boost their expertise, so perceived expertise. And you can obviously do that with texts as well, in posts, just explain a bit more, why you're wearing this lipstick, instead of another one, in your own words. Because, otherwise, there is a chance that you can start sounding like an advertising person, using too much of the product slogans.</p> <p><i>Do you see it happening in the real world?</i></p> <p>I'm not sure. I don't follow that many people right now. Lisa Elridge posts a lot of stuff about her ring collection right now. She is posting all of the rings at her house, then how she pairs them in a packaging, she decides which colors to go with which packaging. She obviously has some more ad shots as well, other people wearing her rings or she re-posts stuff from other Instagrammers that are wearing her rings. But, in general, I think it's genuine or at least that's my perception.</p> <p><i>Would you say your insights would be applicable also to the beauty industry?</i></p> <p>Yes.</p>
10	31:02.5 - 32:29.1	<p><i>18-19. When Instagrammers are more attractive, are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>Yes, that's something that is driving the industry. Obviously, it's not just attractiveness, but that's a big part of the reason why certain people are famous on Instagram. Your eyes are just drawn to the symmetry or beauty, or whatever it is, and you spend more time looking at those people. Spending more time, then you observe more information and more consciously or unconsciously are influenced by them. So yes, unfortunately.</p>
11	32:29.1 - 34:05.5	<p><i>20-21. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are more attractive?</i></p> <p>You are perceived more successful if you have your own brand and that can be attractive.</p> <p><i>Why can it be attractive?</i></p> <p>Well, I guess it is. A lot of people are drawn to it because they desire the same life, the same lifestyle. Some people more than others, but we all do. I don't know how difficult it is to bring out your own brand. I assume you have to have a certain amount of followers and enough capital as well and connection to get to that point. So attractiveness was playing a role before and will play a role after as well. And if that line or product is in line with your image and with your overall profile, then it will boost your attractiveness as well.</p>
12	34:05.4 - 37:15.7	<p><i>22-23. Do you think that the increased attractiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>For me, personally, I wouldn't say. I think there are so many people on Instagram now who have their own products and book deals so it's kind of become not as novel and we have a lot more information about all the money they are making so you tend to brush it off as not as difficult to achieve which makes it less attractive.</p> <p><i>22-23. Do you think that the increased attractiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>Ok, if I think about makeup and if somebody comes up with their own line of lipsticks which are high quality, then I guess it will be more relevant to look at other recommendations that they make. But I guess it's more linked to expertise than a general attractiveness because I'm always thinking about why this product is better than the other. Well, it's not because the person is amazingly successful with it, I kind of brush that off because of just a huge amount of products that there is on the market and huge amount of Instagrammers that are pushing out the products. I think it's more due to expertise than the attractiveness of them is.</p>
13	37:15.6 - 40:10.8	<p><i>24. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more attractive?</i></p> <p>I don't think so. I think it's all the same. We said before that sponsored posts and own brand posts have differences usually but, besides that, I don't think that they do something differently. I don't think it has something to do with a release of a brand, I think it has something to do with the money that comes with it and their lifestyle they lead.</p> <p><i>24 (extra) Does anything change in a lifestyle they portray, maybe?</i></p> <p>Yeah, I think they start to travel more, just be more popular with a regular brand as well, so they get invited to more events and their lifestyle changes and their, obviously, posts are more drawn towards that.</p> <p><i>24 (extra) Is that attractive to people?</i></p> <p>Yeah, for sure. Everybody wants to be famous, meet celebrities, party and drink champagne, or whatever they post. I think that's universal.</p>
14	40:10.7 - 41:01.1	<p><i>26-27. When Instagrammers are more respected, are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p>

		Yes, if you feel very strongly about these issues that they are promoting, you agree with their values and if they are consistent in presenting and promoting these values, then yes, I think, people would be more drawn to those Instagrammers.
15	41:01.0 - 43:05.8	<p>28-29. <i>Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more respected, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more respect?</i></p> <p>No. Again it depends on what they are producing, what product category, how much the product that they are producing in line with their values and if respect is connected to their values, then that's more important than the actual product. If they are more respected for their business success, maybe. I think a lot of people are jealous of success and it can draw some people away but usually, people like to look at that glamorous lifestyle just out of curiosity, even if they are jealous they still do it.</p> <p><i>When you are jealous of the Instagrammers, can you also respect them?</i></p> <p>Yeah, if you also see the other side, like the hard work that goes into it, you gain more respect. People tend to forget that because all you see is the end result and not all the time spent on meeting or in front of the computer, editing and all that stuff. If people see more of it, then they will be more respectful.</p>
16	43:05.8 - 44:25.6	<p>31-31. <i>Do you think that increased respect of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>You would probably spend more time looking at the person's posts or Instagram videos, they have Instagram TV now like you might spend more time if you respect a person more. I feel like, automatically, if you are willing to do that, recommendations would be more relevant to you.</p>
17	44:25.6 - 46:16.4	<p>32. <i>Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their post or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more respected?</i></p> <p>Being transparent about what you do. Saying that it is an ad, even if you are not required to, that is just respectful, in my opinion. Being consistent, I think I mentioned that before. Just associating yourself with other people that are respectful as well. I think a lot of them know each other and they are friends and they post together and who you choose to post together, who you choose to be your partner, boost your respect as well. But it gives more credibility than respect.</p> <p>Talking about respect, transparency, consistency and the way you present information in the text, in your own words again and not somebody else's instructions are important.</p>
18	48:51.5 - 49:23.7	<p>34-35. <i>When Instagrammers are more similar to followers like you, are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>I'm not sure. If they are more relatable and they are more down to earth, then they would gain trust and they would gain your respect maybe; and if they have the same problems as you as well or the same hairstyle, then their recommendations would be very relevant to you. But if they are more glamorous and more extravagant and more also have more expertise, if they work in that field of beauty, then you would also perceive their posts as relevant. So it kind of goes both ways, we look towards the more relatable people for comfort and so you feel better about ourselves, and we look towards glamorous Instagrammers for inspiration or for something which is unreachable, that everybody dreams of.</p> <p>34-35 (extra) <i>You mention that Instagrammers who are relatable, more down to earth can gain your trust and respect. Can you elaborate a little bit more how it is relatable?</i></p> <p>Yeah. Well if they show their everyday life which is something that makes more relatable, then you can see that maybe you do the same thing, you both go to Starbucks or whatever - this is a very generic example - or she is not afraid to show that her new shoes gave her blisters or that this mascara gave her an infection, this is something that is more relatable and down to earth. So next time when she promotes a product, you know that she used it and tried it, it makes her more trustworthy - showing bad sides.</p> <p>34-35 (extra) <i>Do you have any examples of the Instagrammers you just explained - who are similar to followers and, thus trustworthy?</i></p> <p>There is this comedian Estee Lalonde [a beauty comedian, 736k followers on Instagram], I think she is kind of relatable, I'm not sure she has those posts specifically, she kind of changed over time as well - became more glamorous just because of the fame and money that she has. She is still very frank, I think. You can see maybe from Instagram stories more of the person's personality than just from the posts, obviously, because they speak with their own voice. But I'm not 100% sure.</p>
19	54:20.0 - 54:21.8	<p>36-37. <i>Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more or less similar to followers, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are more similar to followers?</i></p> <p>I guess less, I mean it's not every person that gets to collaborate with other brands and get these opportunities, you have to be an Instagrammer who have that access so it makes you less relatable in general.</p>
20	55:21.1 - 56:44.2	<p>38-39. <i>Do you think that that decreased similarity of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations less relevant? (so would you be less interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>I guess it would depend again on what it is. If you see a person who is relatable to you and you see them throughout the years evolving and growing and still being transparent what they do and what they sell, you kind of build your relationship. Even though this person is more successful than you, so less relatable to you, you might still feel strongly about them and their products and try to support them. So in that sense, it would be still relevant.</p>
21	56:44.2 - 1:00:11.4	<p>40-41. <i>Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more/less similar to followers like you?</i></p> <p>I was looking at this Instagrammer but I actually found out about her yesterday, when I was doing my research - songofstyle. I didn't know her, I just looked at her Instagram yesterday and instantly saw her bio and it was something like - author of this book, New York Times best-selling author, Forbes</p>

		<p>30 under 30, and this is very LinkedIn kind of profile than Instagram profile; so not trying to be relatable, I don't know if she does try.</p> <p><i>40 (extra) How does that makes you think about Instagrammers like her, being more or less similar to followers like you?</i></p> <p>Less, definitely. I think a lot of the people who are similar to followers and are relatable, also take a lot of Insta Stories during their day, things that you cannot edit so much, that are more in the moment and are more personal, makes them more relatable than just publishing a photo which has been edited and thought about how to place the products or position.</p> <p><i>Do you see something different happening within Insta Stories when they become entrepreneurs? Do they change something when they release their own brand?</i></p> <p>I can't say that I've paid attention to it. I haven't noticed. I mean, with Estee, I think she still posts a lot of Insta Stories which keeps her down to earth, even though she has done a book about jewelry, I'm not sure, so she kept it up, she hasn't changed that.</p>
22	1:00:11.4 - 1:02:55.2	<p><i>42-43. When Instagrammers seem to like and use recommended products more, are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>If they use them, as part of the ad. If they use them, as part of their daily life, then yes. This is something that is good about the legal requirements saying if it's an advertisement or not so you can actually see. If you've seen like few posts that are all Lancôme sponsored and you can tell this is a brand ambassador, I mean they do really like the brand but you can't like all of the products, it gets a bit too much. This is something that's different for a make-up artist because she works with Lancôme, she actually works to produce their products but that's different. If they've used the product over the few years, maybe you can definitely tell that they like it and that's genuine. I mean, the frequency of posts if you are only counting that or if you are also counting the occasions when they use it, maybe. What would they rely on for an important event, something that they probably genuinely like. Or a personal occasion, a birthday or something, that's something that they would choose more carefully if it would be a sponsored post, yeah.</p> <p><i>42-43 (extra) But in general, would you say that when they manage to portray their liking and using recommended products, the recommendations are more relevant?</i></p> <p>Yes.</p>
23	1:02:55.1 - 1:05:39.9	<p><i>44-45. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands seem like they use and like the products they recommend more, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they like and use recommended products more?</i></p> <p>They should use their products if they make them.</p> <p><i>44-45 (extra) Do you think it's portrayed?</i></p> <p>Maybe not as much. I think people are scared to advertise their own products as much because they don't want to be pushy. But then again, you have to show that you're using it because, otherwise, why did you make this product if it's not good enough for you.</p> <p><i>44-45 (extra) What about sponsor brands?</i></p> <p>When talking about sponsor brands, depends on a product category and then again is linked to their expertise. No, no, I don't think it makes them more genuine. If you release a product and then you use it, and then you show through your communication - that would make you more genuine but just a share fact of releasing something wouldn't. So it's more "the how", rather than "the what". And then if you continue to do sponsored posts, something that is connected to your brand, maybe that would make you more genuine - the combination of the two. But if it's nothing to do with your brand, then it doesn't.</p>
24	1:05:39.8 - 1:06:29.0	<p><i>46-47. Let's say that product categories of own and sponsor brands are complementary, do you think that this makes their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>Yeah. I mean if they show both products and they show that they use them, I think it is more relevant, yes.</p>
25	1:06:29.0 - 1:08:35.0	<p><i>48. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts on Instagram in general which shows that they more honestly like and use the products they recommend?</i></p> <p>If they are genuine, then that would just be using the product. Obviously, they have a lot of products to choose from, it's kind of hard to frequently promote one product when you have so many and you want to try them out as well. It's hard to just do it with one post, I think it's about frequency, as well as consistency over a time period like "oh, I like this powder, I used it when I was 15", they can also say that, put it in words rather than showing in practice. And as well with Instagram stories where you are in a more relaxed setting and not a photo shoot, then you can talk about just random stuff and the things that you actually like - that's more genuine than the photoshoot style magazine posts.</p>
26	1:09:59.3 - 1:14:18.3	<p><i>50-51. What do you think is the Instagrammer's motivation when they promote their own brands?</i></p> <p>Well, obviously everything is about money and being successful. You can't deny and it's not something bad; that's their business, that's how they make money, whether it's their own brand or sponsor brand. The question is if it's genuine or not. If it's their passion, if it's something that they are interested in, have expertise in or try to gain expertise in, then it would be more genuine, more personal as a motivation, besides the money aspect which is always there and you can't like to deny it. And you perceive it just like another way to make a buck, then you would be less inclined to buy and, obviously, support that person. It depends whether you invested time in that person's story or just browsing Instagram and following random people because you want some inspiration for some make-up or an outfit. I think if you don't know the story behind the person, then you would be less inclined to buy anything that is their own brand because then you would assume immediately that is just about the money or because it would be unknown. In general, you have to know the brand even to consider it.</p>

27	1:14:18.2 - 1:15:12.9	<p>52-53. <i>What do you think is the Instagrammer's motivation when they promote sponsor brands?</i></p> <p>It's revenue. Definitely revenue. Also, the glamour being a partner of a big brand. Not saying it's bad or good, it's part of their job nowadays and you can always choose who you want to collaborate with if you're famous enough, you have enough followers and build your reputation. And you should choose the ones which are in line with your values.</p>
28	1:15:12.9 - 1:16:09.0	<p>54. <i>Do you believe Instagrammers like and use their own brand more, or sponsor brands more? Or do they like and use both their own and sponsor brands equally?</i></p> <p>That's a good question. It depends on an Instagrammer. Now, people like Zoella and there is one - Fleur De Force, an old-school one who also release products, I think she did eyelashes, and kind of her style was always more high end or maybe now it is high end, and if you release a product that's more targeted at teenagers, you wouldn't necessarily use it yourself or at least it doesn't really suite you. So that's not a good thing. Obviously, they are thinking about audience when they are releasing a product, not just about themselves because a lot of girls who watch Instagrammers or YouTubers, they are just like teenagers and you are maybe like over 25 and you are in different life stage but that's your audience so you have to cater to it. So if going back to liking and using the products, if you have a product that kind of is in line with your general style and you show that you use it, I think that's more trustworthy and genuine.</p> <p>54 (extra) <i>Would you say that these factors are more applicable more to own or sponsor brands?</i></p> <p>I guess your own brand. Or the effect is amplified if it's your own brand.</p>
29	1:18:08.5 - 1:19:03.3	<p>56. <i>How does that affect your opinion about the recommendations?</i></p> <p>Positively, I guess. And that's with both brand: own and sponsor. They can show you why they use it, how it works and they do it on a regular basis or the way they talk about it as well can be more genuine. The way they do their Insta stories or posts. It's about words that they use. So it would influence me positively, yes.</p>
30	1:19:03.3 - 1:20:20.9	<p>57. <i>Is there anything they say or show in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes you feel this way?</i></p> <p>Ah yeah. I mean if they like a product, they will be more specific in their description what's good about it or maybe give you an example, like "oh, I wore this lip gloss and it's not sticky and I wore it on this occasion because it was windy or something", I don't know. It's basically just about giving more examples of the ways you use it, whether it is in a picture or in the text.</p>
31	1:20:20.9 - 1:22:04.3	<p>58. <i>Can you give us an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram which made you feel this way? Or a recent post that you've seen who made you think about liking and using a brand?</i></p> <p>I've always seen Charlotte Tilbury's YouTube though, so she does those very short videos, just make-up application. She does talk about the qualities in depth but it's very business-like because she is not an Instagram personality and if somebody else uses them that you know better that would have a more of the impact on my decision to buy them.</p>
32	1:22:04.3 - 1:26:01.4	<p>59. <i>When you think of Instagrammers who have their own brand, do you think recommendations of own brand stand out more than recommendations of sponsor brands?</i></p> <p>I think that sponsor brands stand out more in a profile when you are scrolling. Because I think I said that it looks more like a magazine usually, I think that there is some kind of guidelines and things that just make it look out of place sometimes. Like, I think, this Aimee - songofstyle, she had one of those videos when she is applying the lipstick, it's an Armani lipstick and it's, obviously, sponsored and it's just a close-up shot of her applying it and it's just so obviously a sponsored post. Because it's very zoomed in on a product, like you don't show much context in the image, I think that's a sign because, I think, that's what brands want, they want all the focus to be on that product and not like the surroundings or the person behind it so that's why it stands out more.</p> <p>The same thing with Chiara Ferragni because she comes up a lot in a conversation, I feel. With this Gucci baby, dressing up your children, which definitely catches my attention more.</p>
33	1:26:01.4 - 1:26:43.2	<p>61-62. <i>Which type of brands do you remember more clearly?</i></p> <p>I think I remember own brands more. Because the sponsored posts, like even if they stand out, you kind of just scroll down like you don't pay much attention to them and if you see that somebody has released their own brand, you're just interested out of curiosity, I guess, to see what they did and how it is made, if it's a collaboration and then you remember more.</p>
34	1:26:43.2 - 1:28:23.2	<p>63-64. <i>When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, which brand do you associate with the Instagrammer more?</i></p> <p>I guess it will be an own brand but then, again, if they are like a brand ambassador for another big beauty brand, like Lancôme or L'Oréal, and they actively promote them, like not just one or two posts, then that would also stay on my mind so I would relate them with this brand. But usually the own one, I guess, if it's something that I remember more.</p> <p>Why?</p> <p>Because it is more personal, I guess, and it's this one thing in comparison to just multiple random brands.</p>
35	1:28:23.2 - 1:30:22.3	<p>65-66. <i>What do you think are the specific aspects of posts or on Instagram in general that make you remember own brand more?</i></p> <p>Well, if it's an own brand, the only way I would know if I see it on Instagram as if they wrote it down below. I was looking on Instagrammers, I was trying to find out whether they have their own product and I had to just click through the posts and read the text, otherwise, I wouldn't know. So it will be the description that I would remember and like be more curious to know. What else... Yeah, I think it's more a text than anything else because the photos don't usually stand out so much, it's more the story behind them than the actual product itself. I don't remember like the packaging Fleur De</p>

		Force's eyelashes or whatever but I remember that she did them because of the story behind it, I don't know why. I don't remember the images so much as the actual idea behind it.
36	1:30:22.3 - 1:32:14.8	<p>67-68. <i>When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, do you think there needs to be a common theme between them (brands)?</i></p> <p>Maybe, yeah. I guess that kind of the common similarities between both also relates to the person itself. So if you use high-end brands all the time and then you sponsor also a lot of high-end brands, you would assume that this person will release something that is kind of the same style and quality. If you are more into a drugstore, more about the like good value for money and sponsor those brands, it's better that you release in the same range.</p>
37	1:32:14.8 - 1:36:34.5	<p>69-70. <i>Do you prefer if Instagrammers who have their own brand recommend brands that are similar to each other, or that differ from each other?</i></p> <p>I mean there is all this thing about Instagram and your feed being curated in a special way, and this only can be achieved by having a style and the products fitting in into that, the whole concept. If you are an expert, for example make-up artist, and you like promote a lot of different brands, maybe that's not a bad thing as well because then you just appeal to different audiences and you show that you are knowledgeable about different products that are not necessarily like connected in their style or price range or whatever. Also shows you're not afraid to experiment and maybe even that you care about the product more than the price, you are not afraid to use cheaper products if they are still good. But Instagram is just kind of this place where it's very much about how you present content and not just as Snapchat, that was more of a between friends, jokes, short snippets, nothing that was thought out that much. While Instagram, you think what you post a lot and especially if you're doing that as a profession. So it feels it's more appealing to the eye if your whole feed has a theme and that means everything that you promote or you produce should be in the same field.</p> <p>69-70 (extra) <i>You mentioned that when Instagrammers recommend different products, they also show their expertise within the field and maybe appeals to different audiences which might also be not a bad thing. Can all Instagrammers do that? Do you think there needs to be a certain condition that the Instagrammer needs to meet in order to be able recommend different products?</i></p> <p>Yeah, for sure. When I was mentioning it, I was thinking more for make-up artists, rather than normal people. And then the driver of the followers and the purchases would be more the expertise of the person, rather than their Instagram feed. But if you are a normal person and you want to appeal to an audience, it's better to have like a curated feed than to just post anything.</p>
38	1:36:34.4 - 1:39:59.9	<p>71-72. <i>How does the similarity between brands affect your opinion about the recommendation of sponsor brand?</i></p> <p>Well, I guess, it would make the recommendations a bit more genuine because they, obviously, have a preference for this type of style. Yeah, it's quite straightforward. I don't think it would hurt in any way. Obviously, they can't be like too similar because then there is a problem like of copying other people stuff. But if it's just like in the same range, then I think it's fine.</p> <p>71-72 (extra) <i>So you mentioned that when the own brand and a sponsor brand are similar, you kind of believe that they have a preference. So does that mean that when an Instagrammer launches their own product, they do show their preferences, their style? In what way?</i></p> <p>Yes, I do. Well if they use the product themselves and if you've been following them for a while and you see like "oh she is a fan of all of the high-end brands and she likes the product to look as good as it performs", then you would expect the Instagrammer to also put a lot of effort into packaging design and all that stuff. When I think about the feeling and look of a product, I mostly think of the packaging and the presentation box that comes in. If it fits in with everything else what they are wearing, so it shows a preference, for sure. I mean, if that Instagrammer has a distinguishable style because a lot of people do, I think, who become famous, and it's just not switching the styles, obviously, sporty and fancy.</p>

5.3 RF3

Line	Timespan	Content
1	0:00.0 - 12:54.1	<p>1-2. <i>When Instagrammers are more trustworthy (meaning more honest, believable), are their recommendations more relevant?</i></p> <p>I just think that relevance doesn't come from trustworthiness, it comes from whether this product is relevant for me as a customer and does that have any effect that I want to achieve or something. For example, with hair products, if I don't want wavy hair, even though I trust that person, how that product will be relevant if I don't need this product.</p> <p><i>What about, for example, if you see a product you need such as a product for straight hair, and then you would have two Instagrammers, one you trust more and another one you trust less. Would you say this first Instagrammer who you trust more, would make you more interested in that product?</i></p> <p>That's a good question. Probably I would be more interested into the ad and will try to look into more details and if it's an Instagram story, I would definitely swipe up to see the web shop and what is going on about the product. If some of them promote the same thing but I don't believe in them in general and I don't really have a strong affection for them, probably I wouldn't do the same thing. Maybe I would even have a negative effect because I would know "I like them" but compared to the other person, and just in general compared to how I perceive that person, if I don't have a strong affection to that person, then it could also be a negative one, then I am definitely not choosing that product. But if I really have an affection on that specific person, I would definitely go and browse for more information. So if it's an Instagram story and video when a hair stylist is doing something, I would definitely look at that video, what she is suggesting to do, what techniques she is applying and stuff. Guin-Britt Coiffure [1. Indre Trustworthiness] has her own brand and then she makes videos with her brand, just doing something on herself. And I just like how she looks because she looks Scandinavian, she is old but she is going to a gym, so she is taking care of herself, I just like the way she looks. A funny thing - yesterday I was doing my nails and we have started talking about her and my nail specialist said she heard that in real life Guin-Britt is a bitch. And I'm just like "well, if you have a brand and you want to stand in this business, this cruel world, maybe you have to be".</p> <p><i>So you started to defend her because you like her?</i></p> <p>Yeah.</p>

		<p><i>You just mentioned that if an Instagrammer or hairdresser is applying the product or doing something that could showcase the product and that would make you swipe and see it. Do you think that this application of product somehow shows the trustworthiness to you?</i></p> <p>Yeah, then I can see if that product really has an effect, if that professional is doing something with her product or not necessarily with her own brand, and then I can see what is the maximum. Because is this is what an expert can get, so what maximum I can get as a follower. So I evaluate my ability and what value I can get from that product.</p> <p><i>Do you want to tell us maybe more about this affection that you have towards Instagrammers, where does it come from? What does an Instagrammer have to be in order for you to have this affection for them?</i></p> <p>Probably it's just about the personality. For some Instagrammers, I like the way they look, how they behave, what kind of lifestyle do they have. Of course, I enjoy when people go on vacation and post nice pictures, when they are going to the gym and then yeah, basically just a frontal image, most of the times. Some of them I got more affected about hearing their stories behind, e.g. there is one girl in US Leandra Medine Cohen [2. Indre Trustworthiness], I wouldn't have followed her but my friend referred to her "she looked a bit odd but she is so cool and this and this and that". My first reaction was "maybe I wouldn't know, maybe I wouldn't follow her in the first place". But when I have started following her "hmm, she is so interesting". She usually uploads many stories, she is very focused on shoes and accessories, she seems quite natural and quite specific but she is very kind-hearted, you know she is just being herself, she is crazy about shoes and she would always stress about that. So she has her style, so I would define, even the ones who look nice, they have their own style, their lifestyle, their opinion, they are brave to do whatever they feel like doing, they just attracted like-minded people and everyone just want to be with them.</p>
2	13:05.3 - 17:30.0	<p><i>3. Does the fact that they have their own brand make them seem like they have more trustworthiness, believability?</i></p> <p>I wouldn't agree 100% because I have no clue if the products are good. So unless I try, then I can say "ok, yeah she is good at what she is promoting with this".</p> <p><i>So for you, it wouldn't be enough just to see that this person has a brand, you need to try that it's good and only then you can judge her level of trustworthiness?</i></p> <p>Yeah.</p> <p><i>Why you think is that?</i></p> <p>It's because probably because of my upbringings and stuff, just the way I usually purchase things, I don't really chase trends, I really go for the quality so it doesn't really matter for me that somebody is doing a pursue, yeah I can believe in the story, sometimes they make them remain value out of product, but if I try and I don't really identify myself with that product or it doesn't really work well so what can I do, I mean. Then, I would know "ok, this person is good at advertising and for some people, that's enough to buy and use the products". Maybe I just belong to another type of customers who would be "yeah, it's bulshitting, I would just go for something I don't really follow, maybe it's [inaudible] shampoo, for example, but there is nothing that can promote that on Instagram". Yeah, for me is very important to try and then I know does that fit me because maybe it's a good product for 90% of the market, not for me.</p> <p><i>So maybe we could ask you what makes you try the product, then?</i></p> <p>Availability, because if that is only online, how on earth I can try.</p> <p><i>In case it's at SEPHORA, just around the corner. What then, would make you try the recommended product? What can an Instagrammer do?</i></p> <p>They should say something "check this out, it's at SEPHORA, it's perfect for beach waves". And then next time I'm passing by SEPHORA, I'll check and ask an assistant what she knows about this product and compare to the other products.</p>
3	17:29.9 - 20:31.3	<p><i>5. Do you think that increased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more interesting? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>Yeah, of course. Because I mean if that product fits well, then I would say "ok, that shouldn't be so much of the difference for the other products and next time I would consider the next one". Or she would maintain the level of trustworthiness. So if I used it and it would be like "ok, yeah, check, that's exactly what I thought is going to be like". So she managed to communicate the message clearly so that means, if I believe in this post and if I was curious enough and attentive enough in other posts, then I could also identify "ok, she is not trying to hide something, she is not trying to beautify something". If I observe something about the product, then I can say "ok, that is what it's gonna be like in real life as well". So after the first trial, I can decide how is going to be with other products.</p> <p>But if it was a failure, then it also be like, I wouldn't do this again. I could unfollow her or follow only for the nice pictures or to see the way she brands and advertises. It's nice for my eye but I wouldn't believe in the products she recommends.</p>
4	20:31.3 - 25:43.9	<p><i>7. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes the recommendations seem more believable?</i></p> <p>I actually have no clue.</p> <p><i>maybe less believable?</i></p> <p>What comes to my mind right away, is that sometimes I just see while scrolling through the stories I just see some ads from brands which, of course, are retail brands. And, of course, these Instagrammers don't do these ads. [then she continues talking about paid ads which are not relevant for this topic] I think it's important to build an ongoing relationship.</p> <p><i>So you mentioned the importance of creating an ongoing relationship, how is this related to trustworthiness?</i></p>

		<p>Because if I see those videos and stories and everything about how the person works and how she or she lives and everything, then I can also make my own opinion about the person and personality and just say does that fit me. That just builds a much deeper relationship, it might not be directly related with a product itself, just immediately, but it builds a friendship in a way. Because I have an affection, even though that person doesn't really know, but I have an affection for that person.</p> <p><i>So you think the trustworthiness is important when building the relationships?</i></p> <p>I think so. Yeah.</p>
5	25:52.0 - 27:00.4	<p><i>10. When Instagrammers have more expertise (about the products or industry), does that make the recommendations more interesting?</i></p> <p>Yes, definitely. Because then I can also relate with trustworthiness. If they are experts in the industry, then why shouldn't I trust, it just makes my life easier, you know. Then, I don't have to go and browse through everything. I'm just "ok, that person says that, ok I'm going to believe it".</p>
6	27:00.4 - 30:42.5	<p><i>12. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more expertise? Or can it?</i></p> <p>I would say it can be, yeah. So then I would refer to this hairstylist Gun-Britt Coiffure because I think she is selling a brand for quite some time and she has been in the industry for a long time, then I would say that she knows why she is working with, she knows if there is a flaw in the product so that she could change it, I would like to believe that she has the power to change once it is released in the market. I would hope so because if she has her own salon and she has her brand and then her brand is also sold in some kind of magazine or hair stylist shops that I have seen, I would tend to believe in her more. But I compare with people who don't have any brands and then they use a variety of different products and that makes me as a user a little bit more confused because that might be rather good but if it's a different line or a different producer, how much of the person itself is involved, so I would say, if I would believe a person is working for such a long time and she knows what she is doing, then that makes me much more believe in her as well.</p> <p><i>As an expert?</i></p> <p>Yeah, as an expert.</p> <p><i>You said that they can have more expertise, could you elaborate more on how that happens?</i></p> <p>I would say they would then, observe how the products react on different people, what should be improved. Then, they by using their own brand, they can work on it as well and just adapt it to specific changes, to specific people. Once they launch a product, they are in charge adapting it through time. That's how I would like to believe.</p>
7	30:42.5 - 34:40.2	<p><i>14. Do you think that the increased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>Maybe not necessarily. Because there are good experts but they may not launch their own brands for some maybe personal or business reasons, but they have good sponsorships. If they believe into products they are using, maybe other factors. For example, I know a cosmetologist [3. Indre Expertise, beauty and facial specialist] that I used to go to and she doesn't have her own brand because she works for the salon but she uses all these different products which are quite upscale and luxurious and her recommendations and her expertise makes me wanna think that those brands and those products make me think they are also much relevant to me as a person, as a user. She has an Instagram profile, she represents Guinot and not only, she is somehow a brand ambassador, she is from Lithuania. She works in an upscale salon and she posted this one and what I comment on this brand. I went to a beauty salon for my facial treatment and then they used that one but the women in that salon didn't seem that much expert. But I said "ok, I'll just give the products a try because it still cost a lot and you know, will see". And I was still quite hesitant should I believe in products or shouldn't I and then a few days ago, she posted this video [4. Indre Expertise, beauty and facial specialist] and I was like "ok, if she posted that, I might be willing to believe in that brand itself, even though the other person who I might don't really know and didn't trust applied this product". But the level of confidence increased as I saw this.</p> <p><i>And does that relate with her expertise?</i></p> <p>Yes, very much so. Because she seems like an expert in this beauty and facial treatments and she is in collaboration with Sothys [prestigious beauty salon and spa], she represents that brand and Guinot and another one. So she doesn't have her own brand, only represents brands. She uses them, shows that she describes what are the features and everything.</p>
8	34:40.2 - 36:45.4	<p><i>16. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that shows more expertise?</i></p> <p>I would say they are doing pretty much the same. I don't know if there is a huge difference but most of them they show some promo videos and describe well the products and also do some kind of their personal profiles so that the relationship would be developed, on a friendly level.</p>
9	36:45.3 - 45:15.0	<p><i>18. When Instagrammers are more attractive, are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>Yeah. I would say when I identify the person as an attractive, it can be attractive by different means, right? The way he or she looks, the way she or he does the professional life or the way they live the personal life. So it can be a mix of all the areas or it can be just one is dominating and that's why I like that person or find the recommendations more relevant. I would maybe touch upon another Instagrammer, she is from Ukraine and mostly posts in Russian. In some of the stories, she asked whether we as followers would like to see more English content. But I can understand Russian to some extent but, of course, I voted for yes but she doesn't have her own brand, she much promotes different looks and fashion, combines different outfits and then she posts about the brand that she is wearing and stuff. A special thing about her is that she knows how to talk and she expresses her personality through just by being herself and talking and being really really really convincing that she is using and everything and she just basically like talking and I like listening to her. She expresses a lot of energy which is attractive to me because she is confident in herself and then she knows what she is doing and all these things and she just doesn't leave a gap to doubt about her, she seems that she is living what she is talking about and she just breathes in that. I can feel that everything goes through her.</p> <p><i>Do you think that then, her recommendations are more relevant?</i></p>

		<p>Yeah. I also look at her YouTube profile where she also talks about what is trending on Summer or Autumn and a funny fact - on one video she was telling about some earrings and she said "girls, it doesn't matter that all the shops are selling these types of earrings, it's really getting out of the trend and you will see them in supermarkets and everywhere and they are going away". And then I was like "oh yeah, then I'm not going to buy those" even though it was on sale. So I didn't buy any of those but in half a year I saw different kinds of earrings within the same shape, just coming as a new collection and I was like "what's going on, she said that it was going out and I didn't buy it".</p> <p><i>How did you feel about her afterwards?</i></p> <p>I was hesitant who should I believe in. Then I saw another video where she said like "guys, let me put it this way if you really like something - go ahead, buy it and style it, it's totally fine, I'm not denying you and forcing you not to". Of course, I was "yeah, yeah, if you want to be really stylish, you should believe in her because it's about your personal style and what do you feel like wearing and stuff, but if you really want to be stylish, I still would believe in her because if she said so, I'm going to believe in her. I feel, what I agreed with her upon, is that most of the brands usually sell whatever they have and sometimes they just use the material, to kind of just do something from them and get some money out of it. That's how I saw this situation as well.</p>
10	45:14.9 - 46:46.3	<p><i>20. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are more attractive?</i></p> <p>Maybe yes in a sense that then they create and live up by the stories that they make. So then they have to maintain their image, pursue what the brand is talking about and, if I think more broadly, I'm into that kind of sustainable fabrics and then I feel like that makes me more engaged into the whole story what they are creating.</p>
11	46:46.2 - 49:09.1	<p><i>22. Do you think that the increased attractiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>I think it has a positive effect but it's just a matter is it relevant for me at that very moment? [after explaining the question more clearly] I would be likely more interested to find out more about the products. I would hope in also an honest opinion about the products, so I would hope that they are at least somehow at the same level as the previous ones that I believe in.</p>
12	49:09.1 - 50:57.1	<p><i>24. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more attractive?</i></p> <p>I think showing themselves from a personal profile but those who don't have brand also do that. Maybe they are showing a little bit more of personal life than the ones who only do sponsorships. That also depends on a person.</p>
13	50:57.1 - 58:32.6	<p><i>26. When Instagrammers are more respected, are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>Yeah, of course. If I really respect the person, my trustworthiness just exceeds. Because it's super important for me to try things and to know by myself can I really trust. Whenever I can if it's a product, I would be more likely to test it out and see does that really work for me? Does the quality match my expectations and value? So when I know that a person is qualified, those achievements and everything makes me feel that this person is qualified and the way he or she does her work, everything just proves every aspect, then I would be also more willing to believe because there are also people who only get sponsorships and I don't really know them and if personal stories don't really convince me, I will be "so what?". If I really don't believe in you, even though you showed some accomplishments, but if I still don't really engage and believe in you, and you are suggesting this brand, I would be like "I might want to skip this".</p> <p>So I respect people that I can somehow check their trustworthiness. In that sense, then I would say I know Katerina because I've been in her salon and I know how she is as a person and I have this kind of respect what she does in life. Whenever she would say "put honey on your face", I would say "yes" because I believe in her, I respect her so much. But if there is another girl who I don't really believe in and I, therefore, don't really respect her at that same level.</p> <p><i>Does expertise relate with respect?</i></p> <p>Yeah because I know that she goes to different seminars and she also keeps updated her expertise level so that makes me respect her as a professional because then I respect her efforts in delivering the best service and experience to me.</p>
14	58:32.6 - 59:15.8	<p><i>28. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more respect?</i></p> <p>I would say in general, yes, because then I would also feel community support, the people, not only me, but others who believe in them and then I can see that those people come there for the brand and a person who is delivering service and in that way, the expertise also grows and the respect. I can feel that they are more people who respect the person who has a brand and I can feel that "ok, I might belong to those people".</p> <p><i>What about your personal perspective? Does the fact that they can their own brand, can you make them respect more?</i></p> <p>Not necessarily, it's all about expertise and accomplishments. How much they are keeping up to date.</p> <p><i>But kind of still if you would see that the crowd is respecting, you would be more inclined to respect more?</i></p> <p>Yes.</p>
15	59:46.2 - 1:02:50.6	<p><i>30. Do you think that increased respect of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>Yeah. I'm not really sure if that would be somehow different from people who don't have their own brand. I wouldn't differentiate between these two groups but I can clearly say that if I respect them more, then I also should be interested in their recommendations more. I'm not really sure about me respecting them for the fact that they launched their own brand because it might be a shitty brand, I don't know.</p>

		<p><i>What about taking the person who you already like and trust? Let's say, for example, this Katerina, if she would start her brand now, would that contribute to your respect for her?</i></p> <p>I don't know, I would still need to check. Because I don't know what kind of partnerships and deals she has made with a production company and I would still be, like, about the story of the product itself, also what it's special from the market because there are lots of products already, why she needs to launch something.</p> <p><i>What about if you would see that the crowd of following is started to respect her more?</i></p> <p>Then I would think maybe it's because of the product and I would believe in the products, yes.</p>
16	1:02:50.6 - 1:05:29.1	<p><i>32. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their post or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more respected?</i></p> <p>It's about the action of generosity. So the people who have their own brands, if I can see that they are not bitches. If I feel that they are not suddenly interested in making them flashy, then I would say "ok, they are also human and then they care about other people". So, for example, this hairstylist, she shows some pictures when she is with her employees or when they are making something with her team or she makes a video of her employee doing some kind of hairstyle. Or maybe she treats employees with some cake today and she bakes something for them. I would be like "oh, it's so cute". Then I would respect her for the fact that she is not really chasing money and she is more caring about the people and clients. And if I would be her client, if the service wouldn't be delivered by her, then I would feel like the people she is working with and using the products as well, are also reliable so I would indirectly feel that you know, she creates this respect towards her through her staff and whoever makes a haircut for me. Then it's just all related.</p>
17	1:05:29.0 - 1:08:00.0	<p><i>34. When Instagrammers are more similar to followers like you, are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>Not necessarily, it can go both ways. So maybe if that's my peer, for example, doing a sponsorship I would like "him, maybe it's interesting, maybe I should check it out". But I also want to believe in some kind of fairy tales and stories that they put in an imaginary, beautiful, luxurious life. I will look at the lip gloss and I will say "oh, it's raspberry pink colour" and then they would be saying "this is some kind of, you can feel the raspberry touch on your lips when the sun is shining and this is, you know, a sun-kissed lips with raspberries touch". I want to believe in that a little bit, to feel some kind of magic about the product. Also, I don't really want to relate to what I have right now. So when there are people or peers of mine who does something similar, I feel like "ok, I'm at this level". But if there is someone that I can look up for, then I think "that's the next level I'm going to be" and then I'm going to be surrounded by those people, then I'm going to go and search for the high level.</p> <p><i>So would you say that they need to be similar to you but to the certain extent? That they would also have some kind of attractive features that you would look up for?</i></p> <p>Yes, definitely.</p>
18	1:08:05.0 - 1:11:17.2	<p><i>36. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are more similar to followers?</i></p> <p>No, not necessarily. I would say if you own a brand, then you definitely not similar because you made something by yourself and I didn't. I'm just here to follow you. But people who use someone else's brand, they are more accessible, I would say. I identify them to be more on the same ground because I don't have a brand, you don't have a brand, you use something and you just want to make others aware about benefits or features about products. I could so that as well, of course, the network would be smaller, in the beginning. Ok, that's what I usually do to my friends.</p> <p><i>So when they get this own brand, in what way do they start differing from normal people?</i></p> <p>For me, it's about how much efforts it took for them to develop a brand and make sure that everything goes in place, promotion and everything. So it's just about how much effort they put, even wanting their brand to be there. Because how many different products do we have in the market right now. It's a lot so why would we need one more? So it's like a signature, it's something about that person.</p> <p><i>Can you name that? What do you think about them when do you think about that effort?</i></p> <p>I think that's the person who, first of all, I think about the content of the product - how on earth would you come up with the content of the product, even though you have been working with different brand and stuff, how would you know what the shampoo is consisting of. Maybe starting from that, it is possible to combine different things, but the effort on finding the supplier who would like to do something for you and just maintaining the brand and makes them look less similar to you.</p>
19	1:11:17.2 - 1:15:36.7	<p><i>38. Do you think that decreased similarity of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations less relevant or less interesting?</i></p> <p>No, I don't know. No. Doesn't really matter. It's hard to touch. For me it's more the product itself, can I use the product, does it fit me. But then maybe the respect just grows because they did something good but interest in the product... but actually she might be similar to me in some other areas, in her personal life and then it could somehow balance it out so I would still think she is a normal person but I respect her effort to make her own brand so that product is that good, I would be also interested in other products. It doesn't matter that she is different to me, that's alright. I'm happy for her, I'm not jealous "oh, she has own brand, I would like to have own brand as well". Maybe I will someday, maybe I won't. I'm just happy that she is doing her thing, she likes what she is doing, I really like to look at good looking and nice people who just enjoy their life so I'm happy that she is so brave and she achieved this. She is happy, I'm also happy.</p> <p><i>What if she is able to keep this balance? She put all the effort but at the same time, she is down on earth so it's kind of balanced out. What can you tell about her recommendations then, your interest in her recommendations?</i></p> <p>I would be interested in her recommendations because I would see her as my friend then. I still have an affection for her and respect.</p> <p><i>So what if we would take two examples of Instagrammers: one who balanced out the similarity and aspirational aspect, and another one who put a lot of efforts but, at the same time, she is not showing her real personality, she is showing less than this girl.</i></p>

		<p>I would say I would keep a distance from the second girl.</p> <p><i>Would you less interested in her recommendations, then?</i></p> <p>I would say so. Because there is a bigger distance between me and her and our friendship.</p>
20	1:15:36.7 - 1:17:24.7	<p>40. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more similar to followers like you? You mentioned showing personality, how else they can keep that balance for you? Or do they?</p> <p>Compared to others who don't have a brand, they also show their personality. So but maybe the ones who have their brand, they just show a little bit more of that? But I don't even know how else they could balance it's just about, I don't know, being true about products, not trying to be beautified, showing some family, personal life, sharing some things. I like these scales with heart emoji on Instagram, it makes her look like she is more approachable. She breaks the distance; she makes herself more available.</p>
21	1:17:24.7 - 1:21:21.8	<p>42. When Instagrammers seem to like and use recommended products more, are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</p> <p>Two different cases popped into my mind. She just tried something and she liked it and then she just made a review, and another thing is that a person is using the product for quite a while and they know what they are talking about. With the first group, I would be like "hmm, maybe that's something new, I would like to try, let's see in a long-term, maybe I will see negative, contradicting fact, also by her or something" so it would like just observing the market. But if it's something that a person is using for a longer period of time, I would be like "ok, maybe it's something I would like to consider".</p>
22	1:21:21.7 - 1:22:39.8	<p>44. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they like and use recommended products more?</p> <p>I can only reflect on that hair stylist when she uses her own brand on her own hair, I mean like "ok, if she will not lose her hair right away, then I'm interested in that as well". I think it does have a positive influence that the person is using the product itself. But then, again, if that product fits her skin or hair or something, it's not necessarily mean that it will fit me. But it has a better likelihood that I would be more interested to try on something that has already been proved for a longer time by the expert.</p>
23	1:22:43.0 - 1:24:47.1	<p>46. Do you think that difference makes their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</p> <p>Because then I would believe that she knows what she is talking about, knows all the flaws, and hopefully, she is telling the flaws.</p> <p><i>So you believe that she likes and uses products, would you be more interested in them? Because you would think she really knows what she says because she likes them?</i></p> <p>Yeah. First of all, I would hope that she or he just objectively evaluate the product. And first of all, she lists all pros and cons and say her own reflection, how much she really liked it. And not really hiding inefficiencies, there are no perfect products... More accurate recommendations make me more interested if I need those products.</p>
24	1:24:47.1 - 1:24:48.8	<p>48. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts on Instagram in general which shows that they more honestly like and use the products they recommend? You already said trying out on themselves, right?</p> <p>Yeah. Maybe it's about the representation of the product itself. If she really believes in that brand, then I can feel that she is genuinely talking about it and it's not only a sponsorship when she kind of need to taste and just say a general phrase that anyone could use. You know because sometimes the message that they communicate is so universal, it could be told by anyone. But if I can feel that she is putting her own perspective on the product, then it makes more personalised and then I should believe in that as well.</p> <p><i>What does she do to make it believe in a product? To make you think she believes in a product?</i></p> <p>The way she talks, the way she interacts with a product, all the body language, voice, the way she touches a product. Sometimes it's just taking a cream and talking how that the cream is beautiful. But maybe show a little bit more, care and affection to a person she is delivering a message, just me natural, of course, it can be artistic features or skills or sometimes it can be an obstacle that she can... the product is really good but she just doesn't know, she can't really communicate it in a very honest way that everyone would believe in her. So it goes a lot about being an expert, her being herself and then yeah... For me, I don't really like those fake texts, high-level kind of speech that they deliver. Or sometimes, even an actress or public speakers, I don't like when people are taught how to speak and they just say in a correct intonation that everybody else would believe in that. I'm more like, show me more, show me more heart, show me more emotion, the way to talk, the way you behave. So as long as I can see that, that's how I make trust about the person who is talking.</p> <p><i>Do you have an example of an Instagrammer who actually keeps her genuine way of speaking as you just referred to?</i></p> <p>I would say Guin-Britt, as for sure. [showing a video from the Instagram profile] So she is not using it fast just to do it, the way she talks is just being cute and I don't know, she doesn't really bother not to use makeup, she just shows that she is also a normal person, because when I look at her other posts or just a picture itself. She models sometimes, so usually she has her hair volumized so there is a huge difference between how I see her in this picture of having her hair done and then she is not afraid of showing her hair just kind of pretty wet, dry hair and just being herself.</p>
25	1:31:05.6 - 1:35:08.6	<p>50. What do you think is the Instagrammer's motivation when they promote their own brands?</p> <p>I would say their motivation is to attract long-term customers, that they would have a constant follower base and then they could use those people and convincing and, of course, buying those products, that's for sure. But maybe securing customer base.</p> <p><i>If you would think about these two categories that I just mentioned? If you would need to ascribe to one of them, which one would you choose?</i></p>

		<p>I would choose a genuine one. I can tell you a Lithuanian host Aistis, he makes perfumes. Honestly, I would never buy. I don't believe in this, he has been an actor, a radio host and all the sudden he releases perfume - bam. I can think that yeah, maybe he is just changing his profile, going more into perfumes, but no I would still don't believe.</p> <p><i>But in thinking more general?</i></p> <p>In general, I would say that they do that because they genuinely believe in that. It has to be integrated into the whole profile of an Instagrammer, personality and all aspects.</p>
26	1:35:08.5 - 1:36:45.7	<p>52. <i>What do you think is the Instagrammer's motivation when they promote sponsor brands?</i></p> <p>It can be that, for example, that they genuinely believe in that product, even though if they have their own brand, but they somehow match to some level, then it's why not. But I would still think that they do it because they want that themselves, not because of money. Because I think they will just ruin their reputation if people will not like that product itself.</p> <p><i>You mentioned a match or like a consistency. Can you elaborate a little bit more, how you see that?</i></p> <p>I see it that a person knows his own brand and then if there is someone else who does something different maybe or similar category, then they can also evaluate that product based on the standards that they use and they believe in. I would believe that a product would be matching the same level and maybe giving different effects or using alternative ingredients.</p>
27	1:36:45.6 - 1:37:48.9	<p>54. <i>Do you believe the Instagrammer likes and uses both their own and sponsor brands equally?</i></p> <p>Their own because that's the whole motivation to have their own brands. Just to create this trustworthiness of who they are and support the story and stuff. If they would start doing sponsorships, then they would decrease by believability in them.</p> <p><i>How does that affect your opinion about their recommendations? So for example, how does that believe affects your interest in own brand?</i></p> <p>I think that if they believe in their brand, I should believe in their brand too.</p> <p><i>What about a sponsor brand? If you believe, kind of, that they less use them?</i></p> <p>I would just say, it's just a different kind of product. It would be of high relevance for me because I would expect it will be matching the quality of own brand, I would have confidence in using a sponsor brand. But I would believe that it would enrich their brand portfolio.</p>
28	1:37:48.8 - 1:39:24.2	<p>58. <i>Is there anything they say or show in their posts or on Instagram in general that creates that feeling?</i></p> <p>Having the content of own brand like 80-90%, compared to a sponsor brand. So I would say they should need to use their own brand much more. If they have sponsors, let's say 30%, and 70% for own brand.</p> <p><i>How do they show they use them?</i></p> <p>They just post pictures and, you know, upload stories.</p> <p><i>So frequency? The more they show, the more they use?</i></p> <p>Yeah.</p>
29	1:41:42.1 - 1:45:23.5	<p>59. <i>When you think of Instagrammers who have their own brands, do you think endorsements of own brand stand out more than endorsements of sponsor brands?</i></p> <p>I have Pinatex, they are doing fabrics out of pineapple leaves. And they usually post everything about themselves and once they posted about Hugo Boss. Of course, my eye caught this because that was something extra and then it goes 3 posts about Hugo Boss and then everything else - 12 - goes about themselves. That's kind of the ratio that I would use. Or maybe once they also used something with Adidas, I don't know that was just a story. And that also flashed out a little bit just because it was unusual, it was a collaboration.</p> <p><i>So when they are consistent in their communication, showing, for example, own brand which has a specific colour, type and suddenly post about an endorsement which clearly doesn't have the same aspects, so ...</i></p> <p>it is clearer to notice.</p>
30	1:45:23.5 - 1:47:47.9	<p>61. <i>Which type of brands do you remember more clearly?</i></p> <p>It's a hard question, I don't really know. I just think when someone is doing a consistent job with the own brand, that sticks in my mind unconsciously and more firmly. And I would just consider a sponsorship as some kind of a campaign, as a temporary thing. So it might be relevant for that very moment but in a long-term I would remember something that goes on a regular basis.</p>
31	1:47:47.8 - 1:48:56.8	<p>63. <i>When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, which brand do you associate with the Instagrammer more?</i></p> <p>The one that they have, just because it's their own baby. And the new stuff is just for the sake of variety. So you would perceive own brand as the main one.</p>
32	1:48:56.7 - 1:50:55.2	<p>65. <i>What do you think are the specific aspects of posts or on Instagram in general that make you remember own brand more?</i></p>

		Frequency, consistency within posts. So, for example, then Guin-Britt has her posts, I can see the product in the same style, it's a white bottle with black letters and it's clearly seen and when I just scroll I can see "ok, another white bottle". And then there are a lot of white and black pictures and that's her name in the background so she makes photos of the hairstyles afterwards and then she has her stand behind and that maintains the same font and the same colour so whenever I scroll, I have in mind of how her bottle looks and whenever I'm walking on the street, I see them in the shop window "oh, I saw it somewhere, that's exactly what I've seen on Instagram" so it caught my attention by constantly having the same image in the back of my mind.
33	1:50:55.2 - 1:54:55.8	<p>67. When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, do you think there needs to be a common theme between them (brands)?</p> <p>I don't really know an Instagrammer having her own brand and do sponsorships. It does not necessarily have to be a common, but it has to be somehow interesting, somehow different; for me, it does not necessarily need to be the same thing but it can enrich the brand with some other aspects. So it should just maintain the same level of confidence for me of the product quality. Because let's say Guin-Britt is using her own shampoos, I have no clue what they are made of, but I would guess it's a lot of chemicals. Let's say she just promotes something with clean and red and they would explain how they are made of, I would be like "oh, it's interesting because it's a little bit different, they use for these shampoos natural ingredients and that's a bit different from what she sells herself but that enriches her collection and that makes her more open for innovation and different things". And then I would guess "ok, since I don't really believe in natural products and don't perceive them as qualified as chemical ones and if she promotes that, then I would expect the product to have the same quality level and would be more confident in buying those natural things because I would believe she wouldn't promote them, otherwise.</p> <p><i>But you still kind of expect them to be from the same hair care, so there needs to be some kind of theme going on?</i></p> <p>Yeah.</p>
34	1:54:55.8 - 1:57:10.1	<p>69. Do you prefer if Instagrammers who have their own brand recommend brands that are similar to each other, or that differ from each other?</p> <p>It can be a mixture.</p> <p><i>In what ways they need to be similar, for example?</i></p> <p>The theme [category], the quality level, I would say the trustworthiness of the brands, it shouldn't be contradictory. Let's say, I wouldn't hope she would all of the sudden would start to promoting L'Oréal brands but that could be something new in the market that needs support let's say. Or some kind of organic Swedish brand, which is super cool, and she is like "guys, check it out, because it's interesting". So for me, L'Oréal would be lower scale, even if it's professional, it's still retailing.</p> <p><i>So if she supports the brand just because it's hyped, it's new and she just saw that it's cool, you don't mind promoting this brand even though it's not very similar?</i></p> <p>Yeah.</p> <p><i>But if there is a usual retailer brand which is not similar?</i></p> <p>Then I wouldn't believe in that product. Then I would doubt why she would have this sponsorship.</p>
35	1:57:10.1 - 1:59:13.6	<p>71. How does the similarity between brands affect your opinion about the recommendation of sponsor brand?</p> <p>It can be different but it can be supplementary somehow. It shouldn't be contradicting, if you are doing something long-term, they don't promote something which is just for a short term or something.</p> <p><i>So in which situation you would accept a sponsor brand more?</i></p> <p>I would say maybe where they are similar or complimentary but having different features. I don't really need another option because it just makes my life harder but if a sponsor brand suggests something extra, then why not.</p>

5.4 RF4

Line	Timespan	Content
1	0:00.0 - 3:55.5	<p>1-2. When Instagrammers are more trustworthy (meaning more honest, believable), are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</p> <p>If I consider them as trustworthy, yes, of course, I would say that their recommendations are more reliable. Because if I already have that trust of them, then the things that they say, I would listen to.</p>
2	3:55.4 - 6:05.7	<p>3-4. Does the fact that they have their own brand make them seem like they have more trustworthiness?</p> <p>I would say yes, both. Because they have knowledge enough to actually create a brand themselves, and also because for the products themselves, I would say, feels like they have put all of their knowledge into the products, so it feels like, it would be more trustworthy.</p> <p><i>If you would also think about trustworthiness as their characteristic in general, because they still do sponsorships, they still talk about some issues. Do you think the fact they release a brand, change your perception towards how trustworthy they are as people?</i></p> <p>I would say maybe yes, for the same point. Because they are entrepreneurial, it feels like they have some like more extra knowledge, they are more into the things that are writing and posting about, so I would say, that makes them more trustworthy. But, I think, I see your point in maybe if they are</p>

		posting about other content, other sponsor brands if that makes them more trustworthy because they are entrepreneurial? I would say a little because I think they have like, become nerds in that topic so it feels like they know a little bit more than the average person. So I would say that it makes their content a little bit more trustworthy.
3	6:05.6 - 8:46.6	<p><i>5-6. Do you think that increased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more interesting? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>I think, the recommendations increased with trustworthiness, because they know more about that but, compared to regular Instagrammers.</p> <p><i>Would you be more interested in products compared to regular Instagrammers because of their increased trustworthiness?</i></p> <p>I think it depends a little bit, actually. If you would think, beauty-wise, I think I would be a little bit more interested in the ones that are entrepreneurial. Because I feel like they have the knowledge and I, kind of, really want to know about the effect of that product, ingredients or something, and I think that entrepreneurial Instagrammers will be more trustworthy there. Because they have more knowledge, they are really into that topic. But the recommendations, in general, maybe if beauty entrepreneurial Instagrammers give the recommendations of food, I don't know, then I don't think that their trustworthiness is other compared to a regular influencer. So I think if they keep the topic of the industry, then I think it's different but, otherwise, no.</p>
4	8:46.6 - 12:17.6	<p><i>7. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes the recommendations seem more believable?</i></p> <p>I think so. I think that the entrepreneurial Instagrammers, they are more professional in the way they are communicating. I would say also because both they have learned from their experience that they need to write certain stuff, create content in a certain way in order to best persuade their followers. But also, since I believe that maybe as an entrepreneur you like have some criteria of what you need to include in your posts, kind of, to make them sell or to make them increase followers. So I think you can see a difference from an entrepreneurial content, compared to regular Instagrammers. I think examples would be like the professional level of the content, in terms of, e.g. photographs - they are more professional taken, higher quality, they are really good in showcasing the product in the right way, with the right elements, compared to regular Instagrammer that maybe take a nice picture but don't really know how to best communicate. And also, if you think about entrepreneurial influencer, in their "bio" [Instagram bio section] they can link directly to their webpage or a shop or something that a regular Instagrammer cannot do and, of course, that makes them look more professional in one way, and then more trustworthy because "ok, here is a product so I recommend to you and actually you can buy right here" so their profile is like sticking out, compared to the others.</p> <p><i>Are all of these examples that you have mentioned communicate trustworthiness or believability in a person?</i></p> <p>Yes, I would say so.</p>
5	12:17.5 - 13:53.6	<p><i>10-11. When Instagrammers have more expertise (about the products or industry), are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>Yes, as I said before. I would definitely say, as myself as a little bit beauty nerd, I can give more precise recommendations of beauty products. And the same thing goes if it is an entrepreneurial Instagrammer, someone who is into beauty, giving a recommendation, compared to maybe my mother or a random influencer, then I would say that the trustworthiness is higher if they have more knowledge.</p> <p><i>Would you be more interested in the recommendations who are experts?</i></p> <p>Yeah.</p>
6	13:53.5 - 14:58.6	<p><i>12-13. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more expertise?</i></p> <p>Yes, I would say so, definitely. I mean, I think I said that previously, I think that it makes them more credible and that they have more knowledge but, of course, it also makes them maybe seem like they have more knowledge than they actually have if they have an own brand. Because maybe they are into beauty, and then they started a brand and it seems they know everything but maybe I'm sitting home by my phone and actually have even more knowledge that they have, but I'm just not an entrepreneur. But still, I would consider them having more expertise because they are working with it.</p>
7	14:58.6 - 17:19.5	<p><i>14-15. Do you think that the increased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>I would say that the recommendations of an entrepreneurial Instagrammer are more relevant than maybe an ordinary Instagrammers' recommendations because they are in that circle of that field. So when they are recommending something, it feels that it should be relevant because they are in that topic or in that circle. So I think the relevance is connected with expertise.</p>
8	17:19.4 - 19:28.3	<p><i>16. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that shows more expertise?</i></p> <p>I think maybe because they are like more a part of the whole process of actually developing products, for example. Then I would say their knowledge of all of the ingredients that they actually put in there and why they put them in there, and why they chose this ingredient and not another one, I think that their expertise is more portrayed and they have an ability to be able to explain that more than a regular Instagrammer, I would say. Because they can say that "oh, I battled with melasma, for example, and then I know, I've tried so many products and this ingredient and this ingredient works so that's why I put them into this new cream". While, a regular Instagrammer who doesn't have their own brand, cannot really go that into detail. They can say "oh I like these ingredients", but they cannot really go into detail like "oh, so I made this combination". So I think that's what maybe could be a difference.</p>
9	19:28.3 - 19:52.5	<p><i>17. Can you give us an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram where you noticed that?</i></p> <p>Kylie Jenner, for example, even if she has been known before Instagram, but still she was with her lip kits because she thought she has so thin lips and that's like a struggle for her that she wanted to develop something that works. She said that she over lined her lips with a lip liner in order to make them</p>

		look bigger. I think that's kind of an example of how she created something from her knowledge, kind of "ok, I understand that if you over line them and you make a matte color, then it makes them look bigger" and I think that shows her expertise, that she can actually use something that she thought about and put it all together and her expertise from that area and actually create something.
10	19:52.4 - 21:00.8	<p>18-19. When Instagrammers are more attractive, are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</p> <p>Both - yes and no. I would say if they are attractive in their kind of personality, I would say that their recommendations are more relevant because I like them as a person and I think that maybe makes them relevant. For looks, I would say, maybe no. If I think that they are attracted by looks, then sometimes, I think, their recommendations can be relevant because "oh, can I become like this?" if I use those products. But I think, in some cases, the relevance can be lower like. I think we talked about that once, like if it's somebody "oh, I recommend this cream because it won't give me or all my acne disappeared" and then you are like "but this person never had acne" because she looks so good. So and then I don't really believe in this person so the relevance would be lower of these recommendations. So I could say both: yes, and no, a little bit depending on what they are really posting about. I think if I find them attractive personality wise, I think I would believe the relevance is higher. And then, attractive for looks is both: yes, and no. Because sometimes I would think like "ok, this is super relevant because she has really nice skin and you can see it's glowing and that's kind of natural so I could also achieve". But if it's kind of a concern, acne or something, I feel that this is not relevant for her because she doesn't have those battles and then the relevance will be lower.</p>
11	24:54.8 - 26:12.2	<p>20-21. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are more attractive?</p> <p>For looks, I don't think it really matters, I would say. For personality wise or maybe attractive for lifestyle, I would say yes because it's kind of, especially, if you have that interest yourself, I think, that "oh, shit, they actually work with their passion and the things that I love, they love and they can just do that for a living" and you find that attractive, so yeah I would say, for personality - yes, I think. It makes them like "wow, they are so cool, they actually develop something for their passion" but for looks, I wouldn't say so.</p>
12	26:12.2 - 28:08.6	<p>22-23. Do you think that the increased attractiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</p> <p>I think I would say yes, that their recommendations are more relevant because of increased attractiveness.</p>
13	28:08.5 - 33:27.6	<p>24. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem less attractive?</p> <p>I think like I don't know if you now Swedish Instagrammer Isabella Lowengrip. She has her own beauty brand and I think her followers are kind of divided if she makes herself more attractive or not because some people, I would say, think that what she does makes her more attractive because she is this really entrepreneurial businesswoman, she is like 40 under 40 in Sweden, entrepreneurial and stuff. But at the same time, she has a lot of followers that think this makes her less attractive because she is kind of bragging about it a little bit "oh, I have my own brand, oh I created this soap because I really like this smell in the mornings". I think sometimes she is too proud of herself, like "give me 5 years and I will be the second Estee Lauder". She posts that on Instagram, for example, "oh I always wanted that dry shampoo that leaves my hair fresh but doesn't make it greasy so finally I had that power to actually develop that product". And then some people are just "oh, you are just bragging that you had this opportunity". Some people maybe think that it's attractive like "oh, she actually developed what she really wanted". Some people think that she is bragging about it. And I think some people find it unattractive because you shouldn't brag too much. In that case, I would say can be both.</p> <p>So there are people who support what she is saying and there are people who don't. Why is this happening? Do you think because she says something differently?</p> <p>I think that would be one of the reasons, actually. Maybe more that she puts in a way that she is the only one that can do this or like "I had an opportunity to do this, you don't", kind of so people get jealous, I would say. It's like a tone of voice, how she is portraying it. And also she is showing it in connection to her lifestyle which is a bit flashy, like having a chef at home and a private driver, and staff and she writes about it in connection with that "oh, I developed this product which is perfect for me that flies 300 times a year" so she kind of connects that to her lifestyle which some people think is not very good.</p> <p>Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more attractive?</p> <p>I think we can talk about the same example and think why people like what she does. Like because she has also started out not like finished school, just started her own company, and she really had a passion for doing beauty products but she didn't really have a background with like a lot of money, that maybe some other Instagrammers did, so I think that can kind of increase her attractiveness as a person. She came out of nothing but now she succeeded. So right now she is really cool and really driven person that it's possible to do this and develop your own brand and makes me feel like "oh, I can do it as well, kind of".</p>
14	36:41.7 - 39:39.9	<p>26-27. When Instagrammers are more respected, are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</p> <p>Yes, I would say. Because then I would probably share some basic values and that I think it would reflect the recommendations as well if we have the same basic values.</p> <p>What about if you would respect them due to their accomplishments?</p> <p>Then I think, their recommendations will be increased. Going back to Isabella, if I respect her for actually being able to start her own company and making such a high turnover, that she has done the last year, I would also like "ok, if she recommends something that's probably good things because she knows how things works and she is a cool person".</p>
15	39:39.8 - 41:42.3	<p>28. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more respect?</p>

		<p>In many cases, yes. If they have their own brand, I would respect that they have put a lot of passion and effort into making their own brand, and I think that their recommendations I will respect them, because they actually know a lot of people that I maybe wouldn't share, their opinions under the recommendations. I would still respect them because I know what they are doing kind of.</p> <p>Would you respect them more than regular ones?</p> <p>I think I would have more respect for an entrepreneurial Instagrammer because I feel like they have achieved something that we talked about, they have actually made their own brand or a collection or whatever, that itself gives them some respect. But at the same time, a regular Instagrammer I would maybe respect them for being more transparent, so they are not only recommending their own brand, they are actually more diverse in their recommendations and that, maybe, give more respect. Maybe they actually try to explore more than their own brand and that maybe give them more respect.</p>
16	41:42.3 - 42:22.0	<p><i>30-31. Do you think that increased respect of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>Yeah, I think so. Because if I respect them, I probably respect them because of the certain reason, for their accomplishments, let's say, then probably their recommendations will be relevant because they are stemming from that accomplishments and that would make them more relevant for me because they actually come from that, the thing that I respect them more.</p>
17	43:04.0 - 44:55.8	<p><i>32. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their post or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more respected?</i></p> <p>I cannot think of the certain real Instagrammer but if we have like a hypothetical example, I would say, for example, if I would respect an Instagrammer for being concerned environment, I would respect that because I would think maybe too little people put their effort into that and I would say I respect them for doing that. And if they would move that to their brand, for example, being only using ingredients that are good for environment and developing packaging that is made from the recycle material or something, and then they would kind of highlight on their Instagram, I think that would make the respect be different from somebody that doesn't do that.</p>
18	45:07.5 - 49:24.1	<p><i>34. When Instagrammers are more similar to followers like you, are their recommendations more relevant? (so would you be more interested in recommended products?)</i></p> <p>Again, I would say yes and no, I always have two answers. I think if they are similar to me, I would say the recommendations are more relevant in most cases because maybe we believe in the same things, we have the same skin concern, the same values, the same life, or they are also students - those things will also make the recommendation more relevant to me because we are similar in that aspect. In some cases, maybe it could be that the recommendations are more relevant from somebody that is totally different because it could be - trying to think of the case that I haven't thought about - maybe if it's something that I want to achieve or something that I'm not but I want to be, then their recommendations will be relevant to me even if we are not similar. If they maybe entrepreneurial Instagrammers have their own brand, which is not similar to me because they are very entrepreneurial and they always get their ideas to production, and I'm not that person at all, I always need to think more before I take action and bla bla bla, but then their recommendations would be relevant to me because I want to be like that.</p> <p><i>Would you say that there needs to be a balance between these two?</i></p> <p>I would say that the combination could work. But I also think that there could be a little bit depending on why I follow that person. If I follow somebody because I want to get rid of my skin concern, then I would say it is more important that they are similar to me. But if I'm just searching for makeup inspiration, for going out this Friday, then maybe would be better to follow somebody that is not similar to me. So I think it could also depend a little bit on why I follow them.</p>
19	49:24.1 - 53:03.1	<p><i>36. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem more / less similar to followers?</i></p> <p>If they have their own brand as it's similar to... I think it could make it feel more similar to me because maybe they have started it because of the reason that is shared. But if that is not shared, for example, they have started it just to make money, then I think it will make them less similar to me.</p>
20	53:03.1 - 54:37.9	<p><i>37. Do you think that the increased similarity of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Yeah, if we are similar I would say so.</p> <p><i>Do you think that decreased similarity of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations less relevant? (so, would that make people less interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Yeah, I think so yes. Because if it's not for the reasons that I believe in or the things that we believe are similar then, I think, the relevance would be lower. Could be cases, of course, would be different, but mostly I would say like this.</p> <p><i>What about the recommendations of sponsor brands? Also within beauty, within skin care. If they would recommend sponsor brands, would you say that you would still be less interested in those sponsored recommendations when they become less similar to you?</i></p> <p>Yeah, I think so. I still think if they are more similar, that would be mostly the case why I would be interested in their recommendations and the relevance of their recommendations. But, as I said, it could also be that if it's something that I aspire, that is different from us, then I think the recommendation would be relevant. But if it's not something that I aspire then the relevance would be lower.</p>
21	55:34.0 - 59:02.6	<p><i>40. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more similar to followers?</i></p> <p>Taking again Instagrammers that are maybe living a little bit more of a flashy life than I do. Maybe both examples that I took before, Isabella and Kylie Jenner, for example. Some of their posts are very different from my life and how they maybe prioritize things in their life is very different from mine.</p>

		<p>For example, if Kylie Jenner is showing her new lip kits with her Ferrari in the background or Isabella is showcasing her products while she is all the time out traveling, then I would say it makes the difference between us greater. I think examples of things that make me more similar to an influencer, I would say sometimes if maybe they describe their concern that I thought it's kind of rare "oh, shit, she also has this, wow, I didn't know" will make me feel more similar. Or maybe she will make, for example, show a lot of products that she uses and maybe one of them is similar to the products I use, it's like a post of maybe 5 products and one of them I have as well. Then I would be like "oh, she likes that one, I also like that one, then maybe I also like the other 4", and then I feel we are more similar and then I think that the relevance of her recommendations of the other is really increasing for me because we are similar.</p>
22	59:02.6 - 1:00:48.4	<p><i>42. When you believe that Instagrammers like and use recommended products more, are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Yes, if I mean, I think in so many cases today, when Instagrammers can get a lot of money for promoting stuff and sponsored posts, I would say a lot of people just do it for the money. You can buy Instagrammers if you have the right amount of money. So I would say for me it is like really important that they are genuine, in order for like their recommendations to be relevant for me. It was different, I would say, two years ago because then it was not like that obvious but today I feel like you can directly see "ok, she would never buy this product if she didn't get half a million to do this post".</p>
23	1:00:48.4 - 1:03:39.8	<p><i>44. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they like and use the recommended product more?</i></p> <p>Yes, because if they have own brand and own products, I would definitely say so because it's like they have put so much effort, ok not everybody but you would think that they put a lot of effort and love into these things and that would make the relevance like higher. But I would also say that it could also be that they just want to sell them, I would say it depends a little bit on an Instagrammer.</p> <p><i>How about the sponsorships? Do you think they recommend only those which really like and use?</i></p> <p>Again, I would say yes and no. Because if they have their own brand and they are recommending other products, I would say either that it's really trustworthy if it's still relevant recommendations, if it's an Instagrammer having their own face wash and recommending another face wash, I would say "ok, this needs to be really good because otherwise, there would be no win in actually recommending this product". But for example, if it's the same Instagrammer having this face wash, that recommends me maybe the thing that everybody has - the tooth bleaching stuff, then it would be just "ok, she just got a lot of money to do this" so that wouldn't be relevant. So I think it depends a little bit</p>
24	1:03:39.7 - 1:05:52.0	<p><i>46. Do you think that difference makes their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Yes, I would say so. Again, if I take an example of Isabella, she has her own brand and she is really entrepreneurial, she really wants to sell her products, so when she is recommending something else, then I think "ok, then it needs to be good" and also I think that sometimes she maybe posts about other "oh, I'm doing some research" and she is trying a lot of other brand products and sponsor content. And then I'm thinking "ok, she has tried so many beauty products, she can develop things on her own, but she has tried this and she really like this and that makes believe that I should be really interested in this product because she has tried a lot of she knows a lot".</p>
25	1:05:52.0 - 1:08:35.2	<p><i>47. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general which shows that they more honestly like and use the recommended products?</i></p> <p>I would say I think that you can see many cases quite obvious if it's genuine or not. Because I feel that when it's genuine, most of all that wouldn't be even sponsored so they say "this is not sponsored but I really love this product". But also I would say that you can quite easily see the kind of criteria that this Instagrammer has actually gotten from the brand she is working for because you can quite clearly see, for example, "ok, can you mention that these ingredients are really good for your skin or can you maybe mention this product is perfect to use in the morning or can you maybe - avocado - because it's avocado in the products. And I feel like if it's genuine, they wouldn't overthink so much, they would be like "ok, honestly, this product is the best, I love it because it smells fantastic". You wouldn't be like "oh, I really love this product because it has this and this in it and it's really nice to have after you washed your face in 30 degrees". So that makes me think that they are not genuine because I can see that you are just fulfilling all the criteria to get money.</p> <p>Also, I think if you are thinking about like the repetitiveness, of how much they post about it. Because if it's sponsored, then probably they paid 2 posts for doing this, for example. Then you see "ok within three weeks - 2 posts, half a year - nothing", then I wouldn't say it's very genuine cause you never see it again, it was just when they got the money. But if you can go back on their feed and you can see like during a year, you can see every month they actually use this product, it's always on their bathroom shelf, always in their bag, when it's kind of "unprepared", it makes them more genuine. If you see, for example, let's say you follow one Instagrammer and you see she is recommending a product and take a nice picture with some coffee cups and stuff and then you never see it again. But when you go to her friends account and you see her sitting unprepared answering some text messages and she actually has her lipstick on the table, like "ok, she actually uses it" even outside this post, that would make me think it's more genuine because it was unprepared.</p>
26	1:08:35.2 - 1:10:47.9	<p><i>50. What motivation do you think Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing their own brand?</i></p> <p>If it's for their own brand, I would guess it's a genuine motivation mostly because they develop this product or this brand because they really love it themselves and maybe it arises from their interest and from their own skin concerns so it's something that comes from their inner motivation. Of course, it would also be financial because it could be things like "I don't have a job at the moment, maybe I'm actually kind of good in creating stuff, maybe I should do this and earn some money". But more often I would say genuine.</p>
27	1:13:22.6 - 1:15:45.0	<p><i>52. What motivation Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing sponsor brands?</i></p> <p>I would say the opposite. Like I said, if they have their own brand and they are about to promote something else within the same product category, then I think they need to get paid a lot to do that.</p> <p>But it could be the same, of course, as I said about Isabella, maybe she actually just genuinely tries 100 products a month and really finds something else that she actually thinks is really nice and I think, even if it's in the same product category but if she is, for example, also recommending a Channel product - nail polish, she can never compete with that anyway because they are like too big of the competition for her so she can recommend that. But if she would recommend a similar level brand then she would do it on herself, so I think that's why I would categorize it as financial because she probably got a lot of money to recommend it if it's in the same product category.</p>

		<p><i>If it's outside the product category?</i></p> <p>Then I would say that it could more that it's actually she has a lot of knowledge about it to be genuine as well because she is trying so many products, she is very into that but just hasn't gotten into nail polish, she did only face care. Then, maybe, it's still something that she can recommend genuinely because she doesn't have that so she doesn't like losing on it. But I think in so many cases it's just financial.</p>
28	1:15:44.9 - 1:17:30.6	<p><i>54-55. Do you believe Instagrammers like and use their own brand more, or sponsor brands more? Or do they like and use both their own and sponsor brands equally?</i></p> <p>I would think that they use their own products a lot. I mean they would get them for free and, hopefully, they developed them because they really love them so I would guess that they used them a lot, more than sponsor ones because it's something that they have made out of their passion and they have such an easy access to it so I would say that makes them use them more. But again, I would say, if it's sponsor products that they do not have in their assortment, then I would think they can also use them a lot.</p>
29	1:17:30.5 - 1:18:59.0	<p><i>56. How does that affect your opinion about the recommendations?</i></p> <p>If she is using a lot of her own products and she recommended, then I would say I probably would like to believe it more because she uses it so frequently herself. But at the same time, then I would kind of want to approve that she is actually using it that much, because in many cases it would also be "oh, I use every day because it's my own brand", it would be like "yeah, she says that because it's her own brand" so then you would kind of want a proof to say that she actually is using it a lot and then I would maybe believe in that recommendation more if I actually know that the products work.</p>
30	1:18:58.9 - 1:20:32.9	<p><i>57. What actually they show or do on Instagram that makes you feel that they really use? You said that you need to have a proof that they are using it so what that could be?</i></p> <p>I think, again, if thinking about but I said before if it's showcased in a kind of unexpected moments, because if they all the time photograph the products like in well-prepared settings with the right fruit against it so it looks good, I won't say that they always use it. But it that would be again on friend's Instagram story and you see that she is actually using that hand cream when she just sits there, or if it's again maybe during a longer period and you see it frequently showing up - sometimes it's in her bag, sometimes it's in her bathroom shelf - it makes me think she is using them a lot.</p>
31	1:20:32.9 - 1:26:55.9	<p><i>59. When you think of Instagrammers who have their own brand, do you think recommendations of own brand stand out more than recommendations of sponsor brands?</i></p> <p>I think a little bit touching upon other things that, I think if it's sponsored I think it will maybe be clear in a way that it would be not frequently we would see, one time in a feed, and it would be very lined up because brand would probably have their rules of how the posts should be so "ok, we need to see the products like this, and you need to have the logo and we need this and this and this" so the post for me would be not really natural because you would see those things. I think it would stand out more because I would see that directly "ok, this really product-focused picture which has all of the right elements". Again, it's an orange face cream and there is, oopsie, oranges besides it because it includes oranges and it's also in the text so it's very very well thought through. I would say you see that that stands out more than, I think, you own brand because then you can choose yourself how you want to promote it and you don't have anybody looking off to your shoulder how you're doing it. So sometimes, maybe, you just see your face and sometimes you see the product itself and you can be more free with your own brand how you want to portray. And again, you would see own brand showing much more often on the feed than a sponsor agreement would not be over three months, with every week a post.</p> <p>I just looked at Marianna Hewitt [a beauty entrepreneurial Instagrammer, 822k followers on Instagram] she has her own beauty brand as well, she has a face mask and you can see that directly because, in her feed, it's there, and there, and there - so many times. While, for example, here it's Kim Kardashian's brand and it's only once. So you can really see where is one brand and I know it because of how the product looks. And the product is portrayed in the pictures and it's in so many posts that it would be unrealistic that it would be sponsored because nobody would pay so much money. And I wouldn't say that I acknowledge these posts only because own brand is visible. So it's two legs, one thinks that it makes to stand out is that it's very coordinated in how it is posted - about the product label and the thought behind it and the text, it's very thought through. And another one is how frequent it appears. So it could be both things that reveal to me if it is paid for or it is their own brand. Because if its own brand, they can do this frequency and they don't have to have as clear pictures and if it's sponsored, you would just see it twice or three times maybe and it would be very clear pictures.</p>
32	1:27:46.7 - 1:29:28.3	<p><i>61. Which type of brands do you remember more clearly?</i></p> <p>Again, I would say it is very connected to the last question. If it's their own brand, the frequency will be so much higher that I would face it once a week because I know how that product [Marianna's face mask] looks like even if it will be in the corner over there, I know it's blue and this size. So I remember it more because I see it more often and they always talk about it. But if it's sponsored that wouldn't be so often and maybe if it's just once, Instagram's algorithm will not make it appear on my feed, and I would maybe miss that one time or I see it once and the other two times will not show up so I will not really remember it. Could be thought that if they are sponsored by a very huge company that could put a lot of money into this sponsored posts and maybe make it really stand out, really crazy concept because they have one million, then it can make me remember because it is so different. For the general ones, I would say that their own brand is remembered much more because of the frequency.</p>
33	1:29:28.3 - 1:30:37.9	<p><i>63. When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, which brand do you associate with the Instagrammer more?</i></p> <p>The own brand, I would say. And again, as mentioned one thousand times, the frequency plays a lot of roles there because if I see it so many times, it's really something that I would associate that person with compared to if I see it a couple times as sponsored post. Maybe it could be that sponsor brand was used by them a lot of times before they got sponsored, then maybe I would associate them with that product. But again it's about the same frequency.</p>
34	1:30:37.9 - 1:33:32.3	<p><i>65. What do you think are the specific aspects of posts or on Instagram in general that make you remember own brand more?</i></p>

		<p>Posts about own brand can show me more aspects. For example, Kylie Jenner can show me a post how she produces the lipsticks or having a meeting what colors to produce - that content is different from the pictures with a coffee and all these things. So those posts will probably make me remember them more because I don't see it so often how it is produced or how it actually came there.</p> <p><i>What do you think are the specific aspects of posts or on Instagram in general that make you remember sponsor brand more?</i></p> <p>Something that is really crazy and outrageous, like they put so much money in like brands, like the whole Kings Garden as Channel fragrance or whatever. But I would then remember that it was sponsored.</p>
35	1:33:32.3 - 1:35:55.5	<p>67. <i>When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, do you think there needs to be a common theme between them (brands)?</i></p> <p>Yeah, I think that's super important. I would say that for me it's one of the things that affect the credibility of an Instagrammer and as well if it's sponsored or how much money they actually got paid for this. Because if there is no match at all, I would think "ok, they got so much money to do this sponsored post". But if there is a match between both sponsored content and own brand, then I would say it's more trustworthy because there is like one thread that goes through the whole thing.</p>
36	1:35:55.5 - 1:38:06.7	<p>69. <i>Do you prefer if Instagrammers who have their own brand recommend brands that are similar to each other, or that differ from each other?</i></p> <p>I would say similar in most cases. But, again, I would say depends a little bit on what product, kind of. I think I said it before but, for example, let's say this face mask example, if she is recommending another face mask brand, then it would probably be very good because, otherwise, they are just doing it harm for their own brand. So I think that would make them genuine and more trustworthy when they are doing that, compared to if there would be something that is completely different because then it would be just because they couldn't do it themselves and now they got paid to do it. It could also be, as with Isabella, they just don't have that product in the assortment and think completely different or maybe if it is, for example, I always use very natural products, maybe ecological ingredients and maybe natural colors but when on Halloween I really want to have all the colors in my face, then I would still recommend somebody even if it's not similar to what they usually recommend because now they need something to recommend. It depends a little bit on "why they are recommending it". If it's a normal occasion, then I would say it needs to be similar.</p>
37	1:38:06.7 - 1:41:16.9	<p>71. <i>How does the similarity between brands affect your opinion about the recommendation of sponsor brand?</i></p> <p>I think that would make me believe that that product must be really good because, otherwise, it would be stupid in ruining their own sales because they recommend another competitor.</p> <p><i>What if the product categories would be different - a face mask and face cream?</i></p> <p>Yeah, I think, again if they are similar there. But I still don't think that if you would be an entrepreneurial Instagrammer making only face masks, I don't think you would like to associate you with another beauty brand doing a face lotion just to get the money. Because I think that would still hard a little bit the own brand. So I think, if they are similar, I would still say it's trustworthy because they are a little bit conscious about the decision they are making and also for many brands, they would not allow an Instagrammer to actually make sponsored posts about 5 different cosmetics brands within the same month because then it would drench their credibility.</p>

5.5 RF5

Line	Timespan	Content
1	2:16.3 – 2:55.1	<p>1-2. <i>When Instagrammers are more trustworthy, are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>I would definitely say yes, for me personally yes.</p> <p><i>R: How would you describe that?</i></p> <p>If I already trust in what they say, what they post I assume that their content that they share with me is also trustworthy. That I can rely on it and... yes. That's why I would believe in it and take their recommendations as well as complaints, yeah.</p>
2	2:55.1 – 4:45.6	<p>3-4. <i>Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more trustworthy, compared to regular Instagrammers? Why?</i></p> <p>For me, it depends if the brands or if their own brand fits to their personality. If it's authentic and if it matches somehow then yes. Words I would say can be the opposite as well, so. Becoming untrustworthy, yeah.</p> <p><i>R: If you would now try to remember entrepreneurial Instagrammers that you can remember, that you follow, that you saw, would you say that most often actually there is this fit or authenticity? Or most often there is no fit from your perspective?</i></p> <p>I actually think they do it pretty well. Most of the time I see that it fits really good. So, for instance, the people or the Instagrammers that are really fashionable are doing beauty product collaborations or sponsorships, having their own brands... and of course, if you see them post pictures and videos well dressed and with the trendiest stuff then, of course, you think the products also will lead up to that. So I would say yes.</p>
3	4:45.6 – 8:26.9	<p>5-6a. <i>Do you think that increased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more interesting?</i></p> <p>In comparison to the regular ones? Let's see... if it's related to the product they are claiming, then I would say yes.</p> <p><i>R: Their own product, you mean?</i></p> <p>Yes, their own product. Then I would say yes normally yes I would rely on it because I mean they are also getting feedback from their followers, so all the entire content I would see I would say I believe it's trustworthier. However, I would say that I believe also regular Instagrammers can be as trustworthy.</p> <p><i>R: in what case for example?</i></p> <p>If it's not their own brand. But if they are sponsoring it... it depends. I mean if it's their own brand I think it's still a bit more trustworthy because it's also risk related for them. I mean, it's their own brand, if they are telling you stuff that is not true it harms their business as well. Whereas if</p>

		<p>they are just in a sponsorship they would risk losing that, but it's rather the company that is pushing the product so...I would say the regular ones are a bit less trustworthy than the...yeah.</p> <p><i>R: What about for example sponsored endorsements of those who have their own brands. You already reflected on their own brands, that recommendations would look more relevant because it's theirs. What about when they recommend sponsor brands and what about the relevance compared to regular Instagrammers?</i></p> <p>Regular ones you mean if they just post a picture of a product but not under the official sponsorship?</p> <p><i>R: And unofficial.</i></p> <p><i>K: They post but they do not own any of it.</i></p> <p>Okay, okay. I would say a bit less trustworthy.</p> <p><i>R: Still?</i></p> <p>Yes. I think of their name is related to the product or related to the collection, whatever, it is it's more trustworthy for me at least.</p> <p><i>R: But you said less trustworthy, so sponsored endorsements would be less trustworthy compared to regular Instagrammers?</i></p> <p>Again?</p> <p><i>R: so if I am an entrepreneurial Instagram and I recommend sponsor brands you said my recommendations of sponsor brands would be less trustworthy in comparison with regular Instagrammers.</i></p> <p>Yes, if it's regular Instagrammers in terms of they are not paid for what they post then I would say less trustworthy, otherwise, I can't...hm. if they are paid for it I don't really see the difference between being paid for the sponsorship, and being a regular Instagrammer and being just... yeah. I think that for me is kind of the same trustworthiness I would say.</p>
4	8:26.9 – 12:16.3	<p><i>7-8a. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes the recommendations seem: more believable?</i></p> <p><i>R: So think only about the one group, about those who have their own brand. Do they start doing something specific within their posts, within communication and within you know, there's a bio, there are stories... do they do something so that the recommendations would seem more believable?</i></p> <p>Yeah definitely... I mean first of all if they use the products themselves, that is for me a good indication, because then I see - does it work or not. And here I would say especially... of course pictures are good but videos I would say is even more important because it also gives you the "how to use" background kind of, especially if the product is maybe rather difficult to apply. And then I would say of course also if they are connected somehow to celebrities and you see how they are pushing the product as well, so getting another name under this brand will be good as well.</p> <p><i>R: do you have something right now as an example to the last one?</i></p> <p>Yes, I know for instance there is... I can't recall the exact name; I can look it up. There is this hair spray, dry shampoo, whatever collection from OUAL, and I mean they basically show how they do the collaboration with Bella Hadid or Kendall Jenner, so of course if I see that they use the product I would like to try it myself as well, because they have really good hair stylists so I would assume the quality is really good.</p> <p><i>K: Nice! So they can, kind of like any brand, involve some other spokespersons?</i></p> <p>Yeah, Exactly.</p> <p>Behind the scenes posts, I would say so they're also really good...</p> <p><i>R: For trustworthiness?</i></p> <p>Yes</p> <p><i>K: What do they kind of make you feel?</i></p> <p>Tat, they are not afraid of hiding something, because... yes, transparency, definitely.</p>
5	12:47.9 – 13:35.9	<p>Yes, because then I think they are not talking to me without having knowledge, yes, so yeah. Definitely would agree, yeah.</p> <p><i>R: So for you, it is important...?</i></p> <p>That they have expertise, yes. If they are not familiar with, I don't know, with the product of or if they have no clue about this beauty business then I don't think I would trust what they are saying, yeah.</p> <p><i>R: You said I wouldn't trust but what about... so would you be interested in the products?</i></p> <p>I wouldn't be, no.</p>
6	13:35.9 – 14:16.3	<p><i>12-13. Does the fact that Instagrammers have their own brand makes them seem like they have more expertise?</i></p> <p>I would say yes because I would assume that they want to have the expertise in order to best promote the product. And if they are selling their own... you said own product yeah? If they are selling their own product or brand, of course, they must be experts in that, otherwise, it's bad business, so yes, I would say yes.</p>
7	14:16.3 – 16:22.5	<p><i>14a-15. Do you think this increased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations also more relevant?</i></p> <p>Yes, so I can actually give an example for...I just know from... it's a cooperation as well, but basically, the product was claimed under a new name so for me, I would say it was a product of her, a brand of her. It's a German blogger, Instagrammer and she's called Caro Daur. Have you heard of her? Yes. And she is really big, at least in Germany or German speaking countries, and she had a lot of collaborations already and sponsorships, and for instance, for Mac, she created her own lipstick. So basically she posted content showing how it was mixed, which types of tones she wanted, they showed her going through the lab, how it is produced... so it gave me at least the impression that they told her about the process, how the product is made in order to best brief her on that, so that she can come up with her own one. And it seems to, at least for me works. It seems to be trustworthy and then of course relevant as well.</p> <p><i>K: So that makes you feel like she definitely learned something new in the process?</i></p> <p>Yes, that at least she, maybe, checked the quality and she knows what she is selling, and not just getting a product passed on, yes, please put your name on it and that's it.</p>
8	16:22.5 – 17:36.5	<p><i>14a, 15: Do you think that increased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant?</i></p>

		<p><i>R: So when you see this, are you becoming more interested in this product?</i></p> <p>Yes, actually, because I thought it was also really interesting to see how it was. I just remember back then... I am not sure if I can recall the video because sometimes it was just in these Instagram stories but I can check it then later on as well, but they showed exactly how many different kinds of tones they had, shades in red or whatever and how the texture is made so it was for me interesting as well to see.</p> <p><i>R: Such a big variety, right?</i></p> <p>Yes. And then I mean I didn't buy the lipstick and I probably wouldn't order it because for me it is too inconvenient, they only sold it in Germany and especially in online shops, which are rather difficult to deliver here, and I wouldn't just buy it because of her. But I mean out the lipstick is really good and it matches my skin tone as well then I would definitely buy it, yes.</p> <p><i>R: If it would be somewhere in a more convenient to place you'd be interested?</i></p> <p>Yes.</p>
9	17:36.5 – 19:23.8	<p><i>16. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that shows more expertise?</i></p> <p>Ok, I would definitely say, yeah, like I mentioned going through the process of the production of the product... maybe, I'm not sure if I've actually ever seen it but maybe if it's approved by another label or if it's... I don't know if it has characteristics like free of whatever, plastic, so those kinds of characteristics that would highlight for me as well that they have expertise. Because they know, ok, the trend is going to this direction, people don't want to buy stuff with microplastics anymore, or these parabens, they don't want to buy that anymore. If they claim it's free of that, for me it shows well ok they have expertise as well.</p> <p><i>R: So how can it be portrayed on Instagram?</i></p> <p>I saw, if it's the brand itself, write in the brand description, bios, exactly, more... on the post themselves as well, if they just repeat it in the comment or in the text underneath the picture or even on the picture itself of the product, yeah.</p>
10	19:23.8 – 20:50.1	<p><i>17 - Can you give us an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram where you noticed that?</i></p> <p>Yeah for instance Gisou? They claim bee based hair products, sulfate free paraben free and yeah, basically that gives me the most important information I want to know about. So I would assume they did their research and produced at least a more cautious product</p> <p><i>R: so even if everything is written in a brand's page, you still kind of would reflect on an Instagrammer that expertise?</i></p> <p>Yes, if... I mean this brand, I don't recall the name of the Instagrammer, but if I would do and it's really related, if I would see for instance the Instagrammer with the product, or just on the brand page a post showing her sometimes mention it as well, or just her name, then I would definitely say it reflects, yes.</p>
11	21:09.4 – 22:41.7	<p><i>18-19. When Instagrammers are more attractive, are their recommendations more relevant?</i></p> <p>I would think so, yes. Because I would say if it's interesting, coming back to beauty of course if I see that their hair looks amazing, of course, it's more relevant what they tell me about how you should do it with the product, or what they're talking about, their experience, yeah.</p> <p><i>K: So for beauty looks kind of reflect the effectiveness?</i></p> <p>Yes, especially for beauty, I would say it's more probably the outer attractiveness, the appearance rather than the personality because I'm not sure if I can see the personality or if I see the real personality on Instagram. For me, it's rather the appearance, and of course how attractive is their life or their way of living in general, I would say</p> <p><i>K: and that kind of attractive lifestyle, does it affect you somehow, do you think about it at all?</i></p> <p>It could be negative I would say as well, if it's too pushy or unreal then I would say can also become irrelevant for me, but normally I would say it's positively related, yeah.</p> <p><i>K: if it's something you like and a life you would appreciate?</i></p> <p>Yes, exactly.</p>
12	22:41.7 – 24:19.0	<p><i>20-21. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are more attractive?</i></p> <p>More attractive in terms of, that I want to follow them or?</p> <p><i>R: That you would perceive them as more attractive, meaning that they are either more beautiful or their life and their personality is more attractive to you.</i></p> <p><i>K: Just think of them as a person.</i></p> <p>I'm not sure if I could say so. No. I think it could be a normal Instagrammer as well without having their own brand. The only thing I would say is attractive would be for instance that they managed to have their own brand they achieved something, they are successful, they drive their own business, but that is probably personally related. I think it's a really cool thing if you have your own brand if you are able to do that, so yes personally for me I would say yes it is more attractive, yes, but in a completely different way, because it's rather being able to achieve something and being successful.</p>
13	24:19.0 – 27:47.2	<p><i>22-23. Do you think that increased attractiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant?</i></p> <p><i>R: No worries. So you just said if they have their own brand they are more attractive to you, and also the recommendations would be more relevant to you compared to regular Instagrammers. So maybe you have a specific instagrammer in mind that actually made you think "oh yes what she recommends right now..."</i></p> <p><i>K: or maybe even a memory of someone maybe one you over by doing something attractive or... how does that work in your mind kind of?</i></p> <p>Let me check. I would say....</p> <p><i>R: maybe a specific post for example which from your perspective portrays that higher attractiveness of Instagrammers and makes you at the same time be interested in that product more.</i></p> <p>Ok. Definitely, let me see.... ok I mean it's not the best picture ever, but at least... no, it's rather I would say a collection of pictures. It's for the brand I mentioned before, Gisou, she has really beautiful hair, really shiny and I would think... you always see the product itself as well, I mean it's her own product so I definitely think she is using it herself as well, at least it seems on the post, so that definitely would win me over in buying it. So I definitely actually considered the hair oil because it looks really cool, and if it would just be a regular Instagrammer posting it, I wouldn't</p>

		assume that that many pictures and that many occasions would be shown. And then if I just see one picture showing it, and it's not their own brand, I don't think it would be as relevant for me.
14	28:03.7 – 28:53.3	<p>26-27. <i>When Instagrammers are more respected, are their recommendations more relevant?</i></p> <p>Respected by me, or...? Ok. Yes, then I agree, yes, and it's more relevant for me as well. Because if I would say... if they have an opinion I would also agree to, or I think it is thoughtful, then it is more relevant for me to hear what they are saying and to see their content as well, because I would assume it is as trustworthy as thought through as well.</p>
15	28:53.3 – 29:20.7	<p>28-29. <i>Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more respect?</i></p> <p>Yes, as mentioned before, especially in terms of this entrepreneurial spirit, and, yeah, for me, yeah.</p> <p><i>R: So again from that business perspective you mean?</i></p> <p>Yes.</p>
16	29:20.7 – 30:51.8	<p>30-31. <i>Do you think that increased respect of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant?</i></p> <p>Yep, yep, I would say so. Because also briefly mentioned in the beginning, if it's their own brand there is a lot of risk behind, and yes, I just agree it is definitely related.</p> <p><i>R: Because... you just mentioned that there is a risk related, so if they made it if they did that...</i></p> <p>They did something right, basically, that's it.</p> <p><i>K: And if we ask you to think maybe a bit more about those opinions that you agree with, would that affect your affinity towards the product?</i></p> <p>I mean I don't necessarily have to agree on everything they say, in order to have more respect, I mean if they just point out something, it can also be I don't know politically, or if they just speak up, that is also something that shows, or at least that reflects for me a reason to have respect for them.</p> <p><i>K: So kind of not necessarily in line with you but just a reasonable argument?</i></p> <p>Yes, exactly.</p>
17	30:51.8 – 33:23.1	<p>32. <i>Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their post or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more respected?</i></p> <p>I'm not sure if I can find it so fast, but I can, in general, say what would reflect respect, I would say for instance if they go to the place where the product is for instance made, and if you see that the workers are treated well they care about how it is produced and who produces it, that would for instance show respect. Or if it's a reason issue, I don't know, for instance, that there are too many thin models on the runway, and they show that they are going to only runway shows where normally weighted people walk, or if they just claim somewhere, a post or Instagram story, if they mention something that it's not ok to have regulations that allow this, that kind of things I would say definitely show respect or show a reason for having respect. Because of course that is then creating discussion, and even though I might or might not agree, at least it shows that they have an opinion and that is for me always better than just not to speak up at all. Not questioning and not having an opinion</p>
18	33:23.1 – 36:25.4	<p>25 - <i>Can you give us an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram which made you feel this way?</i></p> <p>I remember at least another German blogger. You might know her, back then she won Germany's Next Top Model, Stefanie Giesinger. She still really well known even though it was years ago. And she still really popular and successful, and she for instance always posts how important it is, or mentions at least, to eat healthy food but not to starve like the other models are doing. She works out normally and does not starve. So things like these, I would say, are definitely something that shows a reason for having respect. And for instance, another thing was, she's really transparent and she shows everything. So she has kind of a disease, that her internal organs, they are turning in her stomach, so sometimes she actually can't eat or whatever, she has really bad pain, and she already had two or three surgeries because of that. And basically, she still posts pictures being in a hospital, dealing with that, she has it from birth. But how she actually still managed to be successful, to deal with it, shows also how respectful.... yeah.</p>
19	36:25.4 – 38:37.5	<p>34-35. <i>When Instagrammers are more similar to followers like you, are their recommendations more relevant?</i></p> <p>In general, I would say yes but not always the case. For instance, I can't afford what those Instagrammers are posting all the time, I can't travel from morning until evening, so those kinds of things, of course, I'm not really relating to, at least my life. But for me, it's still relevant and I still want to see it.</p> <p><i>R: So can you maybe elaborate a little bit to what extent they need to be similar to you? you said that in general yes so what is the...?</i></p> <p>So, in general, I would describe it as being at least interested in this type of content, so beauty. If I'm interested in beauty, or if the person is interested in beauty, posts nice content, and I have interest in that topic as well, so kind of topic related.</p> <p><i>K: so similar interests?</i></p> <p>Yes. And of course I would assume normally you have the tendency, if they have the lifestyle you would like to have, then of course, even though you don't have it but you have the wish to, it also is somehow related, so.</p>
20	38:37.5 – 40:33.2	<p>36-37. <i>Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are more similar to followers?</i></p> <p>I mean I, unfortunately, don't have a brand... so, I'm not sure if I could agree to that, not completely because that really depends. the only way I would say it really is connected is for instance, as we discussed before having your own, driving, being successful, those characteristics I hope I am as well, so... that would relate to me and be more relevant.</p>

		<p><i>K: I'm a bit confused as to whether you I'm a bit confused as to whether you skewed more towards they are more similar or less similar to you skewed more towards they are more similar or less similar to you?</i></p> <p><i>R: Than regular... because we have here two groups: regular Instagrammers and entrepreneurial Instagrammers. So which group of Instagrammers is more similar to you?</i></p> <p>Good question. I'm not sure if I am entrepreneurial that way so I don't know, I hope so. I would wish that entrepreneurial one, yes, but it's probably for other people to judge.</p> <p><i>R: But from your perspective, because you are a follower.</i></p> <p>Yep, yep. So probably entrepreneurial.</p>
21	40:33.2 – 45:27.1	<p>38-39. Do you think that that increased similarity of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations less relevant?</p> <p>Yes, normally, yes. But I would say then I would assume I will always get exactly what I would like to hear, and always see recommendations of things that I already know as well. So it can be, it could also be that being less similar is sometimes more interesting. Could be more relevant because it gives you another way of seeing it.</p> <p><i>K: so some variety is needed?</i></p> <p>Yes, otherwise it would be too boring if I would just see exactly what I would think the same, or I would agree to.</p> <p><i>R: so what is the difference that an Instagrammer needs to have so that you would be still more interested?</i></p> <p>I would say and an own opinion that is believable, and authenticity I would say.</p> <p><i>R: and that authenticity, in what way you usually see it on Instagram?</i></p> <p>For instance, I can actually give a good example. Like we had before, these Gisou products, I mean, I know because she posted in one of the posts that her family had this bee business or still has it, so of course, that shows to me she's authentic because she stands behind her family, she wants to have a quality product, so... there is the better match I think with the product. The brand or the Instagrammer itself. So the product fits to the person. Also in terms of comments [descriptions]and communication of their opinion, if it is consistent. If they would switch all the time their opinions, one day they agree, the other day they randomly disagree, that wouldn't be authentic I think.</p> <p><i>K: Can I maybe ask you one more time about this, when she talks about her family business, how does that make you feel?</i></p> <p>I like it. Because normally I like family businesses, they are smaller, they have the opportunity to produce really good products, and yeah, there is still much more culture, there is really roots to what they produce. I don't know how to really describe it, but it's a warm feeling, a good feeling I would say. That is also may be related somehow with similarity? Because I really highly appreciate my family, so that might be a reason.</p> <p><i>R: but then this authenticity won't be something that would differentiate you from her?</i></p> <p>No, in terms of this now, that authenticity would actually be a similarity, the family business and family appreciation in general.</p> <p><i>K: because you are also really authentically with your family?</i></p> <p>Yes, yes. Exactly.</p> <p><i>R: So then, authenticity in terms of her opinion would be something that would differentiate, in your eyes, you from her? Because you said that there needs to be a difference between you and an Instagrammer, and I asked what would be the difference, and then you said that she needs to have an opinion and be authentic.</i></p> <p>Yeah yeah, but those are two topics. I mean, similarity, so what creates authenticity for me would be for instance this example. But it also shows similarity in that particular example. But authenticity would also be, for instance, she has a completely different opinion than I have, so not similar at all but it is consistent and it makes sense. So I don't necessarily have to be of the same opinion. So similarity doesn't have to be there in order to make it authentic for me.</p>
22	45:27.1 – 49:25.6	<p>40-41. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more/less similar to followers like you?</p> <p>Yeah, maybe again, if they use the products, unpack it or even pack it themselves and send it out, might not be the case that they really send it out themselves but somehow it's still nice that they care about it. And I would say, what else....</p> <p><i>R: or even you can at the same time think about what they do that makes them look less similar, like what specific things they do on Instagram or when they post, that makes them look less similar.</i></p> <p>I would say less similar maybe if they are showing something that seems to be fake, but I don't actually have a good example. I would say less similar, in general, if it's not related at all to what I am interested in. But then I would also probably not follow them or pay attention. So it's hard for me to answer the question because I don't have a particular one in mind, but yeah.</p> <p><i>R: because there could be even like little things, right? Like shifting the industry that they worked in before, or it could be something that they may be mentioned within the bios, I know it's hard to tell right now what they mention, but maybe they start creating messages differently, maybe they start mentioning something or stop mentioning something, maybe their messages are becoming smaller or larger, all these communication tactics or strategies that they can use which would make them seem less or more similar to followers.</i></p> <p>Yes, but I would say only if... but I'm not sure if it's actually that much related? Only because they are changing their way of communication, could still be that people also change at the same time and they just prefer certain messages or... so I think it could be, yes, but I'm not sure if it's always the case.</p> <p><i>K: so maybe something that you have noticed that maybe you just so it and thought "ok I cannot relate to this, what's happening here"</i></p>

		OK if they would, I don't know, I haven't seen it, if I would see now that they pick up animals, treat them not well, that would be something that suddenly I could not relate to, or if they support, if they become political in things that I don't agree to, stuff like that would make it less similar I would say to the followers. At least the base they had before.
23	49:51.3 – 50:50.6	<p>42-43. <i>When Instagrammers seem to like and use recommended products more, are their recommendations more relevant?</i></p> <p>I would say yes, because yeah, they are related to the product, especially if it's their own brand, they have the risk factor, so yes, I would agree.</p> <p><i>K: So when you see these posts where they use these products, how does that make you feel, what do you think then?</i></p> <p>I would hope that they're really using it not just to show it on their website or on Instagram or any other social media, I would hope they use it themselves really in their life as well. And they stand behind their product and know that it is good quality, and yeah, that it's a good one.</p>
24	50:50.6 – 53:46.1	<p>44-45. <i>Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they like and use recommended products more?</i></p> <p>Yes. Because it's their product, yeah. Just because it's really... I see a better connection between the product or the brand and this person rather than just any other Instagrammer that posts a random post, yeah.</p> <p><i>R: What about if they do recommendations about sponsor brands?</i></p> <p>I don't know why, but I would say that definitely the first one. So the entrepreneurial one, yes. I actually don't know really why, can't describe it, but maybe it's this authentic point, or maybe the similarity factor, I don't know, but I would say yes.</p> <p><i>K: Can I ask you a small question about this, when Raminta first asked you which one would be more likely to use the product they recommend and you said the one who has their own brand. You mentioned something about how I see more of a connection between this product and their own brand. Can you elaborate a bit on that?</i></p> <p>Probably because when they come up with the product themselves they probably think for a very long time about which product it should be, how it should look like, which characteristics it should have. So the entire process of creating this product is much more thought through. And if it's their ideas and their recommendations for instance as well, and their experience, their expertise, rather than just an Instagrammer that basically gets the products in their hands and takes a picture... Yes, exactly.</p>
25	53:46.1 – 54:27.5	<p>46, 47 - <i>Do you think that difference makes their recommendations more relevant?</i></p> <p>Yes, same thing. I can't really describe it why but yes it's related.</p>
26	54:27.5 – 58:05.7	<p>48. <i>Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts on Instagram in general which shows that they more honestly like and use the products they recommend?</i></p> <p>I mean, just simple things, if they are standing there basically without makeup in a situation that I can relate to and they are using... for instance the Instagrammer is using the hair oil, that would make sense for me. It doesn't really make sense for me if they're completely dressed up, ready, standing in a rooftop bar at a really nice location. I would rather see it in a real life situation than posed somewhere else. So this would be one example, and then of course in terms of communication: how they phrase the sentence, I don't know exactly but simple I would say, not too high sophisticated language that makes it seem like in a magazine, so the way they speak. Then, the situation I mentioned.</p> <p><i>R: Do you have maybe an example of this good practice, when an Instagrammer is showing real life situations?</i></p> <p>Yeah actually Stefanie Giesinger, she often posted or had videos showing her coming to the bathroom, showing step by step what her normal daily routine of makeup is, that is honest I think. So that would be a situation, because sometimes the YouTube videos they post, I mean, they are already sitting there with a lot of makeup on their face, then they only do little parts on their face and that's it. But she really completely gets rid of her make-up, shows transparency and yeah. Real life rather than just posted.</p>
27	58:05.7 - 1:00:40.5	<p>50-51. <i>What do you think is the Instagrammer's motivation when they promote their own brands?</i></p> <p>That's interesting. I would hope it is genuine, but of course, I know there must be an external reason for it as well. But I think it's a mixture between genuine and financial.</p> <p><i>R: You as a follower, which one would come first to your mind?</i></p> <p><i>K: Upon seeing, let's say, posts</i></p> <p>For posts, I would say as it is communication for selling it I would say it's externally rather.</p> <p><i>R: When would it be genuine?</i></p> <p>Genuine it would be for me if they are not showing the product...and then particularly, or at least not claiming in their communication, then it would be for me rather genuine. If it's not a selling message. That would be rather genuine for me.</p> <p><i>R: Which one is more often seen by you</i></p> <p>For Instagrammers with their own brands then I would say more genuine.</p> <p><i>K: And if we asked you, it may be the same answer, but if we asked you to focus on the ones that you follow and like?</i></p> <p>Yeah, yeah, definitely genuine.</p>
28	1:00:40.0 - 1:04:01.3	<p>52-53. <i>What do you think is the Instagrammer's motivation when they promote sponsor brands?</i></p> <p>Yeah, the sponsored ones I would say is more externally, because they are basically paid for doing that, and... depends how long the sponsorship goes, I mean if it's a really strong brand and a really trustworthy Instagrammer for me, then it could be less external, but I would still money is the first they think about and compensation, so yeah.</p>

		<p><i>R: What would you say if you had two Instagrammers - one is entrepreneurial, the other one is regular. They both recommend sponsor brands. So would you ascribe them to the same extent to the external motivation, or your assignment would be different in a way?</i></p> <p>I mean I would say...actually, a normal Instagrammer for me, doing a sponsorship could be also really really passionate. So I'm not sure if I can generalise it, because if I just think about microinfluencers like 100-200 followers, but they come somehow into sponsorships as well because they're really good at what they do. You can still get, not big brands, but for really small brands you can get sponsored. And those, for me, I'm sure they don't get paid a lot for that because they are not having a big base, so they I think can also be really genuinely motivated when doing that, especially at the beginning of their career as Instagrammers. Rather than, for instance, big Instagrammers that have already been in collaborations a couple of times and basically are continuing to keep up their salary, so I'm not sure I can generalise it.</p> <p><i>K: So it also depends on their size, depends on what they can get from it?</i></p> <p>Yes, depends on the follower base they have I would say, their time in the business, as well as the brands, yeah.</p> <p><i>K: You also mentioned if it's a long going sponsorship, so it can be a genuine relationship with a brand, kind of?</i></p> <p>Yes, exactly, the longer I would say the sponsorship is going already, the for me more genuinely driven it is, because it shows that they really...they have signed contracts, having both agreements, so they must've thought about it before doing it.</p>
29	1:04:01.3 - 1:06:00.1	<p><i>54. Do you believe Instagrammers like and use their own brand more, or sponsor brands more? Or do they like and use both their own and sponsor brands equally?</i></p> <p>I would think and hope their own. Because their ideas, everything, the effort...I personally, if I would be that kind of person, of course, I wanna drive rather than another one, so my brand rather than a foreign one, even though I'm under a sponsorship. But I think it probably wouldn't be what happened too often because the product shouldn't be in competition. So... but in general, I would say I and they would probably focus rather on their own brands.</p> <p><i>K: So kind of when you say that you would believe they use their own brand more, you kind of told us that you would want to drive your own sales, right? So that is more about what they present. But if we think what they do in their house, right? Would it be of value to you if you believed that they really honestly like and use it every night?</i></p> <p>Yeah, of course.</p> <p><i>K: Why is that, in that kind of setting?</i></p> <p>Because it's transparent for me, that they are really believing in that product. And if they do so, without being forced and taking pictures of, I mean they're basically not paid for it. They just use it, but for their own use. For their own reasons, but not for later on posting it, so yeah.</p>
30	1:06:00.1 - 1:07:35.6	<p><i>56. How does that affect your opinion about the recommendations?</i></p> <p>I would think that also the recommendations they give of their own brand are better or at least if they are using it more often, what I would assume, then they have more experience with the product. Then I would say the comments [descriptions] are more trustworthy, what they are telling is hopefully then true, and what they are just doing in sponsorships, I mean I would guess that they have strict limits and guidelines that they should follow, so of course the company would advise them to advise this or this characteristic, or claim that result or effect. But if it's their own brand they have much more freedom, they don't have to follow any guidelines, they have their own guidelines, so yes. I would say the brand owners are definitely the ones more relevant.</p>
31	1:07:35.6 - 1:09:53.7	<p><i>57. Is there anything they say or show in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes you feel this way?</i></p> <p>Yeah, if it's not this advertising claim kind of communication.</p> <p><i>R: Something else? You said that they have more freedom. Is that visible in their communication?</i></p> <p>I would say, for instance, let me check actually. They sometimes have the link to their website already there, which I wouldn't like to see because I will look it up myself if I want to have it.</p> <p><i>K: Is it too pushy?</i></p> <p>Yes, that is too pushy, exactly. Or also too many hashtags. Or if they have their own hashtag just for the product and the collaboration. Seems to me, could be too pushy, and if they're basically just writing "Just arrived!" or the price even, those type of communication I don't like that much, because all the information I want to know about it, I will just see it when I buy it. But if I just see a nice comment [description] "Yeah, I'm using my product" of course I know they also want to sell it. I know that, but that type of communication I prefer.</p> <p><i>R: More delicate without this commercial...?</i></p> <p>Yes, yes. More emotional rather than functional message I would say.</p> <p><i>K: And more suggestive?</i></p> <p>Yes, yes.</p>
32	1:09:53.7 - 1:11:51.4	<p><i>58 - Can you give us an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram which made you feel this way?</i></p> <p>The thing is, it is actually her brand, so Gisou, but it is under the Gisou brand page and not her brand page of her profile. So this for instance, yeah and also for instance what is nice in the communication is if they mention themselves, and not just the third person kind of message. If it's like "I use the product" or "I do it like this, I would advise you to buy that", it's better than just "Buy that product".</p> <p><i>R: Is it possible under the brand page? Did you see that?</i></p> <p>Yeah, yeah. For example, "Find this product now available on the website" that would be rather pushy than "I recommend you try out my new product".</p> <p><i>R: Did you notice that if there's a brand page? The communication being "I recommend you".</i></p> <p>No, unfortunately, I haven't seen it but I saw in her profile that it was much subtler, the selling of the product, because she basically just had it in her post but she didn't claim a lot of information about the product, so it was for me less pushy. That's the difference.</p>
33	1:11:51.4 - 1:14:13.9	<p><i>59. When you think of Instagrammers who have their own brand, do you think recommendations of own brand stand out more than recommendations of sponsor brands?</i></p>

		<p>I think actually the sponsored ones stand out more but in a negative way. Because if you have the sponsored ones there's always a tagline "Sponsored by". Then, of course, it's a rather professional post, which, if it's well-made of course attracts your attention. But you easily see that they're sponsored, I mean they need to claim that as well from a regulatory perspective, so they need to do it, but I don't like it, so I would say it stands out more but in a negative way.</p> <p><i>K: So it would definitely catch your attention first, these sponsor tags?</i> Yes. I think the other posts would rather, so, from brand owners, they would rather really fit in the newsfeed that I get from my normal friends and normal surrounding, and I could easily maybe even not pay attention to it being a selling post. Because they're so similar to the way other people post.</p> <p><i>K: Like casual, natural?</i> Yes. Yes, exactly.</p>
34	1:14:13.9 - 1:16:25.5	<p><i>61-62. Which type of brands do you remember more clearly?</i></p> <p>Unfortunately, I think it's really sponsored brands because I have seen them so many times, just because of the amount of times I have seen them. Because it's always sponsored by those big brands that everybody knows, however more information and closer connection I would have rather with their own brands, even though I might not see them first.</p> <p><i>K: What about in the context of one Instagrammer, do you remember them posting about their own brand more or about the sponsor brand more?</i> Yeah, ooh, that depends on the Instagrammer. But I would say normally I have the impression it's more their own. Because they want to push their product more than others.</p> <p><i>R: So do you then remember those products more?</i> Yes. I think so.</p> <p><i>K: And that is because?</i> It depends on the post, that's really related to the post itself I would say. If it's a really good sponsored post, then this could be even more important, stand out better and I could easily remember it. But if I'm really interested in the product of the brand owner and see a random post that is not well made but I am just interested in the product, then I could keep it in mind also really well. So I'm not sure if I can generalize it, no. Depends really on the post.</p>
35	1:16:25.5 - 1:17:25.6	<p><i>63-64. When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, which brand do you associate with the Instagrammer more?</i></p> <p>Definitely brand owners, because as mentioned before the fit between the product and their face then is way better, normally.</p> <p><i>K: So you would associate those Instagrammers who have their own brands with their own brand more?</i> Yes, yes. Because they stand for the product, probably I've seen more posts showing them with their own product, that's what they are also famous for, and yeah, they have probably a longer relationship with their own product than with the sponsored ones if they started this way, so yes, I would say so.</p>
36	1:17:25.6 - 1:21:40.6	<p><i>65-66. What do you think are the specific aspects of posts or on Instagram in general that make you remember own brand more?</i></p> <p><i>R: You said that you remembered sponsored brands more. So what...</i> Yeah, no that depends on the content, it really depends on the post I would say.</p> <p><i>R: Can you right now elaborate on this content, and</i> <i>K: What makes you remember more?</i></p> <p>Really, in the post, within a post? If it's...Actually, I remember posts pretty good first of all if I'm interested in the post</p> <p><i>R: When does that happen?</i> If I like the product. If I want to buy the product or if I just like how the picture looks like. Or...I can't even say if it must be more natural or not, as I like photography, it could also be a really distinct one. But it's such a great shot of the picture, and that's why I remember it. So yeah, doesn't have to be a perfect picture, but it could be a really good one made by a perfect photographer, but it could also just be the Instagrammer standing in front of a mirror and I really like the post, so...it really, really, really depends.</p> <p><i>K: Do you have anyone in mind?</i> But the communication, let's see... So for instance, this picture is not great, but I just like how they divided the frame, the mixture of the colors, that's why I would remember this picture even though it's definitely a selling post.</p> <p><i>R: Is it because this picture is different from others that you see?</i> It's not necessarily different, but it's just a really good shot I would say. I just like getting inspiration from Instagram as well, so if I look through all of those posts, because I'm not always looking for a product to buy, so of course, if I've just seen nice posts, those are the ones that I would remember I would say. Or another thing is if I have been to a place before, and they are using the same location if it triggers experiences that I made before, that I think is also a really strong thing.</p>
37	1:21:40.6 - 1:30:01.3	<p><i>67-68. When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, do you think there needs to be a common theme between them (brands)?</i></p> <p>In order to what, to be successful with it, or...?</p>

		<p><i>R: Just when you see...For example, you follow an Instagrammer. An Entrepreneurial one. And she posts own brands, she posts sponsor brands. Like do you feel there needs to be a common theme, or maybe you feel weird if there isn't...?</i></p> <p>Yes, yes. I would really check out their content, then on the brand page itself as well, and if the posts don't match at all or if I'm used to seeing one theme, if they always do the pictures in a travel context, and suddenly it's, I don't know, office, and it's not related. I think it should be in a theme, yeah.</p> <p><i>R: What about the endorsed brands, between the brands?</i></p> <p>The sponsored ones, I don't think it's necessarily important, no. I think it's rather important for the own brands, that it is in a theme. Because the themes can vary a lot, for example for me...</p> <p><i>R: Ok, think about brand personality right now.</i></p> <p><i>K: We need to kind of interject because kind of what we are trying to ask you is do these brands need to be similar. When an Instagrammer has their own brand, for example when they accept a sponsorship, do the brands need to share like a common...</i></p> <p>The brands? No, I would say they shouldn't be similar. I mean, it can be...but no, because then I would probably mix them up.</p> <p><i>R: How do you understand that they shouldn't be similar?</i></p> <p>So for example how they do the shootings of the products, and the Instagrammer, doesn't have to be similar.</p> <p><i>R: Ok, I'm an Entrepreneurial Instagrammer and I have my hair product, it's a shampoo. And then for example I started to sponsor a conditioner for my hair, but it's a sponsor brand. So do you perceive these two brands as similar?</i></p> <p>Yes, those definitely, because both are for your hair, yes. Yes.</p> <p><i>R: And how does it make you feel? Do you think it's okay?</i></p> <p>I think it fits. I would assume if you're already interested in the product you already came up with, and then you are supporting, still from a different company but you're supporting a product that is within that range, you should have knowledge about it as well. And experience. And then you for instance also know you can probably use both together and it's fine, yeah. It should fit.</p> <p><i>R: What about if my shampoo, what about if I have a very expensive shampoo, it's like premium fancy shampoo, costs like 600 DKK. And then I start to sponsor this conditioner which costs 10 DKK.</i></p> <p>Let's say that way - i wouldn't believe that this Instagrammer uses both, because I would assume that if she pays already for the shampoo 700DKK, then she would also have the money to pay for the conditioner more, but for me it doesn't have to be that both brands are really expensive - it's fine if the product is really good. And it's just one that is commercially sold, for a less expensive price, could be still fine. So like for L'Oréal products for instance. I would say just because the Instagrammer has her own brand, having specific characteristics, really good ingredients, and then supports a L'Oréal product, that costs maybe a fifth of it but it fits into the range, I would say that's fine. Isn't about the price always I would say.</p> <p><i>K: So if we dropped the price and go back to the fit: what can you tell us about what the fit should be?</i></p> <p>Product range I would say, the product range should fit. They should use both I would say, so that is kind of a requirement even though I can't check it. But it should be trustworthy that they are using both. Yeah...give me examples.</p> <p><i>R: If they are the same products? What about if I have shampoo and then I sponsor shampoo?</i></p> <p>Then I wouldn't believe that it would happen, this sponsorship, because they would never...I don't think that the brand owner would support...So first of all, it wouldn't fit I would say. But I'd also doubt that it would happen because they would be in competition. So maybe they would do a collaboration, putting both brands kind of together, coming up with new products, yes. But I don't think they would sell the same type of product.</p> <p><i>K: What about - you asked for examples - what about this personality, brand personality? Let's say own brand is super girly, super sweet...and then another sponsor brand that they accept is like for motorcycle riders?</i></p> <p>Yeah, true I agree. This brand personality fit needs to exist as well. If they are always promoting girly things, and then it's completely out of the way, something else, then yeah.</p>
38	1:30:00.0 - 1:30:34.2	<p>69-70. Do you prefer if Instagrammers who have their own brand recommend brands that are similar to each other, or that differ from each other?</p> <p>I would say rather similar. Because of the reasons we discussed, it's just more authentic, it fits just better.</p> <p><i>R: So you believe in them more, then?</i></p> <p>Yes.</p>
39	1:30:34.2 - 1:36:42.8	<p>71-72. How does the similarity between brands affect your opinion about the recommendation of sponsor brand?</p> <p><i>R: So if the brands are similar - own brand and sponsor brand, they are similar, right. You would assume that due to some reasons, they are similar, the fit is good. So how does that affect your opinion about sponsor brands, about the recommendation of sponsor brands? Would you accept it more?</i></p> <p>I don't get the question. If I have sponsor brand and own brand, and they fit.</p> <p><i>R: Yes, compared to the situation when they don't fit. So in which case you would accept the sponsor brand more?</i></p> <p>If it fits, definitely if it fits. Because it's more trustworthy then to me, that's the main reason I would say.</p> <p><i>R: So do you have any examples of when you saw a great fit, and when you saw a not so great fit?</i></p> <p>I can just tell about the fit, for instance, if it's...ok, yeah. So for instance, this Caro Daur that I mentioned before, she had her own lipstick, this lipstick, of course, I personally think it fits because she used, for instance, MAC products way before she came up with this product, which probably was due to the sponsorship, I don't know, but she at least used it and that is her own product, and it fits her personality as well.</p> <p><i>K: Is that important as well?</i></p>

	<p>I would say so, yes. To some extent, yes, because...I mean it's like the brand the Instagrammer has herself or himself. If the fit between those two matches, then, of course, it's good if the sponsor brand also fits the personality. So basically, if there's a fit between the product and the personality of the person, then I think the sponsorship, the success is guaranteed. But if there is no fit, I don't believe that.</p> <p>And another thing is, I think especially if the fit between their own product as well as the sponsor product, if there is a fit, then even there could be a spill-off as well, that they are actually pushing each other's product, so it's a positive effect on both brands. Because you associate, you see...So let's say you have product A which is their own brand and you have product B which is the sponsor brand. If I would see product A which is really fitting product B then I would associate both and think "Ah yeah, ok, I also need this shampoo because I already bought this conditioner", so... I think it makes it successful if both fit because you associate both in the end.</p> <p><i>R: You associate with each other?</i></p> <p>Yes, yes. Because imagine you buy the brand owned shampoo and it is really in line with the conditioner that is sponsored, and you're just online shopping, you're buying the shampoo and you immediately think "Oh actually I need the conditioner as well". And then you buy that product as well. So if it wouldn't fit, you wouldn't even connect them probably.</p> <p><i>K: So back to this girl that you were about to show us, we asked you for a good example, right? When the fit is good?</i></p> <p>But it's difficult to show that because then I need a product she has as well as a product she sponsors. I can only say, for instance, I don't know, because there are thousands of posts. But for instance this girly theme? I mean it makes sense, she is supporting MAC which is a girly beauty product and at the same time, for instance, she also has her own tights brand. I would say this for instance fits because it's in the same type of fashion beauty area.</p>
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6.1 RE1

Line	Timespan	Content
1	1:20.4 - 3:35.3	<p><i>1-2. When Instagrammers are more trustworthy/ honest/ believable, are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes, definitely. Consumers are more willing to trust Instagrammers who always give an honest opinion or at least seemingly give an honest opinion. A trustworthy Instagrammer shouldn't recommend products that they don't like. Nowadays, followers are very conscious regarding what they see. They thoroughly observe Instagrammers' content, notice what brands they are collaborating with and discuss it on various online forums. It is often enough to make only one post or endorse a brand which is somehow contradicting to your beliefs and the level of trustworthiness is already decreasing. Therefore, in order to stay relevant on Instagram, we always recommend Instagrammers to provide only honest recommendations.</p>
2	3:35.4 - 7:05.2	<p><i>3-4. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who own brands are more trustworthy, compared to regular Instagrammers? (Does the fact that they have their own brand change their trustworthiness?)</i></p> <p>I would say that not necessary. Actually, people might think that since you have your own brand, you will be willing to communicate only good aspects of it and do not recommend brands that are competing with your own brand. That's why I think having your own brand is not instantly increasing your trustworthiness. In my opinion, Instagrammers who recommend various brands and demonstrate a wide spectrum of different options, communicate a more genuine opinion. They may seem as not driven by their business goals and, thus, perceived as more trustworthy. While in practice, Instagrammers who have own brands in a specific industry, e.g. beauty or fashion, are more inclined to talk about that specific industry only in relation with own brand. This, in turn, narrows down the extent of their communication and recommendations which minimize the value their followers get.</p>
3	7:05.2 - 7:46.2	<p><i>5-6. Do you think that decreased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who own brands makes the recommendations less relevant? (so, would that make people less interested in the products?). Why?</i></p> <p>Yes. Because Instagrammers who are minimizing the value of the content their followers get, also experience the decrease in their trustworthiness and respectively the relevance of their recommendations.</p>
4	7:46.2 - 7:47.7	<p><i>7-8. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who own brands do in their posts that make their recommendations seem more/less believable?</i></p> <p>In general, the communication of Instagrammers who own brands are more promotional. These Instagrammers are becoming associated with one brand so they become as representatives or ambassadors of such brands. Eventually, one way or another, everything that they do on Instagram is perceived as an advertisement. They focus more on one brand and, in turn, produce organic posts to a lesser extent.</p> <p>For example, Kim Kardashian's stories are full of her fragrance, makeup products, phone cases and Kimojis which due to their visualisations in a video format with special effects look like a marketing campaign. Thus, her sponsored stories which are incorporated in her daily life much more and, differently than of own brands, look like organic stories. The example of Kim Kardashian could be applicable to Instagrammers too since there is a tendency of their content to look more promotional, less diverse. This makes their feed to look more like a brand's feed, not Instagrammer's and naturally make it less believable.</p>
5	11:42.9 - 12:18.6	<p><i>10-11. When Instagrammers have more expertise (about products or industry), are their recommendations more relevant?</i></p> <p>Yes, of course. The more knowledgeable they are and able to present the newest tendencies, relevant information, the more their recommendations are relevant.</p>
6	12:18.6 - 12:50.5	<p><i>12-13. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who own brands have more expertise, compared to regular Instagrammers?</i></p> <p>I can answer this question from two sides. From one perspective, Instagrammers who own brands can be seen as having more expertise within a particular product group. Especially, when Instagrammers introduce the making process of their products, reveal manufacturing details and in general produce more educational posts which reveal how and why their products are good.</p>

		12-13. Whereas, when talking about industry knowledge, the more products you try and show, the more you can be perceived as having expertise within that industry, regardless of whether it is clothing or beauty products. The common thing between these two perspectives is the chosen direction of one's communication. Because in both ways, either you are an entrepreneur or a regular Instagrammer, you can choose to only claim that a recommended product is "good and nice" or you can choose to also explain and demonstrate your claims more thoroughly. These two communication directions are important when thinking about perceived Instagrammers' expertise.
7	13:50.6 - 14:13.4	<p>14-15. Do you think that the increased expertise of Instagrammers who own brands makes the recommendations more relevant?</p> <p>Yes, as the expertise of an Instagrammer is increasing, the relevance of recommendations is increasing too [the reasoning is the same as in Question 10-11: "The more knowledgeable they are and able to present the newest tendencies, relevant information, the more their recommendations are relevant"].</p>
8	14:13.4 - 15:16.2	<p>16. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who own brands do in their posts that show more expertise?</p> <p>I don't think that all Instagrammers who own brands do something completely the same because the communication depends on an individual level. Of course, the majority of them is sharing some kind of manufacturing information and other relevant details about product quality which shows their level of expertise. I also noticed that sometimes brands invite regular Instagrammers into their manufacturing premises to show the "backstage" of making products. However, I don't think it significantly increases the perceived expertise of such Instagrammers since they are only capturing the process with their cameras, and differently than Instagrammers who own brands, are not in charge with the process.</p>
9	15:16.1 - 16:55.1	<p>18-19. When Instagrammers are more attractive, are their recommendations more relevant?</p> <p>Yes. Attractive Instagrammers have more influence on social media. People are following Instagrammers due to both Instagrammers' resemblance to themselves [similarity] and Instagrammers' features or aspects of life which people do not possess and thus consider as interesting and desirable. Therefore, the more attractive Instagrammers are, the more followers want to be like them and thus Instagrammers' recommendation become more relevant.</p>
10	16:55.0 - 17:40.5	<p>20-21. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who own brands are more attractive, compared to regular Instagrammers?</p> <p>Not necessary. I think, there is a group of people who consider people having their own brands or business ventures as more successful. In general, currently in Europe, there is a tendency to believe that having your own brand or business means peaking in your career. Due to this tendency, some people might perceive such Instagrammers as more attractive.</p>
11	17:40.4 - 18:15.6	<p>22-23. Do you think that increased attractiveness of Instagrammers who own brands makes the recommendations more relevant?</p> <p>Yes. If, as a follower, I think this Instagrammer is more attractive, then their recommendations will be more relevant.</p>
12	18:15.6 - 19:53.1	<p>24. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who own brands do in their posts that make them seem more attractive?</p> <p>If with their communication they stress their entrepreneurial features, show their attendance at various conferences with their products, then they make themselves seem more attractive. In practice, I noticed that the majority of Instagrammers become the face of the brand campaign, i.e. they participate in photo shoots for marketing material, use personal aspects when creating own products. I think it makes them seem more attractive.</p>
13	19:53.1 - 21:19.2	<p>26-27. When Instagrammers are more respected (admired), are their recommendations more relevant?</p> <p>Yes, definitely. Respect is very important for Instagrammers since it contributes to the trust of Instagrammers and a perception of some kind of authority or opinion leader within a particular industry or area. In my opinion, respect is related to trust and expertise. If an Instagrammer is trustworthy and has expertise within a particular area, then as a result, they are also respected and thus, their recommendations are more relevant.</p>
14	21:19.2 - 22:16.5	<p>28-29. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who own brands are more respected, compared to regular Instagrammers?</p> <p>I couldn't say so with confidence. I think respect is not so much related to having a business or a brand as with the communication in general. You can be significantly respected both when having or not having a business. Respect depends on what is the communication of Instagrammers and what it provides to followers. I don't think that the fact they become or are entrepreneurs, does make them seem more respected.</p>
15	22:16.2 - 23:56.8	<p>32. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who own brands do in their posts that make them seem more respected?</p> <p>Ok, I am making an assumption now and not sure whether it is relevant to followers. Maybe the respect for an Instagrammer can increase when own brand is being developed in a socially responsible way, including contributions to charity and people with low income or somehow else positively contributing to the society.</p>
16	23:56.8 - 26:38.4	<p>34-35. When Instagrammers are more similar to followers (peers), are their recommendations more relevant?</p> <p>So as I already touched upon before, similarity to followers is very important for Instagrammers. One of the main things for Instagrammers is that their audience/ followers would be similar and consistent demographically, psychographically, as well as in their values and attitudes. This similarity makes Instagrammers relevant for their audience. The more Instagrammers are similar to followers and do not communicate as a brand, the more relevant their recommendations are. However, Instagrammers can't be as a completely regular people because they need to have something attractive that followers would like to have or achieve. Something that they would feel jealous about. That something that followers would like to have - a feature, characteristics or an achievement, contributes to the relevance of their recommendation. Because when I admire a person and would like to at least a little bit be similar to him or her, I also care about the recommendation that a person is giving.</p>
17	26:38.4 - 28:12.5	<p>36-37. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who own brands are more or less similar to followers, compared to regular Instagrammers?</p>

		I don't think that there is a very significant difference in being perceived as more or less similar to followers when you release a brand. However, I still think the difference exists. It's like in real life when you have a friend who is striving for a career in a company or you have a friend who is owning a brand/company. Those Instagrammers who own brands are perceived as less similar to their followers than regular Instagrammers. The reason I already mentioned in the beginning. The feed and communication of Instagrammers who own brands are much more similar to the communication brands, i.e. one tone, the same theme of posts.
18	28:15.7 - 28:48.3	<p>38-39. Do you think that decreased similarity of Instagrammers who own brands makes the recommendations less relevant?</p> <p>I don't think that due to a decreased similarity to followers, the relevance of Instagrammers who own brands is also decreasing. As I already mentioned, both groups of Instagrammers, despite them owning brands or not, need to be somehow dissimilar to followers. Therefore, this factor of owning a brand could be an achievement which is perceived as a desirable aspect of Instagrammers' life making followers be interested in the Instagrammers' recommendations.</p>
19	29:01.8 - 31:22.0	<p>40b. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who own brands do in their posts that make them seem less similar to followers?</p> <p>Their frequency of posting own brands makes them look different than regular Instagrammers, similar to brand profiles and, thus, less similar to followers. Instagrammers are still much more often working with brands on a short-term basis or sometimes one brand can appear in their profiles, e.g. 4 times per year. Whereas, when they recommend own brands, they do that much more often than 4 times per year. Indeed, their own brand will appear much more often and in many more forms than a sponsor brand such as a picture, video, integrated into other profiles or with other Instagrammers, wearable and usable, etc. This makes Instagrammers' profiles much similar to brand profiles which makes Instagrammers less similar to followers.</p>
20	31:22.0 - 31:24.5	<p>42-43. When you believe that Instagrammers like and use recommended products more, are their recommendations more relevant?</p> <p>Yes, without a doubt. As I like to say, this is one of the main rules in Influencer Marketing. Instagrammers must recommend products that they like and use or at least that it would see they like and use them. They shouldn't recommend products that they use only once for the marketing purposes and then give away for their friends or family members. In order to make their recommendations relevant, Instagrammers should genuinely love and use products.</p>
21	32:36.9 - 36:24.3	<p>44-45. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who own brands seem like they use and like the products they recommend more, compared to regular Instagrammers?</p> <p>Definitely, they do seem like that. However, it doesn't necessarily mean that regular Instagrammers can't be seen as liking and using recommended products in the same manner. They can still be genuine by recommending products that they love and believe in. I think it depends on an individual.</p> <p>I don't think that the recommendations of sponsor brands which are not competing with own brands are somehow perceived by followers differently regarding them liking and using such products. If followers believe that Instagrammers genuinely recommend their own brand, they can also believe in their honesty when recommending other brands. Of course, it is very important how that recommendation is portrayed.</p> <p>When Instagrammers recommend a sponsor brand which is competing with own brand(s), e.g. and Instagrammer owns an under eye cream and recommends a sponsor brand which is a face cream, then the sponsored recommendation might be perceived as much less liked and used by that Instagrammer. It can be depicted in the followers' engagement and comments.</p> <p>There is one Lithuanian Instagrammer who has 65.000 followers and she is popular within the category of "supermom". She often recommends body care and her followers remember her recommendations very clearly. There was a situation when she after half a year recommended another competing body cream. Despite the fact that it might seem quite normal to change one's body cream in half a year, she received a lot of negative comments and a huge backlash from her followers. In my opinion, whether Instagrammers have own brand or not, it is important to always think what one's followers expect from you. And if they expect you to be loyal for a recommended product longer than half a year, then you need to engage in the respective collaborations.</p>
22	36:24.2 - 36:27.4	<p>46-47. Do you think that difference makes the recommendations more relevant?</p> <p>Yes, the increased perception of Instagrammers liking and using products make the recommendations more relevant.</p>
23	36:27.4 - 39:41.8	<p>48-49. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who own brands do in their posts which shows that they more honestly like and use the recommended products?</p> <p>Maybe Instagrammers who own brands can, in general, realize more what works and what doesn't when advertising products. Since they are participating in various stages of brand development such as realizing the need, producing it and advertising with various marketing tools, they see how sales are affected by each of it. Therefore, they might have a better understanding of what communication and tools work better for consumers. For example, how specific texts, visuals and posting strategies work for their followers.</p> <p>48-49. However, it is not a necessary condition that such Instagrammers have a better expertise in the advertising on Instagram. I have a good example which visualises it. There is a Lithuanian Instagrammer Agne Gilyte who is often collaborating with brands in making products or combinations/ sets of products. When she started making such collaborations, her communication on Instagram when promoting them respectively changed. She started to post perfectly made, aesthetic pictures and promotional text which rather remind a brand communication than a communication of an Instagrammer. As a result, such communication doesn't resonate with her personality and, thus, do not engage the followers.</p>
24	39:41.8 - 45:03.1	<p>50-51. What motivation Instagrammers who own brands communicate when endorsing their own brand?</p> <p>In order to make or keep themselves and their products trustworthy, they communicate that they love and use their products, belief in and that it's their "baby" which is very important to them and that only because of these reasons, they recommend those products. In my opinion, they not only communicate that motivation but, in most cases, genuinely possess it. It is not easy to have own brands; they need to put a lot of efforts in creating them. Therefore, there would be pretty natural to think that they create them in the best way possible.</p> <p>I don't think that there are Instagrammers who behind their own brands communicate financial motivation. Even if followers understand that they earn money from own brands, there is no difference from whom you are buying, from Instagrammers and corporate brands. If you like a product, what is the difference whom you are paying money?</p>

		50-51. There is a Lithuanian beauty Instagrammer called Ieva Pa who several years ago quit her job and focused her activity on making sponsorships and creating bracelets called "Ieva Beauty". People don't perceive the job Instagrammers do as serious and, thus, over the years, her motivation in keeping this brand has changed. Currently, she is keeping it in order to be secure she has another activity, next to sponsorships on Instagram so she is able to answer that does something more than "being on Instagram".
25	45:03.0 - 48:04.9	<p>52-53. <i>What motivation Instagrammers who own brands communicate when endorsing sponsor brands?</i></p> <p>So there is definitely a difference in perceived motivation of recommending own and sponsor brand. When we talked about recommending own brands, their internal motivation is pretty strong since Instagrammers recommend something that they have created and what they love. Whereas, when recommending sponsor brands, internal motivation is more product-focused since usually, Instagrammers communicate more about product features or physical aspects and less about the idea behind the brand and its concept. The communication sounds more like "I have tried this product, I liked, this is the result and, therefore, I recommend".</p>
26	48:04.8 - 50:32.7	<p>54. <i>Do you believe the Instagrammer likes and uses both their own and sponsor brands equally?</i></p> <p>If talking about Ieva Pa, an Instagrammer I mentioned before, she recommends both types of brands equally honestly. I am not talking about her real motivation because I don't know but she is able to communicate any kind of recommendations in an honest way. In other cases, sometimes one can really see that the communication of own brand is more thought through and more efforts are put into creating such post. When accepting a recommendation, this effort is usually noticed and appreciated by followers.</p>
27	50:32.7 - 51:03.4	<p>55-57. <i>Does the presence of own brand in the profile make sponsored endorsements seem mainly financially motivated? Does that negatively affect the effectiveness of sponsor endorsements?</i></p> <p>Yes. [The reasons were already discussed in 52-53]</p>
28	51:03.4 - 52:05.6	<p>58. <i>Is there anything they say or show in their posts that create that feeling?</i></p> <p>If an Instagrammer, differently than for own brand endorsements, is investing less effort in creating visual and textual content for sponsored endorsements, then their followers might feel the Instagrammer when recommending sponsor brands is mainly financially motivated.</p>
29	52:05.6 - 52:55.3	<p>62-63. <i>Do you think endorsements of sponsor brand are as much associated with such Instagrammers as endorsements of own brand are?</i></p> <p>Endorsements of own brands are remembered more than sponsored recommendations due to the higher frequency of own brand recommendations. Also, such Instagrammers are already associated with own brands, starting from their Instagram bio where their brands are usually mentioned.</p>
30	53:18.0 - 56:11.0	<p>64. <i>Have you ever experienced endorsements of Instagrammers' own brand being more associated with an Instagrammer than sponsored endorsements? Can you tell us about that?</i></p> <p>One of the main rules when recommending any brand is to not include other strong brands because, otherwise, the focus will be lost. If own brand is stronger and much more recognized than sponsor brand, then it might happen.</p>
31	56:11.0 - 58:20.1	<p>65-66. <i>What do you think are the specific aspects of posts including?</i> <i>- own brand that makes them more preferred? - sponsor brand that makes them more preferred?</i></p> <p>It depends on one's communication. If an Instagrammer is putting more efforts into creating content for posts with own brands, then there is a big chance that it will be more preferred by the followers.</p>
32	58:20.1 - 59:37.2	<p>67-68. <i>When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, do you think there needs to be a common theme between them (brands)?</i></p> <p>Despite whether you have or not own brand, it is necessary to choose partners-brands which are not contradicting to each other. Since an Instagrammer must also choose partners-brands based on their values, the chosen brands automatically should be similar. This similarity does not depend on an industry because there could be two totally different products which are similar due to, for example, their perceived price level.</p>
33	59:37.2 - 1:00:57.8	<p>71. <i>How does the similarity between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of the sponsor brand? How does the difference between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of the sponsor brand?</i></p> <p>Yes. I think if they are similar, sponsored recommendations will be accepted better. If the own and sponsor brands are different, then the acceptance of sponsor brands will be worse.</p>
34	1:00:57.7 - 1:03:10.1	<p>69-70. <i>How important is it to endorse own and sponsor brands similar to each other?</i></p> <p>I think in practice, there are a lot of situations when brand-partners are not chosen by Instagrammers very thoroughly. Especially, if an Instagrammer doesn't have a lot of experience in recommending brands. In case they will reject brands, they fear to miss their chance to get more brand-partners in future. Whereas, for Instagrammers who are well established on Instagram and already have their well-recognised personal brand, it is necessary to be picky and choose only those brands which resonate with them. That's why the similarity between the brands is important since it also projects whether the recommended brands resonate with an Instagrammer.</p>

6.2 RE2

Line	Time	Content
1	3:44.8 - 5:02.7	<p><i>1,2 - When Instagrammers are more trustworthy/ honest/ believable, are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>I would say yes. If they receive more trust then yes, their recommendations and statements are more relevant. Because you always value more what the people that you trust say. So I'd trust my friends over strangers, because you know their values and their beliefs, their normal thoughts, how they live, so you have an overview and insights about where their opinion came from. So if you trust their background and you know they have recommended you something, then you know how to sort of "read into" that recommendation, you value that person's opinion...it has more meaning to you if they recommend you something.</p>
2	5:26.3 - 6:33.0	<p><i>3,4 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more trustworthy, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more trustworthiness? Why?</i></p> <p>That's a really difficult question to answer without any background to it. But in general, if I had to choose I would say yes because you know that they are hardworking people, and they're not fake influencers or just doing it for all the perks, they actually also work. So I would say, in that sense, maybe recommendations from them and their trustworthiness is (inaudible). I think that's a difficult one to ask if I had to choose I would say yes.</p>
3	6:32.9 - 7:19.0	<p><i>5,6 - Do you think that increased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p><i>R: So do you think that increased trustworthiness is somehow related with the relevance of their recommendations?</i> Specifically, extra for Instagrammers who have their own business... I don't think it becomes more relevant than other influencers that you trust if they have their own business. No, might even be more difficult to navigate in that area of who do you work with, isn't it too many brands, too many collaborations, so it might make it even more difficult.</p>
4	7:17.8 - 9:00.4	<p><i>7,8 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers have their who own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes their recommendations seem more believable or less believable? Why?</i> <i>R: If you would imagine them as two groups: one is Instagrammers who don't have their own brands, and the other one is Instagrammers who do have their own brands. Would you notice anything specifically that they do that makes their recommendations seem more believable? Or maybe less believable?</i></p> <p>No, nothing specifically that pops in my mind. Except that maybe they are a little bit more professional often, as I said. They are more upfront with the disclosures (inaudible). So, in that sense, they might be a little bit different over influencers that don't have a brand and they don't really have to protect that. And also maybe not have gained that professionalism of having your own brand, so they might be a little bit more mature. So, no specific difference except maybe being open about the disclosures.</p>
5	9:00.4 - 15:13.1	<p><i>9 - Can you recall an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram where you noticed that?</i></p> <p><i>R: For example, where you noticed that those Instagrammers specifically disclosed their partnerships, or maybe not only with a specific tag but also maybe they wrote something about it in the post. Do you have any Instagrammer in your mind that is not afraid to do that and usually does that?</i> In the Netherlands, where I am from obviously (inaudible), it is a topic that is often touched upon and discussed in the media. So what a ton of influencers did here is they wrote blogposts or made videos about having... #AnnicAd for example. So this influencer girl Annic made her own hashtag, #AnnicAd, and posted a blogpost about it as well where she told all of her followers: "Okay, I'm working with this hashtag as I really want to tell you guys which post I am earning money on and which one not, but also I want to take this moment to explain which collaborations I do and that the ones that I do I really support, and I really stand behind my choices in that and I really believe that they are also valuable and informational to you, my followers. I want to be clear on that and I don't want you guys guessing all the time, so that's why I made this hashtag and it's #AnnicAds." She is an influencer, but she also runs some businesses and she has this business blog in which she also helps women build their own businesses. So she not necessarily has her own product line, but she's also more than an influencer - an entrepreneur and a big brand herself. So I think that's a little bit similar. <i>R: That's a super interesting example! Could you maybe elaborate a little bit on how it affects the perception of her trustworthiness? Maybe you've observed that people are looking towards her as more trustworthy?</i> I would definitely say so. Just by being open, it looks really well on your profile, I don't know if you guys notice the same, but often if it looks like a post is sponsored, but people aren't disclosing it - people will talk about it in the comments. And they will have really negative sentiments, which is obviously not good for your profile or the feeling that your followers who read those comments have. So definitely I think being open about it really helps in being perceived as more trustworthy because they know that you disclose everything that you do for a paid collaboration and that you really pick your collaborations - you don't just work with any brand. And you want it to be useful for them as well. So I would say working in this way, being very honest and open about it, explaining a little bit about how you disclose stuff and how you pick your collaborations works in that sense. <i>K: Cool! That strategy is something completely new to us. That "joint" hashtag for all your ads.</i> Cool. I think there's a couple of people in the Netherlands for sure that do it.</p>
6	15:31.0 - 17:56.6	<p><i>10, 11 - When Instagrammers have more expertise (about products or industry), are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes, for sure. You would go to a beauty influencer to get some beauty advice, and you would go to a mommy influencer to get some mommy advice. So yes, I think expertise definitely helps. <i>R: So you just mentioned that expertise is related with this industry for which you are following them...</i> <i>K: Kind of like a niche that they have?</i> Yes, exactly. <i>R: Can you recall any other expertise that Instagrammers might have, that contributes to the relevance of their recommendations? Or, if just this one pops into your mind, it's fine as well.</i> I worked at an influencer marketing agency and we did tons of campaigns, and I looked at tons of influencers amongst which...mommy, baby, lifestyle, travel, beauty, fashion, sports, and very specifically focused on sports as well, we did campaigns with runners only or fitness girls only...but also truckers, like people actually driving trucks, we did a campaign for a navigation system for trucks and it could calculate how high your truck was, which</p>

		<p>roads you could take and which would have tunnels or something that you wouldn't fit in, or with bridges and the weight of your load, so I was looking for truck influencers, and believe or not there are many.</p> <p><i>R: But it's on YouTube, right? I can't imagine them on Instagram.</i></p> <p>No, also on Instagram. They are sharing pictures of their trucks, the views they see along the way. So that is something I really discovered along the way - there's a niche for everything.</p>
7	17:56.5 - 19:33.0	<p><i>12,13 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands have more expertise, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand make them seem like they have more expertise? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes, it really depends on the influencer again. Of course, we know that there are some really great ones out there, but also that don't take life too seriously even if they have their own brands. But if their sort of "main niche" that they focus on with their Instagram, if the brand they start is in that same niche, then I would expect that their expertise on that subject is bigger, yes.</p> <p><i>R: What about expertise which is unrelated to a specific product category, but any other expertise that this Instagrammer who owns a brand can have?</i></p> <p>Not necessarily. I would really say that the niche they're in and the products or brand that they started should be in the same direction, and there their expertise is bigger. If the Influencer makes a lipstick and talks about being a mommy for example, I wouldn't necessarily say their expertise on mommy advice would be bigger because they have a company.</p>
8	19:33.0 - 20:25.5	<p>14,15 was skipped,</p> <p><i>16-Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram, in general, that shows more expertise or less expertise?</i></p> <p>I would say no again, except I'm thinking just now expertise and trustworthiness sort of tie in together, not a 100% but they are overlapping so maybe if you know that somebody is really responsible, you would ascribe them more expertise. But for me personally, not necessarily, no.</p>
9	20:49.9 - 22:15.6	<p>17 skipped</p> <p><i>18,19 - When Instagrammers are more attractive, are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Personally, again, I would say no, but I can imagine that some followers, viewers who are maybe a little bit younger would say yes.</p> <p><i>R, K: Why do you think so?</i></p> <p>For me, knowing a little bit about the industry, obviously I'm not really impressed easily, and I can sort of make my own choices and not be blinded by this beautiful girl with this beautiful amazing life. Whilst younger people, who may not have as much background knowledge about this, and are just really obsessed...I mean, people are obsessed with influencers almost like they are obsessed with pop stars for example. And then obviously you would trust her more and think that recommendations are of higher value if they are made by some beautiful girl that you follow and that you find amazing. So, I would say for some yes, but not for me.</p>
10	22:15.6 - 22:53.0	<p><i>20, 21 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more attractive, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand make them seem like they are more attractive? Why?</i></p> <p>I think, in a sense, yes. It adds to this image of them having an amazing life that everybody else wants, this image of it all being easy and coming naturally to them. So, having this amazing life and then also owning a business that's at least looking to be doing amazing - we don't know, but it would definitely seem like it's amazing - will add to their attractiveness, like you described it. Yes.</p>
11	22:53.0 - 24:13.7	<p><i>22, 23 - Do you think that the increased attractiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>In some cases, yes. In other cases, no. Again, for some audiences that really step into that and believe into that almost fairytale-like picture, yes. And for others with a little bit of distance, no.</p>
12	24:13.7 - 26:40.5	<p><i>24 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more attractive?</i></p> <p>In the way that the post looks like, you mean? Or the things that they write?</p> <p><i>R: Yes, we can think about everything they do on Instagram. Do they do something specific on Instagram - with stories, with posts, with their bio, with their descriptions, anything - that makes them seem more attractive?</i></p> <p>No, I cannot think of anything like that, no.</p> <p><i>R: You mentioned before that some people can perceive them as more attractive because they show their entrepreneurial life as an easy achievement, or as a path that was not so difficult and everybody can achieve it, or you know, you have this feeling that this person was able to do this. So maybe you can take this thought and think a little bit about how such Instagrammers portray that within Instagram?</i></p> <p>Hmm...definitely in the way that they describe their life, but in general, on social media, everybody always posts the best pictures, the nicest comments, and everything. So I think in general we have this idea that the girls that are Influencers have this amazing life, because they travel and they have all these beautiful outfits, and all these products and they go to all these events... And I don't think that girls that are also an entrepreneur do it in a different way, but it's just one more factor that you know will cost them a lot of time, but they are still doing it. But their posting habits are probably similar as to before they were an entrepreneur.</p>
13	26:58.1 - 27:35.0	<p>(25 was skipped)</p> <p><i>26, 27 - When Instagrammers are more respected (admired), are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes. I would say that respect is very closely related to trustworthiness because you would only trust someone that you also respect. So, I think the same is applicable to respect, yes. I would say if you respect somebody it enhances how much you believe their recommendations.</p>
14	27:35.0 - 28:24.3	<p><i>28, 29 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more respected, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand make them seem like they are more respected? Why?</i></p>

		Yes. Again, it has to do with knowing that they have a professional life, that they run a business, that they have to take care of that. That's something that people always admire - people running their own business. So I think the same will apply to influencers, that knowing that they also run a business really installs respect with their followers.
15	28:24.3 - 29:03.1	<p><i>30,31 - Do you think that increased respect of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes, for sure. Again, a little bit similar to trustworthiness. You are more likely to take advice from someone you respect and you trust over somebody that you do not respect and do not trust. So that definitely helps the recommendations.</p>
16	29:05.4 - 30:16.2	<p><i>32. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more respected?</i></p> <p>Again - a sense of professionalism. I think that's a respected asset and a personality trait to enhance the way in which you take the recommendations. Yes, so professionalism.</p> <p><i>K: Have you maybe noticed any ways in which they can convey that professionalism? Verbally or visually maybe somehow?</i></p> <p>Both, I would say. If you are really focused on your brand, and it's, for example, a super super serious brand, then they would stay away from the super sexy bikini beach style pictures... And you talk in a more thought through way, you won't say things that you didn't check, that's the sort of professionalism that I would expect to come with that.</p>
17	30:43.7 - 31:27.9	<p><i>34,35 - When Instagrammers are more similar to followers (peers), are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes, I would say. Because if they are more like the followers that means that the lifestyle that they have is more in sync with the lifestyle that the followers have. So products that are relevant to their lifestyle, are relevant products in the followers' lifestyles.</p> <p>Addition: Provided that these Influencers are promoting products that they actually love. So if they promote something that is really out of line with their lifestyle, that is really actually not something that they would use, but they're just posting because they would get money for it, then no. [then the recommendations are not more relevant because of similarity]</p>
18	32:26.8 - 35:33.3	<p><i>36,37 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more or less similar to followers, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are less or more similar to followers? Why?</i></p> <p>I would say, in essence, really generally spoken - less similar. Because there's just fewer people that have their own brands than people who do not have their own brands. So that would be a pretty big differentiator between the Influencer and their followers. Other than that, it really depends on the lifestyle that they live. Are they huge like Negin Misrahehi? She's a really big Dutch influencer known worldwide, she has this haircare line. She seems like a real "girl next door" but also she has her own business and her life is really far away from anybody else's life. So... I would say they are less similar, but still relevant enough. It doesn't really matter that their lives aren't similar - that's sort of what I mean.</p> <p><i>K: So could you elaborate a little bit on Negin? On the one hand you said that she's kind of a girl next door, and on the other hand that her life is not really similar to her followers'. Can you kind of explain that again?</i></p> <p>Yeah. Obviously their feed and the image that they have online, the image of being like their followers is one that really sells. To really make sure that the followers are involved, that people are interested, there's this sort of combination of being the coolest kid in class, and you really aspire to be like her... together with the possibility of actually being like her, because you can buy her products that she makes, but you can also buy products that she buys maybe at Zara or H&M... So it's really about how they promote their own lives. Because there's also influencers that are only wearing really big brands. And that's a difference, and their followers are way further away from them, and less similar, because it's not really possible for a regular person to buy only Gucci bags and Supreme clothing. It's a little bit about how they portray their lives to be on Instagram and what they share, I'd say. But in essence... yeah, they're not similar because they own a brand and they do all of these things. But they can be perceived as being quite similar, still.</p>
19	35:33.3 - 37:34.8	<p>38, 39 was not asked</p> <p><i>39,40: Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more similar to followers?</i></p> <p><i>R: You just mentioned that they share their lives, which would seem as a casual or similar life to the followers'... maybe you can elaborate a bit on that having in mind these entrepreneurial Instagrammers.</i></p> <p>So... again there's ways to go about it, and not every Entrepreneurial Instagrammer is the same, but definitely it is possible to maintain that similarity with your followers by sharing really normal stuff with them that's also achievable to their followers. So for example, back to that Negin girl, I will share her profile with you guys. She lives in Amsterdam where I live and whenever she's home she likes to take these pictures with her dog, and she tells how much she's missed him, and she's walking her dog in spots that are really easily recognizable for people that also live in Amsterdam. And by doing these sort of things, and not only posting that she was at a Chanel dinner or shopping in the most expensive street here in Amsterdam, it makes her really really human and still emphasizes this similarity that she has with her followers. She's also a normal girl who's missed her dog while she was away travelling, and she's now enjoying going with her boyfriend and a dog to get ice cream, you know? So there's different ways that people go about that. And you sort of can find your own way in that.</p>
20	37:50.0 - 38:26.1	<p><i>42, 43 - When you believe that Instagrammers like and use recommended products more, are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Absolutely yes. If you see that somebody really uses something overtime, whether it is staged or not, the recommendation becomes more relevant because there will be more people that believe that she actually is using it and loving it.</p>
21	38:26.1 - 39:58.6	<p><i>44,45 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands seem like they use and like the products they recommend more, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they like and use recommended products more? Why?</i></p> <p>That's a really hard question. There's so many little differences in everyone and every Instagrammer, and every product of course. But I would say no. It doesn't actually make it more believable. But yes, they might be better again with that professionalism that they might have, more than normal Instagrammers. So with their professionalism they might be better at promoting something in a genuine and authentic way. But whether that is staged or not, that's really difficult to say. But I think the professionalism acquired with having their own business could help with telling stories in a more authentic way.</p>

22	39:58.6 - 42:00.1	<p><i>R: So let's imagine an example when an Instagrammer somehow is able to portray that they like and use these products. 46,47 - Do you think that difference makes their recommendations more relevant?</i></p> <p><i>R: Are people then more interested in the products? Is there any connection between increased liking and using and increased relevance of recommendations?</i></p> <p>Perhaps a little bit, but again it has its nuances in it. I think it's really easy to stage liking and using in products. And that's something that is more believable if you're respected and trusted as well. So that's all sort of hanging together. And the professionalism of Entrepreneurial Influencers might give them ways to promote it in a more genuine and authentic way? So then, the emotional involvement seems bigger. But obviously if they are actually emotionally involved in products, it's way better. And being an entrepreneur I don't think really changes that. Except if they aren't really liking and using from themselves, but they are probably better at hiding that and making professional posts that are liked after all, than non-entrepreneurial Influencers.</p>
23	42:00.1 - 45:12.3	<p><i>48 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general which shows that they more honestly like and use the recommended products?</i></p> <p><i>R: So how do they use that "professionalism" that you've just mentioned? Maybe you can tell us different ways that you observed.</i></p> <p>I would definitely say that storytelling has a really big part in that, so instead of just taking a picture, posting it, writing something really Influencer-y, like "Oh, these beach days..." whatever, and then tag a brand and a hashtag... I would say professionalism would really show in them telling a story about how these products helped them, or how they got to using it with more words. And making a really nice effort to showcase what that product is all about, but in a nice and fun way for the followers to read.</p> <p><i>K: Oh, so with more...background...?</i></p> <p>Yes, I would say background, storytelling, and sort of an effort put into that. Today I saw a post of one of the girls that I work with in my job now at OneFit, which is a sport membership where you can visit different gyms on one membership. So you can go to a yoga studio, you can go to the boxing school, you can go to swimming pools and do all of your workouts in all these places with one membership. And one of the things that's also part of our membership is cryotherapy, where you go in these ice cold cabins for 3 minutes and it's like -100 degrees for something, and then you go out and warm up. But it's supposed to be really good for your immune system and such. So this girl, she made a really nice post about how she was so hot these days during the heatwave, and she always wanted to try the ice therapy, and she did it today and it was really really scary to her and she almost chickened out, but went in anyway. And how she was so happy that she could try it with our products. I think that's a really nice example of the storytelling element. Instead of just "Oh, tried to beat the heatwave by going to cryotherapy with my @onefit membership".</p>
24	45:46.6 - 49:01.9	<p><i>50,51 - What motivation do you think Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing their own brand? Why?</i></p> <p>In general, obviously, they want to say it's a great product, and if it's designed to solve any problems or any flaws that other products might have in the category that they're entrepreneurial in, then they highlight those. It's probably also about branding, giving the brand they own a cool vibe, creating desirability around it.</p> <p><i>R: And do you think they communicate more that they genuinely like and use them? Or is it still a very common to be perceived as financially motivated when promoting own brand? That they want to sell it and it's all about business. If we would take those two categories, which one do you think is more communicated by them?</i></p> <p>I would say both, but it depends also on how big is the brand. Is it something really small, is the influencer really small? Are they really trying to push it as a new source of income? Or is it already quite a big brand that doesn't need much pushing anymore?</p> <p>For example, this really big dutch girl with the dog [Negin Misrahehi], her brand is huge. People love it, people use it all the time. Other influencers use it as well and they share it. So there's no need for her to really push sales of her own brand, but obviously she's still talking about it and showing new product releases and that sort of thing. But I think for her it's more a storytelling or branding element, and not necessary for sales. While girls that have smaller businesses and are smaller influencers really have to generate sales through their own brand to make their money. Their ads are probably pushier.</p>
25	49:01.9 - 51:11.3	<p><i>52, 53 - What motivation Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing sponsor brands? Why?</i></p> <p>I think that's more filled with CTAs (Call-To-Actions) probably. Because that's what I do a lot - that's how do you get the most out of working with influencers as well. Encouraging them to check out the website, send them to the profile of the brand, all those types of things that they might not do as much for their own brand. Whereas their own brand and their profile sort of merge together a little bit more. So in that sense it's a little bit more commercial maybe, and followers definitely notice that it's a little bit more commercial.</p> <p><i>K: So they push for a specific reaction when they promote sponsor brands?</i></p> <p>Yes. I think that's a very common strategy in Influencer Marketing and something a ton of brands do to make the most out of influencer collaborations, and also make those collaborations measurable. Because if you get 100 new followers on your brand account after you've worked with the influencer, you know that they come from the influencer. So the collaboration has a measurable element, which is obviously very important to marketers. Because branding is great, but it's not something that is measurable, and you have to show results of course.</p>
26	51:11.3 - 53:54.9	<p><i>54 - Do you believe the Instagrammer likes and uses both their own and sponsor brands equally?</i></p> <p>I would say if a beauty influencer has a beauty brand with a full range of products, if I were that influencer I would be really cautious about collaborating with other beauty brands, or at least be very selective about other collaborations that I do, because it would just make no sense to me. For me, I wouldn't trust the other recommendations as much because it seems weird to me that you would promote that, so I wouldn't believe that they really genuinely love it. It is possible of course, but it would really just seem off to me. It also depends on how much they promote their own brand all the time on their profiles. You can spin everything into a believable story. Maybe there's this lipstick from another brand that they swear by and everyone knows that, and she's doing a collaboration with them - then it's believable. So yeah, again, all these nuances. And if that influencer was to do a collaboration with a completely not beauty related brand, so not in line with her own business, there's no reason to trust her less or believe her less.</p>
27	53:54.9 - 55:08.4	<p><i>55, 56 - Does the presence of own brand in the profile make sponsored endorsements seem mainly financially motivated? Why?</i></p> <p>If there is disclosure, sponsored posts are always financially motivated. But obviously I am an industry insider, sort of. But it also has something to do with that. Other than that, I don't think for regular followers who aren't that much into the industry, I wouldn't say that mentioning their own brands in their Instagram bio or other profiles' bios makes them purely financially focused. I think they can still sell the story, or the fairytale. It's all about the image, the branding and the storytelling. So it is possible, I'd say.</p>

		(57 skipped)
28	55:08.3 - 1:00:01.9	<p>58 - <i>Is there anything they say or show in their posts or on Instagram in general that creates that feeling? [portrays sponsor brand being financially motivated]</i></p> <p>I would say if the product is really not in line with what they would usually post about. That comes across as being financially motivated. Products that have a bad reputation so to say - so, the Skinny Detox tea, the coffee scrubs, the teeth whitening products - if I see those sort of products on an Influencer's profile, I will definitely think that's definitely financially motivated. Because why would you brand yourself in that way if it's not? It's a question of the product, the brand, and whether or not it suits your profile. If you're just a general lifestyle fashion influencer, and all of a sudden you are promoting this washing machine to wash your clothes with. That would seem strange to me and it would look like you either got paid for it a ton, or just needed a new washing machine. Which is fine - do what you have to do - but it does not mean like something that naturally really fits their feed or they would naturally post about. I think that's a good differentiator - if the product is something they would post and they would highlight on their profiles if it wasn't sponsored - if they weren't paid for it - then it's all fine. If it's products that wouldn't normally show up in that person's profile because it would just be strange - like a washing machine for a lifestyle influencer, that's not really a match and it seems financially motivated.</p> <p><i>R: Do you have any specific example of that?</i></p> <p>I do have one example, actually. That's Lizzy van der Ligt [@lizzyvdligt], she is a fashion blogger here in the Netherlands. She worked with us on a project which was all about the mobile devices and having the best camera, so that was quite a nice match with her lifestyle. It was really organically pushed, we didn't pay for any posts, it was just in a natural way. Then, she started asking for a TV, because another brand offered her a TV and to install it at her house for free, and that she could just use it if she would post about it for a little bit. So... [Brand name] didn't want to give her a TV because it was really complicated for them, so I explained that to her, like: "Oh, in a collaboration I cannot give you a TV unfortunately, but we can't really stop you from accepting the other one" because, frankly, she really wanted the TV. And then she accepted the TV and it was on her profile, and it was just a little bit weird, because she's fashion/lifestyle and all of a sudden she was promoting this TV. And it wasn't even a brand that...It would have been weird for [Brand name] to give her a TV, but at least people knew that she was collaborating with [Brand name] for different products. So it would have made a little bit more sense, but that was sort of out of the blue.</p>
29	1:00:18.1 - 1:01:37.7	<p>60, 61 - <i>When you think of Instagrammers who have their own brands, do you think endorsements of own brand stand out more than endorsements of sponsor brands? Why?</i></p> <p>I would say no because they don't have to put 'Sponsored' when promoting their own brand, because probably they are not getting paid to promote their own brands... So in that sense, it wouldn't stand out. Also depending on the country where you live of course, and how serious they are about the disclosure laws. For example, in Germany, there are really really strict laws about disclosures, and at the beginning of every post, if they are paid for it, they have to put 'ADVERTISEMENT' in all capitals. So, for example, the German girls don't have to do it for their own brand - so it wouldn't stand out as much as an endorsement, or a push to buy something or like something. If it's a little bit less serious with the endorsements, I wouldn't say there's a lot of difference in the posts.</p>
30	1:01:37.6 - 1:03:26.4	<p>62,63 - <i>Do you think endorsements of sponsor brand are as much associated with such Instagrammers as endorsements of own brand are? Why?</i></p> <p>No, I would say the own brand endorsements are a more common factor in their Instagram profile, so there would be a bigger association between that brand and an Influencer than between sponsor brands and the Influencer.</p> <p><i>K: Any other reasons you can think of as to why they would be more associated?</i></p> <p>Well, obviously, genuine excitement - so the emotional involvement as you call it - it's huge with their own brands. But also the regularity of the post, the regularity of them mentioning their own brand is way higher probably than any post campaign. And maybe it's only one post, you know? So the affinity and the relation between the Influencer and that [sponsor] brand isn't really installed in the followers, because it was only one post. And they obviously promote their own brand more often, so people connect them together way more.</p>
31	1:03:28.2 - 1:04:32.8	<p>64 - <i>Have you ever experienced endorsements of Instagrammers' own brand being more associated with an Instagrammer than sponsored endorsements? Can you tell us about that?</i></p> <p>I don't know what example to give here, but definitely. Their own brands are often intertwined with their profile, their content, their Instagram bio, so that association is often huge, because it benefits them if people know about the connection between them and their brands. I have no specific example though...</p>
32	1:04:32.8 - 1:07:36.0	<p>65, 66 - <i>What do you think are the specific aspects of posts or on Instagram in general including own brand that make them more preferred? Why?</i></p> <p>Maybe not consciously, but unconsciously I can imagine that the genuine feeling about the brands is coming across more if it's their own brand, excitement, the will to tell them a lot about it, so maybe posts are longer for example? They go into the whole story, the background more with their own brands, than with sponsor brands.</p> <p><i>R: Could you elaborate on specific aspects of posts that Instagrammers implement when they endorse sponsor brands, that contribute to that preference?</i></p> <p>Well obviously there is @mentions. With sponsor brands, they are probably obliged to do so by contract. And then there are hashtags - I noticed that a lot of the time when people want to sort of hide their collaborations with brands, or not make them too obvious, they hide the brand's hashtag in-between a lot of other hashtags, which is something that you wouldn't do for your own brand if the hashtag is carrying an important message for your brand. So I would say if there's something they do with their own brand that they wouldn't do with sponsor brands it would be maybe longer text, more excitement and more visible hashtag use.</p>
33	1:07:41.6 - 1:10:24.7	<p>67, 68 - <i>When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, do you think there needs to be a common theme between them (brands)? Why?</i></p> <p>I would definitely say, to build a strong profile being an Influencer, yes, go for brands that have a similar brand identity, because there's probably a brand identity that matches your own identity. And working with brands that complement that is important, so naturally the brands that you work with will have sort of similar brand identities. Otherwise, it makes no sense and it shouldn't feel like a sort of a mismatch between the Influencer and the brands. But I think it has more to do with the mismatch between the Influencer and the brands, than it has with brands and brands.</p>

		<p><i>K: Before you mentioned that there is a sort of expectation, or something that feels like something they would usually post about, or this is something that doesn't fit with what you would usually post about. Can that be considered a 'common theme' that they need to uphold?</i></p> <p>Definitely, I think every product they promote on their Instagram should be something that fits their vibe or their personality - and not even the product, but also the brand, so that it makes sense for the people following them because they know them really really well. So, naturally, the brands that they promote and their own brand would also share similarities - because all of those brands fit that girl. And then again, if all of a sudden a washing machine comes along, then it would make no sense to anyone.</p>
34	1:10:24.7 - 1:11:35.7	<p><i>69, 70 - How important is it to endorse own and sponsor brands similar to each other? Why?</i></p> <p>I would say for your [Instagrammer's] credibility, it's extremely important that at least the brands match you. So if it turns out that brands can be a little bit different from each other, then that's fine. The most important part is that the brands fit you - your image, your personality, your daily life that you portray on social media. And if that's a mismatch? I think it would sooner be a mismatch between, again, the brand and the person, and not necessarily between brands. People will notice and followers will ask questions, and that's going to have really bad consequences for influencers.</p>
35	1:11:35.6 - 1:14:12.8	<p><i>71 - How does the similarity between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of sponsor brand? / How does the difference between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of sponsor brand?</i></p> <p><i>R: So you can image two situations - there is an Instagrammer who endorses two brands which are similar, and another Instagrammer who endorses two brands which are different in vibe or personality. Do you think there will be a different level of acceptance of sponsor brands by the followers in these two situations?</i></p> <p>If the sponsor brand doesn't fit the Influencer's profile, then there will definitely be a difference in how followers react.</p> <p><i>R: And do you think it would affect the acceptance of sponsor brand? Meaning that the acceptance of that recommendation would somehow be challenged.</i></p> <p>Yes, I would say so. Because if it's a mismatch and people don't believe it, then the whole communication around that post and the vibe, the feeling around that post will be very negative and filled with questions or maybe even judgements to the influencer. So even the whole brand part of it is sort of forgotten. And maybe <u>worst</u> case scenario, also the brand will get a negative reputation. I have a fun example of this as well. It was a huge fashion influencer [Anna Nooshin]. She was promoting a reusable water bottle that's made from plastic that came out of the ocean. It was a really, really weird post, and people reacted so negatively to it that even the press picked it up. It was a classic example of a really inconsiderate post where the feedback affected both the Influencer and the brand.</p>

6.3 RE3

Line	Timespan	Content
1	1:58.1 - 2:56.6	<p><i>1,2 - When Instagrammers are more trustworthy/ honest/ believable, are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes, in my opinion, yes. I think in general an Instagrammer's role or an Influencer's role is very closely connected to trustworthiness. Both clients [brands] who collaborate with such influencers, as well as users who follow those Instagrammers, really expect the Instagrammer to be believable and that they 'sell' the recommended product honestly. So I think, definitely, recommendations are tightly connected to trustworthiness.</p>
2	2:56.6 - 5:27.3	<p><i>3,4 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more trustworthy, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more trustworthiness? Why?</i></p> <p>It depends. When I look at Instagrammers who have their own brands, I think of them as people who have already achieved something in the industry. Meaning, they had to have built their position in the market in order to have the possibility of launching their own brand, putting their own name on it, and being certain that the product will be accepted by the market. Therefore, I think that such people are already more trustworthy because they have reached that position. On the other hand, however, we can see them as human "advertising columns" who had to endure a very long journey of engaging in sponsorships with other brands, in order to achieve this position. Which is why I have a double perspective on this.</p> <p><i>K: Do you think followers notice that? Do you think they lean more towards "Yes, they are more trustworthy" or rather "Wow, they had to sell out to do that"?</i></p> <p>I don't think so. I think 99% of people will see them as more trustworthy when it comes to this product. Especially when it comes to followers, so people who keep track of those Instagrammers, respect them and follow them for a particular reason. So I think they don't notice that. I, as a marketer, or a person who works in an agency, perceive such a person as someone who is less trustworthy.</p>
3	5:27.2 - 9:54.2	<p><i>5,6 - Do you think that increased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>I think it can really influence that. But it is highly connected with that position they had built, and with the fact that if Influencer X who has their own beauty or fashion brand, even when he partners with sponsor brands, his recommendations may be perceived as more believable and trustworthy by his followers. It's related with the fact that you trust someone who has achieved a certain position in the market. Not an Influencer, but someone who has reached this position and thus is on a different level.</p> <p><i>K: Can I please ask you to elaborate on this 'position' that you stressed? And this new 'level' that they reach?</i></p> <p>So, in order not to speak in abstract terms: I have done some research about Instagrammers who launch their own beauty brands. It's not so easy to find those examples, there's not that many. One of the top influencer who is just preparing to launch her own brand is @redlipstickmonster who has not done it yet, even though she's been in the industry for several years. Therefore, the beauty industry shows that launching your own cosmetic brand is, in my opinion, much harder than let's say launching a fashion line or swimsuit line like @maffashion or @jemerced. But looking at such influencers such as @maffashion, @jemerced or @annalewandowska who have their own brands, they have done it within the last 1-2 years. And these are Influencers who have been on the market since the beginning of the Influencer boom. Which is why coming back to their position. In my opinion, those Instagrammers had to go through multiple past sponsorships and activities which built their trusting community in order to be allowed to launch their own brands. This is how I see it - only people from the very top, the most experienced, can try to launch their own brand and achieve success.</p> <p><i>K: So, if I understand you correctly: In the context of the Polish market, it is so rare and it is such an achievement that those Instagrammers' influence and trustworthiness is comparable to that of mainstream celebrities?</i></p> <p>Yes, I'd definitely say so.</p>

4	9:54.2 - 11:43.5	<p>7,8 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers have their who own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes their recommendations seem more believable or less believable? Why?</p> <p>I think people who have their own brands are much more eager to use their own image when promoting it. While when it comes to sponsorships, the rules are very clearly defined, and the clients [brands] dictate the way in which the Instagrammer is supposed to appear with a product. When it comes to promoting their own brand, I think they are much more believable because they want to be seen with this brand, and they want to promote those cosmetics of clothes using their face.</p>
5	12:23.2 - 14:15.5	<p>10, 11 - When Instagrammers have more expertise (about products or industry), are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</p> <p>Yes. Definitely. No doubt about that. I think it comes from the fact that they know what they are talking about. And they know the way in which to sell it and how to adapt their communication to a specific campaign, specific brand or sponsorship. I think it affects the followers. It always surprises me, but there is something about experienced Influencers who have been in the market for several years, who have hundreds of thousands or millions of followers, they know exactly how to promote a specific product in a way that a follower does not even recognize it is a paid sponsorship. So I think the more experienced an Influencer is, the better is their promotional content, and the more people follow and are engaged.</p>
6	14:15.5 - 18:44.8	<p>12,13 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands have more expertise, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand make them seem like they have more expertise? Why?</p> <p>I think this does not matter very much. If an Influencer is experienced, has knowledge and knows how to sell themselves or a product, then whether they use it to promote their own or another product does not matter very much.</p> <p><i>K: I understand. What if we think more along the lines of not experience or skillfull "selling", but the real knowledge about the products they promote, such as Maffashion knowing a lot about fashion or beauty influencers knowing more about cosmetic products. Do you think there is any difference between an Influencer who has their own brand and one that does not?</i></p> <p>Depends. No doubt, knowledge about cosmetics or about products that they have launched themselves, built a strategy for them, etc. is one thing. And I do believe this knowledge is uncomparably larger compared to sponsor brands they would be given to promote, about which they know much less. But on the other hand, when I think about a beauty influencer who works with cosmetics from different brands and has to test them and in order to stay believable needs to know about these products. Because those Influencers are succesful. So I think it's a thin line and it really depends on an Influencer, their knowledge, experience and approach to business.</p> <p><i>K: What about the followers' perspective? Let's say your task was to choose a person to promote an expert Instagrammer for a cosmetic product. Would you even consider the difference between Influencers who have their own brands and those who do not?</i></p> <p>Yes. In that scenario, yes. And I would definitely take the person who is experienced in this kind of product.</p> <p><i>K: And how do you think this would affect the followers?</i></p> <p>I think followers would trust the opinion of an Instagrammer who has their own cosmetic brand, and who, even in their promotional text would emphasize the fact that "I have my own brand. I know how this is made, thus, I tested this product and you can trust me". Then a follower thinks "Ok, sounds good, I may buy this product". So I think it can definitely affect the buying behaviour of their followers.</p>
7	18:44.8 - 21:24.7	<p>14, 15 - Do you think: that increased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? Why?</p> <p>Yes, as I said, definitely.</p> <p><i>K: In what way do you think followers realize that?</i></p> <p>I think a follower thinks this Influencer has launched their own brand, which means they had to endure a very long process where they gained knowledge about manufacturing, distribution, mixing ingredients, and so on. All these phases which culminated to launching this product to the market, which is connected with a vast background, and so on. So they think an Influencer has had a long journey, but if they had completed it, it means their product may be worth testing out.</p>
8	21:24.7 - 22:46.3	<p>16 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that shows more expertise?</p> <p>They, more often and much more easily, communicate about parts of the process. Such as "In order to create this cream, such and such ingredients or oils were needed". So I think due to the experience they have obtained, it is much easier for them to speak about these manufacturing stages, about which us, the people who just consume ready-made products, do not know about. In my opinion, using this experience within communication is common and very natural. And this differs them from influencers who do not have their own brands.</p>
9	23:25.0 - 25:17.6	<p>18, 19 - When Instagrammers are more attractive, are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</p> <p>Yes, but I would say that often what matters is the attractiveness of their content rather than their personal attractiveness. That is because not every single attractive influencer puts out attractive content. And ultimately, it is content that the follower needs to find attractive. So I would look at the attractiveness of the content rather than the person.</p> <p><i>K: So, in what way? Kind of like...stunning photos instead of just selfies?</i></p> <p>It depends because pictures that feature people attract the followers better than pictures that do not. But let's say professional, editorial pictures will be more magnetic than low-quality, no filter, caught off guard pictures.</p> <p><i>K: What about the person's attractiveness? Do you think that is of any importance?</i></p> <p>I think it can be. But I'd say it's secondary. People do like looking at beautiful people, though.</p>
10	25:17.6 - 27:35.2	<p>20,21 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more attractive, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand make them seem like they are more attractive? Why?</p>

		<p>I don't think so. The attractiveness they present, the way they are, is built from the beginning. By creating their channel and building their personal brand, they constantly use their attractiveness, be it their content, personality, looks, whatever. So I think this is embedded in their own personal brand and does not change when they launch their own brands.</p> <p><i>K: So you would say that from the perspective of a long-time follower, the fact that this Influencer starts their own brand does not change anything when it comes to their attractiveness?</i></p> <p>I would tie this in with the aforementioned 'position', and how when a person enters this celebrity world, becomes even more recognizable because now they have their own brand. However, I wouldn't say that makes them any more attractive unless we perceive attractiveness as "value". I don't think a follower can perceive them as even more attractive if they have been worshipping them for several years now.</p>
11	27:47.2 - 29:13.5	<p><i>24 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more attractive?</i></p> <p>I think, I may be repeating myself, but I think they use their own image to promote their own brands, thus, I think they may want to be more attractive and connected to their own products in order for people to associate them. So I would say the Influencer wants to emphasize their attractiveness by presenting themselves with the product. However, I don't think a follower notices that difference.</p>
12	30:28.4 - 32:37.7	<p><i>26, 27 - When Instagrammers are more respected (admired), are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>From a follower's perspective, yes. From a marketer's perspective? For me, the more sponsorships an Instagrammer engages in, the less I respect them. Because I know they are not believable to me. But these are two different perspectives. I definitely think followers perceive respect as better and more valuable.</p> <p><i>K: What if you were to select an Instagrammer for a work task. Would you consider their respect, admiration, achievements at all?</i></p> <p>Yes. I think followers feel this on a subconscious level. This follower begins to see that Instagrammer as an expert in the industry - because they have been on the market for so long, they are everywhere, they are on all the billboards, then they must be important and respect worthy. I think socially we also think like that - we respect people more if they are famous, not necessarily because of their achievements.</p>
13	32:37.7 - 35:11.6	<p><i>28, 29 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more respected, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand make them seem like they are more respected? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes. It's connected to their believability, and to the fact that if they have their own brand, it means they have achieved more than other Instagrammers, which I think makes them more respected.</p> <p><i>K: Anything more you can tell me about the connection between owning a brand and being respected?</i></p> <p>Right now, what is on the top of my mind is: they built their position, they gain respect. And owning a brand is another level of that, a step above. But that is specifically about cosmetic brands or fashion brands because as we know, many Instagrammers have their own gadgets, merchandise, books, etc. But I think having an own cosmetic or fashion brand is much harder than launching a mug or a notebook with your name on it.</p> <p><i>K: And you think people respect that effort which comes with launching your own brand?</i></p> <p>Yes, definitely. I think they can respect them more because of it, which makes them more believable. I think respect is very tightly connected with trustworthiness and believability.</p>
14	35:11.6 - 38:01.3	<p><i>30,31 - Do you think that increased respect of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant?</i></p> <p>Yes. We all agree that with respect comes trustworthiness and believability. And I would align that with... when we are at a supermarket, choosing product X, let's say tomato sauce. And why do we choose Brand X's tomato sauce, and not Brand Y's. I think this is because we have seen Brand X before, we have heard of it, we have some kind of recommendation in the back of our mind. So we don't look into the ingredients now but focus on the brand. And I think the same goes for Instagrammers and their brands, and that believability. It is kind of a natural sequence of events. A client [brand] wants to work with an influencer in order to build this product's believability, to be shown to a wide audience, and the last part of the chain, which is the consumer making a decision, thinks 'Ah yes, I remember something, I have seen this before, at a bus stop, or on social media, wherever'. And I associate that with trust. Because it really is true, as studies also show, that Polish people trust Influencers and their opinions. So I think respect ties into that. When followers see a face they know, trust and respect, they definitely will be more likely to choose a product recommended by them over another.</p>
15	38:01.3 - 40:21.0	<p><i>32 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more respected?</i></p> <p>I don't think they do it intentionally, I doubt that a given Instagrammer's strategy involves gaining respect among followers, therefore the content should look like so.</p> <p><i>K: Well perhaps not, but even us, we all post things to Instagram that we want others to admire, right?</i></p> <p>I think that is down to pure vanity. We want people to envy us. But, about their communication. I think like in other points, if someone has their own brand, they stand by it. They sign their name on it, they put their face and personality with it. They are connected to it, so they are devoted to being the most believable and building a believable stream of communication, which is closely connected to building respect and a sense of trust. Also, to avoid lying and really use their own products. For example, @redlipstickmonster not using her own lipstick, but instead using a Lancome lipstick, because it's better.</p> <p>I think they need to adapt to the fact that they appear with their own products more and thus, they are more cautious about partnering with brands who have similar products.</p>
16	41:22.2 - 42:45.4	<p><i>34, 35 - When Instagrammers are more similar to followers (peers), are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>I think so. I think there are two aspect to this one. On the one hand, we as followers like to look at and associate with people with whom we have common interests, things in common. So, therefore, I follow such people. This is one group, and for this one, I would answer, yes, definitely. On the other hand, the other group is people who find influencers about whom they are curious and want to become similar to. So they make changes to their lifestyle, or their daily activities, in order to become similar to this Instagrammer. But this is quite common behaviour - we want to be like our beloved celebrities.</p>

17	42:49.2 - 47:22.2	<p>36, 37 - <i>Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more or less similar to followers, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are less or more similar to followers? Why?</i></p> <p>I would stay with the second group I talked about. The fact that Anna Lewandowska has a food product line may make me, a follower, want to become similar to her, thus I will buy her food products. So I think it can be influential, both for FMCG and beauty products. You want to use the same body cream as Karolina Pisarek [model].</p> <p><i>K: So the products are a way to become more similar to the Influencers?</i></p> <p>Yes. The fact that they have their own brand allows me to become more similar to them.</p> <p><i>K: What about when we look at the life of a particular Instagrammer. When they introduce their own brand, we can assume some things change. Do you think she will become more or less similar to her followers?</i></p> <p>As a follower, you can either accept these changes in her, and be okay with the changes, or change themselves in accordance to the influencer, or change their values or beliefs. I think that is possible too. Or they can unfollow the influencer, of course - but I think this is very rare. For example, because the content they publish is now different, and the follower no longer likes it.</p>
18	47:22.2 - 48:31.1	<p>38,39 - <i>Do you think that decreased similarity of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations less relevant?</i></p> <p>I think so. If they become less similar, their recommendations might become less relevant. It is true that the level of similarity might be connected to their trustworthiness/</p>
19	48:31.1 - 54:27.8	<p>40 - <i>Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more similar or less similar to followers?</i></p> <p>I think when it comes to presenting themselves as more similar, it is only natural that Influencers who have their own brands that they have built into their trusting community want to emphasize the similarity between them and their followers in their communication. "We are similar, this product is suitable for you too, I have products for every skin type, including yours". So I think their communication becomes more direct because now I have a product that is meant for you. I think this kind of communication can bring them even closer. One side is, you can become more like me, and the other is "I created this product for you".</p> <p>When it comes to presenting themselves as less similar, I think that would be stupid of them to communicate totally against their followers just because they have their own brand. It would be very risky, and some followers may turn away from them. I don't think they would take that sort of risk.</p> <p><i>K: What if we come back to that aspirational element you've mentioned. How do you think that is communicated? How do followers know they want to strive to that?</i></p> <p>I think that can be seen more in videos and vlogs. In many vlogs, beauty influencers present things like "Get this make-up look, just like me in 5 easy steps". They make it sound very simple and achievable. Influencers want to communicate to their followers how easy it is to be beautiful, to have gorgeous make-up and look as amazing as me. Even though it requires a ton of products and time.</p> <p>Same thing happens with pictures. Lately, there has been a thing with Zosia Ślotała [polish stylist], she posted a picture which, on first glance, looked like a natural home picture, where she was about to leave for dinner but her clothes got dirty, and she didn't go anywhere because she needed to wash the dress. Turns out it was a Persil ad. So at first, you couldn't tell it was an ad - now she's added that it's a commercial. However, it was an attempt to build up that similarity, showing herself like a normal mother who also has problems and her children also make a mess. It played on people's very primal, simple emotions - I am just like you. But in reality, I never make a mess and I send all my clothes to the dry cleaners. The reaction in the comments was very negative.</p>
20	54:27.8 - 57:40.4	<p>42, 43 - <i>When you believe that Instagrammers like and use recommended products more are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes. I would split this one into two as well. There truly are products which Instagrammers love and they identify with. So they do really want to collaborate with this particular client. If they like Coca-Cola, it's great that they can both receive it and drink it, and also make some money on it. On the other hand, Instagrammers want followers to believe they like these products. They might as well hate Coke, but they will drink it because they will end up getting paid a lot of money. They will pretend it's the best product in the world.</p> <p>It's hard to say which one is more common. I definitely think there are Instagrammers who just believed in a campaign and were happy to be a part of it because they liked the product and felt it was also good for their personal development.</p> <p><i>K: So, if I understand you correctly: Whether it's honest or not, when it comes to the audience's reaction, it's always good when it looks like they honestly like and use it?</i></p> <p>Yes.</p>
21	57:40.4 - 1:00:53.7	<p>44, 45 - <i>Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands seem like they use and like the products they recommend more, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they like and use recommended products more? Why?</i></p> <p>I think the facts that Instagrammers are connected to the brands they've created makes it their "baby". And the influencers who do have their own brands are the ones who've already achieved a lot in their career. So the cherry on top of a cake might be launching their own brand, that's why I think they feel a strong connection to it and recommend it more genuinely than sponsor brands.</p> <p><i>K: So when it comes to their own brand, definitely. What about those sponsor brands?</i></p> <p>Depends on the product. If @redlipstickmonster had her own lipstick already and then recommended an Inglot lipstick, it might be somewhat a clash. If I was her, I would not take on this sponsorship to protect my image. And I think consequently, such a recommendation seems less genuine. But if the product category is different enough, I don't think it matters much. I think, again, we can look at Anna Lewandowska who has a very successful own line, and at the same time is the face of many other brands. It doesn't clash at all - to her followers. To me, it does.</p> <p><i>K: Do you think because she's a brand owner, people believe to a more or lesser extent that she honestly likes and uses the products she promotes?</i></p> <p>I don't think it affects it at all. I don't think people analyze it in this way.</p>
22	1:00:53.6 - 1:02:05.1	<p>46, 47 - <i>Do you think that difference makes their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p><i>K: Let's focus on what you said about their own brand being more genuinely promoted then. In general, if followers believe the product is honestly liked and used by the Instagrammer, do you think that affects the relevance of the recommendation?</i></p>

		I think they are, I think it makes followers more interested in the products. I think they perceive it on this subconscious level - ok, this is their brand, I can see them using it, I believe it won't give me any unwanted reactions. This feels even more believable, makes followers trust more and be much more likely to test out such a product.
23	1:02:05.1 - 1:06:16.4	<p>48 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general which shows that they more honestly like and use the recommended products?</p> <p>Yes, I think they try to directly experience the product - so for example, they are much more eager to use this cream, or to use this product, as opposed to with sponsor brands, where they might only show what the products look like. However, it is a thin line - very often big clients [brands] demand that the Instagrammer tests out the product and demonstrate that it's good. So it's hard to say whether the communication changes in a big way. I think there are definitely differences, such as more enthusiasm. But it also depends on how professional the influencer is. If they are experienced on the market, they know that a professionally done sponsorship is meant to make followers trust in the fact that they love this amazing product and have used it for a long time.</p> <p>K: That's very interesting - so you think brands know that using & liking is beneficial as well, and they're starting to demand it?</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>K: How do you think this is presented via picture or caption?</p> <p>For beauty products, it's showing every step of how the product is used. For example, if it's a make-up set, a tutorial is recorded where it can be seen that the Influencer uses each of the product. Or, a big make up retailer will organize an event with influencers during which a make-up artist will use these products live. So these are direct experiences with the product, which are recorded and broadcast online. It is also specified in their contracts - for example, an influencer is obliged contractually to use her face when promoting this make-up product.</p>
24	1:06:44.1 - 1:11:35.7	<p>50, 51 - What motivation do you think Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing their own brand? Why?</p> <p>I think it's more motivated by the fact that they like and use their own product. But, it is also fundamentally financially motivated - they also simply want to sell the product.</p> <p>K: Which one do you think is more perceived by a typical follower?</p> <p>I believe it's best to show that the Instagrammer uses and likes the product, but I also believe some people do know it aims at selling something on the market. But I think the sceptics are definitely a minority.</p> <p>K: What do you think it depends on?</p> <p>It is the Instagrammer's own brand, so they had to invent it, emotionally connect with it. The whole idea behind it is always prioritised by this Instagrammer. I don't believe their motivation is some high mission they want to fulfill, but ultimately just making money. I think so, and while some people may turn their brand into a sort of "art" and their "baby", I don't believe it.</p> <p>K: Maybe not to this extent, but thinking along the lines of "If I introduce this product into the market, I believe it is something that people need". What do you think about that?</p> <p>I don't think there are any groundbreaking innovations to be made in the beauty or fashion industry, I think it's very trend-sensitive. Such as the recent boom for ecological and organic cosmetics - it's more of a trend and a historic "wave" to which every company will adapt to and adjust their branding accordingly. People may believe this is an innovation, but ultimately there is a group of people who understand the market conditions, current trends and what is worth investing in. I think some people are aware of these strategic facts, but on an unconscious level, there is a chance they will end up choosing those products nevertheless and believe it is something "new" because they will be influenced by the communication.</p>
25	1:11:29.3 - 1:13:32.8	<p>52, 53 - What motivation Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing sponsor brands? Why?</p> <p>Also depends on the context. Is the sponsor brand somehow connected to the brand they own? Or is it a completely different product category? In my opinion, if it's a different product category, people don't mind and it may even have positive influence. Because for example, if it's a person who appears in more and more media, it becomes even more embedded in people's memory and says that this person can be the face of multiple products. I think, paradoxically, it may be a good thing.</p> <p>K: So it may result in a positive effect because by being in more campaigns, they... build this "position" you mentioned before?</p> <p>Yes. To followers, yes. To me, they remain advertisers.</p> <p>K: If I understand you correctly, on the other hand, it may be better when they appear in more campaigns because it makes you think they know something about various topics?</p> <p>Yes. I think followers may think so. They won't mind that they are a face of multiple products, it may make them even more aware of their celebrity status. It may even bring attention to this person's own products.</p>
26	1:13:32.8 - 1:15:42.9	<p>54 - Do you believe the Instagrammer likes and uses both their own and sponsor brands equally?</p> <p>I think people believe the Instagrammer uses their own brand more often than sponsor brands. But again, depends on the category. They might as well have their own beauty line and wear Kazar shoes. I don't think one eliminates the other.</p> <p>However, I think entering sponsorships in which the product is the same as your own product category is very risky. I don't even know many of such examples. Not including celebrities such as Ewa Chodakowska [polish trainer] who probably sponsored multiple athletic wear brands at the same time. I think this is perceived differently.</p> <p>K: So why do you think followers believe the Instagrammers use their own brand more?</p> <p>I think they believe the Instagrammer likes it, has these products for free and genuinely uses them.</p>
27	1:15:42.9 - 1:17:19.2	<p>55, 56 - Does the presence of own brand in the profile make sponsored endorsements seem mainly financially motivated? Why?</p> <p>Yes, I think this kind of clash may appear in their mind.</p> <p>K: Why do you think that happens?</p> <p>I think the follower starts to think "Wait a minute. She has her own lipstick, and theoretically, she uses hers - why is she using these two other lipsticks, and saying they are amazing?". I think an Instagrammer who participates in these kinds of sponsorships appears less trustworthy. It may result in a wave of hate comments and their followers "waking up" and realizing that there is some kind of "trick" going on.</p>
28	1:17:19.2 - 1:19:24.5	<p>57 - Does that negatively affect the effectiveness of sponsor endorsements?</p>

		<p>I think it may affect it negatively, but not in a huge way. As I marketer, I think this sponsor brand's researchers failed because they did not check whether this Instagrammer promotes a competing product. Why did this brand even choose to work with this Influencer if they own a similar product? So that brand would lose points in my eyes.</p> <p>But followers do not think like that. I think, in this case, the sponsor brand may remain "in the background" [of the own brand].</p> <p><i>K: So following what you told me about the proper research about these Influencers. If it was up to you, would you choose this kind of Influencer to promote a similar brand?</i></p> <p>No. I would not recommend this Influencer to my client. I would do my best to stop this from happening, but often, despite an agency's recommendations, a person from the brand's management insists on a specific Influencer. And then, things happen. So it depends on the brand's approach and an Influencer's communication skills.</p>
29	1:19:24.5 - 1:21:14.5	<p>58 - <i>Is there anything they say or show in their posts or on Instagram in general that creates that feeling?</i></p> <p>I think there may be a difference. In the case of sponsor brands communication, I think the Instagrammers just want to "get it over with", not puch much effort into it, take a couple of pictures, tag a brand and that's it. And when it comes to their own brand, they want to put in more effort, pose better or whatever else.</p> <p><i>K: Anything else you can say, maybe about the content of these posts?</i></p> <p>I think for sponsored brands, it's often a brand-generated message. Clients [brands] pay a lot of money for a single sponsored posts, so they want this communication to involve a lot of content, which often makes them dictate what it's supposed to look like. This communication then becomes 'fake'/artificial. So I think these kinds of messages are less believable. Not necessarily less attractive or worse - but simply less believable.</p>
30	1:22:12.2 - 1:24:45.1	<p>60, 61 - <i>When you think of Instagrammers who have their own brands, do you think endorsements of own brand stand out more than endorsements of sponsor brands? Why?</i></p> <p>I think so, however, it's very natural for Instagrammers who have their own brands to create a separate communication channel for their own brand. For example, she is a celebrity, not an Instagrammer, but Kinga Rusin owns Pat&Rub cosmetics and she has a separate fanpage where she promotes. She also uses her own image in the promotion on this separate channel, but she takes away the weight of this constant communication into an external channel. On her private channels, she still uses beautiful pictures and references her own brand here and there, but not nearly as much. So posts of own brand can stand out, but it all depends on the strategy. And the fact that not all Instagrammers can allow themselves to only post sponsored content - the clients [brands] would like that very much, but it's not always possible.</p> <p><i>K: And how, in your opinion, does the fact that she started a separate profile just for her own brand help her?</i></p> <p>I think it helps createa separate communication channel, and somehow disconnects whatever she does as her profession from her brand. The fact that she has separate channels for those things results in the communication about her brand not 'getting lost' among personal content.</p> <p><i>K: Do you think that makes her followers focus on her own brand more?</i></p> <p>Yes. I think so.</p>
31	1:24:45.7 - 1:27:06.1	<p>62, 63 - <i>Do you think endorsements of sponsor brand are as much associated with such Instagrammers as endorsements of own brand are? Why?</i></p> <p>I think at first, sponsor brands. It also depends on the brand. If it's a big brand which has uncomparably more budget than this Influencer to promote their product, then sponsored content may be more recognizable and more widely shown. However, I think every Influencer's aim is to make their own brand more recognizable. But I think this is a long and complicated process.</p> <p><i>K: What if I asked you about which brand is more associated with a particular Instagrammer? Their own or sponsor?</i></p> <p>It depends. Even right now, when I'm trying to think of an example, I don't think it's even on my top-of-mind to relate a celebrity like Anna Lewandowska with their own brand Food by Ann, but more with Calzedonia or Head&Shoulders.</p> <p><i>K: What do you think it depends on?</i></p> <p>It depends on the size of a campaign. On the fact that I've seen a thousand billboards, commercials and Internet ads with Anna washing her hair with Head&Shoulders, and I've seen much less of her with her own products. It depends on the campaign budget.</p>
32	1:27:06.1 - 1:28:43.6	<p>64 - <i>Have you ever experienced endorsements of Instagrammers' own brand being more associated with an Instagrammer than sponsored endorsements? Can you tell us about that?</i></p> <p>I can't think of a particular famous example, but I am certain it happens. For example, Robert Lewandowski? Who is the face of Huawei but uses an Iphone. That was a widespread case. It's just an example of Influencers not being monitored properly, when they are supposed to be doing something, but they're not, and someone should be there to catch that.</p>
33	1:28:43.6 - 1:31:10.0	<p>65,66 - <i>What do you think are the specific aspects of posts or on Instagram in general including: own brand that make them more preferred/ sponsor brand that make them more preferred? Why?</i></p> <p>Putting it into context. As I told you in the case of Zosia Slotala, it's nor really about the product and more about the story. Or, being more engaged with the product. If there's a good, eye-catching story, the brand does not really need to be particularly visible.</p> <p><i>K: How can it be done with an Instagrammer's own brand?</i></p> <p>I think similar moves can be used for both [own and sponsor], but only when the brand is already associated with that person. After they've build up some recognition of their brand, and their face was in a few own brand advertisements, they can allow themselves to engage into storytelling.</p> <p><i>K: So, when they are ready to get into storytelling, would that look any different from sponsored brand storytelling?</i></p> <p>Yes. I think it may be more believable and equated with the Influencer. Because it is their own brand, they can do whatever they want with it. So I think they have a much wider array of storytelling options.</p>
34	1:31:10.0 - 1:35:49.2	<p>67, 68 - <i>When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, do you think there needs to be a common theme between them (brands)? Why?</i></p> <p>I would step away from whether the brands are similar, and focus on the extent to which a brand is willing to be flexible about an Instagrammer's communication. Honestly, you can make a good Influencer campaign with any brand if you follow their style. For me, an Influencer is irreplaceable because they have a particular style, a way of communicating, creating content and promoting themselves. So if a brand is willing to adapt to it and build an appropriate campaign accordingly, that results in a believable post. So the similarity between brands that you mentioned - yes, but it can be done via communication and connected to an Instagrammer's particular style.</p> <p><i>K: So the similarity kind of goes through them, right? If something fits the person, it fits with the other brands the person promotes?</i></p>

		<p>Yes, if the Instagrammer has the freedom to decide on that. Influencers often get to decide and decline some sponsorships because they are being dictated specific conditions which they do not want to meet - and that's great, because they may not at all be in line with what they usually do. So let's say Anna Lewandowska was to suddenly crochet. It's not in line at all. So it's not really about the brands being similar, but maybe this vibe or style you mentioned, and the extent to which a brand is willing to be flexible about the Influencer's communication.</p> <p>Some influencers do decide to accept those demanding sponsorship proposals, and that results in a complete failure. It makes people ask "Why..?"</p>
35	1:35:49.2 - 1:37:35.1	<p><i>69, 70 - How important is it to endorse own and sponsor brands similar to each other? Why?</i></p> <p>I think maintaining that similarity helps both the Influencer and the brand. A follower pays attention to what is pretty, consistent, believable, easy to look at. At what allows them to follow a storyline, allows them to form an emotional connection. That benefits all parties because consistent communication has a positive flow and is well-received. But it rarely is.</p> <p><i>K: So this is something people could work on?</i></p> <p>Yes, but on all levels. These decisions go through an unimaginable amount of people. I don't even know if it's possible, and I think I maybe had one really consistent Influencer marketing campaign which allowed the influencer a lot of flexibility and resulted in something cool and believable. But when it comes to sponsorships in the beauty industry or with bigger players, it's never been possible to work out an ideal concept where everyone reaches an agreement at every stage.</p>
36	1:37:35.1 - 1:42:39.8	<p><i>71 - How does the similarity between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of sponsor brand? /How does the difference between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of sponsor brand?</i></p> <p>I think consistency definitely helps the sponsor brand, builds up brand believability. The fact that they selected a cool influencer with whom they made a good campaign makes people think that this brand really understands people and this Influencer's followers.</p> <p><i>K: What about when the consistency is completely off?</i></p> <p>Then followers ask themselves "But, why...?" and a lot of internet memes are created. I think people laugh it off, and the thing is, nothing is ever lost on the Internet. So very, VERY bad campaigns stay in people's memory for a long time. This creates the old never answered question: Is it better for people to talk about you, no matter if it's positive or negative, as long as they do? Because some people do adopt that kind of marketing approach. At the end of the day, the market is the ultimate judge and some brands disappear, and some apologize and come up with something a lot better. Or some come back with the same unsuccessful moves.</p> <p><i>K: That's interesting. Because it is true that we adore some people because of how tacky they are, and it doesn't matter if they end up in an embarrassing campaign.</i></p> <p>Yes, absolutely. We all have some "guilty-pleasure" influencers. I personally love Magda Gessler for what she does and the way she does it [polish chef, known for their emotional behaviour and foul language, the equivalent of Gordon Ramsey]. In my opinion, the Netflix Orange is the new Black campaign with Magda Gessler is a complete success. It shows that the people who developed this strategy know what they're doing and they've done a really good job. That would be Netflix's strategists, I think. It is tacky, and it is something we do not take seriously, but it's something we really love to watch and follow.</p> <p>But sometimes it really doesn't work. For example, I really love Szczepan Twardoch as a writer, but his campaign with Raiffeisen Polbank is dramatically bad. There is no understanding, and I just don't understand why. I think the idea of joining Twardoch with a mobile bank app is alright, but the campaign is just terrible. It's not believable at all, even though it's a writer I like and a bank I recognize, but nothing about it persuades me to consider this bank, even though it features this influencer.</p>

6.4 RE4

Line	Timespan	Content
1	2:29.6 - 6:39.5	<p><i>1,2 - When Instagrammers are more trustworthy/ honest/ believable, are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Well yes, of course. I am an account manager right now for Social Works, everytime I'm at a client meeting they always ask me: "How can we assure that this campaign will be trustworthy because we don't want customers to see us as untrustworthy. We actually still want to keep their credibility and their trust towards us". So the answer I always tell them is that on one side, there's trustworthiness that you usually get with Instagrammers with lower follower numbers, usually, we call them local influencers - so below 10 000 followers. But as this whole platform becomes more commercial, there is, of course, a tendency towards the fact that you cannot measure trustworthiness or untrustworthiness of a post, but you have to actually measure it with traditional marketing objectives. So what I always tell them is that for example, when people see TV commercials or banners hanging on different buildings, they always have their guard up. Because they know that it's commercial, they know that it's branded by a company, so from that point on they always have their guard up. And even though the branded campaign on Instagram is also backed by a company or advertising agency, the guard is lowered, because the followers that see this post, they follow this particular person for some reason. So, regardless of it being trustworthy or not, regardless whether we can actually see through the advertising and see that "Ok, there is actually an advertisement behind this" our guard is down, because we follow this person for a particular reason.</p> <p><i>R: So, you said that followers follow Instagrammers for a particular reason. Would you say that trustworthiness was one of them? That followers trust them as well. Could it be one of them?</i></p> <p>Exactly. So for example, I follow this girl called Lilja [@emilielilja] who's really good looking, she's a DJ, she's really cool, kind of a tomboy, right? Even though she does a lot of branded posts, her trustworthiness is really high. So she can write: this post is branded, I made a collaboration with Absolut Vodka, I'm making the best cocktail and I would like to show you guys my favourite recipe" and everyone knows is branded. But because she is so real in her personality, people automatically trust her even though it's a branded post and even though she obviously gets money for it. So this leads me back to..Whatever you're doing with your instagram and whatever branded sponsorship you're doing, storytelling is key. And content through the storytelling is key. As long as you have a good story, it doesn't matter if it's trustworthy or not, it doesn't matter if you can see the sponsorship behind the post. But if the storytelling is good and if it's the right influencer that makes the storytelling trustworthy, it doesn't matter if it's sponsored or not.</p>
2	6:39.0 - 12:06.3	<p><i>3,4 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more trustworthy, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more trustworthiness? Why?</i></p>

		<p>To some extent yes, I would say so. Of course, it's a subjective opinion, but to some extent, yes. I would say that if they are branding their own brands, it increases their trustworthiness. That is also why we are working on building a separate unit in our company, where we're only launching collaborations with Instagrammers - be it clothing, beauty, headphones, everything.</p> <p><i>K: Can you elaborate on why you believe having your own brand can bring more trustworthiness to that person?</i></p> <p>I think it has something to do with when you create something yourself, you create it because you believe in some special characteristics and features in your product. It could be a unique design, it could be a unique fragrance or item inside of your beauty product, it could be anything. But I think when people see this person and see this person that they believe in in the first place has created his or her new product, they believe it has been created because of some sort of purpose, they believe that, ok, we think that there's something missing in the market, so we would like to market this product because we believe it's missing some characteristics that people are looking for. And if people compare that to a traditional sponsorship, there could be a kind of mismatch. I think they would be more prone to pick the product that the Influencer has created.</p> <p><i>R: What if we moved a little bit more to the person. If we would have two groups of people: one group would have their own brands, another group don't have. They both do sponsorships, but the first group also recommends their own brand. What do you think, would this group be more trustworthy as a person just because they have their own brand?</i></p> <p>Yes, I would say so, completely. You can also measure it by the success of their own product. If it has had a lot of success, that you can see that the purchasing has increased as a result of his or her followers buying a lot of her products, then the next sponsorship, the advertising agency of this company would know that he or she has had success from prior sponsorships of her own brand. So they would know that the success ratio of their campaign would probably be higher.</p>
3	12:10.5 - 13:08.8	<p><i>5,6 - Do you think that increased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>It's definitely an interdependent relationship - they [Instagrammers being more trustworthy and the relevance of their recommendation] kind of follow each other. And as soon as you are... I mean, I would say they go hand in hand. If your trustworthiness is good, then, of course, your recommendations would also be more relevant.</p>
4	13:08.8 - 19:46.8	<p><i>7,8 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers have their who own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes their recommendations seem more believable or less believable? Why?</i></p> <p>What I think is interesting in this topic is a lot of these, it's mostly females, actually, that launch their own products...that's also what we want to do, launch collaborations with other companies. These entrepreneurial Instagrammers, when they create and design their products, they make videos from the get-go. So as soon as they start drawing a piece of clothing, or talk to designers or producers, suppliers, they actually film their whole journey or document their whole journey. Also, right now you can do that on IGTV, you can film up to 10 minute long videos, so you have a whole range of modes so that you can actually document your journey, and invite your followers to not only participate but follow your entrepreneurial journey.</p> <p><i>R, K: It's very interesting that you mentioned IGTV. We also think it has great potential.</i></p> <p>Yes, me too. It's still very very new, but I think we're still to see its potential. I think it has huge potential as well. Especially since we're almost reaching 1 bn users on Instagram, and the trend towards 2020 is actually more towards viewing video content on our mobile phones, and as this trend increases, it's even more and more relevant to have a platform for video content.</p> <p>Instagram is trying to win the market, penetrate the market capacity, by making the most optimal video viewing platform, and that's what they're trying to do on Instagram. So I think it has huge potential and I think we're still to see the best from it.</p> <p><i>R: And what about YouTube? All these Instagrammers also have YouTube channels, so if it's a make-up artist, she will have a tutorial on YouTube at the same time. And then she posts a sneak peak on Insta so that everyone goes to YouTube. But now, they can do it directly in Instagram. So YouTube can have a very sad future.</i></p> <p>It also depends on...because right now, Instagram's biggest advantage is that it's free from commercials. So if we compare Instagram and YT right now, YT still has commercials. So if Instagram applies commercials to their channel, and if it works poorly or it's frustrating, then that would weigh the pros and cons between those two channels again. But right now, there is a clear difference, because there's still no commercials.</p> <p><i>K: I also think if Instagram allows creators to be more themselves, it can really benefit.</i></p> <p>What I'm trying to preach for clients, is if you have a child and he or she is on YouTube watching a video, even though they're only 2 or 3 years old, they know how to skip an ad on YouTube. On Instagram, we don't have that skip button. While the platforms and the media are becoming more and more guarded in terms of ads, AdBlockers, even on Safari, while all of this is happening, it's becoming more and more interesting to use Influencers on Instagram, because there's no noise. We can look directly at the message, there's no noise kind of preventing us from actually receiving the message.</p>
5	19:59.9 - 23:05.3	<p><i>10, 11 - When Instagrammers have more expertise (about products or industry), are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes, sure. I mean, from the early days of influencers, before Instagram's time, Influencers kind of stemmed from actually knowing something, from actually having expertise or know-how about products. Be it gaming, be it beauty, be it whatever, but people actually listen to these people because they have some sort of expertise. And nowadays, this expertise is kind of decreasing, because everyone knows that being an influencer can be really rewarding, so everyone tries to become this influencer, and that also decreases... If we look at a meta perspective, that kind of decreases the amount of expertise that these influencers actually have about these products, especially if it's sponsored. Some people just say yes to whatever partnership, even though they don't really have any sort of expertise, but they still come and bring out their opinion on certain products, even though they don't have the expertise that would make this opinion relevant.</p> <p><i>K: So among all this fake expertise, that everyone is an expert now, do you think real expertise still stands?</i></p> <p>Yes, well, that's also what differentiates the good Instagrammers and the bad Instagrammers, of course. That's also our job as an agency to actually locate and also build our own Instagrammers so that we know "This one is really credible because he or she has a lot of expertise in these topics". In that way, we can also kind of assure the companies we work with that he or she is a good partner for you because she has a lot of expertise in these topics. We are also trying to build our relationships with the Instagrammers we believe in the most, that have the most quality so that we can also deliver the best output for our clients.</p>
6	23:02.1 - 24:21.5	<p><i>12,13 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands have more expertise, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand make them seem like they have more expertise? Why?</i></p> <p>Well yes, especially if it's a successful brand, then, of course, they have expertise. Then they also have, depends also on how much they have been... Some people, for example, Kylie Jenner, I assume that in her example, I'm not sure, at least from the beginning, how much she was actually involved in this partnership, talking with suppliers, producing the make-up...I assume that somebody else just produced everything for her and she just put her name and face on the product. So, of course, it also depends on how much he or she has actually been involved in producing this product. And if he or she has been involved a lot, well that increases her expertise and her know-how. And of course the other way around.</p>

7	24:23.0 - 25:27.4	<p>14, 15 - Do you think: that increased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brand makes their recommendations more relevant? Why?</p> <p>Yes, for sure. I think expertise spills over to the relevance of their recommendations. People can also see that, and if they can see that wow, 2 months ago she launched her own collaboration, and it looks really good, so if now she's recommending this product, well then I assume that her recommendation is relevant or at least trustworthy.</p>
8	25:27.4 - 26:22.9	<p>16 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that shows more expertise?</p> <p>Well, in order to show expertise, you at least have to show some sort of...for example if you're producing a product, you have to show that you're actually a part of the process. And the way these people do that is of course by documenting the process in video or photo content, by any means.</p> <p>K: So what kind of posts would they show?</p> <p>That could be either drawing or talking with suppliers, or...yeah.</p> <p>R: So it's kind of similar to what you said about trustworthiness.</p> <p>Yeah, it's pretty similar. I think it goes hand in hand.</p>
9	26:22.8 - 27:46.1	<p>18, 19 - When Instagrammers are more attractive, are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</p> <p>Yes, but also... from whose perspective are they more attractive? Is it from their followers, companies, agencies?</p> <p>R: Do you think that differs?</p> <p>Yes, I do. If you're a company, their attractiveness depends on what line of products you are promoting. So if you're promoting beauty products, she has to be an expert in beauty, not in food. If she's an expert in beauty, then she's in turn then also more attractive. She could have two million followers, but if she doesn't have any expertise in the promotion of a beauty line, well then she's not attractive for them. So, of course, that differs a lot, from whose perspective you're kind of perceiving this.</p> <p>R: What if we looked right now at the followers perspective? So you, considering your experience and who you have been working with... if followers perceive them as more attractive, because of their looks, of their life, do they perceive recommendations as more relevant?</p> <p>Yes, I think so. Because that lowers their guard. If they really admire this person, if they kind of idolise this person, then yes, then, of course, their trustworthiness increases and their relevance increases in turn.</p>
10	27:46.1 - 33:54.5	<p>20, 21 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more attractive, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand make them seem like they are more attractive? Why?</p> <p>I also think that yes. Because, especially today, all of us kind of admire a person that can actually produce something herself or himself. I think a lot of people, especially today, kind of have an entrepreneurial dream of some sort, they wanna actually produce something themselves. And they want to be independent from a boss, or independent from a company. So yes, kind of admiring these people who are independent has become some sort of a trend, I think. Even from a very young age, you see that. These kinds want to be independent of some sort. I don't know where this tendency comes from, but of course, it's a societal tendency. It's a pretty big tendency.</p> <p>R: Sometimes it can seem very easy because you only see the result.</p> <p>Exactly. You only see the success story.</p> <p>R: And then it feels like "Oh, I want to be like that as well!"</p> <p>I was actually featured in a TV programme about young entrepreneurs. This was actually the topic that we were talking about. We were invited because they wanted to showcase the real stories of entrepreneurs, and not only the success stories. And their problem statement was kind of "How much pressure" or "Where does the pressure actually come from? Does it come from their parents? Does it come from the environment?" And how much are they pressured by these forces, and does that push them towards being more independent or does it not push them towards being more independent? So, where this pressure comes from.</p> <p>K: So maybe on the back of that topic, when you think about these Instagrammers who have their own brands... you mentioned: "What pushes one to become an entrepreneur". Do you think followers can kind of perceive some characteristics? When they see that the person has managed to achieve this, what do you think they think about that person?</p> <p>R: Do you think they analyze it like that at all?</p> <p>Not really. Because really, in this atmosphere people are very gullible. So I mean, if you're good enough at expressing yourself, then you can make people believe anything. And people do make people believe anything - especially on Instagram. Do you know Tai Lopez? He's like an Entrepreneurial Instagrammer. And also Gary V? These two guys are very similar. They're sort of entrepreneurs, and they make self-help books, coaching, those types of guys. And they could actually say anything and people will just eat it raw because they admire these people so much, and they find these people so attractive. Because on the video, they look really really succesful. And if they look really really succesful, then their trustworthiness increases, attractiveness increases, and then, of course, they're more prone to receive whatever message they're putting out there.</p> <p>R: So very often, there's not so much of analysis, but more just crazy belief in those people.</p> <p>Yes.</p>
11	33:54.5 - 35:13.2	<p>22, 23 - Do you think that increased attractiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? Why?</p> <p>I think this is kind of like a three-legged stool, and all these three aspects that we kind of talked about kind of follow each other. If you remove one leg, the stool falls. So, all three legs are at the same level, I believe. So if the attractiveness increases, the other legs increase as well, and vice versa. So I think all three dimensions really go hand in hand.</p>
12	35:13.7 - 37:50.4	<p>24 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more attractive?</p> <p>There's also been a trend in kind of exposing yourself in a real light. So, for example, showing your fat, or showing yourself without make-up. And of course, that also increases your trustworthiness, because then you're actually putting yourself out there, in a real light. And if you're also doing that, then in the other sense you also become more attractive, because you actually become more of a real person to your followers, right?</p> <p>K: So being genuine is an attractive characteristic?</p> <p>Yes, I definitely think so.</p>

		<p><i>R: Do you think that this trend that you just described is more applicable to Entrepreneurial Instagrammers, or it doesn't really matter and it's more of a general tendency?</i></p> <p>It's a pretty general tendency I believe but of course, some people also use it to manipulate. They don't really show themselves without make-up, or they still have photoshopped some part of their body or whatever. So, of course, it has to be genuine, 100% genuine. You can't do it just 50%. And there's also a trend in kind of faking that genuinity.</p>
13	37:50.4 - 39:40.2	<p>26, 27 - <i>When Instagrammers are more respected (admired), are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Yeah, well, it's a bit like CSR, right? Corporate Social Responsibility? If you see these Instagrammers participate in various events, be it social events for the good of people, or be it participating in charitable causes, then of course that increases. It's like CSR in companies, people can still fake it, make it look really good on paper or Instagram. So all of these aspects, people really have to be more analyzing to actually be able to see behind the facade.</p> <p><i>R: So do you think this respect, fake or not, if it's believable, do you think it's somehow related with the relevance of their recommendations?</i></p> <p>Yes, if it's believable, yes.</p>
14	39:40.1 - 40:05.0	<p>28, 29 - <i>Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more respected, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand make them seem like they are more respected? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes, I believe so. Especially if their followers have some sort of entrepreneurial spirit, then, of course, they believe people who also have that.</p>
15	40:05.0 - 41:06.2	<p>30,31 - <i>Do you think that increased respect of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant?</i></p> <p>Yes, I definitely think so.</p>
16	41:06.2 - 50:29.8	<p>32. <i>Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more respected?</i></p> <p>It could be for example, by donating some revenue to charitable causes, that could increase their respect. It could also be by for example elaborating on their entrepreneurial journey by telling their followers "This is what I did, this is how it happened" and kind of build their ethos like that.</p> <p><i>R: Do you see it happening?</i></p> <p>Yes, but this is becoming more and more unique, the further we go. The circle is kind of closing in. It's the minority of people that have their own brands, and it's further a minority of people who are successful in having their own brands. So it's becoming more and more of a rarity the further we go.</p> <p><i>R, K: Do you have any examples?</i></p> <p>Yes, Josefine Haaning [@josefinehj]. She's actually a friend of mine and also Maria Kragmann [@mariakragmann]. She's also pretty big. I think Maria Kragmann is really good at showing her followers "This is my design process, these are the sketches that I made when I started my idea, this is where I produce it, this is how it looks". She's really good at all these different aspects. I think that you should look into her.</p> <p>Josefine both of them actually do clothing, not beauty. Josefine, she has a very basic clothing collection. She's not very good at showing behind-the-scenes content. She has a pretty big followig base, she has around 600k followers which is really big for a Danish girl, but she doesn't do that many activities to showcase her product or her clothing line. I think if she did like Maria Kragmann, she could sell a lot more and really build her brand more.</p> <p><i>R: Do you think what they do is also applicable to the beauty industry?</i></p> <p>A lot of it, yeah. We are working a lot with Mathilde Goehler, she's our biggest influencer at home, she's actually a part owner of a company with her boyfriend Rami, she has almost 1 million followers. Right now we're trying to create a perfume with her. She's mainly a fashion girl but I really think this can also spill over in the beauty industry.</p> <p><i>K: So are you going to encourage her to do those things you told us, to document her journey?</i></p> <p>Yes, yes. That's our job as well, so we would have photographers and video people follow her in this journey to help her document that.</p> <p><i>R: It's great to hear that you're considering launching collaborations with Influencers. Most agencies are more into doing sponsorships.</i></p> <p><i>K: Or just distributing the influencers to the brands.</i></p> <p>That was also why I was hired in the first place, I have some sort of entrepreneurial drive inside me as well. What I really like about this particular field is if I could help these people build their own brands and if I could kind of be a part of that journey, because I think that's really where the power of marketing has its core.</p> <p><i>R: And you're kind of stepping into two big areas which are entrepreneurship, which is interesting to you and influencer marketing, which right now marketing is all about.</i></p> <p>And especially now, the trend in influencer marketing, as also you're diving into, if you're actually a part of this co-lab process, this co-creation process, it increases all of these parameters which, in turn, results in better revenue, better profit, and all of that.</p> <p>(...) My father has a clothing brand, Second Female, it's pretty big in Europe. Right now I'm building a case to actually use famous or credible influencers to co-create four or five products with the brand Second Female. And I'm gonna have a video crew follow this process, and build a separate website where you can purchase this products as well as see the whole process. All of what we're talking about, it's really happening.</p> <p>(...) In general, Denmark is very far behind in co-labs and co-creating products with Influencers.</p> <p><i>K: I feel like here local influencers would be much more influential.</i></p> <p>Both yes and no, because you also want to step into their followers, and if they only have 5k followers, then your output would most likely be less than if you used someone who has 80k followers. And as you've pointed out, if you're using someone who has 2 million followers, then it lowers the credibility of it, then it's kind of a PR.</p>
17	50:33.2 - 58:40.9	<p>34,35 - <i>When Instagrammers are more similar to followers (peers), are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes, I believe so. At our agency, we've kind of categorized these Instagrammers in four categories: we have local influencers, micro, macro and mega. So the local influencers, they have less than 10k followers, or between 1k to 10k followers. If they have between 10k to 30k they're micros, if they have 30k to 250k they're macro, and beyond that, they're mega. The more we move left in this range, the more trustworthy they are, of course. But the further left you go, you lose that reach that you would also need in a PR activity. So you have to find that sweet spot in the middle, to still keep your engagement. Usually, we say that your engagement should actually be around 3%, and when you move beyond 50k followers, it's really hard to get someone who has an engagement rate beyond 3%. So usually we want to find someone between 20k and 30k followers to actually keep that engagement rate.</p> <p><i>R: To me, it seems like 3% is quite low. Don't you think so? How do you calculate the engagement rate?</i></p> <p>Engagement rate is usually number of likes, number of comments, divided by following.</p> <p><i>R: Which posts do you take?</i></p>

		<p>You can calculate it on recent posts by going a month back or 100 posts back, depending on how frequently they post, but usually, we have some tools that do it and you can set these filters yourself. The easiest way to do it is by going one year back, depending how relevant you want to be - then you can just go one month back.</p> <p><i>R: And there is a specific tool for that?</i></p> <p>We have some tools. We mainly use Iconosquare, DeepSocial and [inaudible].</p> <p><i>K: Do you also check fake followers?</i></p> <p>Yes, we check that a lot. We check that mainly through DeepSocial. For example, we were working with a Danish brand that had 10k followers, but 99% of their followers were from Turkey.</p> <p><i>K: Coming back to similarity, did you mention this micro/macro/mega range because you see a link between the number of followers and similarity?</i></p> <p>Yes. Relatableness or similarity... An Influencer would be more similar to me if he or she posted bad pictures or pictures from normal places. But the way Instagram works is we want to see pictures from beautiful places, we want to see attractive people. We want to see interesting things, foods or destinations. Which kinds of lowers the similarity and skews the similarity or relatableness. So I don't think it's actually as important as producing attractive content.</p> <p><i>R: What if we go back to that three legged table metaphor you had. You said that all these characteristics like trustworthiness, respect, expertise are on the same level of importance. So as far as I hear from you, similarity with followers does not stand on this scale?</i></p> <p>No, I would put that in a separate box.</p> <p><i>K: So it wouldn't damage the table?</i></p> <p>No, I don't think so. Because as I said, on Instagram, it's really important, that's actually alpha omega that you produce beautiful content, beautiful pictures, you need to edit it in a certain way, you need to take the pictures in a certain light, and all of that kind of puts that similarity away in a different box.</p>
18	58:40.9 - 1:00:02.0	<p>36,37 - <i>Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more or less similar to followers, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are less or more similar to followers? Why?</i></p> <p>Less similar. Because I think that this whole tendency of idolising people and kind of living in a utopian society or world is really trending on Instagram. And I think that's still what Instagram is for, you know? Idolising and kind of stepping out of your reality into a utopian world. If we want to stay on that track, well then the people that we follow or the people that we admire the most are pretty far from our reality.</p> <p><i>K: So when an Instagrammer launches their own brand, they then become even further apart?</i></p> <p>Yes, unless we are only following people who are in our own field of work so that we can get inspiration from those kind of people. Then it's another story.</p>
19	1:00:02.0 - 1:00:43.0	<p>38,39 - <i>Do you think that decreased similarity of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations less relevant?</i></p> <p>Not really. I would say that it increases the relevance of their recommendations. But I would say that it's maybe not as important as the other things that we've talked about.</p>
20	1:00:43.0 - 1:02:28.3	<p>40 - <i>Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more similar or less similar to followers?</i></p> <p>Well as I mentioned earlier, some of these people try to showcase themselves in a more genuine light, by showcasing themselves without makeup, or their real bodies, or whatever. To actually remind their followers that they're still normal people.</p> <p><i>R: Do you see this tendency happening within Entrepreneurial Instagrammers' profiles as well?</i></p> <p>Yes. Some do it, some don't.</p>
21	1:02:28.3 - 1:04:08.6	<p>42, 43 - <i>When you believe that Instagrammers like and use recommended products more are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes, of course, I'd definitely say so. But it's hard to know whether they actually like these products. I can say from my own experience that we've worked with people who have a large following number, who have been kind of promoting products that they say they really like, but in reality, they use other products. So it's hard to tell whether their message is credible or not.</p> <p><i>R: Do you think it's the same for a follower? That for them it's also hard to say?</i></p> <p>That's back to the storytelling. So if the storytelling is good, then the followers will believe their message.</p>
22	1:04:08.6 - 1:05:39.6	<p>44,45 - <i>Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands seem like they use and like the products they recommend more, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they like and use recommended products more? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes, I believe so as well. Because if they have their own brand, if the sponsor brand is similar to your own brand, then you would also assume that "Okay, he or she likes this product because it is within the same...line".</p> <p><i>R: Could you elaborate on that "line"? What is the similarity that followers can perceive between the brands?</i></p> <p>For example, this DJ named Kygo, he just made his own headset for listening to music. So if he's made his own headset line, and he's later on commenting on or recommending another headset from another brand, then we'd assume that there is some sort of similarity between the two, and we would also see his message as more credible and reliable.</p>
23	1:05:39.6 - 1:06:18.9	<p>46,47 - <i>Do you think that difference makes their recommendations more relevant?</i></p> <p><i>R: By difference I mean what you just said, that when they become Entrepreneurial Instagrammers, they seem to like and use recommended products more.</i></p> <p>Yes, for sure. Kind of in the same way as we talked about.</p>
24	1:06:18.9 - 1:07:48.2	<p>48 - <i>Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general which shows that they more honestly like and use the recommended products?</i></p> <p>Well, some people, they do live unboxing for example, so if they received a product, they showcase themselves unboxing the product live. Then, of course, it's harder to fake your reaction.</p>

		<p>R: What if you thought specifically Entrepreneurial Instagrammers?</p> <p>I can't think of anything right now.</p>
25	1:07:48.1 - 1:15:09.7	<p>50,51 - What motivation do you think Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing their own brand? Why?</p> <p>Most likely the characteristics, the features, the uniqueness of the product. I think uniqueness is more important for their own product than for the sponsorships if that makes sense.</p> <p>R: How do you think followers perceive that? Do they "buy" that?</p> <p>I think so. But again, it all comes down to the storytelling in the communication, and how credible their message is.</p> <p>R: So if you had to choose one category which to ascribe followers' perceived motivation. Would it be more liking and using products genuinely or being compensated?</p> <p>It really depends on who the influencer is. And then, of course, their storytelling. So if we have two different Instagrammers, and one of them, she has endorsed thirty different products in different categories, different qualities...well then her message is lowered compared to the influencer who has only worked within specific categories or quality lines or something like that. I would say that is the biggest factor of whether we ascribe their communication as being motivated by financial rewards or actually [believing in] product characteristics or features.</p> <p>R: So even if I asked what motivation do they communicate when promoting sponsor brands, you would say the same: it depends on the Instagrammer and storytelling?</p> <p>Yes. It depends on storytelling, depends on the history of posts. That's why whenever we work with the influencers that we work with a lot, we really try to build their trustworthiness from the beginning so we can actually... For example, Mathilde Goehler, we really handpicked what kind of collaborations we would have her collaborate with so that we can make her more and more exclusive in her collaborations. And that's also why she has been selected by Dior right now, as a unique ambassador. Because we've really handpicked the collaborations that would suit her best and build her brand.</p> <p>K: So you kind of picked her profile?</p> <p>Yeah. And that also makes her message more trustworthy, more credible, which in turn resonates better with her followers.</p>
26	1:15:09.7 - 1:16:27.2	<p>53 skipped,</p> <p>54 - Do you believe the Instagrammer likes and uses both their own and sponsor brands equally?</p> <p>It really depends on the private label supplier that she or he has been using in producing her own product. It could also happen that they are not really satisfied with their products, but they are still reeling in a lot of revenue from promoting it, so if the product that they receive from their endorsement is better than the product they have been co-creating themselves, well then... yeah, it really depends on the quality of the product. It differs a lot.</p>
27	1:16:30.1 - 1:20:08.9	<p>55, 56 - Does the presence of own brand in the profile make sponsored endorsements seem mainly financially motivated? Why?</p> <p>I think it really comes down to if the characteristics are similar if the features are similar [of both brands]. That improves the storytelling. "I only work with these brands, because they're similar to the one I have".</p> <p>K: So as long as it fits my preference, both can be perceived as "I like them and use them"</p> <p>Yes. It differs a lot if it's clothing and beauty because of course we can use a lot of lipsticks or lip liners. So it really depends on the homing costs of the products, is it possible that we can use 10 different types of these products, or can we actually just use 1 car for example?</p> <p>R: In case a follower perceives a sponsored endorsement as financially motivated - so an Instagrammer failed to correctly choose a product to promote. Does that then affect the effectiveness of sponsor endorsement?</p> <p>Yes, for sure. And again, that comes down to storytelling. If the storytelling has not hit the spot, then it's more likely that our followers will perceive it as financially motivated, which would in turn negatively impact the effectiveness of the recommendation.</p>
28	1:20:08.9 - 1:21:27.7	<p>58 - Is there anything they say or show in their posts or on Instagram in general that creates that feeling?</p> <p>For instance, this girl Emillie Lillie, she is a DJ, if she's promoting an alcoholic brand or a cocktail, then I don't care if it's sponsored. I would still believe that she would choose to work with this brand because she likes it. She's used to being picky about what type of liquor she drinks, or where she parties. So then again, that comes down to consistent storytelling.</p>
29	1:21:27.7 - 1:25:25.9	<p>60, 61 - When you think of Instagrammers who have their own brands, do you think endorsements of own brand stand out more than endorsements of sponsor brands? Why?</p> <p>It depends on what kind of line the products are in. Some Instagrammers are really really lazy. You wouldn't think that, but we've worked with people that get paid a lot for just posting 2 or 3 posts, but because they are either busy or lazy or whatever, they don't wanna post these posts. But the motivation, I think - for some people, because of course, it varies a lot. But if you're sure that by posting these 2 or 3 photos that you're getting paid a lot, the motivation would probably be bigger if you're a lazy person in the first place. Then by posting photos from your own brand, the reward is further out in the future.</p> <p>R: And what would you say is the result of being lazy and not being lazy, when you compare such posts?</p> <p>I don't think followers can tell. If we as an agency put a deadline on an Instagrammer, and they have to post these specific posts within the deadline, the followers don't know that deadline, the followers don't know the specific characteristics and things that these people have to do in order to live up to our expectations as an agency. The followers don't know that. So it's hard to actually pinpoint whether they're lazy, whether they don't really like the collaborations or not. Unless it's really apparent in their bio or in the setting that they post this photo in.</p> <p>K: Ok, so followers probably do not know about deadlines. But you as an agency probably have some expectations to what you want a post to look like because you believe that will be effective. So can you tell us more about that? What is your "checklist" of what has to be done in order to make a post stand out?</p> <p>That's not really my specific field, I think our campaign manager would be better to elaborate on that.</p> <p>K: Maybe you have noticed which ones do better?</p> <p>I work more with onboarding clients and creating their social media campaigns. Again, it's a lot about the storytelling.</p>
30	1:25:25.9 - 1:28:47.7	<p>62,63 - Do you think endorsements of sponsor brand are as much associated with such Instagrammers as endorsements of own brand are? Why?</p>

		<p>I would say that the own products would more likely be in the top of mind of the consumer. Again, back to the storytelling, if we really believe that he or she created this product for a particular purpose, and with particular characteristics, then it resonates more directly with me. Then I would be more likely to remember: "Wow, I remember seeing this product because it had these or these characteristics because they were important for him or her".</p> <p><i>R: Do you have any real life examples?</i></p> <p>It's still pretty rare that people produce these own brands, at least in Denmark, so not really, no.</p> <p>Well, perhaps this couple that created Gymshark, the fitness brand. Their story is really a success story, right? Then it really stays top of mind for me, because I know that he or she created the product because there were certain characteristics, or they felt there was sort of a gap in this field. And when in turn their product has had a lot of success, then it stays top of mind for me more. Then if they were to do some sort of sponsorship with an already existing and succesful brand like Nike and Adidas, I would be more prone to remembering their own product then.</p>
31	1:28:47.7 - 1:30:00.0	<p>(the ones before were skipped since the respondent already answered them)</p> <p>67, 68 - <i>When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, do you think there needs to be a common theme between them (brands)? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes, for sure. The more common the vibe is, or the more similar these products are, the more trustworthy the message and the storytelling is.</p>
32	1:30:00.0 - 1:31:14.1	<p>69, 70 - <i>How important is it to endorse own and sponsor brands similar to each other? Why?</i></p> <p>The more similar they are, I think the better the outcome is.</p> <p>K: So you mentioned that by following this similarity, with one girl you even kind of coached her to reach a specific point in her career. Maybe you have other ideas of what are the consequences of keeping this consistency? Or bad consequences if you don't?</p> <p>If you don't keep this consistency, that's probably easier to elaborate on. That would affect your followers negatively in the sense that they can actually see the dissimilarity and they would be more prone to actually not believing the message that you're trying to convey.</p>
33	1:31:14.1 - 1:32:37.0	<p>71 - <i>How does the similarity between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of sponsor brand? / How does the difference between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of sponsor brand?</i></p> <p>So if we have this Instagrammer that promotes her own fitness/food line, so, for example, we know this girl is maybe anorexic, and when she eats, she only eats super super healthy. If she were to promote a brand that's not really healthy, maybe it has some fat in it...If she's really promoting it, then we would be more likely to perceive her message as being sponsored and motivated by financial reasons.</p> <p><i>K: So that would not be accepted by followers?</i></p> <p>Not as much, no.</p>

7.1 RB1

Line	Timespan	Content
1	0:08.5 - 0:10.0	<p>1-2. <i>When Instagrammers are more trustworthy/ honest/ believable, are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>In this question, I can be very specific and say yes, definitely. It's self-explaining in a way because, of course, if like an Instagrammer is more honest about the product, like her and his followers rely much more on this person. But what does trustworthiness mean for you, guys. That's a big question because it's difficult to track if an Instagrammer is trustworthy or not. But at the same time, it's also easy to see. Like if an Instagrammer mostly posts about fashion and suddenly starts posting about beauty products, you can say that at least related... But if she is a fitness Instagrammer, only posting about the workout and what she is eating, and suddenly start posting about a foundation. Then you can say, ok, it's not so trustworthy at all and she is not honest about the product. But, on the other hand, maybe she is honest about the product so it is about what you decide and you think is honest.</p>
2	3:20.3 - 6:48.3	<p>3-4. <i>Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more trustworthiness? Or can the fact that they have own brand bring more trustworthiness, in your opinion?</i></p> <p>Not necessarily, no. Because if she has her own brand, it doesn't say anything about if she is more trustworthy in her claims or statements when she tries or starts talking about the product. Because having a brand is her job and it doesn't mean that she is more trustworthy about her product, compared to like someone who only do sponsorships but she also has another job. So, for me, at least, I would never try to distinguish it by saying - ok, I only work with those who have their own brands or those who don't have their own brands. But I would say I would prefer, maybe, depending on which brand they have because if we are talking about an Instagrammer who has her own beauty brand, suddenly if she starts talking about another beauty brand, that would be a bit weird. If I would be a consumer, I'm also following Instagrammers, I don't think that I would think it was trustworthy if an influencer started talking about another beauty brand if she has own beauty brand. I don't know what would be a bit weird.</p> <p><i>If an Instagrammers has a lipstick and then she starts talking about another lipstick from another brand, would you think that would be even more weird, as you said?</i></p> <p>If you mix the categories, that would be weird. But if she has like hair products, and then she starts talking about make-up, that's a nice match because you know she is interested in beauty so that's a nice mix of talking about make-up. It's difficult, let's say that I have a beauty brand and I have started a small business with lipsticks and then I have an opportunity to collaborate with Kylie, right. And then I asked "Hey Kylie, would you like to post about this and blablabla" because I know she has ... But no, I think then her followers wouldn't even recognize that it's not Kylie's products, they would get confused and I wouldn't get a valuable reach out of it. Because, of course, a lot of people would be the post, if I go with "ok, the reach is this, engagement rate is high", but do they know that it's my product and not her product. That could actually...there is a risk and I don't think that I would actually take this risk, to be honest.</p> <p><i>How can Instagrammers increase trustworthiness? In what way?</i></p> <p>If they do it in a natural and authentic way. I'm following an Instagrammer and she is huge. Maybe you already know her, she is a Dutch blogger Negin</p>

		<p>[Negin Mirsalehi, 4.9M followers on Instagram], she is amazing and she got known for her hair and now she has her own hair range and at the same time, she has started to collaborate with KIEHLS on skin care. And for me, it's a natural mix because she is known for her hair but also beauty so it makes her trustworthy but she is not interested in collaborating with a lot of brands. I'm pretty sure that she gets contacted by tons of brands but for years she hasn't had any collaborations on beauty but after a lot of years then she has started to collaborate with one product and that could make them trustworthy that they get more selective instead of saying yes to everything. So that could help them to increase their trustworthiness. Otherwise, the way they are talking. If we look into the qualitative in what they are doing and if they are vlogging and say "ok, guys, I got sponsored by this brand but seriously, I still use it".</p>
3	7:41.4 - 10:36.9	<p><i>5-6. Do you think that increased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Yeah, definitely.</p> <p><i>5-6. Do you think that decreased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations less relevant? (so, would that make people less interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Yes, that's related. If I was to go out and find an Instagrammer and she has a lot of ... but I don't know... cause if she has a lot of collaborations, but it depends on what categories. If it's within beauty, I would say ok, so this girl is interested in beauty products and I will go and look into her engagement rate and see how people are engaging with her, what are they asking her about. Because I have also experienced sponsoring an influencer with a product, she had a lot of engagement but asking about where she bought her pants. So it's also about, I think it's difficult to split it.</p> <p><i>Do you think these tools that you have mentioned: engagement rate, comments could help you to evaluate the level of their trustworthiness?</i></p> <p>Yeah, not only the platform. If we are talking about an Instagrammer, I don't only analyse her but actually, there are a lot of tools that are public to everyone, you don't need to work with a media agency or a company, you can do it by yourself. You can go and analyse the audience data and start looking into "ok, she has 50k followers but how many % of her followers are interested within beauty. Ok, only 5% so maybe not if I want to push a beauty product".</p> <p>It's very difficult to evaluate the level of her trustworthiness, I would say you can just feel it. Or it is by looking into what her followers are asking about or commenting about. And also looking into other social media platforms if she has them.</p>
4	13:30.5 - 15:40.4	<p><i>7. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes their recommendations seem more believable?</i></p> <p>Yeah, I think if they have a brand, a brand account of Instagram and at the same time a private one. I will use Negin because she is a perfect example. She has her own brand "gisou" and like her, a brand account for this one and she has a lot of people working for her so she has an office and social media manager and all this. And then she has her own Instagram account, which is a brand but it's like her name is even a brand, you could say. But she is posting about the product from her own private account and she is using it. And that, I think, is so cool "ok, so she is actually using the product so it has to be good. Because I look at her and it has to be amazing and she is using this product and she even has the whole history behind the product that she is talking in her private account and not only the brand account and that". I think, is very strong and nice way to do that. It increases trustworthiness a lot because you have probably seen celebrities doing collaborations with brands and you wouldn't hear anything, you don't see them talking about the product, only a brand highlighting "ok, so we did a collaboration with this person and look how beautiful the product is". And then you go to this person's Instagram and you don't see anything. If it's so good, why she is not posting about it or talking about it.</p>
5	15:40.4 - 17:17.7	<p><i>10-11. When Instagrammers have more expertise (about products or industry), are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Yes. If a fitness Instagrammer starts talking about a protein drink, then that is more trustworthy because you know that she is using and drinking this on a daily basis, she knows what is good for her body and what is not. That's more trustworthy to see posts from her than from someone who is interior blogger talking about this protein drink - "what do you know about protein drinks? do you even know what it does for your body? or it's just you need this extra money that you got from the collaboration?". Her recommendations wouldn't be that relevant, I would say.</p>
6	17:17.7 - 20:21.5	<p><i>12-13. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands have more expertise, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more expertise?</i></p> <p>No, that wouldn't make any difference for me, not at all. Because if she is an expert of, she has a beautiful account with a lot of beautiful furniture because she has a brand, that wouldn't make her an expert, compared to someone who does sponsorships or the other way around. That again depends on the content they are creating, and the feeling and, in some cases, maybe and that would also be if it's within the category that I'll use the influencer for. Like if it's in the category for the product, that would make her a bigger expert. But if it's within different topics, that doesn't tell that she is an expert for the product that I'll use her for.</p> <p><i>So if you are a beauty brand and, e.g. she has a beauty product...</i></p> <p>That would make her an expert.</p> <p><i>Can you tell us in what way?</i></p> <p>As mentioned, you just know that they have a big knowledge of this topic. If she is used to do contouring and strobing, then I would, of course, go with her because she might have her own strobing brand and then I want to highlight my lipstick and she can do a look with my lipstick. Rather than doing it with another Instagrammer who is just a regular one. It depends. Is not that one group is better than another one, it depends on a lot of the profiles of the girls and now what they are doing.</p> <p><i>But as a general tendency, you would be more into saying that entrepreneurial Instagrammers have a better expertise within this group, within beauty?</i></p> <p>If the brand is within the beauty, yes.</p>

7	20:21.5 - 20:38.6	<p><i>14. Do you think that the increased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Yeah, definitely and that would be the same as you want to buy a car. Would you go to someone who has... let's say there is this guy who just launched his own car brand, right? So he knows everything about Mercedes, Audi, Tesla, Porsche and now he has his own brand. And then, you have another group of people, they don't have their own brand but they know a little bit about cars, because of using cars, and you also have a car brand and you want somebody to talk about this car. Who would be prefer like? I would prefer the one who knows about the cars, he knows how the engine works, he knows how the seats, how to take care of the seats etc. And that it's just more relevant because he is a kind of a spokesperson within this category. And again not to say other girls are good but ...</p> <p><i>So you would believe that kind of starting your own brand takes a certain amount of research and that makes you a bit more of an expert?</i></p> <p>Yeah. And I would say that in most cases the brands are often a result of what they used to do sponsorships about. So if they have a make up brand, I'm pretty sure they did a lot of sponsorships with other beauty brands until they got their own brand.</p>
8	22:05.2 - 26:00.0	<p><i>16. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that shows more expertise?</i></p> <p>No, I haven't noticed that. Not really. Only if they are talking about their own products in their own account. Cause if I would go to an Instagram, just scrolling, I wouldn't see any difference between the one who has own brand and the other one unless the one with a brand starts posting about their own brand. And then, of course, the other one might have more beauty products [on her account] because she is doing sponsorships with a lot of different brands. So it's a broader product assortment that she is using, compared to the one who has own brand.</p> <p><i>What would you say if you would decide to check specific profiles of an entrepreneurial one and a regular one? And you would check their pictures, stories, their bio - everything that you can check on Instagram?</i></p> <p>It would look more natural if its own brand. Cause she knows the brand, she owns the brand so she knows how to posts with it, what to say, what not to say. Whereas the other one is more commercial, it's much more ad in your face.</p> <p><i>Does that somehow relate with expertise?</i></p> <p>Yeah, that is related. Of course, cause if she is an expert within that and she is talking about that, it feels more natural, compared to someone that is not so comfortable within that category that she is posting about. And again, for some people, it would be "oh, it's too commercial or it's too much product in your face". But that is actually what is working for the brands and we don't mind if it looks too commercial in a way. Because I know by the end they all human beings but for me as a media buyer when I do a campaign - I will be on YouTube, Facebook, different digital video platforms. For me, she is just a medium, she is just a channel. So it's ok if it looks like an ad and she is talking about the product, but we have to be very careful who we are collaborating with. As you would do with Facebook and all the other medium channels, you would go in and you would do like a "check" of previous campaigns and all this. The same we do with the girls, we go and look at what she has been doing for the past three years. Like if she is someone we can trust because we want her to be a spokesperson for the consumers and we don't want to collaborate with someone who might say something bad in the past and that also helps us to choose someone that we trust.</p>
9	26:00.0 - 28:12.9	<p><i>18-19. When Instagrammers are more attractive, are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Yeah, they are. If you are attracted by someone, if we would think not only about Instagrammers, you would definitely think that, and now I'm thinking about boys. If I was attracted by a man, I would definitely think what he is saying would be more relevant than someone that I'm not attracted by. So yeah.</p> <p><i>Why do you think it's happening?</i></p> <p>Cause you just start believing in what they are saying. If an Instagrammer has a nice look in her news feed and I really like her personality, and I really get attracted by her account, it's a natural feeling that I would be more into what she is saying, compared to someone I am not attracted by.</p>
10	28:12.9 - 28:55.9	<p><i>20-21. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more attractive, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are more attractive?</i></p> <p>Yeah, I think so. Because it makes them look more serious and not only this, like, I don't know how to find another word of "stupid" but it makes them look smarter "ok, she has her own business - wow" and that would make more relevant as well.</p>
11	28:55.9 - 29:26.0	<p><i>22-23. Do you think that the increased attractiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Yeah, I would say.</p>
12	29:25.9 - 39:11.2	<p><i>24. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more attractive?</i></p> <p>Yeah, I have. It's a German blogger. She also started her own hair brand, I think she is called Cocolif [736k followers on Instagram]. And she has beautiful hair so for me it's natural, of course, she needs to have this brand. So what they do is that they are using the product and showing.</p> <p><i>You mentioned that they are attractive because they have a business. So maybe, how you find out about that business, how you observe that?</i></p> <p>I follow them because I like them. And then they start talking about the product that they have, the brand that they have and then I go to that account and it looks pretty nice and she also uses the product, I'm like "ok, this is nice, I want to try this". But it's more or less the same question. I don't know how to answer this one.</p>

		<p>I have, for instance, the opposite. I can stop following someone if they start talking about ... you can need to have a good feeling about that... For example, if she starts talking about jewelry and then I would be "what? this is weird because normally you talk about beauty and fashion, lifestyle and now you have done a collaboration with a jewelry company". For me, that's not cool. It's a bit confusing. Oh, this is very common - if beauty bloggers get children, suddenly it's a mom blog page. That is off to me. I don't have anything against these mothers, new moms but it's just weird that we are talking about babies, I want to know how you did your look.</p> <p><i>Is it because you have started following her not because of babies?</i></p> <p>Yes, exactly.</p> <p><i>So would you say that the level of her attractiveness to you will be decreasing?</i></p> <p>Definitely. They sometimes, I feel, they forget that it's not, sometimes it is, but it's not about you, it's not you as a person. It's more about what you are saying. It's more "a live newspaper", in a way. It's not always like this because I love Negin as a person if she will get a child, I'll still follow her, but sometimes I follow girls because they have nice look or they are really good in fashion, styling and if she gets a child, I don't care about you, it's more about style, I want to see how you combine outfit. I know that it sounds a bit, what would you say, harsh in a way but yeah.</p> <p><i>So you said even if she would start making kids and post about that, you would still follow her. So why you follow her, maybe?</i></p> <p>Because she is, you can feel that when she is posting, it's so in such a natural way, she is honest and she is showing products even if she is not sponsored by the brands. If she would want to, she could contact beauty brands and say "hey, I'm planning to do this, would you be interested in a collaboration?". And the brand would be "omg, I got a call from Negin - 5M followers - yes, please, let's make a contract". But she is just doing it because she likes the product and she is, like, she has a nice personality and she is very authentic. She is showing behind the scenes with her dad, talking about what happened to him and she is involving her fans by asking "so what do you think". She wanted to launch a new product in a travel size but before doing it, she asked her followers "hey, which product do you need when traveling?". And people feel they are a part of something big. So interacting with consumers, you can feel it's a part of her life, and not just an "add-on", it's not only to make money. It's like she loves it. And also, she is one of the first movers on Instagram, like, that also means a lot. She was able to keep authenticity when losing it happens quite often. Before we tried to find Instagrammers with a high amount of followers, but now it's turned around. Now, we try to find the smallest ones, with the highest engagement. And Negin is good in her engagement. She is interacting with her followers and she is yeah.</p> <p><i>So basically her personality keep you as a follower, even if she would start posting something not so relevant to you?</i></p> <p>Yeah, exactly.</p> <p><i>While if you would follow other for something that they do - they are good stylists or does something that you like to observe and then they would start doing something different, you would start to reconsider whether you want to follow her further?</i></p> <p>Yeah. And that is actually the same if you are following a brand, not only an Instagrammer. But, e.g., a brand known for shoes and then it starts posting about furniture, you would be "what?". But if you really love the brand, love the history of the brand, they have a storytelling and then they start posting about furniture that would be "hmm, that is quite interesting". So it's all about the story behind and the relationship.</p>
13	39:11.1 - 40:37.3	<p>26-27. <i>When Instagrammers are more respected (admired), are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make you more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Yes, they are more relevant cause if you respect someone you rely more on their recommendations, compared to someone that you don't respect.</p> <p><i>Why do you think so?</i></p> <p>First of all, I wouldn't follow someone that I don't respect, like, if I don't have a respect, then it would be ...</p> <p><i>So do you think respects is one of the main factors why you decide to follow an Instagrammer?</i></p> <p>Yeah, cause I don't think I would follow someone if I don't have respect for them.</p>
14	40:37.2 - 41:39.5	<p>28-29. <i>Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more respected, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are more respected?</i></p> <p>No, not at all. Cause you don't need your brand on Instagram to be respected. Cause like if you are following a girl who doesn't have her own brand but you still respect her, that would still make her posts relevant cause I respect her for who she is not whether she has a brand or not.</p> <p><i>Can having your own brand gain them an additional respect with her followers, you think?</i></p> <p>Maybe, that could actually be. But maybe not, I don't know. I don't have any clue.</p>
15	41:39.4 - 43:26.5	<p>32. <i>Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more respected?</i></p> <p>No, not really. If they are supporting UNICEF or some charity work, that maybe would increase respect for that person. Or if they are doing a good thing for a society or community, other people.</p> <p><i>Can they do it when they have a brand, maybe in a different way?</i></p> <p>Yeah, definitely. The opposite would be if somebody is doing totally odd. If they say something bad that could hurt someone if they suddenly started looking ungrateful for what they are doing and what they have.</p>

16	43:26.5 - 46:39.0	<p><i>34. When Instagrammers are more similar to followers (peers), are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>That's a tricky one. Because if you're an Instagrammer, you are different. And if you're different, you are not similar in a way.</p> <p><i>So, kind of, the fact that you are a followed Instagrammer makes you already a bit unique, you would say?</i></p> <p>Yeah, cause otherwise, I don't know. You just said that it's someone who is close to regular people. But I would answer no.</p> <p><i>What if we would take both Instagrammers, you follow them both but one is more similar to you - she does something that makes you feel "oh, she is like me". Which one would be more relevant to you when recommending a brand?</i></p> <p>I tried to look into my little sister's social media patterns, how she is using social media. She is 15 and she thinks it's super cool if she is following a girl who is different. If she has nice clothes or she has a big house, or she has something she doesn't have, like something "wow, this is different". And I think I'm the same, maybe not into this unrealistic part. I would follow someone who would inspire me and that would be someone is different to me. So for me, at least, it would be more relevant to follow someone who was different but still has the same. So if I have to choose between a girl who is totally different and another girl who is totally different, but one of them she actually has a personality that is close to my personality, that would be nicer. That would be "wow" so we have the same values and I would feel "oh, maybe I could be a blogger". That would be a bit more relevant.</p> <p><i>A bit of a balance to be achieved, right? They have to have this aspirational element but somehow you need to relate to them?</i></p> <p>I follow my friends on Instagram because we are friends and we have common interests. And I think it is more interesting to follow, for me at least, someone who is inspiring me at the same time and if that person also has some similarities, that would be a perfect match.</p>
17	47:12.8 - 47:54.5	<p><i>36-37. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem more / less similar to followers?</i></p> <p>Less similar to followers cause then they have their own business and are not just working for a company.</p> <p><i>Some other differences that are clear to see how they start differing?</i></p> <p>No, not really. But that would be the same as if out of Instagram. Someone who has their own business will be less similar to someone that doesn't have own business.</p>
18	47:54.5 - 48:15.6	<p><i>38-39. Do you think that decreased similarity of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations less relevant? (so, would that make people less interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>No, not necessarily.</p> <p><i>Why do you think so?</i></p> <p>Cause you can still be super nice and cool even though you are not similar to each other.</p> <p><i>So maybe that aspirational factor relates to that as well?</i></p> <p>Yeah, definitely. You can be aspired by someone who is completely different to you.</p>
19	48:15.5 - 48:44.6	<p><i>40. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more similar to followers? We kind of talked already about this balance they need to achieve.</i></p> <p>No, I haven't. I never thought about this similarity, to be honest. If someone was similar to me or not. By the end, it doesn't matter to me at all.</p> <p><i>So you don't consider that at all? As a follower or as a specialist?</i></p> <p>Well, you can say, as a specialist, I would look more into it cause then I have a target that I want to reach. I want to collaborate with someone who is close to this target. It doesn't make sense to collaborate with a girl in her 40s and have children and then trying to communicate to girls who are between 15-20. As an expert in my job, I would definitely try to find someone who is close to the target. I don't think that followers recognize it that much. Maybe if it a too much of a gap, then it might be "wow, why is he talking about blemish cleansing products she is 40".</p>
20	49:45.5 - 51:33.3	<p><i>42-43. When you believe that Instagrammers like and use recommended products more, are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Yes, cause if they by nature like this product, they really adore it, their content is also more authentic. Cause then it leads to a more real content, instead of just talking what she doesn't like. So yeah. And that you can quickly feel. It doesn't need to be that she loves the products, but she needs to think "oh this is actually quite nice".</p>
21	51:53.4 - 54:41.0	<p><i>44. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they like and use the recommended product more?</i></p> <p>No, that doesn't matter at all. So they have their own brand and then they use this product, would I think they like the product even more just because they have a brand, compared to those who are only sponsored? No. And, in general, that someone has own brand doesn't make them more attractive, respected, more emotional or anything. From a brand perspective, from my perspective, I wouldn't, I haven't thought about it. Only if they have a brand within my category that I would use in a strategic way. Otherwise, no difference.</p>

		<p><i>If the category would be the same?</i></p> <p>Yes. Speaking about expertise - yes, attractiveness - yes, trustworthiness - yes.</p> <p><i>So for you this difference to even be considerable or useful, it needs to in line with what you are trying to sell?</i></p> <p>Yes. Otherwise, I wouldn't say that they like the product more, that they are respected more. No, not really.</p>
22	54:41.9 - 56:33.4	<p><i>48. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general which shows that they more honestly like and use the recommended products?</i></p> <p>They are posting much more. So if they like the product, they would do more organic posts. Even though I am paying them to do 3 posts, they will make 10 posts. If they like the product, they want to communicate about that product. But that rarely happens. That would be nice if you could get this but.. Even though an Instagrammer loves the product, she wouldn't be like more different. I don't know. Cause she wouldn't post 10 posts because then it would be weird for followers. No, I don't think they would do anything differently. Maybe the way they are doing it. Instead of only doing a post, they might do a story so that they really can tell "so guys, I've just made this post and I really want to stress a fact that I love this product because it does this and that and I tried and used it in different ways". Cause we collaborated with some beauty influencers and maybe we sent them a lipstick, but because they love the product they did a whole look by applying a lipstick on the lips, on the eyes in a fun and nice way they are interacting with the product. They love it so much, instead of just putting on the lips, which is completely fine and perfect because that's the purpose of the product, but that tells me "ok, she spent time with this product, trying to do nice looks because she thought it was a nice texture and she really talks about the nice smell and more information". So the quality of the content differs whether they love a product or not.</p>
23	56:34.3 - 59:49.4	<p><i>50. What motivation do you think Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing their own brand?</i></p> <p>Let's say that it's within beauty and she has her own beauty brand, that would depend a lot. It depends on how big she is. Cause if she has her own brand and she is not that big, let's say that this brand is new and she wants to create this awareness around it and that's a good product, and she might get contacted by a big and well-known beauty brand "hi, would you like to collaborate with us", that would be a good mix. Because that would help her increase her awareness, but also maybe she would be "ok, if I post with this product, this brand, they might associate my brand with this big brand - that's super cool to me". So that's two sides for me. Again, if Kylie Jenner would contact by someone, she is actually collaborating with Huda Beauty and Make Up For Ever, and that I think because she likes the products. So that could be a strategy.</p> <p><i>What do you think followers would understand about this collaboration when would see "oh she released her own brand and she recommends it"?</i></p> <p>I think they would think "wow, it's nice. She gets motivated by the fact that she likes the product and not that she wants to earn money".</p>
24	59:49.3 - 1:02:28.4	<p><i>52. What motivation Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing sponsor brands?</i></p> <p>The same. If an Instagrammer has her own brand and starts talking about another product which is not her product, I would say she likes the product because why she talks about the competitors. If it's within beauty, if she is a beauty Instagrammer and then she starts talking about another beauty product, that would be because she really likes the product. Otherwise, I would be like why to mention the competitor.</p> <p><i>Maybe to get money because she is sponsored?</i></p> <p>But that would be too risky. That would be such a bad move and I don't think that they would do it because it would be too obvious so she has to make that one very clear by saying "hey, guys, I have just tried this lipstick and it's so cool". I haven't seen this here in the Nordics so it's very difficult to and I don't think we will be in that case, maybe in the future if a huge influencer will start her brand, then it might happen.</p> <p><i>We are asking what would happen if an Instagrammer, not a brand, recommends a sponsor brand?</i></p> <p>Ah, I'm sorry. So when she is posting on her own personal account about another product, even though she has her own product. I don't think they would think it's because of money. Cause when you see her, it depends on how big she is, but you wouldn't think "oh, she has her own brand, why she talks about this". But Negin has her own gisou brand, but if she would start talking about a professional hair care brand, that wouldn't look weird to me. That would be cool. She doesn't have any shampoo in her collection. But if she would start talking about hair oil, that would be weird because she is selling hair oil, I wouldn't think it's because of the money, I would just think it's weird. I think followers would think that it was because of money, but I'm not sure.</p>
25	1:05:05.9 - 1:05:49.3	<p><i>54. Do you believe the Instagrammer likes and uses both their own and sponsor brands equally?</i></p> <p>I don't know. No idea.</p>
26	1:05:49.3 - 1:06:24.4	<p><i>55. Does the presence of own brand in the profile make sponsored endorsements seem mainly financially motivated?</i></p> <p>No, not really. I would be more if there is not relevant content. It's all about the content and what they are talking about and what they usually talk about. When an Instagrammer is getting into a new business, I just see it as a next step, that she needs to do something else than blogging. Not much that she wants to be more respected or something.</p>
27	1:06:24.4 - 1:10:46.1	<p><i>60-61. When you think of Instagrammers who have their own brands, do you think endorsements of own brand stand out more than endorsements of sponsor brands?</i></p> <p>I think their own brand would stand out more than sponsored products. Cause speaking about experts and expertise, they own a brand, they know a product, so I would say it stands out by the fact that... if she is talking about own brand in her own profile, I wouldn't be to read ... oh no, I don't know, maybe it's the same. I don't think there will be any difference.</p> <p><i>So kind of the posts of own brand is as much likely to catch your attention as the posts about sponsor brand?</i></p>

		<p>If it is about the same category. If it's within the category that she was used to post about, then yes. It's like when we are on Instagram, consumer patterns on Instagram have changed a lot because of the algorithm so much. So when you go on Instagram, most people they start on the stories, clicking on the stories and a little bit down to a news feed - that's it. So in the news feed, while they are scrolling, if they see like an Instagrammer with own brand posting about another product, they don't recognize it. Like, you don't go to the account of an Instagrammer every day. Then I never do, only on a news feed. So you don't see the sender of a content, you don't see if it's a brand or Negin. If it's an influencer sending it, if she is tagged in a third account, like in a beauty account owned by the third person - that you don't see. You see the product, the person, and it's a quick decision you need to make, whether you like it or not. And the next time you see the product, you would think "hey, this influencer has actually posted about this product". But you don't see a product "ok, she has her own product, this is weird" - no. I would love if we would have consumers, stopping and thinking about that but they don't do that. But we have 1.7 s to catch the attention of people on Instagram.</p>
28	1:10:46.1 - 1:14:24.7	<p>62. <i>Do you think endorsements of sponsor brand are as much associated with such Instagrammers as endorsements of own brand are?</i></p> <p>If it's within the category of a product and if the Influencer has a brand within the category of my product, then I want a user to know. If she is well known within hair styling and she has own brand, and she is talking about my hair product, that I think will increase the association more than if you saw a regular Instagrammer posting a product.</p> <p><i>But if you would think about one Instagrammer who recommends own brand and sponsor brand, as Negin, would you say that she is more associated as a person with own brand or she is more associated and related in your memory with a sponsor brand?</i></p> <p>With own brand. Cause 80% of the time, you would see her with her own brand, that means that the awareness of her with her own brand is bigger than the awareness of her and another brand. So you tend to remember what you see the most. And when you on Instagram or Facebook and you start seeing ads from campaigns, if you see the same picture 10 times you would remember that more than seeing another picture twice, maybe. And that's the same for the consumer on Instagram. If you would see an Instagrammer with her own product more often than with few posts of different products, then you don't remember them in the same way because you get exposed to. So I think they get more associated with own brand, rather than sponsor brand.</p>
29	1:14:24.7 - 1:17:22.4	<p>64. <i>Would that affect your choice of selecting an Instagrammer who has their own brand to do a sponsorship?</i></p> <p>Yes, of course, it would. If it was like a product, that could even increase the awareness of my product, then I would do it. That would benefit me a lot. If she is so big in makeup, she has a lot of followers because she is good in doing makeup, but she has only mascara and a lipstick, then I want to launch a contour kit, that would be a nice match because then I would complete a missing part. That would be super cool. But if she has a lipstick brand and I have a lipstick, then I would be very careful. I don't think I would go with her.</p> <p><i>You mentioned the awareness? Does that somehow relate with your goals why you are employing an Instagrammer?</i></p> <p>I would say this could be based on the fact that I don't think they recognize the differences. They would not know that it is my brand. They would think it's her lipstick because, again back to the fact that if they would see a picture... Let's say that Ronaldo [a football player] has his own shoe brand, and he is huge and big and then he posts Nike. And you are scrolling, you have 1.7s, I don't think people will recognize this was Nike, they would just think it was his own shoes because this is what he used to post. Unless the content is very different so shoes would be in your face "this is Nike" but Instagrammers would never do this.</p>
30	1:17:22.4 - 1:19:08.4	<p>66. <i>Have you ever experienced endorsements of Instagrammers' own brand being more associated with an Instagrammer than sponsored endorsements? Can you tell us about that?</i></p> <p>I haven't collaborated with any beauty Instagrammers who have own brand.</p>
31	1:19:08.4 - 1:21:04.6	<p>67. <i>What do you think are the specific aspects of posts or on Instagram in general including own brand that make them more preferred?</i></p> <p>I think a lot of people are scared of a branding but for a lot of companies, there are some facts saying that if you have a logo and the product, that performs the best, compared to someone who is hiding, in a way. You need to show the product and maybe even use the product, show the efficacy. If you have a cleansing product, instead of doing like this [showing how she holds an imaginary product in her hands, smiling and looking straight as you would look when staring right into the camera], you can actually show "look how good it is", that is much better. The product is preferred more than not having a product. And if you have a product, use it. Don't just show only the product and its packaging.</p> <p><i>Is it also applicable to a sponsor brand?</i></p> <p>Yes, I want them to use the product, that is a part of the brief always - use the product, show how it works. But if it's like a beautiful product, if it's a perfume, then it's ok to just show, because it's beautiful and nice. But if it's a lipstick, put it on, show the results, put it on your arm, I don't know, just do something.</p>
32	1:21:04.5 - 1:22:17.4	<p>69. <i>When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, do you think there needs to be a common theme between them (brands)?</i></p> <p>Yeah, that should be a link. Cause that is more authentic for the consumers. Because it's like within the field where they have this expertise in this topic and within this product. And if they start talking about like another category, there still has to be a strong link with the personality. If there is no link between the categories and themes, then there needs to be a clear link between a personality and then the product.</p>
33	1:22:54.7 - 1:24:57.4	<p>71-72. <i>How important is it to endorse own and sponsor brands similar to each other?</i></p> <p>They would become experts in the field. Then the followers would think "oh, she has a broad knowledge of beauty, it's a specialist, instead of being a generalist about different products". Of course the consumer behavior on social media is different than in the world, but if you have colleagues, you might have some specialists and if you have questions about a specific topic, then you might go to a specialist, instead going to a generalist because you would say "she actually knows a lot about this". And I think that you could take that to a social media part as well. Consumers would follow the ones with expertise within the category they have an interest in. And that is built by posting about similar stuff, same topics.</p>

34	1:24:57.3 - 1:26:48.5	<p>73. How does the similarity between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of a sponsor brand?</p> <p>That leads back to the earlier discussion. She has to make clear it's not the same product because, otherwise, we get lost. But if it's within the same topic, I don't know but it would be nice to see any studies around it if people actually would think that a sponsor product would be his or her brand. Going back to Ronaldo, if he starts posting his own shoe brand and then starts posting about clothing, would you think that it is of his own brand or another brand. It depends on how big the brand is if it's Nike - no, you wouldn't think. But if it's a small brand, it could be risky. So it depends who you are collaborating with because if it's a big beauty brand, then of course, you wouldn't, then you would know the brand, ok this is a beauty brand A and not her brand.</p> <p><i>How does the difference between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of a sponsor brand? If one brand is luxury and another one is a mainstream brand?</i></p> <p>That would be ok. In a beauty world, you don't have loyal consumers, you know it from yourself, you don't have makeup from one brand, you have makeup from so many brands. The only thing is it might change for skin care cause then you tend to buy what is working for you so that would be ok, as long as it wouldn't be eating her own brand.</p>
35	1:28:06.8 - 1:29:51.3	<p>74. Would you be more likely to do a sponsorship with an Instagrammer who has a similar brand to the brand you work for?</p> <p>Not if it's too similar. It is still beauty, but another product, then I would. We had the same case, we collaborated with an influencer and we had a product, and then she posted about the product, it was nice, cool - all this, and two weeks later she posted the same product from another brand. And that was just weird because she said "this is the best product within this category" and then the next time "hey, I'm using this product". As a consumer it would be "wtf, which brand like", that's not nice to do. Cause "hey, I've just tried this cleansing gel - so cool" and the next time "I've just tried this cleansing tonic" - it's still within beauty, you still need both - cool. I would like this product, even if it's another brand because none of us are loyal to beauty products - we change, based on a trend.</p>
36	1:29:51.3 - 1:35:32.2	<p>76. If you consider launching a brand collaboration with an Instagrammer, which Instagrammer you would consider to choose: the one that has a brand or a regular one who does only sponsorships?</p> <p>I would go with both; I don't think one would be better than the other. If it was the one with a brand, she has to fit, she has to be cool and benefit me in a way, she should help to reach out to the millennials if people they tend to think that my brand is all lady brand. On the other hand, I would also do with someone who doesn't have their own brand. That's the same with Estee Lauder and Viktoria Beckham, who has her own fashion brand - nice collaboration, that's super cool, that's nice. Huda Beauty was considering doing something with Makeup For Ever, that's actually cool and it's within the same "beauty junkies", so they have the same target - that's cool because then you might get a chance to reach out to the fans of Makeup For Ever, you will gain the market share, so it's a strategic move to do.</p> <p><i>What about if you are doing a sponsorship?</i></p> <p>I would go with the one who fits my brand. And I wouldn't look if ... it's difficult because it depends on the strategy of that launch, of the brand, the time, the aim. But I would look into, first of all, whether she has a brand or not if she is an authentic person if she has a knowledge of the brand.</p> <p><i>If there are two Instagrammers, one has a brand, another doesn't but they are both perfect matches to your brand, they both look good, your agency recommends both but you have a budget only for one, so would you consider one over another?</i></p> <p>I would go with the one who doesn't have a brand. Cause then I wouldn't be sure that she would highlight my products more than her own brand. Because the other way around... Let's say we have a Nordic beauty influencer with own brand, she would still not be ... there are too many risks to go with an Instagrammer who has own brand. Cause I don't know who is her target, who is buying this product, do I want to be associated with this brand, what about my loyal buyers, will they stop buying my products because they don't like this brand? What about the reviews of her products? Are they good products? She has to be very big to avoid the risks.</p> <p><i>So you just said that it would be too much of efforts because you need to fit your brand not only with an Instagrammer but also with her own brand?</i></p> <p>Exactly. And also if my manager says "Eda, we want to..." (because we don't have agencies to find Instagrammers and we do it by ourselves) and she says "hey, we need an Instagrammer within this hair care, go and find an influencer", and then I'm struggling to choose between, I just found two good matches, but one has own brand, I would go with the other one. If I would have a budget, I would go with 100 Instagrammers with 3000 followers each, then going with a girl who has her own brand cause it's more authentic. Unless it's a strategic decision to collaborate with the one with own brand. We would not do that on a local level, only if it's a global level.</p>

7.2 RB2

Line	Timespan	Content
1	1:59.9 - 2:02.0	<p>1-2. When Instagrammers are more trustworthy/ honest/ believable, are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</p> <p>I think that yes, of course. Because you can see it from the comments of followers. They start commenting and supporting the opinion of Instagrammers even without putting extra efforts in figuring out whether that opinion is correct. There is this Lithuanian Instagrammer called Agne Jegaleviciute [188.5k followers on Instagram] whose followers very instantly start supporting her opinion and thoughts shared in her posts. But, of course, this trustworthiness of her is only apparent within the circle of her followers.</p>
2	3:58.8 - 5:44.3	<p>3-4. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more trustworthiness?</p> <p>I think that yes. First of all, their posts are more consistent, e.g. they are not going back and forth the way they communicate as regular Instagrammers do, who are usually recommending one thing and the next day is making recommendations about totally different things. They are not attached to</p>

		<p>anything concrete and that's why very often their recommendations can be contradicting. I am working with Agne Gilyte [a Lithuanian fashion and beauty Instagrammer, 26.2k followers on Instagram] who launched her own "beauty boxes" - her own private label [a beauty box of recommended beauty products which is branded with Agne's name]. Also, she has her own clothing line. Her posts are consistent and complementing each other which increase her trustworthiness and trust in what she is doing because it seems that she believes in what she is doing. That's why I think that definitely yes.</p>
3	5:44.2 - 10:42.2	<p><i>5-6. Do you think that increased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>I would say that one is very connected to another one. Sometimes we are working also with regular influencers to whom you pay money and they recommend your product. Sometimes it seems that their recommended products are not connected with them, even if they communicate that these products are "wow" - probably they say so because they are just "doing their work". But from the perspective of followers or me personally, I would not trust such Instagrammers if I would be a follower. When Instagrammers recommend products that are not connected with them, their trustworthiness is decreasing because most probably the Instagrammers are not using these products. If you see that before the Instagrammer was talking and recommending only luxury products so positioned themselves luxurious, and now, suddenly, the Instagrammer started talking, recommending and praising a mass market product, then my trustworthiness of that Instagrammer is decreasing.</p> <p><i>So as I understood, those Instagrammers who have their own brands are more consistent in what they recommend?</i></p> <p>Yes, I would think that yes. They are more consistent because they have their own brand. First of all, a lot of their posts are about their own brand and the development of their own brand. Therefore, such behaviour increases my trust in her because she is creating/ developing something and simultaneously becoming pickier who she is working with, not choosing so many irrelevant brands to sponsor, what I have seen from my experience. However, when I think about Agne Jegalaviciute [a Lithuanian Instagrammer having the biggest following in Lithuania], I think she maybe already understood that she with her recommendations have gotten too far. Because one day she is recommending a cream RASA [a mass market skin care brand] and the next day she recommends CHANNEL cream which is not correlating with each other at all.</p> <p><i>When you think about Agne Jegalaviciute who is not consistent in her recommendations, are the recommendations also due to this reason become also not relevant to her followers?</i></p> <p>I really know that the followers' interest was growing with a geometrical progression. In the beginning, the majority of girls started to trust her but also I know that eventually this trust also decreased significantly. They stopped follow her because people started to be pickier and consider more aspects when following an Instagrammer. Maybe it was because of her personality, her outgoing public discussions or the mix of brands within her profile which is not inducing trust at all. Looking from my personal perspective, I don't have trust towards her due to her inconsistent recommendations, every day I see ads. Maybe it's because of my profession, I don't know.</p>
4	10:42.1 - 13:07.5	<p><i>7-8. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes their recommendations seem more believable?</i></p> <p>The posts of regular Instagrammers are concrete/specific about the product and usually, there is only one post, sometimes maybe they will also add an Instagram story. Whereas, entrepreneurial Instagrammers start their recommendations with teasers, then comes the Instagram story and then finally the product is shown. So there is a frequency in their communication, rather only one post.</p>
5	13:07.4 - 15:49.6	<p><i>9. Can you recall an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram where you noticed that?</i></p> <p>Agne Gilyte. We have been working with her on product recommendations. She is working in a very good manner, I would give her 10/10 how she is creating her profile, how active she is, what content she is posting - super. Now, she launched her fashion-related project. One month before the launch, she started teasing the followers that something new is coming: posting pictures and asking what they notice is different, why she looks different, then with Instagram stories. So everything that she does is a continuous work and very well thought through. Maybe she doesn't have so many followers as the other Agne [Agne Jegalaviciute] but it doesn't necessarily mean that she doesn't have that reach. I think that her followers are "of good quality".</p> <p><i>How you are judging that your followers are "of good quality"?</i></p> <p>From the discussion under posts, comments. Because when you check the discussion under the other Agne's posts [Agne Jegalaviciute], it seems that all the girls are making comments just for the excitement to leave a comment. Are they potential consumers of these products? I would doubt that. They are acting more as they would be a part of a community, striving to get a chance to express their opinion.</p> <p>I work with a luxurious skin care brand SENSAI of which target group is a more mature woman. Once I made a contest on Facebook to win SENSAI products. When I was choosing a winner, I really did my research because there were so many young girls participating who are not my target at all.</p>
6	20:17.4 - 23:34.8	<p><i>10-11. When Instagrammers have more expertise (about products or industry), are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Most probably yes. It's again also about that trustworthiness. At the beginning of our collaboration with Agne Gilyte, I invited her and our <i>beauty advisor</i>, who is twice a year trained about SENSAI products and new arrivals, to get her familiar with our products: let her try them out, get some treatments. We wanted to make her like and use the products in any case. Since the products are of good quality, you are naturally "falling in love" with them for their benefits. When it happens, the Instagrammer's posts become more organic and natural because she says something that she believes in. Now, for example, I don't need to create posts for her, she is doing it by herself and send me only for the approval. But very often I don't need to change anything since she is doing a great job: she organically reflects seasonality or relevant occasions. Therefore, I think that this expertise that they get is very important because then their posts become very organic. Consequently, the followers start trusting such Instagrammers because they believe in what Instagrammers are doing.</p> <p>And I just want to stress that this kind of expertise could be acquired not only for entrepreneurial Instagrammers. All kind of Instagrammers can be "prepared" to know the products, doesn't matter whether they have a brand or not. It depends on you [a brand manager] how much you will invest in their knowledge. My colleague is working with Lavija Surnaite [Lithuanian TV host, 12.6k followers on Instagram] who is posting 2 times per month about Max Factor products. The Instagrammer is very nice and fulfils her "duties" or what it is agreed upon but it seems that she is doing it just to "get work done". Whereas, I am very happy about my partnership with Agne because she is honestly excited about getting the products and even initiates communication, e.g. on Instagram stories, without me paying her.</p>

7	23:34.8 - 24:56.7	<p><i>12-13. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands have more expertise, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more expertise?</i></p> <p>I think that maybe yes. If you would think from the perspective that a person is able to create something, it means that they are not a loser. So these Instagrammers are not only nice people who have created a big following but also developing something. A person who is able to create something deserved a higher trust and respect than the one who is only taking advantage of his or her platform to increase their following.</p>
8	24:56.7 - 27:54.1	<p><i>14-15. Do you think that the increased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>I would say that the relevance of recommendations is connected with the expertise.</p>
9	27:54.1 - 31:52.1	<p><i>16. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that shows more expertise?</i></p> <p>Talking about the same Agne Gilyte. She has started her career as a stylist. Also, she has finished studies about fashion history in Florence, and she has been writing about it earlier which gives her trustworthiness about her career because people then see that she has a related background. I'm not sure whether she has noted it in her Instagram profile but she definitely has done that in her blog.</p>
10	31:52.1 - 34:12.3	<p><i>18-19. When Instagrammers are more attractive, are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>So an Instagrammer who is more attractive will probably have more followers and more active followers. Unless, if an Instagrammer is not attractive but has collected a big following due to her or his social activities and convert its unattractive aspects to his advantage, then the Instagrammer can have the same or even more [the relevance of recommendations]. But I would say that attractiveness still has a high importance.</p>
11	34:12.2 - 35:50.6	<p><i>20-21. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more attractive, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are more attractive?</i></p> <p>They are more attractive in a more general sense, not that they become more attractive externally. I think that then [when they release their own brand], their profile is changing, it becomes more professional. As in all the small business, the more you are growing and developing it, the more consistent it becomes. You determine your style, making consistent posts hire a photographer who for making pictures and thus, naturally attractiveness is increasing. And trustworthiness as well because your profile is growing and becoming more high quality.</p>
12	35:50.6 - 36:45.1	<p><i>22-23. Do you think that the increased attractiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Yes, I would say that everything is related together.</p> <p><i>Maybe you can explain a little bit why you think that it is related?</i></p> <p>As I already mentioned that your communication is becoming more high quality, you create more trustworthiness, consequently, followers trust more your recommendations. That's why I think that all of this is very much related.</p>
13	36:45.1 - 40:12.5	<p><i>24. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more attractive?</i></p> <p>Well as I have already mentioned, most often such Instagrammers have their own photographers, stylists who are creating the posts visually so the quality of post become much higher. I would say that having your own photographer is must because if you would compare two pictures: one made by your own phone and the other one is made by a professional photographer with the already decided product placement. The latter one looks much differently and accordingly, your opinion also differs [positively], compared to the first example [a picture made with one's own phone]. Maybe then [when posting pictures taken by a photographer], the post seems more as the advertising project because everything [influencer marketing] has started with Instagrammers taking pictures at home, without an extensive planning, because they use it. However, now everyone knows that products are not by accident appear on the shelves. In my opinion, it is more pleasant to look at a nicer picture and it is more trusted than the other one. Because there are a lot of "low quality" Instagrammers and I don't know how they are getting paid with such high sums of money. Sometimes it is better to give products to your 15-year-old daughter who would give them to her classmates and you will reach the same audience. Yeah, because it is very common to think that it might be better to work with smaller Instagrammer who are just starting their "Instagrammers' career".</p>
14	40:12.5 - 42:38.4	<p><i>26-27. When Instagrammers are more respected (admired), are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make you more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Well, it should be like this but if it's in real life, I don't know. For example, the same Agne Jegaleviciute whose values are not tolerated or appreciated by others due to her bad language share in posts but for some reason, these girls are still following and support her. So either her followers are the same as her and they think it is "cool" to act this way... I can't even tell you why... For me, the values of Instagrammers, their stance on certain issues and general attractiveness are very important.</p>
15	42:38.4 - 44:26.1	<p><i>28-29. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more respected, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are more respected?</i></p> <p>No, not necessary. As we talked before, if a person created something, the profile is increasing, the trustworthiness is also increasing... but in the case of respect, you don't necessarily need to create something. Maybe you are involved in some kind of social projects which are very valuable and appreciated. So despite creating a private label, you can be a socially responsible person who is respected and trusted by others. For example, Dovile Filimanaviciute [a singer, active in sharing her opinion on social media, 13,1k followers on Instagram], she has her own social projects and she is popular and it's not due to the fact that we created something. I think that no, not necessary.</p>

16	44:26.1 - 46:04.0	<p>32. <i>Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more respected?</i></p> <p>They are participating in social projects and communicating about that via Instagram posts. They are helping, donating something. Maybe this gives them more respect. If it is done organically, I think it gives them that respect and trustworthiness.</p> <p><i>Maybe you have noticed which Instagrammers are getting involved in the activity you have just described?</i></p> <p>No, I haven't noticed and I think there shouldn't be any correlation.</p>
17	46:03.9 - 49:30.7	<p>[after introducing what is a similarity to followers, before asking a general question about the similarity to followers]</p> <p>It's like in this saying: "Show Me Your Friends, I'll Tell You Who You Are". An example of Agne Jegaleviciute could be brought up if her posts start with curse words I immediately scroll down and not reading, while her followers are discussing together and having a great time while doing it. That means that their values are matching.</p> <p>34-35. <i>When Instagrammers are more similar to followers (peers), are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>If their values match, they follow and see them, then it means they believe in the recommendations. Otherwise, the followers wouldn't be interested.</p>
18	49:30.6 - 54:09.0	<p>36-37. <i>Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more or less similar to followers, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem more / less similar to followers?</i></p> <p>Maybe more followers could start following them due to their own private label and then that similarity is increasing. Yes, the similarity is getting stronger because if a newly launched brand encouraged them to follow, it means that the followers liked them.</p> <p><i>What about those followers who were already following them on Instagram before they launched a brand? Would you consider such Instagrammers more or less similar to followers? Or maybe you would not even consider that.</i></p> <p>Most probably I would not even think about that. But if I'm following him/her, it means I consider them close to me, with the life they are living, values, social media communication. Most probably he/she will launch something that I will like because I follow. Of course, not necessary because they can also launch not related brands.</p> <p><i>How then would it be? If they would launch a random product?</i></p> <p>Depends, it can happen in many ways. It's hard to say. I think that these followers who were following the Instagrammer before the launch of own brand, the similarity with that Instagrammers can go in both ways. Whereas, the similarity with followers can increase from the new followers who like that brand and because of it follow the Instagrammer.</p>
19	54:08.9 - 55:49.4	<p>40. <i>Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more similar to followers?</i></p> <p>Yes, so posting your daily routine or showing your family, home, kids - all of these down-to-earth things make that similarity higher. Because you see that this Instagrammer is not only beautiful and all the time with make-up. Agne [aforementioned Agne Gilyte] once told me that her son asked her "Mom, why you're not having your make-up done and not going to work" because he knows when she is having her make-up done by a make-up artist, she is going to have pictures for Instagram posts. So I think that showing your routine and daily simple things, make you more similar to followers. Because they are the same people as us: they are being without make-up, they can be sad, they can be angry, happy and not. Then you understand that it's [Instagrammer's, their profiles] not only a perfect facade. It creates trustworthiness, a general attractiveness, transparency.</p>
20	55:49.3 - 57:10.9	<p>41. <i>Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem less similar to followers?</i></p> <p>I don't know how people are perceiving this increasing quality of the Instagrammers' profiles. Are they taking this as a positive thing or a negative that they are "too good to take pictures by themselves"? This could be a little bit tricky.</p>
21	57:10.9 - 57:15.7	<p>42-43. <i>When you believe that Instagrammers like and use recommended products more, are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Yes, of course. I think that the more you convince with your recommendation, the more followers take them for granted, "as a true thing" and thus, the relevance of recommendations is increasing.</p>
22	58:56.4 - 1:00:09.5	<p>44-45. <i>Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they like and use the recommended product more?</i></p> <p>Maybe, not necessary, I even don't know... Maybe I would relate that with the fact that when you start creating your own brand, your content becomes more high quality, consistent. Other than that, your recommendation could be perfectly acceptable even if you don't have your own brand. I think that there are other things which influence that.</p>
23	1:00:09.4 - 1:03:23.5	<p>48. <i>Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general which shows that they more honestly like and use the recommended products?</i></p> <p>So they are trying to present everything organically, e.g. that they are taking pictures at their home. We were making four tutorials with Agne Gilyte about how to moisturize your skin, refresh your make-up and etc. And we really spent a lot of time and effort on thinking how to make it more trustworthy and relatable to followers, i.e. that she would look like she is using the products in her bathroom, in front of the mirror, filming her from the</p>

		<p>sink without make-up. All these aspects create a trust that it is really a part of your daily routine and you are really using it. If you are filming not at home, you try to create an environment that it looks like you are at home. You try to make an organic advertisement. In my case, I got lucky because Agne really likes and believes in SENSAL products so she creates the recommendations in an organic and natural way; using her own words, rather than taking them from the brand book.</p> <p>Also, I think that this feeling is achieved with a continuous product placement in the profile. When it seems that these products appear "accidentally" wherever you are, either at home, at the seaside, with friends.</p>
24	1:03:23.5 - 1:05:56.9	<p>50-51. What motivation do you think Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing their own brand?</p> <p>This first type of motivation [internal] because the Instagrammer created the product. And even if the Instagrammer want to earn money from this product, most probably it happened due to their internal aspirations.</p>
25	1:05:56.8 - 1:06:38.9	<p>52-53. What motivation Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing sponsor brands?</p> <p>Most probably followers would think about the financial motivation, that the Instagrammer was paid. Again, it depends how that post is presented, but nevertheless, most probably that financial. Now, people understand how these products appear in the profiles of Instagrammers, that brands paid the Instagrammers.</p>
26	1:06:38.9 - 1:07:38.9	<p>54. Do you believe the Instagrammer likes and uses both their own and sponsor brands equally?</p> <p>I think that they recommend more organically their own brand. But again, if the Instagrammer got really interested about sponsor brand, as in my example [a collaboration between SENSAL and Agne Gilyte], then this feeling [liking and using a brand] can be achieved in both ways. However, I think that this much likely will be achieved with own brand, more natural.</p>
27	1:07:38.9 - 1:08:43.0	<p>55-56. Does the presence of own brand in the profile make sponsored endorsements seem mainly financially motivated?</p> <p>I think that no. That there shouldn't be any associations in between of these two things.</p> <p>So even if the Instagrammer would not have own brand, the sponsor brand would be still considered financially motivated?</p> <p>I think so. Of course, it depends on the content but in most cases yes.</p>
28	1:08:43.0 - 1:10:47.5	<p>57. Does that negatively affect the effectiveness of sponsor endorsements? Have you experienced or heard of such a situation happening?</p> <p>Logically thinking, well it's hard to know what people think because I see advertisements everywhere I go.</p> <p>What do you think about that when you are hiring the Instagrammers? Do you think that this assignment to the second category will affect the effectiveness of recommendations?</p> <p>As I already mentioned, for me it is very important that posts are organic, that's why we were investing so much time in familiarizing Agne with our products. I think that we succeeded in this. However, even if people perceive the recommendations of sponsor brands as an advertisement, it can still encourage people to try the recommended products. So the recommendations could be still effective [even if they assigned to the external motivation].</p>
29	1:10:47.5 - 1:12:19.1	<p>60-61. When you think of Instagrammers who have their own brands, do you think endorsements of own brand stand out more than endorsements of sponsor brands?</p> <p>I think that the recommendations of private label. At least it's something that I have noticed when we do collaborations. People are more interested in the recommendations of own than sponsor brand - they ask more questions, press more often a "like" button. They are not so interested in sponsor brands, discuss less about them. However, people might see the recommended products somewhere else as well, maybe advertised in print advertisements or other traditional marketing tools so that's why they don't have so many questions about them. Whereas, the advertisements of Instagrammer's private label they see only on Instagram so maybe that's why they have more questions. So since the product is recommended only on Instagram, or least in the beginning, the concentration of consumer feedback is higher in this channel; when an Instagrammer is releasing and advertising own brand, it's exciting and interesting, people want to know more and asking questions. While the knowledge of sponsor brands is much higher, thus there are not so many questions needed to ask. So the recommendation on Instagram is just as a reminder and incentive.</p>
30	1:12:19.1 - 1:14:50.2	<p>62-63. Do you think endorsements of sponsor brand are as much associated with such Instagrammers as endorsements of own brand are?</p> <p>Well, depends on how much he or she is using the product. If it's a onetime thing, then definitely there will be no association between that brand and the Instagrammer. If it is a long-term collaboration, e.g. one-year or two-year, then I believe that the Instagrammer can be associated with a sponsor brand. But most often, the association with own brand will be always higher.</p> <p>Did you notice in practice this tendency of communicating own brand more often than sponsor brand?</p> <p>Of course, yes. The Instagrammer will communicate own brand as much as it is possible and as much as she wants, while how often the sponsor brand will be communicated depends on how it is agreed with the brand and how much it is paid.</p>
31	1:14:50.2 - 1:18:45.3	<p>67-68. What do you think are the specific aspects of posts on Instagram in general including own brand that make them more preferred?</p> <p>The intensity, there are more posts about your own brand than sponsor brands. For example, even if Agne is posting about her weekend, there still will be a note about the skirt with a link to get more information. She relates more posts with her own brand. But if I will take one sponsored posts and one post with own brand, I wouldn't see many differences. Maybe because Agne Gilyte works with a photographer, she is only making Instagram stories by herself. So her posts are high quality, attractive.</p> <p>If you would think about the description of the posts?</p>

		<p>There are not a lot of space for the description. Practically, everything there is about pictures.</p> <p><i>So basically, consistency and frequency are the two main things in preferring the brands recommended on Instagram?</i></p> <p>Yes.</p>
32	1:18:45.3 - 1:26:07.3	<p><i>69-70. When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, do you think there needs to be a common theme between them (brands)?</i></p> <p>For an Instagrammer recommending low key products, you will not ask to recommend luxury products. It's because your brand is not matching with the Instagrammer's followers, values, post quality and content. And if they would create their own brands, most probably they would be of the same level as himself - his past recommendations, values, social status etc. When you are looking for an Instagrammer to recommend your brand, you are trying to match the brand with the Instagrammer's posts, lifestyle and appearance would reflect the image of your potential target consumer.</p> <p><i>If a beauty Instagrammer releases a mainstream skin care brand which is not lined with a luxury skin care, would you still be considered to employ this Instagrammer for a sponsorship?</i></p> <p>First of all, if brands are conflicting with each other, then I would not choose the Instagrammer. That's why our contract with Agne Gilyte states that SENSAI is not going to be recommended by any other Instagrammer and she won't be working with any other skin care brand. So I would really think about that.</p>
33	1:26:07.3 - 1:30:03.9	<p><i>73. How does the similarity between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of the sponsor brand? You can also think about different product types: under eye cream and face cream.</i></p> <p>It's still the same skin care so I would really think before making a decision.</p> <p><i>What are the reasons?</i></p> <p>Because what followers would think when one day you claim that you're obsessed by one skin care brand and the next day you would praise another skin care brand. Then I would not understand what is the truth and this is why we are making sure the Instagrammers we employ are not working with other skin care brands. Otherwise, the harm would be done not only for my brand but for the other too. It is especially relevant for skin care brands to consider that because, with cosmetics, you can use mascara of one brand and lipstick from the other. But with skin care it is different. In order to get the best result, very often it is very important to use a combination of the same brand products. As it is the case with SENSAI products. Also, currently in Lithuania, there are a lot of Instagrammers that are very hard to employ. One of my colleagues wanted to advertise Mexx perfume and she was struggling to find anyone who would be willing to do it. It shows that Instagrammers are also taking care of their own reputation and think that these mass market perfume can damage their reputation. Maybe they have already promoted Chanel or a niche perfume brand which is obviously not similar to mass production and thus don't want suddenly state that Mexx perfume is their "this summer top" perfume.</p>

7.3 RB3

Line	Timespan	Content
1	2:48.6 - 4:20.4	<p><i>1,2 - When Instagrammers are more trustworthy/ honest/ believable, are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Definitely. We actually talked about it the other day at the office, that a lot of Instagrammers or bloggers or social media influencers, they became popular by doing something that was very true to them. And then they want to stay on top, so they continue building on that, and then it starts to wear out because they found some gimmick that was fun, people recognized, it was fun for a year, and then they had to do something new. And then it starts to feel like now they are just doing it because they want to keep their fame. And that starts to be not so honest. But when they started, it was very honest. So if you can get on the wave from the beginning, it feels more natural and it's ultimately more relevant. So it's not just whether an Instagrammer is honest about the product, it's whether they're honest about what they're actually doing on-line. I think you want the nail to be there when they are in the honest period of getting big.</p>
2	4:20.4 - 5:29.5	<p><i>3,4 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more trustworthy, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more trustworthiness? Why?</i></p> <p>It depends very much because there are some that have a brand because they want to expand to doing all kinds of things, and that often doesn't work. But if there is an Instagrammer that was famous for her craft beforehand, and got famous for that, and then launched the brand, it becomes very trustworthy. So if you are a stylist beforehand, you have won a competition or something, you make good videos about some styling tips, and then you launch a brand, it's very honest. They deserved it, they worked hard to get to that point. But if you are on paradise hotel, like to do some beauty there, and then suddenly have your own brand, it's more like you're trying to benefit from the whole situation.</p> <p>It's not just what they talk about, it's what their background is. Like what is their reason to talk about it. Do they have any competence, skills, that they are better off talking about? Then it starts to be more trustworthy.</p> <p><i>R: So it's not only what they were communicating about, but also what their interest was before they launched a brand?</i></p> <p>Yes, because if you are an educated stylist who works for these companies, and then you launch a brand. And on the other side, you made a funny video, you got popular, you did an "Ask me" blog, whatever. And then you launched a brand because you are interested in beauty. It's not the same.</p> <p><i>R: Ok, so there is a difference also in your knowledge, in the actual knowledge?</i></p> <p>But I think this is more in terms of, if they have their own brand, how they are going to be more successful. We are also discussing if we should find an Instagrammer who wants to launch a brand with us, or if we should launch a brand, we shouldn't have them push. So it's a bit different who you will look for, because if you have a brand that wants to push, then maybe we can use both. But if you want to launch with an Instagrammer, it would more be someone that had a background, that can actually develop one.</p>

3	5:29.5 - 10:00.1	<p>5,6 - Do you think that increased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? Why?</p> <p>I think there are two types of trustworthiness in this. Now I've talked about the competence within the field, but there's also the reason why you're doing it. Like Andrea Rudolf of Rudolf Care, we're not working with her, she has her own brand, she was a TV host, radio host, feminist that got mad about some maternity rules. She figured out that she had a lot of bad chemicals in her body because of all these beauty products, so she decided to start her own brand. So she had no skill, you know, whatever, to actually launch a beauty brand. But she had a reason why to do it - so you can also trust that reason. Then it's another matter whether she can actually make it luxurious.</p> <p><i>R: Do you think this kind of trustworthiness brings her recommendations also more relevance? Or customers would be more interested in that product that she launched, just because they know why it came out.</i></p> <p>Yes, I think that is definitely the reason why it works, it's because she had that very good reason that people trust. "Ok, so your products are also free of all these chemicals because that's why you started it, we really trust you now". So I think trustworthiness is so important if you want to launch a successful brand and become big. But trustworthiness can be two different things. It can be why you launch it, but it can be the skill you have behind, so you trust that the products are actually also good.</p>
4	10:00.1 - 15:50.8	<p>7,8 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes their recommendations seem more believable or less believable? Why?</p> <p>I see a lot what we do as companies to use them, and I think that there's a big difference, because it's easy to see when there's a company involved. It's very easy to see that now Unilever is sponsoring this with Neutral.</p> <p><i>K: Because of the 'sponsored' tag that they have to add?</i></p> <p>Or just visuals, or how the creative is being developed. It's quite easy for people to see that ok here is something that has been involved with a company. And it's never as good as an entrepreneurial Instagrammers. So I think when we actually give products to Instagrammers, bloggers, they usually use multiple social media channels. They're very good at trying to develop their own style, so whenever we send a product to them, they are very good at taking that sometimes ugly product and putting it into their setting to make it beautiful. It's their visuals, it's their way of communicating, it's them explaining their situation. So I think they are very... I don't know if they are in touch with their target group, but if we believe their target group are following them because they are in touch with them, it makes sense. So I think what they are good at is turning the promotion of products and brands into very specific relevance for a little group of people. Whereas we as a big company, often goes for the average customer. The company is bigger, and and Instagrammer is smaller. But at some point, an Instagrammer probably also becomes so big that they also talk to the average.</p> <p><i>R: So does that thing, having their own style and portraying it, gives them trustworthiness?</i></p> <p>Yes, because if you are starting as an Entrepreneurial Instagrammer, now I'm just thinking about the ones that have 1k to 5k followers, it's so few, that you're very much in touch with them, they answer every question that the followers ask, they do it very personally. As a big brand, we have customer service answering those questions. Not even the one that works with the brands. So.. it's a trustworthiness that, you know, the person is right there, to answer all the questions, to explain the beliefs, it's not just a tagline with seven words when they present it it's a whole story about the product. So they have another way of doing it that seems very trustworthy.</p> <p>9 - Can you recall an example of a post or other aspects of Instagram where you noticed that?</p> <p>I know we have one in Germany, where we actually launched a brand with an Instagrammer, but I didn't see the post, I just saw some visuals. It was very clear that it was just her, and it was completely odd, and it would never have gone through a Unilever process ever. Because the products, you know, everything just seems like... but she did everything.</p> <p><i>K: So she made it work?</i></p> <p>Yeah. And she did the creative for her own product as I understand. Unilever just supported everything, made the products and so on. But usually, there would be so many people involved that you often have to compromise so no one gets what they want. And as an Entrepreneurial Instagrammer, if you do the design, you get exactly what you want.</p>
5	15:50.8 - 18:12.4	<p>10, 11 - When Instagrammers have more expertise (about products or industry), are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</p> <p>Yes, a 100%, that is the most important factor when establishing a partnership or something that has to fit together. It's not the only way you can have a fit between two things, but I believe it's the most important criteria for having it. I think this very much relates to, I have a background in sponsorships, and when you, for example, see a betting company and sports team partnering up together, it makes sense. Because they have expertise in football, handball, or whatever they're sponsoring - it makes sense. Then you also have a bank - where is the fit? You don't see it, but banks have been there so many years that it's just common. So there may also be other things that make the partnership good. But you will always say that betting companies, football shoe companies, they have expertise, and doing this makes sense. So in that way, it also relates to Instagrammers and beauty. If you have expertise in what you're doing, it makes so much more sense.</p> <p>And then you can always say that there is someone more successful doing something different, but that could be starting by a gimmick. Sometimes it's not the music song that is really the best written and produced, sometimes it's just the more fun one that got viral. Otherwise, it's expertise that you really have to look for.</p>
6	18:12.4 - 20:26.8	<p>12,13 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands have more expertise, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand make them seem like they have more expertise? Why?</p> <p>Well actually, yeah, you could say that it works both ways, so if you're a stylist and then you launch a brand, the brand helps you look like a better stylist. In that way, it can work both ways, but I think for launching a brand, often you have to go the other way around.</p> <p><i>K: How do you think that happens, that when you launch let's say a clothing line, it makes you look like a better stylist?</i></p> <p>Because if you show all the videos, that you are styling this person, putting the hair like this, finding this clothing, if you also have your own company or brand that is selling these kinds of things, it says: "Oh ok, you are also pretty good at this", because otherwise you couldn't establish the company and have the right trends, and so on. So I think it's a positive effect that will come, but I think it's more going from expertise to launching a brand than starting a brand and then becoming an expert. I think for Rudolf Care, it actually went the other way. She started with: I want to have a product that is ecological, that is without all the bad chemicals, that is still luxurious: How come there is no such product? And then she launched a brand, figured out all these things, and now she's known as being an expert in skincare. So that is the opposite of my claim here, but it's always like that, it's not like you can only do it in one way. I'm just saying that in 80% of the cases expertise will be the reason that you are trustworthy, that you can launch a brand.</p>
7	20:26.7 - 22:27.9	<p>14, 15 - Do you think that increased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant?</p> <p>Yes, but there is always a tipping point. So I think people are getting more and more tired of seeing Instagrammers sponsoring products all the time. Either way, if it's their own or if it's from other companies. So at some point it just gets less effective - it's still effective, but it's less effective. If you have an Instagrammer who only posts 1 or 2 times a month about this, I think it's very relevant because then the expertise justifies that now they finally</p>

		<p>have something to promote and share the world. But if they share it two times a week? It's not because of your expertise, it's because you have to run this business.</p> <p><i>R: But you kind of agree that there's a correlation between the relevance of recommendations and increased expertise? So when you get this increased expertise, you are able to produce more relevant recommendations, it's just a matter of how frequent?</i></p> <p>Yes, and I think it goes back to the fit. The fit means that if you post this and you have expertise, it's a high fit and therefore it works good. So definitely. It's just, I think what happens is that people get greedy and then they push it so much that their fit wears out.</p>
8	22:27.9 - 23:52.5	<p><i>16 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that shows more expertise?</i></p> <p>I don't have someone that has launched their own brand, but we do have someone that we supply with products, it was an aluminum free deodorant. What was quite interesting is that we found some that had actually posted about this three years ago, and then continuously put a few comments in, without actually promoting other products - it was kind of "Remember, aluminum is not good". So when we came with this, they were actually pretty excited about it, it was really relevant for them. I don't know if they had expertise, but at least they had been talking about this for so many years that the follower group found them as experts in talking about this manner. They trusted that they really had expertise in this. So actually just the fact that they continuously talked about the same thing gave them some expertise.</p>
9	23:52.5 - 27:52.4	<p><i>18, 19 - When Instagrammers are more attractive, are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>I think it depends, you really need to understand what context it is in. It's also what kind of attractiveness? It could be the luxurious high end life, but it could also be "I'm doing good in my community, I'm doing volunteer work". This is also attractive for a lot of people, to have that life. So you cannot launch a brand that is luxurious in this wrong group, and you cannot take a not luxurious product and go with them. So, the context is I think what matters here.</p> <p><i>R: We can take both examples, so when the attractiveness is related with luxurious look, and then when it's more related with personal values.</i></p> <p>Those are two contexts, but it also depends on what they are promoting, if it's a sponsored product or if it's their own brand. So it very much depends on how they want to develop that because you shouldn't make a 1000 DKK perfume or high heels if you're going to launch it in a mom community. But if you are in the luxurious end, it definitely makes sense because then, to start off a brand, if it's a new Entrepreneurial Instagrammer that wants to start a brand, it's actually the kick-off to get the brands launched. And also if you're a company that wants to sponsor these Instagrammers, you have to look for where you actually want to go with your brand - so it's more an association part.</p> <p><i>R: Ok, so when the association is correct, the fit, then you would say that relevance...?[increases]</i></p> <p>Definitely, definitely. If you have this small community, let's call it that, and you have everyday products, it makes so much sense, because if you sell it in a supermarket, there are also beauty products, they go to the supermarket and buy, that's their everyday life, they're an everyday person that is attractive that also goes to the supermarket. You want to do the same. Definitely, that works. I would say still, of the criteria we are talking about it's a less important criteria, but it's not that it's not important. It's just that if you have this, but you don't have trustworthiness, the expertise, the fit and so on, it doesn't matter. But if you have trustworthiness, if you have expertise and so on, I think it will still have a little effect even though the attractiveness thing is kind of off.</p>
10	27:52.4 - 33:10.2	<p><i>20, 21 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more attractive, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand make them seem like they are more attractive? Why?</i></p> <p>Mostly yes, but I have also seen bad examples. Yes, when you have a brand that becomes successful in that way, maybe it's a personal thing, but in general, people like to see successful people. That is what the news talks about and so on. That is more attractive, you also want to start your own beauty brand if you could, so of course, that seems more attractive. But you know, about all these Instagrammers and haters and so on, it can also have the other effect, so if you try to do something you definitely don't have any expertise in, you're not trustworthy because it's clear for a lot of people that you do this just to be famous, to have business, and not to help anyone. I think the purpose, the reason why you're doing it is so important for a lot of people. If you cannot explain that without just saying 'I want to be famous', then it can have a very negative effect. And with all these new sites where you can make your own clothing line, or make your own perfume or something and then put your own label on and then sell it on a website, but they are posting it on Instagram to get all the followers to go to a website, it seems more... How can you say it? It actually makes the person less attractive because the person is making a fool of themselves. When it becomes clear that now you're just trying to do this, but you're definitely not succeeding in it.</p> <p><i>R: And you don't really care.</i></p> <p>Yeah.</p> <p><i>K: So they are under scrutiny for this to be very genuine, and then it can make them more attractive.</i></p> <p>It's like when you see someone that can't sing but really believes he or she can sing and goes to an audition. And then you're just laughing at them, but they don't really know why, because they have heard from two friends that they can sing. But I mean, these are not the serious EI, they are just wannabees. I think I see more of these because it becomes so easy to make your own brands, not just in beauty, now the big thing is craft beer where you make your own beer and your own label, you just have to put in these ingredients. You design your own shoes with Nike, you do all these things. And it's also in beauty. And it becomes easier for people to start beauty brands with themselves. Often you use your own name as the brand, and that is a difficult thing, because if you don't have a very strong name, or attractiveness or expertise if you don't have a reason why you're starting except that you want to earn money, I think it also falls apart.</p> <p><i>R: So do you think... you just said that nowadays people use their own kind of name in order to produce stuff and it's getting more and more common to see these products launched. Would you say they are kind of using their popularity and kind of celebrity?</i></p> <p>Yes, because if you don't use your own name but you use a brand name, then often you have a clear plan of what you're going to do, that you want to start this company yourself or with some friends, and then you create an Instagram of that, and that's not on your person, but on your brand, so it's more a classic brand thing. And I think that is a 50/50...some work and some don't work. I don't think that is different from not using Instagram. But if you use your own name, it's not like "Now I want to launch a brand, so I will make myself popular on Instagram". It's like "I'm on Instagram, me personally, I post these kinds of things, suddenly I become popular, what can I do now...?". And some people are just no-names, regular people that do something and then get a lot of followers, and others are people going to the fashion week because they're in the industry, working for brands, and then decided "Now I want to do my own". And that's a different situation.</p>
11	33:14.4 - 35:06.7	<p><i>22, 23 - Do you think that increased attractiveness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>Yes. All these things are having a positive effect, it's just to what extent you have this fit, and if it's enough. So if you're trustworthy, if you have expertise, if you're attractive, all these kinds of things, you have a good base of being successful with the brand you want to launch.</p>

		Then, of course, the product also has to work and you have to be good at business and so on. But if you take one of these things out, you're less likely to succeed. Not just because it's one of them is taken out, it's also because they have an effect on each other. So because you have expertise, you're more trustworthy, but because you were attractive before, that makes you trustworthy. Because you're trustworthy, you're also more attractive. It works both ways, so I don't think it's those three things that equal a 100%, I think it equals even more. I think it's a multiplicative effect in some sense, that when you're really strong in each parameter, you become more of each, so to say.
12	35:06.7 - 37:11.6	<p>24 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more attractive?</p> <p>They show their personal life, behind the scenes. And I think that is the one single most important thing, that you can actually see that this is not an agent uploading a Facebook post or a Twitter post, you see pictures, you see videos, you hear her sound, and you often see it in hotel rooms or home or in a grass field, or in a laboratory. You feel much more connected. So when Instagrammers are very good at showing the daily life they have. And also, showing it a lot. So even though I personally get annoyed when I see 20 Instagram stories from the same person, it has an effect. Because you truly feel like you follow this person through their life. So this is the trustworthiness, you trust that this is actually the person saying what they want to. The next thing is what they show, if that is someplace you want to be, backstage at the Fashion Week that is going on now, or that they are doing this design in the design studio, I would also want to be there. And if that is actually the situation, then you also have some expertise, because you're showing that you're actually part of developing these things. Then there are other situations, you're sitting on a boat, good weather, and drinking wine, people also love that, that makes you attractive for certain groups.</p>
13	37:25.1 - 40:49.4	<p>26, 27 - When Instagrammers are more respected (admired), are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</p> <p>Yes, and I think it refers back to what I talked about earlier if you are a no-name trying to do something off, and so on, you make a fool of yourself. And yes, people follow you, but it's because they want to laugh, not because they think it's nice. I saw the other day there was this TV documentary about four influencers. I think it's a bit difficult just saying Instagrammers because often they need to be aware of most medias. One of them, I think made sense. She wanted to work in this high-end industry, she promoted a lot of stuff, beauty stuff, but she was aware of the situation. She was breaking up with her boyfriend, you saw all that, but she was talking very honestly about it. So you felt you get a closer connection to her even though she lived a different life. You kind of respect her on her premise. And then you saw some other people that were talking rubbish, like how hard it's going to be, and they actually use 2 hours every day to take this picture, and so on. And they feel like this is hard work, everyone I know also works 8 hours a day, so... it's not hard work that you have to work 8 hours to take a good picture. That's your job. And... I also think it's because some of them are very young. But I think these kind of things, for a lot of people, it's actually giving them less respect. For some people, it convinces because they don't understand, so some people just like the way they work and talk and all these things. But they need to be more realistic in their life around Instagram, that not everything is about Instagram all the time. But anyway, it was just an example that personally I have a difference in who I respect and who I don't, and that will definitely have an effect when I want to follow an Instagrammer or not, and then you know, that's where you have to see it. And then when you're following someone, you're usually also more likely to be influenced by what they recommend.</p>
14	40:49.4 - 43:14.1	<p>28, 29 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more respected, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand make them seem like they are more respected? Why?</p> <p>It again depends on what kind of brand it is. Because it's quite easy to launch something rubbish because you found a t-shirt store where you can print your own logo and now you're set up. And if you're not in a position where you have the expertise, or the background, or the reason why, then it's easy to make fun memes of you, and that's not a good thing. Because some are just so focused on "I want to have my own brand". But if you have all these other things and you can tell a story, that you actually went to Portugal to look at this manufacture, and you found this perfect pants, and now we have it for you guys. Then it makes sense. And then because you have this brand, then you start to get this respect because there's actually some work behind it. I think storytelling of launching your brand, and why you have the brand is very important. And maybe it's also a generational thing, or youth thing, the reason why explains so much for a lot of people. You can also disagree on "I don't think this is a good product, I don't like it" and so on, but you cannot disagree on why this person chose to do it. So if the person is, Rudolf again, she was pregnant, she figured out she wanted to have other products because she loves skincare and personal care products, well you cannot disagree on her reason to do it. You can disagree on if the products are good or not, but if you have someone that is both aspiring to be an actor, singer, celebrity and so on, and also have own brand, then it's easy to say: "Oh well it doesn't work that way. You don't have a reason to have this".</p>
15	43:14.1 - 46:35.3	<p>30,31 - Do you think that increased respect of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? Why?</p> <p>Yes, not in the beauty, but I have someone I actually went to school with, so I know him from there, but we are connected on Instagram and LinkedIn and so on, he started this subscription order where you can order wine, and everyone has followed the whole story. So first, he bought some wine and sold it to some friends, he bought it in bulk and sold many years ago. Then he started his own little restaurant or bar, where you can order some food and wine, and then he made some interior things. Everything small, it's successful, you know, not big things... But that has led to now they are ready to make this subscription box. And then there is a lot of promotion on that, he didn't just start with "I want to sell wine". You have the whole background here, he knows who to contact to find the cheap wine, he knows what is good wine, what is a good price, all these kinds of things. So now he started this, and I'm not that big a fan of wine, but I consider actually being part of it to support him, just because of that. And I think I'm not so much into beauty, even though I work with it, I'm not engaged with the products in that way. But I think it's the similarity here, so if I was actually using a cream every day, then I would be more... you have to have the need for it before actually considering buying it, but if you are buying another drink, then you would definitely consider buying that wine from the one you follow that has this storyline. And I think the storyline here actually connects a lot of thoughts because maybe he's not the biggest expert in wine, but he's some kind of expert. He's very trustworthy in what he does, I've seen that over the years, it's kind of attractive for me, I had started my own companies before, I would like to do it again if I find the right thing I want to do. And I see he's always been working with fine wine if I have something I really like and it's my hobby I would also like to start that, so that is also attractive for me. So, all these things combined, I'm more likely to actually support him also.</p>
16	46:35.3 - 50:20.8	<p>32. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more respected?</p> <p>I suppose nothing more...</p> <p>R: Maybe working as a brand, and thinking about your target group, followers..?</p> <p>I think it's again, a bit context dependent, but I think what a lot of new companies or companies, in general, could benefit from is to become more open. And it's not just...maybe that would wear out if everyone did the same, so maybe it's just because it's a new way of actually doing business...What I mean by open is that you are not doing like everyone else, you maybe show exactly what you earn this month, you show exactly how much these</p>

		<p>products cost, but explain why they have to pay a premium because this is the way the company can develop. You let people become more proud of the company, to support the growth of the company because especially in the beginning, you have a lot of fans of the company, the first movers, that want to see it succeed. So in that way, I mean, it is some personal boundaries to jump over, and if you're really ready to say "Oh, I've earned this much a month" or however you want to do it. But this kind of transparency and openness could be a competitive advantage for a lot of people or brands if they're there to do it. I think you see it more in like social economy companies, and these where you have a limit, everyone can earn maximum this and this, and we support, a 100% of our profits to charity and so on. So these kinds of new approaches, I don't know if it's just for Instagrammers, it was just a way to open up. One thing is storytelling, the whole process up to launching and having a brand, but a year in, what kind of storytelling can you do there? It could be that you have all these issues. I know you, a 100 people, you have all of this, but see the targets down, you can show that on Instagram. We simply cannot send it to you. Instead of sending an email saying "We are working the very best we can". So this kind of new transparency, it fits very well on Instagram, whereas on a company website or Facebook it's not the same. It becomes very corporate.</p>
17	50:20.8 - 56:04.6	<p>34,35 - <i>When Instagrammers are more similar to followers (peers), are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</i></p> <p>I don't think so, but again it depends on the context. Because the fact that you're very different can give you different thoughts, so you know, diversity is often good, and in this case, such kind of diversity can actually be inspiring. Like seeing someone that is completely different from you. Someone that chooses to have this brand where, you know, they don't have an office, they work around the whole world and they show that off. I'm nothing like that - I work in Denmark in my 8 to 6 job, that's it. But that can also be attractive, it's just not similar to how I live. And I also think there has to be some kind of "wow!" factor, and if the person is very similar to me, it can have a bit of... not negative effect, but it's not as positive as it could be. If I follow an Instagrammer that is living close by me, a very similar life to me, that might be good because I get a lot of inspiration around the area, so "Ok, this brunch place is life, I should also go there". And they are living the same life as me, I know I can also be inspired by these things. My brother is living the same life as me, so what he does I probably also want to do. That way is good. But, trying something new, I think similarity is a negative thing.</p> <p>K: <i>You mentioned the "wow" factor..?</i></p> <p>Yeah, because I don't think my brother is "wow", you know? Not to say it in a bad way. And I don't think the blogger or the Instagrammer that lives in my area I follow is "wow". They live in a similar place, they have a kid, you know, but it's not "wow". I don't know if I think someone living in Sweden, or this kind of life is "wow", it's just "wow, that's different" to what I know. I see something different. I have been to Street Food here in Copenhagen, but I haven't been to Street Food in Mexico. And that could be a very regular life that person lives in Mexico, it's just different. So I think it's more that - it's not "wow, it's s more", it can also be...</p> <p>Yesterday I read something, it was just here in Denmark, it was like "He could have the welfare system and get an apartment, but he didn't because it seems more attractive to just pursue an easy life". It's very different, you know, I like that I can be a little inspired of it, maybe. I don't want to not have an apartment and live on the street, but that's different. So I think that similarity is very difficult to put in a place to say if it's negative or not, it so much depends on what you're actually trying to communicate. Let's say in the mom community, similarity seems kind of good. Ok, it's this easy to just make this little change in your life. It's this easy to put your hair up like this everyday because this person also has 3 kids and a regular life.</p> <p>R: <i>So would you say then that similarity is still relevant, but there should be also this aspirational aspect within these Instagrammers that would make you want to follow them?</i></p> <p>Yes, but I would actually say that dissimilarity can also be a reason why you follow. And the aspirational...dissimilarity can be both aspirational, but it can also be the other way. I don't want this, but wow, that's interesting. I want to support that, I just don't want to live this kind of life. I think that is more context dependent, but in a way that you have to be able to relate to it, you need to have some kind of similarity, but you can still relate to something that is dissimilar to you, but it might be difficult if it's too extreme.</p>
18	56:04.6 - 57:55.0	<p>36,37 - <i>Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more or less similar to followers, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are less or more similar to followers? Why?</i></p> <p>It depends on the followers they have. Because the fact that you have your own brand is not similar to the regular group, but if your group of people that are following you are inspired of being yourself, being entrepreneurial, how you can do small things to make things better in life, these kind of things, then you know, in a broader sense you have similarity. And I think in that way, it makes sense. So, yeah. My friend that has this wine company now, I don't have a company myself, but I have the same feeling that I could do that, or I could do something entrepreneurial in some way. So in a sense, we are a bit similar here and there, I can relate more to it.</p> <p>K: <i>What if you thought about beauty Instagrammers? And let's say a follower typically is just a consuming individual, right?</i></p> <p>Yeah. The fact that the Instagrammer has a brand is, you know, very different. But if you as a follower want to experiment with a lot of things, and this Instagrammer shows a lot of experiments, "Ok, now we try to experiment on how to make this new product", then in a broader sense you have something relative and in that way, I think, it becomes interesting.</p>
19	57:55.0 - 59:14.7	<p>38,39 - <i>Do you think that similarity of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant?</i></p> <p>R: <i>So, let's say, let's take the example of when a girl also is willing to experiment, and...the fact that Instagrammers release the brand does not decrease the similarity between her and followers, but also maybe inspired her and the similarity maybe even increased, because I also want to do something similar. So do you think then this girl will be also more interested in the recommendations that EI does?</i></p> <p>Yes and I think from the Instagrammer's point of view, she has to benefit of that and actually involve people. So you know, this specific case, the way to do it was to get inputs, like "How do you want me to do this next time, should we make this product more like this, or more like this?" Because then you connect a lot more with this similarity. So I think this is the context where you can say similarity is very important for the success of this brand. So that way, yes. it definitely makes sense.</p>
20	59:14.7 - 1:01:13.8	<p>39,40 - <i>Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more similar to followers?</i></p> <p>Just the language they use is I think very important, using words, typing the right way, when corporates try to do it, often...</p> <p>K: <i>It sounds like a robot.</i></p> <p>Yes. And it's like "Ok, you had to translate this from another country". You're not quite getting the essence of it, and as an Instagrammer you also have to be more up to date, so now there's this Drake song, and you have to make this dance, and they can suddenly do the same and make fun of that, and companies will always be two months or two days behind of these ideas. So you're more up to date, it seems more genuine what you upload. Now I said language, it's also the way you post, the way you... there's just this trend of how you... you take pictures this way, and then in 6 months you take pictures in this way. And these pictures are the same that regular people use on their own Instagrams, on their Snapchats, and so on. They are just, they have a broader audience, so they influence both ways. So you know, first it's probably regular people that start doing this, and then you have to earliest, an Entrepreneurial Instagrammer, to take this trend, and then you push it out to a lot more people. It's kind of being very much on trend.</p>

21	1:01:13.8 - 1:02:12.1	<p>42, 43 - When you believe that Instagrammers like and use recommended products more are their recommendations more relevant? Why?</p> <p>Yes, if you feel that they genuinely do that, then definitely. And I think you don't get to a point where it's the same as word of mouth, you will always listen more to a close friend of yours. But the more genuine the Instagrammer is perceived, the more closer you get to exactly the same as word of mouth.</p>
22	1:02:12.1 - 1:03:02.6	<p>44,45 - Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands seem like they use and like the products they recommend more, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they like and use recommended products more? Why?</p> <p>It depends, back to the reason why. The reason why defines if this is genuine or not. If you don't know why they have this brand, it's hard to understand why they promote it that often. If you know that they have this brand for this reason, then it's natural that they promote it this often. But also, if you have a brand you want to push it out there, so that's not genuine. So the storytelling and the reason why, the understanding of why they're doing it, yeah.</p>
23	1:03:02.6 - 1:03:43.9	<p>46,47 - Do you think that difference makes their recommendations more relevant?</p> <p><i>R: So in case...let's put it this way: in case you observed one EI who did everything right with her storytelling, and then you genuinely thing that she likes and uses products which she recommends. Would you then be more interested in her recommendations?</i></p> <p>Yes, I mean, I need to have a relevance for the products in the first place. If I was looking for new jeans, or if I was looking for make-up, yes. Without a doubt.</p>
24	1:03:43.9 - 1:06:21.8	<p>48 - Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general which shows that they more honestly like and use the recommended products?</p> <p>I think it's hard to look and know whether they actually sell it or not. But what seems to be more succesful is when you can back everything up, so when you get this new thing and you see ten other Instagrammers also having the same product and promoting it, it doesn't seem genuine. Then usually it's a campaign - that also has an effect from a company side. But that's not the reason why you try it, so if you have ten Instagrammers to talk talk about the same, I don't know if this works, that's not the reason why they do it, but everyone is talking about it now. This company put a lot of money in it. But I trust this company more - so it's just the same as doing a TV commercial. So it's not as effective as having one single genuine expert talking about but it might have another reason, that this brand thinks that [inaudible], this is just so people know that we came up with a new product.</p> <p><i>R: So would you say it depends on the goal?</i></p> <p>Yes. Very much so. We use it in that way in here, so we know that this half-beauty, half-food blogger, Instagrammer, you know...is that genuine? And so on. Don't know, but they have 50k followers, and we want to talk about this new launch that we are coming up with, and we also have a TV commercial, so we get some consistency around it. And then you know, what works there is maybe the attractiveness, that there's a relevance, they have some expertise, they have talked about this kind of product before, and so on. But not to an extent that we actually benefit a lot off it. And the attractiveness, if we believe that, is working for this Instagrammer. Then, that they also talk about this product, that they actually got invited by this company to talk about this product, it can have an effect later on.</p>
25	1:06:21.8 - 1:10:10.2	<p>50,51 - What motivation do you think Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing their own brand? Why?</p> <p><i>R: We categorize motivation into two groups - one is genuine liking and using, the other one is financial, so it's pretty extreme. [Definition of motivation]</i></p> <p>I think they want to have the genuine, but I don't think everyone is doing it in the best way. Often you can talk a lot about a single product, and how now there's a discount, and so on, and you can do that sometimes, but in general, I think that is devaluating the brand. You should talk a lot more about the overall reason why you should use this product, why you should use this brand, or why this brand exists. Then you're becoming more genuinely focused. The moment you start talking about, and I think that's what most do because they want to be more succesful with the brand, they start talking about external things without them believing it. Cause when you start talking about "Remember, there's sun today, you have to use this product" Yes, they might think in the minute that they're doing it genuinely because you have to do it, but they are doing it in a business sense, not because they do it as a friend to another. They would never say it in that way. And I think you need to have a combination of those two. People are not afraid of listening to external motivation. It just has to be proclaimed like genuine communication.</p> <p><i>K: So you both need to talk about kind of the benefits, from your perspective, and also kind of create the need, like the conditions around using the product?</i></p> <p>Yes, because I think the brand is what sells the products, always. But you also have to talk about the products, or the discounts, or whatever you do sometimes. But again, [inaudible] you can always talk about the brand. It has a good reason, a good story, and that can be more genuine. The moment you start talking about the specific things, you start becoming a salesperson, no matter how you do it. And that is good - that is perfectly good. The idea is just being more creative about it, because when you do a post, like ok, now, it's sun, you have to use these sunglasses because that and that, or you could have, you know, a Q&A live where you say "Well, people, if you have questions for products I would happily talk about a lot of them". And then that becomes a different selling point, but it becomes actually genius, because if you have questions about it, of course, you want to talk about it. So I think brand-wise it's quite easy, most figure it out, because they launched for a reason and it's easy to talk about that reason, but the moment they announce selling it, the more they fall back to the bad tactics. And that's where you have to be really creative.</p>
26	1:10:10.2 - 1:13:48.6	<p>52, 53 - What motivation Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing sponsor brands? Why?</p> <p><i>R: Maybe think about when they endorse sponsor, and when they endorse own brands. Which brand you would more assign to the external motivation?</i></p> <p>In general, if you have your own brand, genuinely, and other brand, sponsor - financially. Just overall. But I think there are a lot of exceptions. So sometimes it can be a brand that you truly know that this person just loves and got the chance to promote. You know, it's like you get your dream job, you get tickets for this concerts of a singer you love, these kinds of things. Then it's clear, you see the post that it becomes genuine motivation. So, again, it depends. And you know, some brands are just so cool and it's hard to be an Instagrammer getting the chance to promote it, you know? They know when they get the chance that it's awesome. But I think today, we see mostly external, because there are so many brands that want to go in this direction and want to push it off, but I think a lot of Instagrammers are becoming good at, and now they're doing this, now they're doing something else, because you have to differentiate. In the beginning, you didn't know it was sponsored or not, now everyone it's sponsored but it's not that bad, because everyone knows it depends on how you do it. And what we at least see is sometimes, we have Dove, for example, and a lot of people love the Dove brand, but don't use the products. But they love to communicate about it, they're honest about it - "Well, I haven't used it for long, but now I've tried</p>

		<p>this, and it actually worked" or "I was a bit skeptical before this, because blah blah blah, but then we got told it was this way, I tried it for this period and it's really good and the best part is this price". So they are very good at communicating honesty. So you trust that yes, they were paid to do it, but their recommendation is true. And it doesn't mean that...let me give another example. So on Netflix, you have to give stars, 1 to 5, but when you give 3 for a chick flick, it doesn't mean that the chick flick is bad, it just means if you have to look overall if this is good or not, of course, it's not the best movie. But I'm in the mood where I want to see this movie, so actually, it's the best right now. So when you go to IMDB, you know, seven for this kind of movie is, you know, the best. And I think it's a bit the same going back here to Instagrammers, that yes, I know that they are not using this every day and I know they were sponsored, and so on, but if I'm looking for this kind of product, it's actually pretty good they were recommending it [inaudible].</p>
27	1:13:48.6 - 1:14:54.3	<p>54 - <i>Do you believe the Instagrammer likes and uses both their own and sponsor brands equally?</i></p> <p>Yeah, depends on what brands. Some they just, you know... If you've started your own clothing line but you completely admire another major Louis Vuitton brand or something, you know, getting the chance for that [the chance to promote that] would be awesome for some people. Also for their own business - because they can associate together, so to some extent, yes. But when they feel they have a luxury brand and they promote a less luxury brand, they're doing it for the money. I don't think they are feeling that good about it. So, people are becoming more and more aware about this.</p>
28	1:14:54.3 - 1:17:00.1	<p>55, 56 - <i>Does the presence of own brand in the profile make sponsored endorsements seem mainly financially motivated? Why?</i></p> <p>If it's the same category, yes. If it's complementary or not the same category, no. Then it seems natural. So if it's a make-up brand, but this company is glasses, it makes sense. You have to fit these two together, then it actually becomes a perfect match. But if it's a make-up brand, and she has a make-up brand, it seems odd, and I would also not understand always why, that they would actually promote it.</p> <p>R: <i>So it depends on a category, on a product category?</i></p> <p>Yeah. It could also be, you know, the same category but a collaboration or something, then it starts to make more sense.</p> <p>R: <i>Collaboration? In what way?</i></p> <p>I'm not sure, but you've seen IKEA and HAY? So HAY makes luxury, chic furniture in a single range, for a single period, for IKEA.</p> <p>R: <i>Ah okay...so like a certain, special...collaboration, which is still the same category, just a one time thing maybe?</i></p> <p>It could be something [inaudible] about self-esteem, and have these programmes, or could it be that [inaudible] is part of something that an Entrepreneurial Instagrammer has, but also wants to do kind of the same, and then go together and have a bigger purpose with it.</p>
29	1:17:00.0 - 1:21:01.9	<p>57 - <i>Does that negatively affect the effectiveness of sponsor endorsements?</i></p> <p>R: <i>When you see for example... so let's take: there's own, there's sponsor, and there is a collaboration that we just talked about. So does that negatively affect the effectiveness of sponsor endorsements, or positively?</i></p> <p>If there is a fit and a reason, and expertise while they are together, it is positive. And I think it's not just for beauty or Instagrammers, it's for everything. Whenever you have two brands, you have one smaller channel to go out, that have much more awareness about everything. And if there's a reason that they go together, it seems obvious for everyone. But it's about finding that right reason to actually go together and often companies they start with the channels, thinking "Ok, this is an Instagrammer, high reach, we want to go out there". And then they start to figure out the collaboration, and time, and creativity, and so on. It's not always a good fit, and then we see some bad examples. But when it starts in the other way, like "Oh, we need this kind of Instagrammer for this collaboration, let's see if we can find one". If you're then able to find one, then it can be good.</p> <p>R: <i>And in the example that you mentioned before, that if it's two make-up brands...so maybe I'll ask in this way. When the effect would be negative, to sponsor endorsements, how do own and sponsor brands need to be related, how different or how similar should they be...?</i></p> <p>I mean, but then it's not a collaboration, then it's not a collaboration, then I think it's just a company that wants to be promoted by an Instagrammer. And this Instagrammer already has their own brand that's the same, but it has to be the same category. Because I think the new category is quite clever. Because if you are a clothes company but you don't have hats, and this company have hats - it makes sense. But if you both only sell shoes, it seems kind of odd that you promote each other. Then it has to be in a very creative way, and a reason why you do it. So if it's exactly the same category, then I don't have any good examples of how that went about. Then it should be about, that there was a bigger idea, that you know now you see Zara and H&M and these kinds of companies go together because they want to fight child labor. You know? Then it makes sense that you go together. And it would be the same here that you have this very influential Instagrammer in Denmark, that can promote some new program, that they want to do infused, so therefore these two big companies go together.</p> <p>K: <i>So for some innovations or some projects?</i></p> <p>Yeah. It could be, but often I think it's difficult to make these collaborations because you will always, as a company, you will always think "They wouldn't give us extra. They wouldn't promote this extra, because they have their own". So it's more you know, it would probably often be something on the side, that ok, now we do something, a new company, association, or we do some PR stunt, but together.</p> <p>57 - Have you experienced or heard of such a situation happening?</p> <p>R: <i>Do you have a good example of that happening? Or maybe a bad one. Also works.</i></p> <p>Not with Instagrammers. Not at top-of-mind.</p>
30	1:21:01.9 - 1:22:48.1	<p>58, 59 skipped.</p> <p>60, 61 - <i>When you think of Instagrammers who have their own brands, do you think endorsements of own brand stand out more than endorsements of sponsor brands Why?</i></p> <p>So if I compare two? I don't think there is a big difference, because... I cannot top-of-mind think of one Instagrammer. But if you have one with own brand, and someone that promotes, I don't think there is a big difference. There is a bigger difference in the red thread, the one with the own brand. Because they talk about the same all the time, you know, they have a base that they can talk about. Here, one day it's about shoes, the other day it's about HBO, the third day it's about... food. So it's less red thread, but you know, the single posts. The Instagram promoters, they are trying their best to make that very creative themselves. So I don't think the creatives are that different.</p>
31	1:22:48.1 - 1:28:29.3	<p>62, 63 - <i>Do you think endorsements of sponsor brand are as much associated with such Instagrammers as endorsements of own brand are? Why?</i></p> <p>Yeah, I mean, definitely, the own brand fits better with that Instagrammer. But I think it's because a lot of brands don't dare to commit to long-term agreements with Instagrammers. I think that's the main issue, because what happens everytime is that you have some products, you send it out, that's it. Or you make this little campaign for this whole month. There is very few that dare to do it for longer periods, and I know a lot of competitors is doing, L'Oreal and Nicky, she has a background as a stylist and so on, she's number one, she's the one to take. I think they paid a lot and they did a bit more</p>

		<p>long term and they used her also on banners online, they use it in stores now. We're also thinking about using Instagrammers in stores in that way. It has to be more of that, before you associate it together.</p> <p><i>R: So you said long collaborations. So what does it give, that makes you associate this brand with an Instagrammer, a longer association, how does it work?</i></p> <p>I think it's just branding continuity. It's normal criteria. I remember, Skoda, the car company, has been sponsoring ice hockey world cup for 20 or 30 years. It doesn't make sense - but anyway, no one following ice hockey could imagine them not being a sponsor. So just because it is a long term agreement, it's an association.</p> <p><i>K: Can I ask a small off-topic question? I think it would be interesting for us as well. When you say that companies are not really willing to step into a long term collaboration with an Instagrammer, or an Influencer in general. Do you think there is a reason for that? Because we see that they are very much willing to step into long term campaigns with normal celebrities, right? And you could argue that the level of fame or recognizability is comparable at this point.</i></p> <p>Comparable only to some extent. Because with a celebrity you've still got some different things, with a celebrity I think there's an assumption that they are actually good at something, they are an actor, that's what they do for a living.</p> <p><i>K: Mhm, they have a profession...</i></p> <p>And an Instagrammer, that's it. Let me go a bit off-topic because I actually think this is more, what an Instagrammer in general should be aware of. They start, they have a good concept, you know, they have this one idea that they make these kind of videos, it gets very popular...after a year, ah, come with something new. And then they try to reinvent something new, and for some it works, for a lot it doesn't work. If you have a background in something, being an Instagrammer is just your secondary thing. You are always an actor, but you also go on Instagram. Instead of just being... So I think that is one important thing for a company, that you don't know where you have this Instagrammer for one year, so it's hard to say you want to do this for five years. You know where you have an actor, more or less. An actor is, you know...these kinds of celebrities, they are more big, they also have a bigger team behind them. It's only the biggest Instagrammers that have a team that big behind them. So it's more controllable I think, for most brands it's hard to give control away.</p> <p><i>K: So in case of a scandal, there is a manager or something, and you think they are more predictable?</i></p> <p>I think that's the first thing that a lot of people talk about, but the other thing is just, can they also help in a year. Maybe not a scandal, but are they as effective in a year, are they as creative, can they continue doing this? So I mean, this is a lot about how you can co-create with an Instagrammer. But, there is an opportunity, but I of course understand why a lot of people here are afraid to do. Such a huge brand, and suddenly you bring an Instagrammer to be the main person you associate it with. But for a lot of new brands, that could be an interesting way to promote. But in general, when someone is building a brand, it's hard to say "Here. Now whatever you do, it's [inaudible] us".</p> <p><i>R: It's risky...</i></p>
32	1:28:29.3 - 1:29:37.7	<p>64, 65 - <i>Would that affect your choice of selecting an Instagrammer who has their own brand to do a sponsorship? Why?</i></p> <p>Actually, if it's complementary, if the area is close, then I would prefer Entrepreneurial, because they understand more of what we're actually about. But I think that is more theoretical. Because it is difficult to find someone that is spot on for this brand you do, and if you find someone that is spot on, often it doesn't really matter if they have their brand or if they are just a promoter, because if you are spot on I think people are better at finding ideas and writing the right things, and more willing to do things.</p>
33	1:29:38.2 - 1:30:50.4	<p>66 - <i>Have you ever experienced endorsements of Instagrammers' own brand being more associated with an Instagrammer than sponsored endorsements? Can you tell us about that?</i></p> <p><i>R: Do you maybe have an example of an Instagrammer, and when you think about her own brand pops into memory. So do you have that kind of example that you know? Or considered for your brand?</i></p> <p>I'm not sure, because now I'm thinking of the products we have here for that category and I don't think...we are more into selling everyday personal care than clothes to the beauty personal care. But also some beauty. I think in that category there are less Instagrammers. So I think it's more beauty, clothes, make-up, so I can't really think of someone right now.</p>
34	1:30:50.4 - 1:32:10.7	<p>67, 68 - <i>What do you think are the specific aspects of posts or on Instagram in general including own brand that make them more preferred?</i></p> <p><i>R: In other words, what do EI do specifically when recommending own brands that makes it more preferred by followers, do they do anything specific first of all?</i></p> <p>I don't think it's one post that defines this, I think it's the range of posts they do, because they come a bit more "behind the scenes". So, everyone can show the final product of something you promote and your own brand. But the [own]brand, the Instagrammer has all the background for it. So you see them open their own boxes, you see them closing their own boxes, you see them design, you see a lot more things, whereas for the other you just see the final product all the time, so you don't get the whole story, just: "Here's the product, buy it" is the reason why. While here - "In two days we are ready with this, tomorrow, are you ready?" You know.</p>
35	1:32:10.7 - 1:34:20.3	<p>69, 70 - <i>When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, do you think there needs to be a common theme between them (brands)? Why?</i></p> <p>Yeah... There has to be, for it to be more effective, there has to be a match in some way. And before I said just the long term agreements means that you can actually have a match. Then it means, that in the beginning you don't have, you're not that effective, but later on you can be more effective. But a match in some way, and I think this is where you have to be very creative. If you don't have a big match, maybe you should not be main partnering, but then maybe you can do some partnering with some product. But then it makes sense, ok, so we have this little thing together. So now we're doing this together. Not saying like "NOW we're suddenly one together". And not two anymore.</p> <p><i>R: So you need somehow to consider how similar your brand is with own brand, and then based on that decide what at most you can do with this Instagrammer, how much you can...</i></p> <p>Yeah, because it could be that you do something for a whole year, big campaign, do this charity fund, and so on, but if your match is so little, it might come off wrong. But if you have a bit match together, then you could do all of these kinds of things. But if you have this little thing, then you could do a lot of things each of you, and then match up sometimes.</p>
36	1:34:20.3 - 1:36:17.1	<p>71, 72 - <i>How important is it to endorse own and sponsor brands similar to each other? Why?</i></p> <p>Again, it doesn't have to be similar brands, it just has to have similar reason to be together. Yeah, so... I think it's that way it has to connect. Of course, often they will be that similar, but... if that is the case, I think this is very much back to the expertise, actually. Expertise and match is probably the most</p>

		<p>correlated things. Because if you are a stylist salon, and you have stylist products, then you're both experts in what you do and you use each other. So suddenly you match together.</p> <p><i>R: Before you mentioned this complementary product category thing. If there's a sponsor brand, that it needs to complement own brand in some way. Then there is a match, kind of, right? So...</i></p> <p>It just makes sense that they sponsor, partner up, and in the same way, if you have this stylist salon organization that are doing some promotion for something specific, and you have this Instagrammer that has some product that is really good [inaudible] trying to promote, then you're just complimenting each other, because you get this campaign out to a lot more people.</p> <p><i>R: So would you then agree that product category also has something to do with this similarity?</i></p> <p>Yes. Because I think expertise has a lot to do with product category. So that is the thing that it goes back to.</p>
37	1:36:17.1 - 1:37:12.0	<p><i>73 - How does the similarity between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of sponsor brand?</i></p> <p>Yeah, it's important, but then again, if it's exactly the same and you know, then it seems odd, because then you don't think it's honest, so why are they actually doing this? To earn money. But the similarity, if it makes sense, if it's complementary or if there's a good reason to go together, then it's really honest. You know, there's expertise, attractiveness, you know, you work in this category and suddenly you can attract other similar big companies. Then it all starts to make sense.</p>
38	1:37:12.0 - 1:38:53.7	<p><i>74, 75 - Would you be more likely to do a sponsorship with an Instagrammer who has a similar brand to the brand you work for? Why?</i></p> <p><i>R: You just mentioned all the cases, so would you say you would consider all these aspects that you said?</i></p> <p>Not if it's a brand similar to ours. So, let me take Dove again. If someone has kind of a similar product, it wouldn't make that much sense. But if someone has something complementary, like Dove is having its moisturizing cream, and the product's actually good when you shave, so maybe a shaving company. Makes sense. Or a beauty salon, then I would, if an Instagrammer had these products, then it would make very good sense.</p> <p><i>R: And then you would consider, probably, working with them?</i></p> <p>Yeah, that's what I said. That often I would actually prefer them because they understand more how to work with a brand. So it's easier to actually make things work. Except if they have a really good reason, matching in all the parameters, then it doesn't really matter, because then you can just feel that if you will make things happen you will make good ideas.</p>
39	1:38:53.6 - 1:40:22.6	<p><i>76, 77 - In what situations do you consider using Instagrammers who have their own brands rather than regular Instagrammers? Please reflect on which type of Instagrammer would be more appropriate for doing a sponsorships or when launching a product in collaboration with an Instagrammer. Why?</i></p> <p>Collaboration. That would be...But here at Unilever, that is difficult, so I'm just talking about a theoretical perspective. If we were geared to be able to make new brands, and so on, collaboration I think is... It's also because there's some news about it, not many have done that. So... you know, imagine that next year you see 20 brands in one category coming in that way. Then it starts losing effect. So I think there is some newness factor in this.</p> <p><i>R: Which would be nice to use, currently.</i></p> <p>Yeah. And I think a lot of companies are not geared to do that, so even if as I'm saying I don't think we at Unilever are geared to do that right now. We have done that in Germany, so we are in some sense, but it just takes longer when you're a collaboration than when you're a small startup.</p>
40	1:40:22.6 - 1:43:17.7	<p><i>78, 79 - 76, 77 - In what situations do you consider using regular Instagrammers rather than regular Instagrammers? Please reflect on which type of Instagrammer would be more appropriate for doing a sponsorships or when launching a product in collaboration with an Instagrammer. Why?</i></p> <p><i>R: So, would you then consider regular Instagrammers more for sponsorships?</i></p> <p>Yes, because the goal is different. The goal is often that now we are having this big launch, we are good at making big launches, so it's nice to be everywhere and get some followers. So it's more kind of this thing. There's no one that really believes that using this Instagrammer you can directly see the sales afterwards. Especially not in our category, where we are still everyday beauty products. I think it's a bit different if you have high end beauty products. Then you would maybe see the effect more directly. But, you know, the reason is you know, when you are in buses, when you are in TV, if you do PR, then it's also a good complementary thing to have - a sponsored post.</p> <p><i>R: So you mentioned product launches - what about products that already exist in the market for some time. Do you still use regular Instagrammers for them? And if yes, in what cases, what are the goals?</i></p> <p>Actually... I mean the goal is, then it's not the product we are going for, then it's the brand. Actually, we have a brand now where the last 2-3 years most talks have been about the business behind it, the numbers, what should the price be, can we increase this [inaudible] and so on. So we have forgotten the brand a bit. And then it's a nice way to, an easier way to come to some regular Instagrammers and get some sponsor posts.</p> <p><i>K: And how does it kind of help to emphasize the brand again? Using that person?</i></p> <p>Then it's more about the brand, so depending on the campaign we build up, that this campaign is interesting for them to be a part of, or if it's a hair range, it could be that we invite to a special day where they get their hair styled and they can tell about our products, so that "Ok, so what they actually do is these kinds of things, this is quite important because, in this weather, your hair is damaged or if you have to go to a new year's party, you can do these kinds of tricks, or use these products" So it's more brand...re-launch in that sense.</p>

7.4 RB4

Line	Timespan	Content
1	0:11.7 - 8:52.5	<p><i>1-2. When Instagrammers are more trustworthy/ honest/ believable, are their recommendations more relevant?</i></p> <p>Yes, when you trust and believe in somebody, you are also much more persuaded by that person. But we are all the time trying to "solve" this dilemma. Some Instagrammers are pickier in what they are recommending, whereas some of them are taking almost everything they are offered. In turn, every day the latter Instagrammers have a lot of different brands to recommend when in the morning they "use" one cream and in the evening they recommending another cream brand. But these Instagrammers with lots of different recommendations have a lot of followers and thus you are getting a very good reach, e.g. Agne Jegaleviciute [a Lithuanian Instagrammer, 188k followers on Instagram], Indre Morkuniene [a Lithuanian Instagrammer, 68.5k followers on Instagram], if talking about Lithuanian Instagrammers. It's very difficult to say but it seems that their influence is very similar. People like to watch Instagrammers who have a lot of followers and who post a lot of different brands, they don't care about whether the products are good or not, they follow them, e.g. Karolina Meschino [a Lithuanian Instagrammer, 184k followers on Instagram] because they every day learn</p>

		<p>something new. Theoretically speaking, they shouldn't trust the mentioned Instagrammers because they recommend brands five times per day. However, the numbers of likes create a good awareness, a lot of people know about that, and when one is standing next to a shelf in a store, it makes the decision process easier, "helps you to choose" the brand. I think that we would put an equal sign in between of trustworthy and not trustworthy Instagrammers. Most often, more trustworthy Instagrammers are also less likable.</p>
2	10:19.4 - 11:47.7	<p><i>3-4. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more trustworthy, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more trustworthiness?</i></p> <p>It's a different category but I would like to talk about Beata Nickolson [a Lithuanian food Instagrammer, 70k followers on Instagram] who has a lot of own brands [products] - ketchup, bread etc. By the way, next month we are launching a limited edition MARGARITA's line [one of the skin care brands the respondent is managing] with her. So she has created a high trustworthiness around herself, she has this high-quality label and everybody knows that with Beata you will not be able to undertake anything of bad quality. For sure, she is one of these people who choose very carefully what to recommend. There were many times when she "closed the doors" to our proposed projects. So there is definitely a high trust around her.</p> <p>Now, when people are talking mainly about themselves and own projects, then you start thinking... you know, we all can talk about ourselves and our projects at its best. For me, it's nice when other people say good words about my projects. But when you talk about your own projects, everyone kind of understands why you talk about them positively. Btw, do you know a brand Glossier? To be honest, I haven't dug into the story so much, but you know that the owner of Glossier was the Vogue Editor and have her own blog and you can subscribe to a newsletter. These newsletters are very interesting because you also receive the reviews of other brands. So for me, this aspect forms trust around this brand because it's nice that they [Glossier team] create the brand and at the same time review other brands in an organic way, meaning that they not only criticise but also give a lot of positive reviews. Compared to one Lithuanian brand called "Kosmetikos DNR" ["Cosmetics DNR"] which is making products and also review other brands in their blog. And they do it more... from that negative perspective, you can feel that it's not completely fair what they say. Because you can see the difference in how they talk about their own products and how they do that with other brands. That's why even if I haven't tried Glossier yet, I already trust the brand and looking forward to buying these products. Also, they had a project on Instagram when they were showing bathroom cabinets, what products people are using. If you would scroll their Instagram feed, you would see that there are a lot of different brands showed and it creates trustworthiness because everyone knows that people are using different products in their daily skin care routine (e.g. Glossier, Vichy, economy and premium products). Very rarely women are buying all the necessary products solely from one brand. Thus, this kind of communication creates trustworthiness because they show not only their own products but also competitive products which is cool.</p>
3	16:08.6 - 19:09.9	<p><i>5-6. Do you think that increased trustworthiness of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>I would say so. For example, if somebody is developing their own brand, it means they are more into the category [e.g. skin care]. If I understood the question correctly, when there is a brand keeper [owner] who also invest time and efforts in educating people because they are interested in the category and products themselves, then there is a higher trustworthiness. For example, talking about Beata Nickolson, people trust her and her created products because she is a food expert, she develops recipes, tries them, together with her husband has a restaurant chain, writes recipe books - so she has a very clear quality mark. Now [when she is launching a collaboration with a skincare brand "Margarita"], for her it will be a new entry to cosmetics but trust me, I would wish for everyone to create products with people like her. She is very particular and knows her quality standards. We were sending her a lot of samples to choose from and she was very responsible in her choices. What does that mean? When she will enter the cosmetics industry, she will be more knowledgeable about cosmetics and her expertise accordingly. Of course, there is a new category for her but she will undertake the perspective of her big family and communicate that in order to take care of the family, you also need to think about your skin care. It will be interesting to see how everything is going to shift for her.</p>
4	19:09.8 - 21:27.3	<p><i>7-8. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes their recommendations seem more believable?</i></p> <p>I think that these entrepreneurial Instagrammers are not only creating products but also educating about them. Because when a regular Instagrammer is recommending a product, they write about products in a pretty superficial manner, i.e. about the flavour and smell. Whereas entrepreneurial Instagrammers are digging a bit more, i.e. they write more about skin, why this product is good, for which skin type, compare with other products.</p>
5	21:27.2 - 25:53.5	<p><i>10-11. When Instagrammers have more expertise (about products or industry), are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>I think that yes, it should be this way. You know it's very difficult, I don't like to generalize a lot and make such conclusions when I don't have numbers to prove [commercial results]. I would say that yes; expertise should influence the relevance of recommendations.</p> <p><i>Do you have any examples, maybe, when you noticed this happening?</i></p> <p>For example, some brands are working with a lot of different influencers and some are choosing individual brand ambassadors who genuinely work with the brands, try to dig into them, make brand reviews, they are consistent in their brand choices and work with maximum 2-3 brands. For our brand "Margarita", we chose Beata Nicholson and focused on her. Beata is also communicating about skin care and here we made an exception because she honestly told us that she is not going to lie that she is using Margarita face creams. She admits that she needs something more for a mature skin, whereas "Margarita" creams have a lighter effect. Having brand ambassadors gives more expertise and trustworthiness from the eyes of "Margarita's" followers. However, I have this big concern about brand ambassadors since the reach is limited to the following of Beata so you are not diversifying your awareness. Are we happy about "Margarita" sales? No, but there are a lot of factors which could possibly affect that, such as new competitors, so it's hard to say what is the major reason. With other brands, we are trying to mix the Instagrammers so half of them are more experts.</p>
6	25:53.5 - 28:34.2	<p><i>12-13. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands have more expertise, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they have more expertise?</i></p> <p>Now I am thinking about clothing, not cosmetics. For example, when I'm thinking about Ramune Pietkauskaitė [a Lithuanian designer] who has her own style and direction, she sounds trustworthy. But a beauty or fashion blogger who reviews a lot of different brands can also be very trustworthy since she can compare different styles. Similarly, might happen with cosmetics. So, as I already mentioned, this loyalty to your brand should be balanced. However, people who are using one brand and are consistent, for me, also seem like having expertise. I value their opinion but, of course, they communicate everything only from their own perspective.</p>

7	28:34.1 - 35:09.8	<p><i>14-15. Do you think that the increased expertise of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>I don't know, it should be a positive correlation between these two things because the more you have the expertise, the more you are trustworthy.</p> <p><i>Maybe you have an example or situation when noticed that happening?</i></p> <p>It's hard to remember. There is this Latvian brand "Madara Cosmetics" and there are 3 sisters who own this brand. They were communicating everything from their own perspective and thus have created a high expertise and has high trustworthiness in Latvia and outside the country. However, when they enter new markets, in opposite as in Latvia, they are mainly using beauty Instagrammers.</p> <p>Do you know "Paula's Choice"? There is this Paula who is active on social media and she created this brand. Once, I have discovered her when was reading an article about Instagrammers' brands, this Paula's Choice was mentioned as a success case. Even from the name of this brand you can guess that before the launch of her own brand, she was Paula who was making choices about different brands and now she presents her own best choice for the consumers - her own brand. [this example was not discussed from the perspective of expertise, rather mentioned as a success story when an Instagrammer launches a successful brand].</p>
8	35:09.8 - 37:17.2	<p><i>16. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that shows more expertise?</i></p> <p>I remember a Lithuanian brand "Uoga Uoga" [natural skin care and natural mineral make-up]. The owners of this brand communicate a lot on social media - what is happening in laboratories, how the products are created etc. So showing the process of production helps you to experience how the products are made. Or allowing the followers to choose a design for the upcoming product, e.g. via Instagram stories, contributes the expertise and trustworthiness a lot. You know, usually corporate brands communicate with a corporate style, rarely integrates people who are working with the brand and rarely show how it is done. Whereas these business people on Instagram put a lot of personality into the communication, they are filming, showing, demonstrating so you [as a follower] experience everything together.</p>
9	37:17.1 - 39:58.6	<p><i>18-19. When Instagrammers are more attractive, are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>Yes, probably. Attractiveness always gives you this... A symbiosis between both, attractiveness and expertise, gives you a lot, especially for beauty brands. When unattractive people talk about beauty products, they are not creating such trustworthiness about brands than attractive people are. For me and probably for most people, it is incomprehensible when, for example, at beauty exhibitions or in any other representative beauty events, you see representatives with acne, looking unattractive. It might sound a bit harsh but this is what beauty business is about, you need to glow, your skin needs to be bright and healthy - you need to represent the philosophy of your brand. So this attractiveness is very important.</p>
10	39:58.5 - 40:57.7	<p><i>20-21. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more attractive, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they are more attractive?</i></p> <p>I don't think so. Statistics show that there are so many regular Instagrammers who bullshit a lot within their posts, share poor quality content and are still very likable and popular, have a lot of followers who comment and like their content. It is so strange to see how these Instagrammers who post so many ads and poor quality content on a daily basis are much more liked and people engage their content 25 times more than with the high-quality content shared by other Instagrammers. Maybe these highly engaging followers are not buying products, I would like to believe this way. But still, at the end of the day, the gained awareness helps the brand a lot.</p>
11	40:57.6 - 42:53.3	<p><i>24. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more attractive?</i></p> <p>There are a lot of different ways, it would be very hard to generalize for me. Some people are showing every detail of their life, some people have certain topics which they post about, more in a structured way and are not bullshitting. I couldn't generalize.</p> <p><i>If you would try to put yourself into the shoes of a follower and imagine yourself scrolling the Instagram's feed, what aspects or what communication makes you change your view about Instagrammers' attractiveness?</i></p> <p>Now I think about Agne Jegaleviciute who has thousands of followers. She is very sincere and open, meaning showing her good and bad sides are not afraid to mock herself. Of course, mock other people. But most probably her openness, realness and sincerity charm others [followers]. And me, personally, I prefer more real pictures than those which are perfect and very "polished/perfect" because they are not even interesting. People are not perfect and they want to follow people who are more real. E.g. Indre Morkuniene [...] is very "polished/perfect", always glowing, looking perfect. However, she is a good copywriter - time to time she admits something tells about her fights with Morkunas [her husband, a famous TV presenter in Lithuania] and etc. So this openness, sincerity and showing that "black side" is something that often makes you more similar to your followers.</p>
12		<p><i>26-27. When Instagrammers are more respected (admired), are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make you more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>It should be like this, if you are asking me, then yes. If I respect a person for their accomplishments and achievements, then, naturally, this trustworthiness and willingness to try and check something are getting higher. I'm answering very generally because for me numbers are the best way to see the answers to these questions.</p> <p><i>So did I understand you correctly that you would be more willing to answer "yes" than "no"?</i></p> <p>Yes, I would say more yes. Though, I just remembered this Lithuanian Instagrammer "Influencia" [a Lithuanian Instagrammer who is mimicking the stereotypical behaviour and communication of Instagrammers]. Yesterday I was listening to the radio about marketing and it was said that, in general, you shouldn't respect him because he is just bullshitting a lot. But his first post was about toilet paper, some kind of joke about using toilet paper. And they said that the sales of that toilet paper increased significantly and "Grite" or another toilet paper brand contacted him and now pay him for the endorsements. So in this case, I'm thinking what trustworthiness we are talking about here... He is a joke but sometimes people take these jokes and a</p>

	<p>not serious content as a real thing and at the moment of standing next to the shelf in a store, you remember that somewhere you saw this product and thus, buy it. So this "Influjiencia" is a guy who is pretending to be a girl - seems like you wouldn't trust this influencer. However, you know that brands are paying him to recommend products which means he is able to affect sales and people like it. You know people [followers] are also need to be segmented. Me, as Ieva Cepone, need respect and trustworthiness and I need that Instagrammers would keep a balance between the content of their own brand and sponsor brands. While there are people who don't give a fuck about all these things and they just like a fun content, jokes so, in turn, buy recommended products.</p>
13	<p><i>32. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more respected?</i></p> <p>Oh, I don't know if I will remember or notice something about respect. In general, I notice that some Instagrammers are tagging other people, e.g. thank them for something, others put a lot of hashtags, some are more focusing on a content.</p> <p><i>You mentioned tagging other people in their posts? What do you think is the reason for this trend?</i></p> <p>I would say that they are sharing attention. Let's imagine, Agne Jegaleviciute or Indre Morkuniene tags you in a post, you can expect that at least 10% of their following to go and check your profile. For example, once Jurgita Jurkute [76.8k on Instagram] wrote a post about her sister, tagged her and I checked her. Probably I would never check her sister because if not this post.</p>
14	<p><i>34-35. When Instagrammers are more similar to followers (peers), are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>I think that definitely yes. But it's the same as in traditional advertising. When a person similar to you, due to values, is recommending a product, you always accept such ad more. That's why you are trying to choose a person similar to your target group.</p>
15	<p><i>36-37. Would you say that in general Instagrammers who have their own brands are more or less similar to followers, compared to regular Instagrammers? Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem more / less similar to followers?</i></p> <p>How many followers have their own brand and develop their own business? You see that somebody is creating and developing something and you don't. So there is a difference which gives you a distance.</p>
16	<p><i>38-39. Do you think that decreased similarity of Instagrammers who have their own brands makes their recommendations less relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>I would say that yes. But I don't know. Right now I remembered Kim Kardashian. How many followers identify themselves with her, how many similar followers she has.</p> <p><i>Are followers less interested in their recommendations when the similarity is low?</i></p> <p>I would say that less.</p>
17	<p><i>40. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general that makes them seem more similar to followers?</i></p> <p>That would make them seem more similar maybe no. But right now reposting the content on Instagram is getting very popular. For example, that Instagrammers are reposting the posts of their followers, especially if the posts are related to them. In this way, they are sharing the attention they have with their followers, showing that they see them. We are doing similarly with "Ecodenta" [a toothpaste], we are reposting posts of followers who make reviews or mention in one or another way.</p> <p><i>Do you think it strengthens the connection between these Instagrammers and their followers?</i></p> <p>Probably yes if we do this. I think it's fun for people to be reposted. It would be interesting to know the real motives of people why they are on Instagram, do they want just to be there or maybe their goals are to collect followers. I think reposting followers' content shows an honour, one can get more followers. So I would say that you become a closer Instagrammer for sure, it's like you are strengthening the friendship.</p>
18	<p><i>42-43. When you believe that Instagrammers like and use recommended products more, are their recommendations more relevant? (so, would that make people more interested in the products?)</i></p> <p>I think that definitely yes. You can feel it from how they are describing the products and talk about them. You can see it quite obviously. There are Instagrammers who are very thorough in explaining the products, their effect. There are some who do it randomly so you can see that they haven't even used them and it is visible from how many likes you get if you can judge based on that. When they do a more genuine review, then followers engage more, discuss what is working and what is not.</p>
19	<p><i>44-45. Does the fact that they have their own brand makes them seem like they like and use the recommended product more?</i></p> <p>Ideally, I would say that yes, they should believe it more and actually, I think that they really do. For example, when I think about "Madara" which became very popular in Latvia, they were talking about the products very thoroughly, about the product making process, design. Naturally, you believe in products more. But now I am answering your questions from my personal perspective. Because if you would ask me as a marketing specialist to answer this, nobody has this "golden answer", neither agencies, neither what tools could measure that - likes, engagement etc. This world [Instagram and Instagrammers] are very "blank". Sometimes it feels that the best is to work on awareness, the more people see the recommendations, the more likes and doesn't matter that a similar cream was promoted yesterday because half of Lithuania sees your products. Yes, maybe they are not fully digging into your products but again when you come to a store and stand in front of the shelf with creams, you will recall some of them were seen before. So nobody has the answer to this question, all agencies have a different opinion which could be argued or denied.</p>

20	<p>48. Have you noticed anything different Instagrammers who have their own brands do in their posts or on Instagram in general which shows that they more honestly like and use the recommended products?</p> <p>So it depends on how they review products. Do they talk only about the smell and flavour or they tell more the effect how this product was at the beginning and the end. Because if they talk only about the brand, the packaging and smell, then it means that what they did was only opening the package, smelled the product, tried on their hand and that's it.</p> <p><i>So in short, it is important to show that you are using the product for already some time?</i></p> <p>Yes, yes. It's one of the most distinguishing factors. And, of course, also if one week before the Instagrammer was recommending a similar product and was swearing that it's the best, whereas, the week after she or he does the same with another product, then you must be stupid to believe that they really use them.</p>
21	<p>50-51. What motivation do you think Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing their own brand?</p> <p>I would like to believe that they do this because they like and use it. But at the same time, I understand, especially when the Instagrammer has a lot of products and their business is big already, that sometimes you don't succeed in portraying that. However, when you are a business person and want to sell, you sometimes step over your beliefs. For example, for me, it is very hard to advertise products that I don't like. It's normal that I don't like and use all the products at BIOK and, similarly, I don't think that these Instagrammers who create for different people, different tastes, they use the products 100%. I don't believe in that. So when you become a business person, your willingness to sell a product is high and sometimes you overstep your principles.</p> <p><i>How do you think the followers understand that? Which motivation would you assign this action to?</i></p> <p>I would say that around 70-80% of people still think that they do it genuinely.</p>
22	<p>52-53. What motivation Instagrammers who have their own brands communicate when endorsing sponsor brands?</p> <p>When you already have your own brand and recommend another one, then you really need to like that product. I would say that the first one.</p>
23	<p>54. Do you believe the Instagrammer likes and uses both their own and sponsor brands equally?</p> <p>I would say that still more love is put in recommending your own brand than a sponsor brand. I think that it's hard for them to love other brands more.</p>
24	<p>55-56. Does the presence of own brand in the profile make sponsored endorsements seem mainly financially motivated?</p> <p>Maybe no... Now I'm trying to think through the examples. It's hard for me to tell because I know why certain Instagrammers promote sponsor brands, there are a lot who would make reviews without a financial motivation. Now, I can't recall the brands which I follow to visualise this question...</p>
25	<p>60-61. When you think of Instagrammers who have their own brands, do you think endorsements of own brand stand out more than endorsements of sponsor brands?</p> <p>I don't know... I think very similarly; I would not distinguish. Most often very similarly. With own brand, sometimes there are more "call to action", e.g. various links to go and do something, to buy and etc. But there are not big differences in how the recommendation look. If they recommend a sponsor brand, they really "make it work".</p>
26	<p>62- 63. Do you think endorsements of sponsor brand are as much associated with such Instagrammers as endorsements of own brand are?</p> <p>Should be own brand. But I don't know. It depends on how strong the brand is; how long it has been appearing in the Instagrammer's profile. Some people posts time to time something and some "are flooding" very often.</p> <p><i>Does that depend on how often you post your own and sponsor brand?</i></p> <p>Yes, yes. Some of the Instagrammers integrate brands very lightly, whereas some of them do that harder.</p>
27	<p>64-65. Would that affect your choice of selecting an Instagrammer who has their own brand to do a sponsorship?</p> <p>Most probably that yes. Depends on how the Instagrammer has created its trustworthiness and its profile. Whether she or he is focused solely on her own product or is covering the whole category. When we were choosing Beata for our collaboration, we saw her association with her own brand and her products as a strength which will help us to communicate.</p> <p><i>Why did you see that as a strength?</i></p> <p>Because she has already built her audience which like more natural and healthier products, she has a strong position which depicts "an affordable quality".</p>
28	<p>67-68. What do you think are the specific aspects of posts or on Instagram in general including own brand that make them more preferred?</p> <p>I would say that they do it in a similar way as with sponsor endorsements than differently.</p>
29	<p>69-70. When you think about Instagrammers endorsing their own and sponsor brands, do you think there needs to be a common theme between them (brands)?</p> <p>I think that yes. Because, for example, I like naturalists so I follow them and for me, I like whether it is about food, drinks, cosmetics or clothing. So I don't think that they should be from one category.</p>

		<p><i>So how similar recommended brands should be?</i></p> <p>In their idea, values, why you follow these Instagrammers. One of them are naturalists, others update you with the recent product launches, others are travellers and travel a lot. I think people choose Instagrammers based on their interests and it would be very strange if on day Instagrammers shop in Ali Express and the other say in Harrods.</p>
30		<p><i>73. How does the similarity between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of a sponsor brand?</i></p> <p>I think that it affects a lot because, as I already mentioned, if you trust the opinion of an Instagrammer who you relate with and suddenly they recommend you something, then you know that you should like this product too because it has "that thing".</p> <p><i>How does the difference between own and sponsor brand affect the acceptance of a sponsor brand?</i></p> <p>The same Indre Morkuniene and Agne Jegelaviciute recommended NIDA cosmetics [a private label of the Lithuanian retail network] which cost 2-3 EUR, even if usually they use the best cosmetics, expensive clothing, shoes. If you would check what people comment, you would see that they say "wow, how nice it is - it's Lithuanian; where I can buy it". Then it means that there are a lot of different people following such Instagrammers. I think that there are a lot of Instagrammers who have a lot of different segments - luxury, mainstream, economy and then such Instagrammers try to offer everything for each category.</p>
31		<p><i>74-75. Would you be more likely to do a sponsorship with an Instagrammer who has a similar brand to the brand you work for?</i></p> <p>Yes. If a brand is similar to its philosophy, values such as naturalness, eco-friendliness, quality, some kind of common touchpoints. If followers like these aspects and my brand are communicating to them, it means that they will be interested in my brand too.</p>
32		<p><i>76. In what situations do you consider using Instagrammers who have their own brands rather than regular Instagrammers? Please reflect on which type of Instagrammer would be more appropriate for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - doing a sponsorship - launching a product in collaboration with an Instagrammer <p>Of course, when you want to release a common product. Because this person has an idea of what it is like to launch a brand, they are more aware of doing sales and all the influential factors which need to be considered when launching a brand. So it is easier to develop a new product with an entrepreneurial Instagrammer.</p> <p><i>Is their knowledge of communicating with followers somehow affects your choice?</i></p> <p>No, no, I don't think so. However, when I think about Beata, she said "since I've already created a lot of products, I need to believe and love in what I create next because it is hard to fake it. Also, I answer each comment". And she really does that, answers the comments from the product side. So she is more engaged in that product than a regular Instagrammer because they talk less about the products and more about themselves.</p>
33		<p><i>78. In what situations do you consider using regular Instagrammers rather than Instagrammers who have their own brand? Please reflect on which type of Instagrammer would be more appropriate for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doing a sponsorship - Launching a product in collaboration with an Instagrammer <p>To do a sponsorship, not to launch a brand.</p>