Influencer Endorsements Effect on Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention

Why and how does influencer's content on Instagram affect their follower's brand attitudes and purchase intention toward sustainable food brands?

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Abstract

The research on Instagram-influencer's effect through endorsements is scarce. There is currently no model that examines the triangulation between follower, influencer, and brand on Instagram. Thus, there is a gap in academic research. This gap creates a potential to construct a working model for brands to use when selecting influencer endorsement. This paper examines the use of influencer endorsement by brands in the sustainable food sector on Instagram and the effect it has on their followers. To do so, we have intended to build a model that can be used to get the most out of influencer endorsements. Furthermore, this paper aims to answer the question: "why and how influencer's content on Instagram affect their follow's brand attitudes and purchase intention toward sustainable food brands." The model that is used stems from Heider's balance theory, and the inclusion of the TEARS model, match-up hypothesis and customer-based brand equity to explore the connection between follower-influencer, influencer-brand, and brand-follower through a qualitative multi-method technique of data collection. The data is gathered from two in-depth interviews of influencers, one influencer manager, one focus group of Instagram users and a nethnography following two different sized influencers for 82 days. The main findings derived from this paper suggest; (1) Authenticity is a dimension that should be incorporated into the TEARS model as a driver for trustworthiness and credibility, (2) Brands should aim to choose influencers with attributes that they want to be associated with. Consistency in attributes in the endorser-brand relationship provides a strong match-up effect on followers, (3) Perceived quality from influencers had a substantial impact on the consumer's judgment about the brand's overall quality and attitudes. The authors encourage further research on this topic and to explore how to improve the presented model with the future research suggestions in the paper.

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Influencer's on Instagram can greatly influence their followers to buy the products they endorse. Influencers are best compared to opinion leaders which " *are individuals who exert an unequal amount of influence on the decision of others*" (Rogers & Cartano, 1962, p. 435). Instagram is a platform where opinion leaders can communicate to millions of people through the internet. The easy access to the opinions of influencer's have led to extreme followings. Influencers on Instagram range in their following from a few thousand to a few millions. A key distinction from the traditional opinion leader and the influencer phenomenon, is the ongoing communication from an influencer to a mass audience of strangers (McQuarrie et al., 2012). This effect is referred to as the 'megaphone effect'. Influencer's can grab a megaphone without filters from institutions or establishments and reach a broad audience (McQuarrie et al., 2012).

An influencer is defined as "*A third-party who significantly shapes the customer's purchasing decision but may even be accountable for it*" (Duncan Brown & Nick Hayes, 2008). The broad audience an influencer can reach on Instagram passed 1 billion users in 2018 (Clement, J., 2019). Studies have found influencer's to be a reliable and credible channel that has real behavioral impact on consumers (Berger & Keller Fay Group, 2016). It is the authority, knowledge, position, and relationship with their audience influencers possess that gives them the power to influence their audience (MarketingHub, 2020). A study from TapInfluence & Nielsen (2016) found a significant purchase increase when influencers endorsed a specific 'meatless Monday' campaign. Other research has found that specific conditions must be met to achieve the desired effect from influencer endorsement (Müller et al., 2018).

Influencer's have reached a following that makes them comparable to celebrities, and some influencers are categorized as celebrities. Celebrity endorsement has been used since the early 1930's when the radio emerged (Erdogan, 1999). Back then celebrities were having to high prestige to be a 'mere brand presenter' (Erdogan, 1999). The limited amount of celebrities interested made it hard for advertisers to use celebrity endorsement. The development has gone up substantially since the

1980's, and the developments in technology has increased this further (Shimp, 1997). The emergence of celebrity endorsement facilitated more spending from brands, and in 1996 it was estimated that more than 1 billion us dollars was spent in the US on celebrity athletes (Lane, 1996).

Influencers endorsements are not as powerful as celebrity endorsements, as they do not hold the same power of influencer over the consumer (Brown & Hayes, 2008). On the other hand, influencer's usually do not take the same price for an endorsement. Influencers range from small to large, and there are usually several influencer's in every niche imaginable. Marketers search for better ways to connect with their target audience online, and influencer endorsement is one of the strategies. The interest has facilitated the growth of influencer endorsement to be a $9,7 billion industry in 2020, up from 6,5 billion in 2019 (Marketing Hub, 2020). Additionally, influencers used in marketing provide an average earned value for every $1 spent, of $5,78 (Marketing Hub, 2020).

An increase in spending from marketers, higher return on investment than traditional ads, no interruption from traditional ads, higher credibility and believability are some of the buzzwords related to influencer endorsement. It also causes a need for further research in the subject of influencers and their effect on consumer behavior. The overarching goal of the research paper is to understand why and how influencers can be successful in marketing brands on Instagram. Influencers have caught our attention by endorsing brands on social networking sites. The endorsement deals are often used by brands to show the consumer the value of the product or service. Essentially, if an influencer is considered an opinion leader within a niche, brands leverage their credibility to affect their followers brand attitudes and purchase intention towards the product.

This research paper is relevant for brands within the sustainable food sector that use or want to use influencers to endorse their product on Instagram. By better understanding how consumer attitudes and purchase intention is affected, brand can take better decisions when selecting influencers to endorse their brands most effectively. The research paper also aims to add to existing academic theories on celebrity endorsement by introducing influencers.

1.1 Research problem and question

This section will present the relevant research within the area of interest for this research paper and the research question. Furthermore, we will introduce influencer endorsement.

Moreover, one can rationalize that influencer endorsement can affect consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and, ultimately, purchase intention and behavior. Both attitudes (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975: Azjen & Albarracín, 2007: Fazio, 1986: D. Katz, 1960: M. B. Smith, Bruner, & White, 1956), and purchase intention (Spears & Singh, 2004: Eagly and Chaiken, 1993: Jaafar, Lalp, Naba, 2012: Ghosh, 1990) have been researched considerably. Purchase intention is a widely considered effective marketing measurement tool (Morwitz, 2014). The reason for its effectiveness is because brands on a fundamental level want to increase their sales. Additionally, marketing strategies aim to stimulate the "*probability that the consumer will purchase the product*" (Sam, Fazli & Tahir, 2009:4). Based on this logic, this research paper will investigate the effect influencer endorsement has on their followers regarding brand attitudes and purchase intention. Therefore, our research question is:

Why and how does influencer's content on Instagram affect their follower's brand attitudes and purchase intention toward sustainable food brands?

The research question is based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), as the research paper focus on consumer behavior. The theory aims to explain that attitudes affect behavioral intention. The research gap we want to contribute to is how influencers affect followers brand attitude and purchase intention towards the endorsed brand.

The academic research on influencers and purchase intention is limited. An article by Lim, XJ., Radzol, AM., & Cheah, JH. (2017) found by using a survey and data analysis that a match between an influencer and the endorsed brand had a significant effect on attitudes and purchase intention. Additionally, a positive relationship between consumer attitude and purchase intention was found. This effect confirms that the TRA is viable in an influencer endorsement context. Consumer attitude was proven to significantly mediate the relationship between attractiveness, product match-up, and meaning transfer (Lim, et al., 2017). Outside of this article, there were no prominent peer reviewed academic papers on this topic.

Saunders (2009) defines methodology as "*the theory of how research should be undertaken*" (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). This section will outline the methodological choices used in our research process and procedures. Importantly, the choices we make to decide our philosophy and approach will guide the rest of the paper and influence the findings and conclusion of our research question.
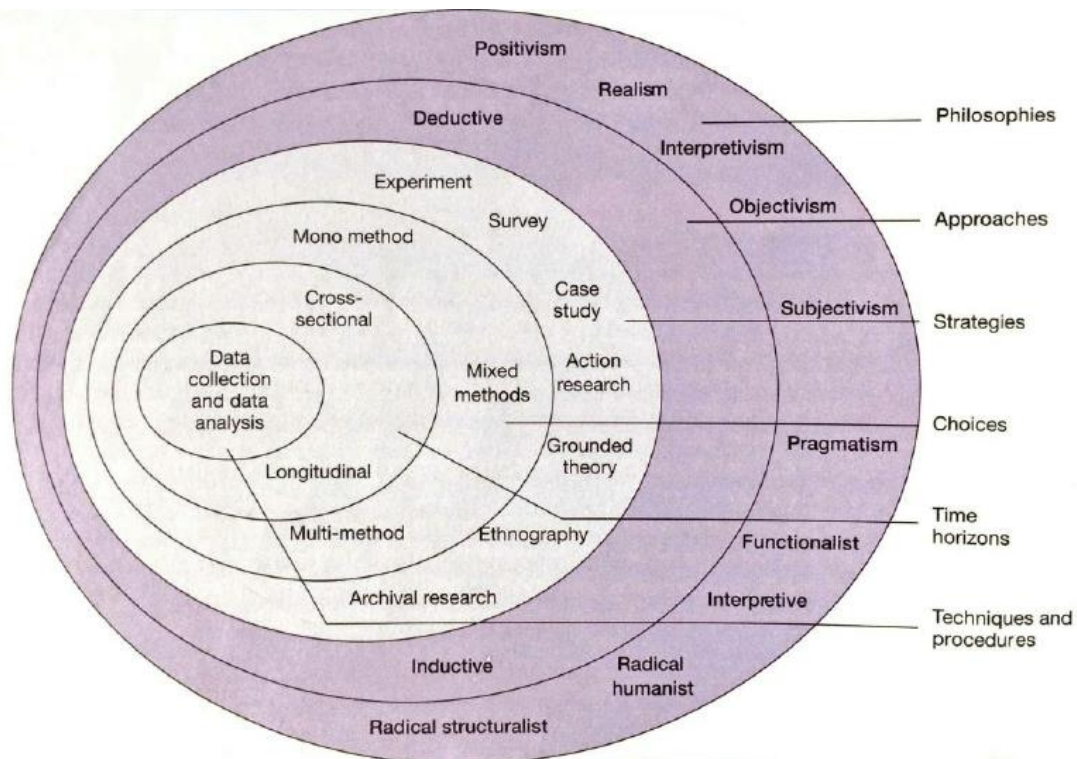
Figure 1: Research Onion, Saunder (2009)

1.2.1 Research philosophy

Research philosophy relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge (Saunders et al., 2009). Understanding the research philosophy is essential since it clarifies our underlying assumptions regarding our research and the nature of the world. Therefore, the research philosophy explains how the research should be conducted (Flick, 2011). The philosophy we choose to adapt will construct the way we collect data and equally important how we perceive the data we collect. Therefore, it is essential to explain the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of our philosophy to give a greater understanding of our assumptions of the world.

To distinguish the different philosophies and explain our choice, we must first start with ontology, one of three assumption types. Ontology refers to assumptions about the nature of reality (Saunders et al., 2009). There are two aspects of ontology, which are objectivism and subjectivism. "*Objectivism represents the position that social entities exist in reality to social norms*" (Saunders et al., 2009, p.110). Conversely, within a subjectivist perspective, social phenomena exist through the "*perceptions and consequent actions of those social actors concerned with their existence*" (Saunders et al., 2009, p.110). The two frameworks have several sub-branches of classifications that differ from the minor assumptions they hold; still, the primary assumptions are comparable (Bryman, 2012). The interpretivist philosophy describes for these phenomena to be understood, it is essential to explore the subjective meaning motivating the actions of social actors. (Saunders et al., 2009). Conversely, positivism follows the objectivism framework. The positivism philosophical attitude is mostly that of the natural scientist who favors "*working with an observable social reality and that the end product of such research can be law-like generalizations similar to those produced by the physical and natural scientists*" (Remenyi, Williams, Money, Swartz, 1998, p.32). From the positivism perspective, reality is objective, independent, and external of social actors. From the realism viewpoint, reality is objective and "*exists independently of human thoughts and beliefs or knowledge of their existence (realist) however is interpreted through social conditioning (critical realist)*" (Saunders et al., 2009, p.119). From the interpretivist stance, reality is socially constructed and subjective. Finally, the pragmatists view reality in the way they will allow them to best answer their research question.

As stated by Saunders et al. (2009) a "*research question rarely falls neatly into only one philosophical domain*" (p.107). Our philosophy is of that we are external, objective, and independent of social actors which fit well from a positivism stance. However due to our small sample size and that we are unable to repeat the study, our research philosophy cannot fit within the positivism framework because our findings are not substantial enough to draw generalizations about the world. Therefore, this leads us to take the pragmatic view: "*most important determinant of the epistemology, ontology, and axiology you adopt is the research question - one may be more appropriate than the other for answering particular questions*" (Saunders et al., 2009, p.109)

"*Epistemology concerns assumptions about knowledge, what constitutes acceptable, valid and legitimate knowledge, and how we can communicate knowledge to others*" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Saunders et al., 2009, p.127). Therefore, how we choose to interpret and collect data are determined

by our choice of epistemology. It can range from facts and numbers, and therefore observable phenomena to opinions and narratives, which entails our interpretation of the data is what is final. A positivist viewpoint would be that only observable phenomena can provide credible data (Saunders et al., 2009). Conversely, an interpretivist concentrates on the details of a situation to find the reality behind these details, which are the social phenomena and subjective meanings that motivate social actors. A realist would rely on the idea of independent mind. There are two schools of thought, direct realism, which can be described as what you see is what you get, and on the other hand, critical realism believe the images and sensations of the real world can be deceptive and do not portray the reality of our world (Novikov & Novikov, 2013). However, in our search of answering our research question, we do not find it sensible to eliminate knowledge that could possibly clarify all or part of our research question. Thus, our epistemological assumptions fit those of the Pragmatist.

Finally, axiology, which "*refers to the role of values and ethics within the research process*" (Saunders et al., 2009, p.128). A positivist will undertake research in a value-free way. The researcher is independent of the data and therefore maintains an objective stance. On the other hand, a realist would believe that the research is impacted by our values through our biases of upbringing, cultural experiences, and world views. However, an interpretivist argues that the value is embedded in research. Thus, the researcher is part of what is being researched, and cannot be separated from it. Lastly, research with a pragmatist philosophy argues that in research value is essential when interpreting results, therefore, *"the researcher must adopt both objective and subjective points of view"* to understand the data collected (Saunders et al., 2009, p.119).

Derived by our research philosophy is which data collection methods should be used. A positivist would want highly structured data collected from large quantitative samples, while an interpretivist would prefer small samples of in-depth, qualitative investigations. Pragmatists are flexible in the data collection and use a mix or multiple methods design of quantitative and qualitative data from both collecting primary and secondary data (Saunders et al., 2009). This is discussed more in detail in section 7.3

1.2.2 Research approach

Research approach explains in which order the research question is built and how it is solved. There are two categories of approach, which are deductive and inductive. Inductive approach is based on gaining an understanding of the meaning's humans attach to events (Saunders et al., 2009). One approach in an inductive approach is that the researchers would start interviewing the people connected in the research area. After that, the result of the interview and the researcher's analysis would formulate a theory. Although the theory might stay the same, the reasoning for how the researcher came about the theory might change as more research is conducted (Saunders et al., 2009).

The other method is a deductive approach. *"It involves the development of a theory that is subjected to a rigorous test through a series of propositions"* (Saunders et al., 2009, p.146). This approach is very structured, and the focus is based on six steps that will determine the result of the research question. A characteristic of a deductive approach is the ability to generalize the results. Therefore, the use of a quantitative method gathers a sufficient sample size to make the research more reliable.

Instead of moving from data to theory or theory to data, an abductive approach can move back and forth, thereby combining induction and deduction (Suddaby, 2006). The process of this approach starts by studying and collecting sufficient data to build a conceptual model. This model and research question will then be tested using existing and new data.

Finally, using approaches in combination to undergo research. Combining deductive and inductive approaches can often be advantageous, depending on the research topic and existing data (Saunders et al., 2009). For our research approach, started our research inductively to gain an understanding of the research context and sharpen our problem area. Afterward we developed a research question, and from that point we worked with a deductive approach. Thus, we gathered primary data that we could use to explain our research question.

1.3 Delimitation

The research paper is limited to the marketing perspective of influencer endorsement on Instagram.

Additionally, our primary data sources are Norwegian. As a result of this, we limited the scope to the Norwegian market. Furthermore, to make the results more accurate, we choose to narrow the scope of the research paper to the sustainable food sector.

1.4 Definitions

Cash grab – A decision made by someone because of the monetary value of the exchange and not by the quality of the post

Influencer - A prominent figure on a social media platform whom generally exchanges financial instruments or special benefits for endorsements

Organic content – Content that is produces and made by someone that is not endorsed or sponsored

Endorsed content – Content that is produced and made by someone because of exchanges of financial instruments or special benefits

Promotions - refers to any type of marketing communication used to inform or persuade target audiences of the relative merits of a product, service, brand, or issue. It helps marketers to create a distinctive place in customers' mind.

#ads – A hashtag that must be included in the post if the post is endorsed

Engagement- any type of interaction, being a like, comment, etc., between follower and influencer.

Involvement - The degree or intensity of interest that a buyer shows for a certain product or brand (Park & Young, 1983).

AdBlock - An ad blocker is a program that will automatically block advertising from an internet user experience online.

2.0 Social media

Social Media has been growing steadily for over a decade, and more than 3,8 million Norwegians are active users in 2019 (Shaulova & Biagi, 2020). Furthermore, this represents around 70% of the population. It provides an insight into the impact these new ways of communication have had since they launched in 2004. The most actively used social media today is Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, and Instagram, in that order in Europe (Shaulova & Biagi, 2020). Social Networking Sites like Facebook was initially an online place to connect with friends and family. Today it is used by companies in all sizes to drive sales and loyalty while staying top of mind for the consumer. A survey conducted to Chief Marketing Officers (CMO) in North America found that 78% of the responding CMO's saw their company increasing their spending within digital marketing (Moorman, C., 2020). It has changed the way we consume information and buys products. As a result, Social Media Marketing is growing at an annual rate of 13,3% (Moorman, C., 2020). In this section, we will go into some nuances to describe Social Media, as it is relevant for the overall understanding of influence marketing.

Social media was traditionally a place where consumers consumed content. If they found the content suiting to their needs, they would buy the product or service advertised. However, consumers are now using digital platforms to create, modify, and share. Moreover, it is happening through content sharing, blogs, and wikis (Kietzmann et al. 2011). The level of increased engagement for this media display the value companies can extract from a strategic use. Kietzmann et al. (2011) propose a model for social media, consisting of seven building blocks: Identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups. The user's activities on social media sites fall into one of the seven categories and can be used to categorize and strategize for the firm's marketing strategy.

A way firms use social media marketing is by creating a brand page for their brand on a social networking site. Firms can interact with their followers by posting videos, pictures, messages, questionnaires, and information. One way of measuring the effects a brand page has on its audience is through 'brand post popularity.' (L. Vries, & S. Gensler, & S.H. Leeflang, 2012). The study of Vries et al. (2012) found vivid and interactive brand posts to enhance the liking function for brand posts. The comments on a post are also positively related to the likes on the post.

Studies show how to translate social networking sites into sales for brands. Kumar et al. (2016) describe the term 'firm-generated-content' (FGC) to be any content shared by or responded by from the firm on social media platforms. The study measures spending, cross-buying, and customer profitability. The study found that FGC had a significant and positive effect on customer's behavior and that the effects can, in combination with tv commercials and e-mail marketing, create synergy effects. The characteristics of the FGC used was valence, receptivity, and customer susceptibility. All had a positive impact; however, receptivity had the most considerable effect.

Trust is declining sharply for traditional news outlets like newspapers, tv stations, and radio (J. Turcotte, & C. York, & R. School, 2015). Social media offers a new approach to receiving information and news. In the study by J. Turcotte et al. (2015), they found that social media recommendations improve levels of media trust. The experiment shows the difference between a news story posted by a friend and from an outlet. The study shows that consumers are more likely to follow a news outlet if a friend of theirs shares a news story. As a result, the media trust in the outlet increased significantly. Additionally, if the friend were considered an opinion leader, this effect would be amplified.

The effect of the experiment can be related to Chaldini's (1984) social proof factor. Social proof is "The tendency to see an action as more acceptable when others are doing it" (Cialdini, 1984). In a social network site context, both comments and likes are cues of social proof (Hilverda, Kuttschreuter, & Giebels, 2018). A study conducted on social proof's effect on organic food concluded that social proof affects consumers if the comments are perceived useful. Additionally, likes affect consumer's reactions to negative emotions and willingness to pay (Hilverda et al., 2018).

2.1 Instagram

Instagram is a rising photo-sharing social networking service that is receiving increased attention from scholars and practitioners. However, we know little about the psychological factors motivating users to use the app. A study uncovered the structural dimensions of consumer's motives and explored the relationships between identified motivations and critical attitudinal and behavioral intention variables (Lee, E., Lee, J. A., Moon, J. H., & Sung, Y., 2015). The results from the study suggest that

Instagram users have five primary social and psychological motives: social interaction, archiving, self-expression, escapism, and peeking. Additionally, this is useful in the context of this research paper, as mapping out the motivation for using the platform and following the influencers will provide insight into the dynamic.

Instagram is a visual platform, where the users share photos to communicate their message. Photos are prominent ways of online communication. By understanding how photo content affects engagement, we can better understand the underlying dynamics of Instagram. Photos of people and human faces are a powerful channel of nonverbal communication. A study from Bakhshi, S., Shamma, D. A., & Gilbert, E. 2014 (2013) found that photos with faces are 38% more likely to receive likes and 32% more likely to receive comments, even when controlling for network reach and activity. Moreover, the number of faces, their age, and gender had no significant effect on engagement. This study provides us with insight into engagement on Instagram and might be one of the factors explaining the emergence of influencers on social media. Influence marketing usually connects a face with the content, and if faces genuinely are a significant performance enhancer for influencers, this could be used strategically in their content.

2.2 Motivations

Motivations for using social media network platforms like Instagram is an essential factor for our project. By gaining an insight into why users are motivated to use the platform in the first place, we can also gain insight into strategies and tactics to best take advantage of these motivations. Also, this is relevant for influencers and companies operating brand pages on these platforms.

Tsai & Men (2013) studied motivations for social networking sites. Their paper is acknowledged and peer reviewed. The study investigates consumer engagement with brand pages, motivations, and antecedents that drive this engagement on Facebook. The result of the survey was that the relationship-oriented factors played a significant role in consumer engagement. The primary reason for using the brand's Facebook page is remuneration. Users expected economic incentives from following, discounts, free samples, and sweepstakes prizes. The second reason was the information, which is a utilitarian motivation that seeks information related to the company. Thirdly, entertainment

was a prominent motivation. It was suggesting that users seek a place where they can escape their daily routines and relax while experiencing aesthetic enjoyment (Tsai & Men, 2013).

It is reasonable to believe that some of these motivations also are prominent for the motivation to follow influencers or opinion leaders on social networking sites (SNS). The results in Tsai & Men's (2013) article is from the Facebook platform. The results may deviate when translated to Instagram, as the platform is more visual by nature.

Another study from Enginkaya & Yilmaz (2014) received somewhat the same results, providing five different motivational factors. Brand affiliation, investigation, opportunity seeking, conversion, and entertainment. The study looked for consumer's motivations to interact with or about brands on social media. The two studies mentioned describing similar factors with different slight variations. For example, the 'investigation' factor overlaps with the 'information' factor from Tsai & Men (2013). 'Opportunity seeking' overlaps with 'Remuneration.' 'Brand affiliation' and 'conversation' may represent other dimensions than in the Tsai and Men's (2013) paper.

Consequently, these factors will be used and explored later in the research paper to determine if there is any similarity in motivations to follow influencers and brand pages. The differences in motivation might help us explain the dynamic between the user, influencer, and brand in a more detailed manner. By understanding the motivational drivers, influencers and brand pages can better understand what their followers need and thereby create content that is relevant and provides value to their followers.

2.3 Influence Endorsement

Influence endorsement is "*A third-party who significantly shapes the customer's purchasing decision but may even be accountable for it*" in Duncan Brown & Nick Hayes' (2008) book on influence marketing. The academic research and definition of this term are limited. This definition is broad, and for the context of this thesis, we will limit the scope to third parties on Instagram. The limitation is due to Instagram being the context we study the phenomenon of influencer endorsement. The above definition will be the basis for what is referred to in this research paper as influencer endorsement.

Additionally, the following two definitions will facilitate a more practical understanding of the term' influencer endorsement. The Word of Mouth Marketing Association has defined influencer endorsement as; "*Identifying key communities and opinion leaders who are likely to talk about products and can influence the opinions of others*." (WOMMA, 2016). This definition is adding understanding by describing the influencer dynamic. The term "communities" can be related to the different categories and niches on Instagram.

The definition from Markethub, a leading influencer marketing company, has a more practical and accurate definition; "*Influencer marketing involves recruiting thought leaders and authorities within your niche to broadcast your message to a wider audience*" (Markethub, 2016). This definition is more based on the practical use of influence marketing in the industry. The definition is useful to better understand the results from a practical standpoint, rather than theoretical.

Consequently, Brown & Hayes' (2008) definition will be the primary definition used in this research paper. Additionally, the two other definitions will facilitate in situations that require it. In 5.0, influencers will be explored and explained in more detail.

Furthermore, the emergence of influencer endorsement can be attributed that the environment for marketers is getting harder online, as 40% of Millennials have AdBlock – and growing fast (PageFair & Adobe 2014). The AdBlock problem is leading marketers to use new tools and creative ways to connect with their target audience authentically. Studies show that consumers exposed to influencers concerning a 'meatless Monday' campaign, significantly increased their purchases when shopping (TapInfluence & Nielsen, 2016). The study concluded that every 1000 impressions from influencers on consumers, resulted in $285 extra sales in the control group. The study shows a direct effect on sales for influencer endorsement for a specific campaign. The comparison to traditional display ads shows significant results in revenue favor of influence marketing. However, influence marketing costs per 1000 impressions is more costly than for display ads. The study concludes with an 11x return on investment (ROI) versus traditional digital display ads, using blog posts only (Nielsen Catalina Solutions, 2016).

It is, however, essential to keep in mind that this study is done by an influencer management firm that has the incentives to get the best possible results, as these results will justify their existence and

increase their sales. They promote their platform for customer relationship management (CRM) in an influencer-brand setting and claim this is the root of the superior results. Claiming the results would be 3x lower if their platform were not used (Nielsen Catalina Solutions, 2016). These effects may vary on variables like the product category, brand, and influencer mix.

A study conducted by Müller et al. (2018) showed that customer purchasing intention is triggered when the identified conditions were satisfied. These conditions entail, *'customer must perceive the product as useful,' 'the influencer as credible,' 'must have a positive attitude towards the ad,' 'must perceive the persuasion attempt of the ad,'* and *'assess the ad rationally or emotionally.'* (Müller et al., 2018). The study shows the importance of context, and gives the following practical guidelines for companies using influence marketing: "*Carefully select the advertised product, suitable influencer, as well as to apply characteristics endorsing positive attitudes towards the ad, which can be informativeness and entertainment*" (Müller et al. 2018). Informativeness and entertainment as endorsing positive attitudes toward an ad or influencer are from the articles; Ducoffe 1996: Tsai & Men 2014. Furthermore, the practical guidelines for an influencer are to pay attention to the trustworthiness of the image, combined with an authentic endorsement to create credibility and trust among the consumers. The study indicates that customer develops a purchase intention even if the post is an '#sponsored' '#ad' if the conditions are met.

To summarize; social media has been presented in this section. Starting with the broad functions of social media, then narrowing it down to motivations and Instagram, and finally influencer endorsement. This was done to get a broad overview of the subject at hand, and to get an introduction to influencer endorsement subject, which this research paper is based on. By understanding the social media term, consumers motivations regarding the usage, and the platform itself, we can better understand the role of influencer endorsement.

Sustainable food is healthy food produced in a sustainable food system that impacts both environmental, economic, and social systems in a positive way (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2018). This means that the system that produces the food is profitable throughout, it has a broad-based benefit for society. It has a neutral or positive impact on the natural environment. The American Public health association defines a sustainable food system as "*one that provides healthy food to meet current food needs while maintaining healthy ecosystems that can also provide food for generations to come with minimal negative impact to the environment. A sustainable food system also encourages local production and distribution infrastructures and makes nutritious food available, accessible, and affordable to all. Further, it is humane and just, protecting farmers and other workers, consumers, and communities*" (The American Public Health Association, 2007)

Consequently, this has created several key issues that are discussed in literature where there is almost unanimous consensus (Hobbs, 2007; Pilipinas et al., 2007). First of all, one of the critical issues of the increased demand for food is not only to produce more nutritious food but also to meet food security around the world (Hobbs, 2007). A lot of the increased demand is from meat, and therefore the production of livestock for these animals has also increased (Vranken, Avermaete, Petalios, & Mathijs, 2014). Second, the available land to produce enough food is shrinking because of urbanization and lands to use for other agricultural purposes. There is still much land that is classified unused, but the likelihood of high-quality land is low since it is mostly taken for agriculture (Fazal, 2005; Lambin & Meyfroidt, 2011). Third, big corporations and governments are disputing over water resources, and there is high uncertainty of who will "own" the water and have the distribution rights in the future (Robbins, 2003). Fourth, fossil fuels will be more costly. Therefore, the cost of fossil-fueled machines in the agriculture industry and other industries will increase. Furthermore, this cost could eventually impact consumers and their spending on food (Heichel, 1976; Pfeiffer, 2006). Moreover, Greenhouse gas emissions such as carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, and methane that have natural warming effects on the atmosphere will increase with devastating consequences on climate, especially an increase in serious climatic incidents such as floods, drought, etc. (Alcamo, 1995; Milly, Wetherald, Dunne, & Delworth, 2002). The increased knowledge of these potential and now-happening issues has spiked a new interest from consumers to consume sustainable food more than ever before.

3.1 Sustainable food products today

There are several trends following consumers increased desire for sustainably sourced food. This paper will not discuss what trend is better for the environment or the human body, but rather focus on what the trends are and how companies are marketing themselves using influencers to target the most appropriate consumers of these trends. One of the trends is eating mostly plant-based food or vegan. Big corporations, such as Nestle, are supplying the increased demand by acquiring and producing vegan products (Nestle, n.d.). Additionally, with emerging trends, fast-moving, new and innovative companies, they are creating a whole new range of vegan snacks, marketed through a less traditional way of electronic word-of-mouth (Raw Halo, n.d.). Even though the vast majority of people eat meat, plant-based food is enjoying much attention as more people are trying a flexitarian lifestyle (Morrison, 2019). The vegan food market size was valued at $14.2 billion in 2018 and is expected to reach $31.4 billion by 2026 (Thomas & Deshmukh, 2019).

Another trend that has caught the skepticism by the consumer is lab-grown meat. Created to reduce CO_2 emissions from raising livestock, scientist and experts believe that by 2022 some lab-grown meat will be on the shelves of some supermarkets (Shieber, 2019). This technique of providing meat is seen as a way to give more traditional consumers a way to continue the habits they have today rather than the struggle to change the way consumers who do not take an interest in changing, for better or for worse (Bercovici, 2017). Furthermore, with the emerging of the middle class of places like China, India, and other densely populated places, the demand for animal protein will skyrocket (Bercovici, 2017). Another trend in sustainable food is eating locally produced food. Some of the reasons behind this trend are because specific consumers want to reduce "food miles" (Reynolds, 2016). The longer it has traveled, the more CO_2 emission it produces is the claim. Other claims and reasoning are to support local economies and connect with the produces. Thereby, we can eat more seasonally to lessen the import of food from all around the world, there again, decreasing pollution and the use of pesticides (Reynolds, 2016).

Forward, when discussing sustainable food products, it will be defined as vegan or plant-based food products and snacks that are branded and can be bought in a health store, online or in a supermarket.

3.2 Sustainable food and influencer endorsement

As earlier mentioned, influencer endorsement is used mostly and targeted towards the younger generation, because they are most active on platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. Therefore, many brands producing healthy vegan snacks or sustainable food products are using influencers to target the younger audience. A study in 2018 by Gallup done in the U.S found that in the age group 18 – 29, 7% are vegetarian and 3% vegan. Between 30 – 49, 8% vegetarian and 4 % vegan. Between 50 – 64, 3 % were vegetarian, and 1 % vegan (Gallup, Inc, 2018). Due to their early introduction to healthy lifestyle choices, research shows that Gen Z's are much more knowledgeable on sustainable living than previous generations (TIME, 2018). Therefore, the main target audience for new sustainable products is the younger generation. The cost of these products is often more than regular snacks that often have a higher dose of sugar. However, a Global Health and Wellness Survey of 30,000 people in 60 countries conducted by Nielsen (2015) reported that 41% of Gen Z was willing to pay a premium for foods they perceive to be healthier, compared with 32% of Millennials (age 21–34) and about 21% of Baby Boomers (approximately age 50–mid-60s) (Nielsen, 2015).

Another study tested the relationship between age, influencers, and sustainability awareness. The study was done on 788 consumers. The results showed a relationship between age and sustainability awareness, as well as between the importance of influencers for increased sustainability awareness in younger consumers, namely, millennials. This indicates that managers of brands should work with influencers perceived as trustworthy to increase sustainability awareness for the millennial subset consumer group (Johnstone & Lindh, 2017).

To summarize, sustainability is a new focus consumer care about when they are making purchase decision. The food industry is targeting this by creating products that better pursue to this audience. The use of influencer endorsement is a way to use precise techniques to penetrate the market.

Introduction	⇨	**Theory**	⇨	Methodology	⇨	Results	⇨	Discussion	⇨	Conclusion
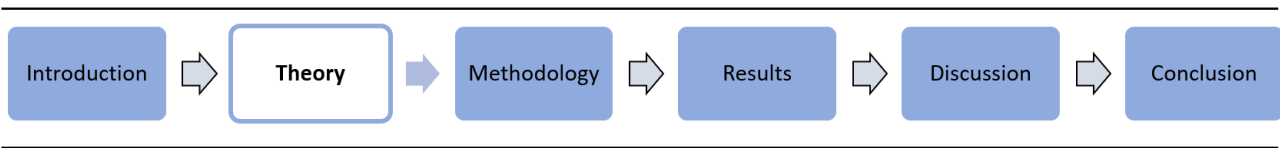
This chapter will introduce the relevant underlying theories for the research paper. The theory of reasoned action, attribution theory, transfer meaning model, and Heider's Balance theory will be elaborated on, as the theories are relevant for the construction of the propositions and will be used to explain the prominent relationship.

4.1 Theory of Reasoned Action

The theory of reasoned action was used as a base when constructing our problem statement. In this regard, we must provide an overview of the components attached to this theory, to better create a precise model of the research problem. The theory of reasoned action aims to explain the relationship between attitude, intention, and behavior. Many models try to explain the relationship between attitudes and intentions, although it has not been empirically established (Spears & Singh, 2004). The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was proposed by Ajzen & Fishbein in 1967. In explaining behavior, the TRA is viewed as the superior model in a marketing setting (Lutz, 1991). TRA is used to "*...predict and understand motivational influences on behavior in social psychology."* (Madden, Ellen, Ajzen, 1992). Our research paper aims to understand followers' motivations to purchase endorsed products form influencers. The TRA is therefore chosen.

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) was first presented in 1967 by Fishbein. The theory was further developed in 'Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior' by Fishbein & Ajzen (1980). The theory tries to explain the relationship between attitudes and behavior. By using preexisting attitudes and intentions, the model aims to predict human behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen 1967). It tries to explain how consumers form and change attitudes based on their beliefs and knowledge, and their evaluation of these (Hoyer et al., 2013). The TRA is widely used, as the theory explains drivers for consumer behavior and help marketers understand how they can change attitudes, intentions, and ultimately behavior (Lutz, 1991).

The fundamental element of the theory is to look at motivations for performing a specific behavior. As previously elaborated on, TRA suggests that behavioral intention is the main predictor of the outcome in behavior (Doswell et al. 2011: Fishbein & Ajzen 1967). The figure illustrates the theory of reasoned action:
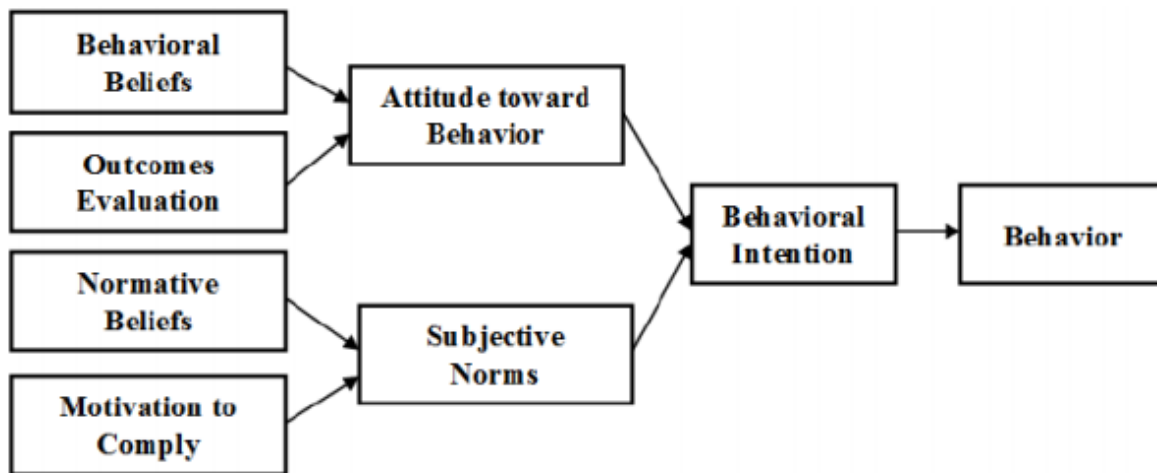
Figure 2: The Theory of Reasoned Action - Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980

The first component of behavioral intention is attitudes towards the behavior. Attitudes are the degree a person has favorable or unfavorable evaluations towards behavior or object (Ajzen & Albarracín, 2007). Attitudes can also be learned, and they are hard to change as they tend to persist for long periods if it is manifested in the long-term memory (Schwartz, 2006). Attitude towards a behavior is affected by the consumers beliefs about the outcome of a behavior, and the evaluation of the behavior's significance (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980). If the positive attitudes outweigh the negative, the consumer is more likely to develop positive attitudes toward a behavior or an object, which will strengthen the behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991).

The second component of the model is the subjective norm. Subjective norm is a normative belief that has its origin from social pressure (Hoyer et al., 2013). Normative beliefs are the approval of reference groups, and whether they approve of the action. If the reference group would not do the behavior in question, it is less likely that the individual would do so (Montano & Kasprzyk 2008). The reference group can be friends, family, sport-teams, and all groups the individual identifies with (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2005). The normative belief is strong or weak dependent on the consumers motivation to comply with the reference groups (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980).

Consequently, attitudes and subjective norms affect the behavioral intention variable and hence affect behavior (Colman, 2015).

4.1.1 Attitudes

This section will elaborate on the current literature on consumer attitudes.

Attitudes are one of the critical determinants of behavioral intention, and it refers to the way people feel about a behavior (Ajzen & Albarracín, 2007). Petty, Unnava & Strathman (1991) define it as an overall evaluation that expresses how much we like or dislike an object, issue, person, or action. The function of attitudes is: "*Attitudes signal people about whether objects in their environment are good or bad and thus perform an important approach-avoidance function*" (Fazio, 1986: D. Katz, 1960: M. B. Smith, Bruner, & White, 1956).

Two variables primarily influence attitudes. First, the strength of behavioral belief regarding the outcome of the behavior and its probability. Second, the evaluation of the overall outcome being positive or negative (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975:1980). The theory of reasoned action claims that there is a real correlation between attitudes and behavioral outcomes. Moreover, this means that if a consumer believes a particular behavior will lead to the desired outcome, the consumer is more likely to have a positive attitude towards the behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980).

Conversely, if the consumer believes a behavior will lead to unfavorable or undesired outcomes, the consumer is likely to have a negative attitude towards the behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975: Azjen & Albarracín, 2007).

Hoyer et al. (2013) defines five dimensions around attitudes: (1) Favorability, to which extent we like or dislike the object. (2) Attitude accessibility, how easy the attitude is to remember. (3) Attitude confidence, how strong we hold the attitude. (4) Attitude persistence, the endurance of the attitude. (5) Resistance, how hard it is to change the attitude. These dimensions are essential in measuring the attitude towards an object. These factors will, in varying degrees, affect the purchase intention of a consumer.

Furthermore, a study done by Priester et al. (2004) showed that attitude strength significantly affects the brand choice of the consumer. Attitude guides consideration for the attitudes considered 'strong.' As a result, this means that to what degree the attitude is positive, the more likely it is that this attitude will influence consideration and choice of brands (Priester et al., 2004)

Another important distinction in attitudes is that attitudes have two different categories, explicit and implicit. Explicit attitudes require a deliberate thought process and are considered more conscious. Implicit attitudes are a more unconscious process and are considered more automatic (Dempsey & Mitchell, 2010). Studies later found that implicit attitudes are strongly predictive of behavior (Greenwald & Banaji 1995). Greenwald & Banaji (1995) found implicit attitudes to be "…*inaccurately identified traces of experience that mediate favorable or unfavorable feeling, thought or action toward social objects*." (Greenwald & Banaji 1995:8).

Madhavaram & Appan (2010) argue that explicit attitudes form based on arguments and propositions, and implicit attitudes form from stimulus from an object (Madhavaram & Appan 2010). In influencer endorsement terms, this means that explicit attitudes can be affected by logic-based arguments from an expert. Furthermore, implicit attitudes can transmit by unconsciously consuming influencer content and exposure to a brand. The ladder speaks to the 'inaccurately identified traces of experience' definition of implicit attitudes. The dichotomy between these two types of attitudes, as well as the co-existence of them in dual attitudes, is engaging in analyzing influencer communication regarding the theory of reasoned action model.

As the fundamental functions of attitudes have been elaborated on, this section will explain brand attitudes briefly. The reason is because the research paper focuses on brands in the sustainable food industry, and it is therefore necessary to specify the attitude term for the relevance of this paper.

Attitudes towards brands is defined as "The buyer's evaluation of the brand with respect to its expected capacity to deliver on a currently relevant buying motive." (Rossiter, 2014). In the literature, brand attitudes enhance the equity of the brand (Aaker, 1991: Keller, 1993). As a result, buyers purchase the same products or brands or shows preference towards a particular brand (Chen & Liu, 2009). Brand equity is considered to have advantages like brand preference, increased purchase

intention (Berry, 2000), and market share (Chang, 2006). The research paper particularly aims to understand the development of brand attitudes, and how it affects purchase intention

To summarize, positive implicit attitudes will determine the behavior of consumers according to the literature. Additionally, brand attitudes are affecting brand equity and purchase intention in consumers according to Chan & Liu (2009), and Berry (2000).

4.1.2 Purchase intention

Spears & Singh (2004) claim that attitudes are a summary of evaluations, while intentions are: "*The person's motivation in the sense of his or her conscious plan to exert effort to carry out a behavior*" (Eagly and Chaiken 1993:168). Spear & Singh (2004) define purchase intention as: "*Purchase intentions are an individual's conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand*." A consumer might have the intention of purchasing a specific brand, but other factors like environmental- and impulses might hinder the consumer from making the purchase (Jaafar, Lalp, Naba, 2012). Other possible behavioral controls might reduce the relationship between purchase intention and purchasing behavior. However, the consensus is that purchase intention is of 'great importance' as a predictor of the buying process (Ghosh 1990).

Jaafar et al. (2012) argue for several factors affecting purchase intention. Attitudes, extrinsic, and intrinsic factors, as well as experience to the brand or similar brands. Intrinsic factors entail perceived quality, perceived risk, perceived value. Extrinsic factors entail; Perceived price, advertisement, packaging, store image (brand). Furthermore, in the study, attitudes were divided into 'trust,' 'familiarity,' 'perceived economic situation' (Jaafar et al. 2012). Not surprisingly, the study found 'perceived value' to affect the consumer's purchase intention the most. The study was a private label study in the food sector in Malaysia. We can assume that this study has some geographical and cultural biases that cannot be translated accurately to western society.

The decision-making process is widely used in marketing to structure sales and marketing campaigns. In the book 'Principles of Marketing,' Kotler and Armstrong (2010) list the steps, which relates to purchasing intention, like the following: (1) Need recognition, (2) Information Search, (3) Evaluation of alternatives, (4) Purchase decision, (5) Post-purchase behavior. Relating to purchasing intention,

step 4, the purchase decision addresses it. Kotler and Armstrong (2010) list two other reasons as to why intention does not need to translate into behavior. One is that the attitudes of others, like a husband having strong negative feelings toward something, will reduce the likelihood of the behavior. Point number two is unexpected situational factors like losing a job.

In the TRA model, attitude and subjective norm is the two main components that influence purchase intention, and ultimately behavior. These factors explain the purchase intention in varying degrees depending on the product category, sector, culture, and platform. These factors have a weighted effect on the purchase intention, where the attitudes weigh more than the subjective norm (Ajzen & Fishbein in 1980).

A study done by Manstead, Profitt, & Smart (1983) found that mothers breastfeeding their children had a change in the weighing of the 'attitude' and 'subjective norm' factors when they had prior experience to draw from (Manstead et al. 1983). Additionally, this might entail that confidence and prior experience increase the weighing on attitudes in the decision-making process, as consumers trust their own experience and have memories to support their decisions.

To summarize, attitudes and purchase intention are closely related. Attitudes and purchase intention help to explain purchase behavior. By using the variables in the research paper, we can better explain why and how influencers affect their followers.

4.2 Attribution theory

Moskowitz (2005) found that humans are motivated to appoint causes to the way they behave. A set of attributes explain their behavior or the processual term *attribution*. Attribution is the process of an individual that must explain causes to their behavior. The following definition of attribution theory will be used: "*Attribution theory deals with how the social perceiver uses the information to arrive at causal explanations for events. It examines what information is gathered and how it is combined to form a causal judgment*" (Fiske & Taylor, 1991:23).

Fritz Heider is the psychologist behind the attribution theory, and his first work on it started in 1958. Heider claimed people see cause and effect relationships, even in situations there are none (Heider,

1958). Heider suggested two ideas: (1) Dispositional (internal) and (2) Situational (External) attributions. Dispositional attribution appoints cause of behavior to internal characteristics. People try to explain the behavior of others by looking at their enduring internal attributes. These attributes are personality characteristics, where the individual is from, their culture, and background. The dispositional attribution causes the fundamental attribution error, or 'over attribution effect.' This effect tells us that consumers tend to overemphasize personality-based explanations for behaviors (Ross, 1977).

On the other hand, the same effect makes consumers underestimate the situational factors affecting behavior. Situational attribution is to appoint the cause to a situation or event outside of a consumer's control. External attribution focuses on situational or environmental causes to behavior as opposed to internal (Kelley, 1967).

Furthermore, Jones & Davis (1965) conducted a study where they concluded that consumers pay attention to intentional behavior. The theory explains the conditions where we make dispositional attributes to behavior, we find intentional. The theory, 'Correspondent inference theory,' refers to the moment a consumer observes that a person's behavior matches their personality (Jones & Davis, 1965).

Kelley (1967) developed a well-known, logical model for attribution theory and whether a behavior should be attributed to internal or external characteristics. The model is called the Covariation model and refers to the fact that a consumer has multiple observations at different times and situations (Kelley, 1967). The following three elements are components of the model: (1) Consensus, the extent to which other consumers behave in the same way in similar situations. (2) Distinctiveness, the extent to which the person behaves in the same way in similar situations. (3) Consistency, the extent the person behaves like this in every situation like this one (Kelley, 1967). These factors make the foundation of which we attribute internal or external causes to the observed behavior. We tend to look at correlation in this causality relationship. The approach may be flawed as correlation does not equal causation. However, the model can be used to understand consumer psychology better.

To summarize, attribution theory can help explain the causes consumer's set to their behavior. Additionally, attribution theory can support the connection between influencer and brand.

McCracken (1986) developed the theory of meaning transfer concerning celebrity endorsements. Meaning is transferred from the culturally constituted world to the consumer goods at hand, and ultimately to the consumer (McCracken, 1986). Figure 3 illustrates this relationship, and the arrows symbolize the instrument used to transfer meaning from one stage to the next.

FIGURE

MOVEMENT OF MEANING
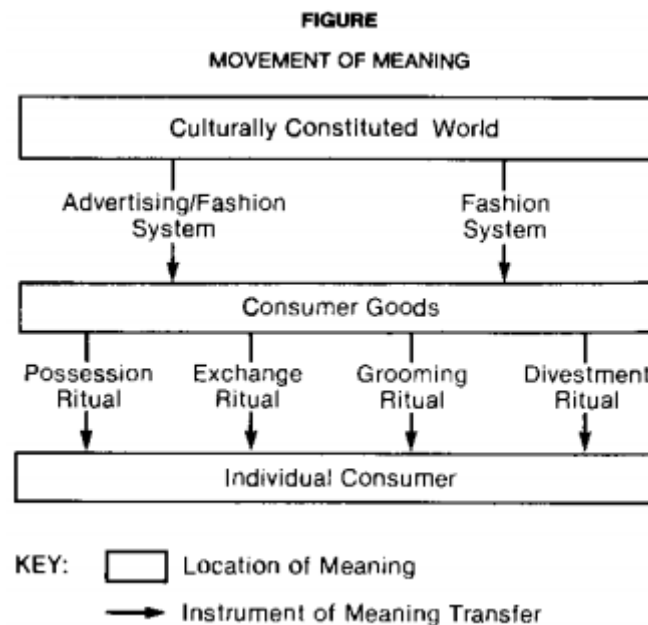
Figure 3: Meaning Transfer Model - McCracken (1986)

In McCracken's (1986) own words, the culturally constituted world is: "*the world of everyday experience in which the phenomenal world presents itself to the individual's senses fully shaped and constituted by the beliefs and assumptions of his/her culture.*" (McCracken, 1986:72). He further explains the two dimensions; First, the lens where the individual views phenomena. Second, culture is the blueprint of human activity. Through the lens, culture determines how the world is seen or perceived. As a blueprint, culture determines how the world will be fashioned by our efforts (McCracken, 1986).

The next step in figure 3 is consumer goods. Transferring meaning from the world to goods entails disengaging meaning from the world and transferring it to goods (products). McCracken (1986) divides the 'instruments' of meaning transfer in this regard to Advertisement and product design. Advertisements work because it brings two elements together—consumer good and representation of

the culturally constituted world within the frame of the advertisement (McCracken, 1986). The meaning transfer process starts when the advertiser identifies cultural opinions and which cultural categories and principles it must entail. When brands select target audiences, this process starts. Cultural categories like age, ethnicity, lifestyle, and gender can help make this construct.

Additionally, the advertiser should investigate the external environment. Variables in the environment like; objects, people, and other environments that express the meaning that the advertiser wants to communicate to sell the product must be identified (McCracken, 1986). These objects can be a celebrity, as discussed later in McCracken (1989), or an influencer.

Product design or fashion systems also manage to transfer meaning. The fashion system works in three ways. The first is that it takes new styles of clothing, home décor, or other objects of design and builds and association with the established cultural categories and principles. The other way of meaning transfer is that it can create new cultural meanings. Opinion leaders (Influencers) create cultural meaning in this process. These opinion leaders shape and refine existing cultural meanings, and they push the boundaries for change within the culture. As defined, opinion leaders are "individuals who exert an unequal amount of influence on the decision of others" (Rogers & Cartano, 1962, p.435).

Furthermore, this status can be achieved through virtue of birth, beauty, accomplishments, talents, and fame (McCracken, 1986). The third-way fashion system transfer meaning is to engage in a radical reform of cultural meaning. McCracken defines 'radical types' as hippies, punks, and gays, which often break the norms, creating a constant change in the cultural state (McCracken, 1986). This definition did not age well. We can draw parallels to this definition and the influencers today as they help to shape the cultural principles and to change the status quo through their opinion leader position.

The final step in the meaning transfer process is the transfer of opinions from consumer goods to individual consumers. The consumers must take possession of these meanings and use them to construct their self-perception. According to McCracken, this happens through rituals. As the model shows, there are four rituals, Possession, Exchange, Grooming, Divestment. Possession rituals transfer the properties of the good to the owner. The cultural meaning of the good, as made by the advertiser, will be in possession of the consumer. Celebrity endorsements or influencer endorsements

might contribute by 'charging' the products with additional values of cultural meaning. Secondly, celebrities and influencers can empower the grooming ritual. Grooming rituals happen in terms of the consumer using their best possessions to exude confidence and power and defense. The motivations to dress a certain way can be created by the symbols created by opinion leaders such as celebrities and influencers (McCracken, 1986).

The theory tries to explain attributes given to objects beyond their utilitarian function. Ultimately how the meaning is transferred from the overall cultural world to the product and the consumer. The meaning transfer model gives us some insight as to how the consumer uses consumer goods and objects to construct their own identity. More practically, brands will need to see the underlying cultural meaning transferred when using an influencer endorsement and how the meaning relates to their target audience.

To summarize, McCracken's Meaning Transfer Model can be used to explain the additional symbolic value attached to a product endorsed by influencers.

4.4 Heider's balance theory

Heider's balance theory was presented in 1958 by psychologist Fritz Heider in the book 'The Psychology of interpersonal relations.' Cognitive dissonance is a central term in Heider's balance theory. Cognitive dissonance was proposed in 1957 by Leon Festinger, where he claimed humans would strive to have internal psychological consistency. The internal psychological consistency is necessary for humans to function in the real world and explains much of human behavior. If a person experiences internal inconsistency, the person will be motivated to take action to reduce the cognitive dissonance felt. There are several ways of reducing dissonance; changing behavior, justifying behavior by changing conflicting cognition, justifying behavior by adding new behaviors, or ignoring or denying information that is conflicting with existing beliefs. (Festinger, 1957).

Heider's balance theory takes it a step further, by conceptualizing the cognitive consistency motive as a driver for psychological balance. The consistency motive is for a person to hold their values and beliefs over time. The theory proposes that the liking relationship in a system of two or three elements are balanced when the affect valence multiplies to be a positive sum (Heider, 1958). The relationship

between two people will be balanced if person 1 (P) likes person 2 (O), and O likes P. They have the same valence attitude toward each other. The theory furthermore proposes a triadic relationship by adding another component – X. Thus, if P likes X, but does not like O, what is then the relationship between P and X when P learns that O made X? The model is called Heider's P-O-X model. Balance in this model is achieved when there either is, three positive links, or only one positive and two negative links between the three elements. Therefore, the example mentioned will, in theory, pose an imbalance in cognitive dissonance for P. (Heider, 1958)
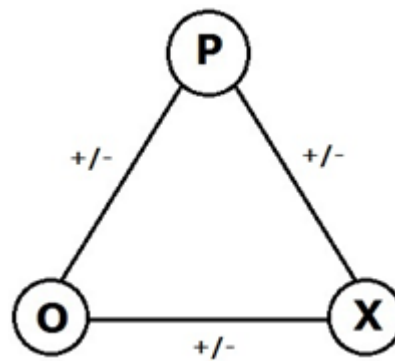
Figure 4: Heider's Balance Theory - Heider, 1958

When explaining the dynamic between consumer, influencer, and brand in influencer endorsement, Heider's balance theory is fitting. The P-O-X model in this regard is P=Consumer, O=Influencer, and X=Brand/product. There are, however, criticisms of this theory, and there might be many more possible variables that affect this relationship that cannot be explained by a simplistic model. The theory and model do, however, pose an accurate model for this research paper. The reason for this is because, as an influencer, often is considered an opinion leader.

Furthermore, the value in this research paper is in the relationship between followers (P), influencer (O), and brand (X). The theory supports the following: If a follower likes an influencer, the follower is more likely to like the product endorsed by the influencer to obtain cognitive balance. Conversely, if the follower likes the influencer, but strongly dislikes the brand being promoted, these negative associations may be transferred to the influencer according to the Balance theory. Theoretically, the balance theory is sound and provides a structural foundation for research. There are, however, limitations to the theory that we must explore to get a realistic representation.

The criticism of the balance theory from Heider is related to the function of balance theory in psychology and mathematics. Claude Flament (1963) criticizes the theory by exposing how weak ties and family bonds. When looking at the intensity of the bonds between P-O-X, Flament claims, it is hardly possible to define balance in psychological terms. Therefore, Flamant argues that balance theory is not justified. (Flament, 1963).

Furthermore, in experiments done in Mowen et al. (1981 and 1980), the balance theory was not supported. The experiments measured how effective celebrity endorsements are and found that distinctiveness and consensus interacted to influence the connection between units. This interaction influenced the product in a non-interactive manner (Mowen et al. 1982). Balance theory cannot predict results like that. Mowen et al. (1982) found the attribution theory and the distinctiveness concept to be more applicable to measure celebrity endorsements. By considering these criticisms in the research paper, we can ensure better validity and more useful results. Moreover, by being aware of the limitations to the theoretical models used, modifications can be implemented to achieve more accurate results in the data collection and analysis section.

To summarize, Heider's Balance Theory and P-O-X model will be used in this research paper to construct a triadic relationship between follower influencer and brand. This model was first presented in the introduction.

To best answer our research questions, a conceptual model is constructed. We will observe and collect relevant data utilizing the model. The research question will be divided into three components: the follower, the influencer, and the brand. Using Heider's Balance Theory (Heider, 1958) to connect the components in a triadic relationship. These connections will be explained by the following theories and hypothesis.

First, the TEARS-model will be used to determine the follower-influencer relationship (Shimp, 2007). Second, the match-up hypothesis will be used to determine the brand-influencer relationship (Kamins, 1988: McCracken, 1989: Till & Busler, 2000). Finally, Aaker's (1991) customer-based brand equity will be used to determine the brand-follower relationship. Figure 5 illustrates the conceptual model.
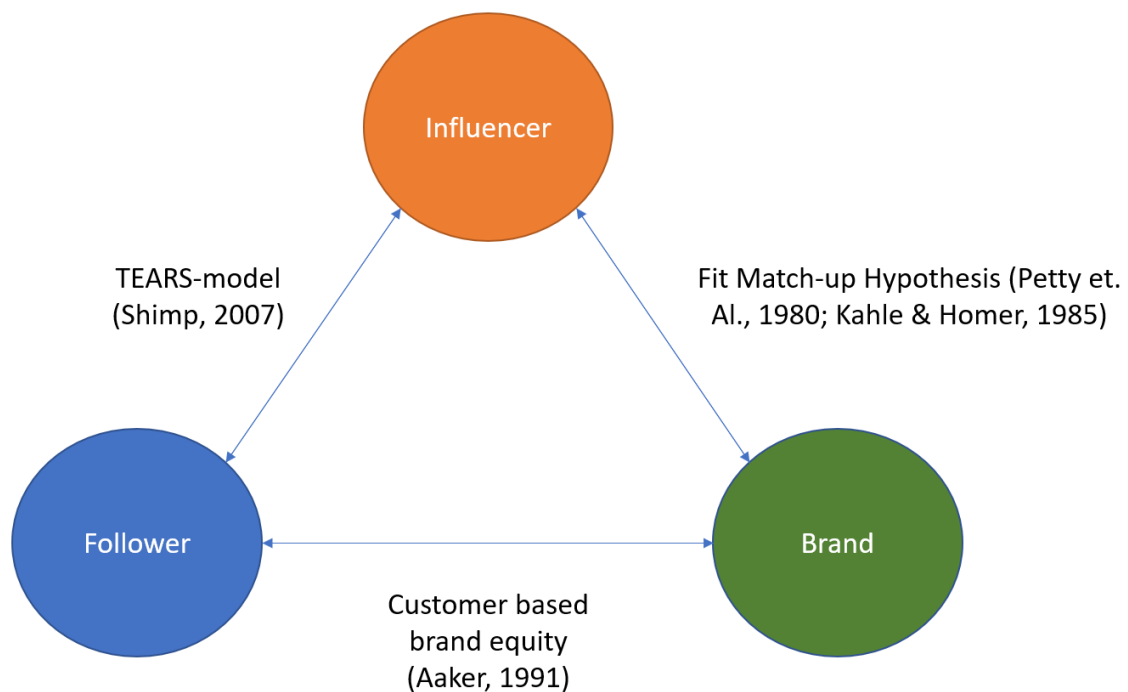
Figure 5: FIB-model: Follower, Influencer, Brand Model (Proprietary to authors)

What is an influencer?

An influencer is: "*A third-party who significantly shapes the customer's purchasing decision but may even be accountable for it.*" (Brown & Hayes, 2008). When observing the top influencers within different niches on Instagram, it becomes prominent that companies are using them as marketing tools to promote their product. By using influencers that are contextually fit for their product, and that has a target audience like the products, they hope to influence the audience. A study found influencers to be a reliable and credible channel that has a real behavioral impact on consumers (Berger & Keller Fay Group, 2016). The real behavioral impact on consumers is one of the reasons brands have been using it actively for years. Moreover, one of the leading influencer marketing firms, MarketingHub (2020), claims that influencers have the power to affect the purchasing decisions of others because of their authority, knowledge, position, and relationship with their audience.

According to Brown & Hayes (2008), influencers are not as powerful as celebrity endorsements and do not hold quite the same influence over consumers. They are, in varying degree opinion leaders that, through different dimensions, gain the consumer's trust. The TEARS model will be used to look closer at this relationship, looking at the dimensions of; trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, respect, and similarity as proponents of the relationship between influencer and follower (Shimp 2007). Other dimensions can also affect the relationship. Dimensions like the status of the influencer, their occupation, their social connectivity online, the attributes to the personality, how likable they are, and the timing of their emergence to social media. (Brown & Hayes 2008). Timing is a component that may explain the reason why there are examples of less likable characters becoming big influencers. They were in the right place at the right time. Additionally, it may be related to the category or niche they operate.

The influencer creates value for companies and brands through collaborations, where they promote the brand's product via an '#ad' or '#sponsored' post on their digital platform. Additionally, influencers can use a less visible strategy. This strategy entails using a brand in their recipe and mentioning the brand page with an '@.' Alternatively, by posting content where the product is visible, but without the "#Ad" to signal endorsement. From a company perspective, they are creating product and brand recognition through their collaborations.

Furthermore, followers describe influencers as 'go-to people in their field' that can provide answers to their questions. They entertain, share pictures, create engaging discussions, and share informative posts (MarketHub, 2020). They build a relationship with their followers over time by providing value within a niche field. Influencer marketing firms like MarketHub help companies streamline the content and manage the influencers over time. These efforts have helped influencer marketing to have an impact on the modern marketing scene.

Opinion leaders

An opinion leader is a term that describes what an influencer is. Influencers are opinion leaders on social networking sites that have attributes that deem them trustworthy by followers within a niche. "*Opinion leaders are individuals who exert an unequal amount of influence on the decision of others*" (Rogers & Cartano, 1962, p. 435). This definition is accurate for the traditional opinion leader in marketing theory but does not adequately explain the influencer term. The influencers are often appealing to a mass audience of anything between 2000 to 2 million followers. Influencers on Instagram may not hold the same 'influence on the decision of others,' as the traditional opinion leader does. The traditional opinion leader is a friend, a family member, or an expert within a field. Moreover, social interaction might create an environment more suited to influence behavior and intention than through a social media lens. McQuarrie et al. (2012) argue that the distinction between the traditional opinion leader and the influencer phenomena is the consumer behavior of ongoing communication by ordinary consumers to a mass audience of strangers.

McQuarrie et al. (2012) propose the concept of the "Megaphone effect." Consumers can grab the megaphone without any filters from institutions or establishments and reach a broad audience. Bloggers use the megaphone effect, and they gain an audience by sharing content that makes it appealing for consumers to follow them. Influencers undoubtedly use this effect to some extent, but it cannot explain the entirety of an influencer. A study conducted by Myers & Robertson (1972) found several dimensions of opinion leadership. The opinions held by opinion leaders are a result of their perceived knowledge, interests, and frequency of discussing the topic. In their findings, they explain that opinion leaders also communicate with a two-way process, where other individuals influence the opinion leader. The study concludes that opinion leaders are not dominant leaders having their influence on a passive follower base. But rather a person with relatively more influential communication than the average person (Myers & Robertson, 1972).

5.2 Followers

In this section, we will define what a follower is and their impacts on Heider's balance theory. As one of the three components, it is important to understand who they are and what motivates them to follow influencers on Instagram. The reason for this is because, later, we can use this knowledge when we connect the follower with the TEARS-model (Shimp, 2007) to understand why they follow whom they do.

The reason why a user on Instagram receives images on their home page or news feed is that they have clicked a button on another user's page called follow. Thereby the name follower. Instagram's social network is asymmetric, meaning that if a user A follows B, B does not have to follow A back (Hu, Manikonda, & Kambhampati, 2014). A follower can engage with the account in many ways, and each method is another stage of interaction and increased effort by the follower. The simplest and least interactive interaction is pushing the like button or "double tapping" on the photo. The next stage of interaction is to comment on the photo to express their textual opinions on the post that is posted by the user (Tsai & Men, 2013). After this, it is direct messaging, which is like an email, just integrated in the app. All methods and more are ways of interacting or communicating with the user to create a form of relationship. Sometimes it is one-way as the influencer will not always respond.

The motivation, primary activity, and use intention of someone using Instagram is based on five primary social and psychological motives: social interaction, archiving, self-expression, escapism, and peeking. (Lee, Lee, Moon & Sung, 2015). Thus, a user is usually fully engaged with the platform creating opportunities for brands to capture their attention. Followers believe that they can show case their lifestyle, values, or beliefs by what content they follower or by what they post (Chen, 2017). Therefore, it is easier way for brands to find the target audience. Users of Instagram also value the subtleness of ads and they prefer the more natural and subtle marketing information (Chen, 2017).

5.3 Brand

This section will focus on the brand component of Heider's balance theory. First, we need to define what a brand is and what is unique about brands that focus on health and the importance of trust. Next, the paper will introduce a brand that focuses on sustainability, healthier ingredients, and how they believe it improves the "spirit" of the consumer.

A brand is a design, symbol, name, term, or any other feature that recognizes one seller's service or goods as distinguished from those of other sellers. (BusinessDictionary, n.d.; Fahy, 2012). A brand has three primary functions. One is navigation, which helps consumers choose from the vast amounts of choices. Two, reassurance, in that brands can communicate the quality of the products or service through trust. Third, engagement, where brands use a distinctive association, language, and imagery to encourage the customer to identify with the brand (Wheeler, 2012). Brand credibility is a critical mechanism through which brands can impact consumer choice (Kemp & Bui, 2011). Credibility is the believability of an entity's intentions and shows as expertise and trustworthiness (Erdem & Swait, 2004). Brands must have the willingness and utility always to give what has been promised. A credible brand will increase consumer confidence and minimize risk (Delgado-Ballester & Luis Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Knox, 2004). To create brand credibility, it is crucial that the consumer recognized the image of the brand with credibility.

Keller (1993) defines brand image as *"perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand association held in consumer memory"* (Keller, 1993). Mostly, brand image shows the consumer's feelings and thoughts for the brand (Roy & Banerjee, 2008). Brand image is the personal symbolism that consumers associate with the brand, which includes all the descriptive and evaluative brand-related knowledge (Iversen & Hem, 2008). When consumers have a favorable brand image, the brand's communications have a more significant impact compared to a competitor's brand communication (Hsieh & Li, 2008). Thus, brand image is a crucial factor in a buyer's behavior (Burmann, Schaefer, & Maloney, 2008).

Health, like any other product feature, can be communicated through the brand, and thus branding has a potential essential role in the communication of a product's health advantages (Chrysochou, 2010). A health brand is something more than just a food product claiming nutritional and health benefits. A health brand *is developed when a corporate organization (a) intentionally attempts to communicate implicitly and/or explicitly a value universe that links a product or the corporate organization itself to the value health and (b) consumers are able to associate the product/company with this value* (Chrysochou, 2010).

The next section will introduce Raw Halo. The reason we want to have a brand is to use them as an example to simplify what a brand in the sustainable food industry can be.

5.3.1 Raw Halo

Raw Halo is a company founded in 2014 to introduce chocolate that is made from organic raw chocolate from ethically sourced, plant-based ingredients (Raw Halo, n.d.-a). The founder said in an interview with confectionery news, *"Our chocolate is designed to be better in every sense, for you and the planet. We've created a luxury chocolate bar that's healthier, more natural, and better quality, making better-made and better-for-you the new benchmark for premium chocolate"* (Eagle, 2019). Raw Halo is a small company and is based in the U.K., offering out its products online, retail stores, and health stores. Furthermore, the company chooses to have an extra focus on sustainability, which is fitting to the brand image. Their way of creating trust with their consumer is by planting one tree for every fifty bars they sell (Raw Halo, n.d.-c). Another sustainability area of focus is its packaging. They offer colorful variants of packaging to display the different flavors, and the importance is that the wrapper is 100% plastic-free, sustainable, and recyclable. Together with sustainability, they offer transparency in what their chocolate is made of (Raw Halo, n.d.-b).

6.0 Connecting follower, influencer, and brand

This section introduces the theory on which the connection between influencer – brand, brand – follower, and follower – influencer is based on. As visualized in the conceptual model (figure 5), the theory we will use to connect followers and influencer is the TEARS model. Furthermore, the theory used to connect influencer and brands is the match-fit hypothesis. Lastly the theory we will use to connect followers and brands is customer-based brand equity.

6.1 Connection between Followers and Influencers

The TEARS model is a well-known model used to look at the effect of celebrity endorsement on products or services based on endorser characteristics (Shimp, 2010). In our paper, we will change our celebrity endorser with Instagram influencers and thereby test how much influence the persuasiveness of the communication is conveyed to the target audience, which is their followers. Shimp (2010) stated that the endorser effect has two general attributes, credibility, and attractiveness, which contributes to an endorser's effectiveness, and that each consists of further distinct sub-attributes. The acronym TEARS is used to characterize five discrete attributes: trustworthiness and expertise are two components credibility, whereas physical attractiveness, respect, and similarity (followers and influencer) are dimensions of the general perception of attractiveness.

As most scholars have written about the TEARS model in connection with celebrity endorsements, we believe that the effect is similar or more reliable based on the research-written on the effects of influencer and celebrity comparison. When a brand uses a respected and credible athlete or celebrity as the message communicator, it is more effective than using a non-famous/ordinary person. An influencer on Instagram is challenging to describe as only a celebrity, as some influencer tries to be the perfect ordinary person to have a stronger connection with its audience, as celebrities might feel more distant. A study done by Schouten, Janssen, & Verspaget (2019), compared the effectiveness of endorsement advertising by social media influencers to traditional celebrity endorsements. They used different celebrities and influencers across beauty, fitness, food, and fashion and the results showed that participants identify more with influencers than with celebrities, feel more like influencers than celebrities, and trust influencers more than celebrities

6.1.1 Credibility

Credibility describes the extent to which the source is recognized as possessing significant experience or knowledge to offer an unbiased opinion (Carroll, 2009). Easily put, credibility is defined as believability. Credible people are believable people, and credible information is believable information. If information comes from a reliable source, consumers' attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and values can be affected through "internalization" (Daneshvary & Schwer, 2000; Ohanian, 1990). Internalization occurs when followers accept an influencer to affect their values and attitudes. As stated by Daneshvary & Schwer (2000), the credibility of the source when they offer a solution to a problem is a reason why an individual might accept the influence as a source. Consequently, the endorsement of a service or product by a trustworthy source may affect consumers' behavioral intentions.

It is important to remember that Instagram influencers can control the image of how the consumers perceive them. The messages they share is not always what they believe or if it is their knowledge and words (Lavorgna et al., 2018). Often, they wish to be perceived in a way that might attract more followers, and this is often done by visualizing and writing what they believe are the best of themselves or what they want to be seen as by the public (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). Even more so, if they are endorsed, it is mostly only positive feedback about the brand and/or product that the influencer share. (Appendix E, F). However, it is up to the influencer to pick or say yes to a brand endorsement that they like and agree with their values, rather than the amount of monetary gain.

6.1.1.1 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the first dimension of endorser credibility (McCracken, 1989) and the T term in the TEARS model (Shimp, 2007). "*Trustworthiness refers to the personality of the celebrity in terms of how honest, honorable, and believable he is perceived to be*" (Shimp, 2007, 252). The trustworthiness dimension of credibility describes the perceived morality or goodness of the source. Shimp (2007) argues that a celebrity endorser, because of the life he or she lives personally and professionally, is trusted more by the target audience. They try only to reveal attributes that are favored by the public. Therefore, celebrities or influencers are perceived as trustworthy through a built-up perception. Celebrities must limit unfavorable media attention, wrongly advertised products,

or by spreading false information about what they or others make public. Oppositely, if the consumers perceive the influencers as trustworthy, they are more easily influenced (Atkin & Block, 1983)

P1: Influencer trustworthiness has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).

6.1.1.2 Expertise

The other dimension of credibility is expertise and is defined by terms such as experienced, competent, and knowledgeable. The expertise dimension of credibility captures the skill of the source and perceived knowledge (Fogg & Tseng, 1999). An example is that often models are perceived as knowledgeable when it comes to beauty products because it looks as if they know what works. It can be the same with athletes, doctors, or any professional. Speck, Schumann & Thompson (1988) stated that celebrities, who are regarded as an expert in a specific area, display a greater brand recognition than celebrities who are regarded as non-experts. The degree of celebrity expertise will determine how effective it can be (Amos, Holmes, & Strutton, 2008).

Furthermore, the more perceived expertise a celebrity has, the greater effective it will have (Hennayake, 2017). Silvera & Austad (2004) found through their paper that the expertise of an influencer correlates with the validity of the claims concerning the product, and is, therefore, a crucial element in increasing the influence of marketing messages. Additionally, the expertise of an influencer offers accurate information on the product offering to the consumer, which can then lead to a favorable attitude towards the brand (Magnini, Honeycutt, & Cross, 2008).

Trustworthiness and expertise contribute independently to influencer effectiveness (Toncar, Reid, & Anderson, 2007). However, one of the two attributes may persuade enough to influence the purchase intention or the attitude of the consumer towards a product. However, a duality is stronger and more reliable in general needed. For our paper, we will investigate the effect of trustworthiness and expertise when the followers follow an influencer on Instagram and what effect this might have on their purchase intention towards the products or services that the influencer endorses. Therefore, our first and second proposition is:

P2: Influencer expertise has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).

6.1.2 Attractiveness

The second general attribute that contributes to celebrity endorser or influencer effectiveness is attractiveness (McCracken, 1989; Shimp, 2007). When consumers find something in an influencer that they deem attractive, persuasion happens through identification. Identification occurs when "individuals conform to the behavior or attitude advocated by another person because these individuals derive satisfaction from the belief that they are like that person" (H. Friedman & Friedman, 1979). Identification is linked to attractiveness and likeability and is possibly the method that best describes persuasion by an influencer or a celebrity endorser. The TEARS model recognizes three sub-elements of the general notion of attractiveness: physical attractiveness, respect, and similarity (Shimp, 2007). Perceived attractiveness can be achieved through one of the mentioned attributes. However, a celebrity encompass does not require all of these at the same time (Freeman & Chen, 2015).

However, in the modern society of today and the use of Instagram as a platform to use influencers to promote products or services, it is hard to know what is real and what is altered. In the credibility section, we wrote that followers do not know who writes the influencer's content or how they feel about the product. Nevertheless, if they are perceived as credible, they will more likely be followed than not. Since technology has become so advanced that anyone can alter the physical appearance of themselves as well as the perceived world around them. Then followers can have the same problem of knowing what has been changed to have more of the attractive attributes that will increase their following or purchase intention within a target audience.

6.1.2.1 Physical Attractiveness

Advertisers tend to choose celebrity endorsers on their attractiveness· to gain from dual effects of physical appeal and celebrity status (Singer, 1983). Furthermore, research has proven physically attractive endorsers are more successful at altering beliefs and creating purchase intentions (H. H. Friedman, Termini, & Washington, 1976; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981) than their less attractive

counterparts. Also, consumers tend to form positive stereotypes about what they see as attractive people (Baker & Churchill, 1977; Debevec & Kernan, 1984). Nevertheless, Bryne, Whitehead & Breen (2003) found that the impact on recurring purchase intentions is ambiguous, as attractiveness isolated may not be enough. Furthermore, there may be a risk that celebrities may distract from or overshadow brands.

Nevertheless, Belch & Belch (2011) argue that companies spend massive amounts of money for celebrities to endorse products. Because celebrities may have what is called 'stopping power' – they can attract the attention of consumers towards the advertising messages in a chaotic and filled media world. Also, Till & Busler (2000) found that it has a "physical attractiveness effect" on consumers' attitudes to brands and thus their purchase intentions.

P3: *Influencer physical attractiveness has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).*

6.1.2.2 Respect

Respect is the R in the TEARS model and is the second component of the attractiveness attributes. Respect can be described as how much the consumers appreciate or admire the influencer based on the influencer's accomplishments and qualities (Shimp, 2007). Shimp (2007) also recognizes respect as being an essential element of the attractiveness attribute and that it may mean more than the physical attractive attribute in some cases. Celebrities are respected for their appealing personalities, their stand on pressing societal issues, athletic prowess, acting ability, and other vital qualities (Hennayake & Hennayake, 2017). Shimp (2007) contends further that consumers' respect for an influencer's standpoints (on, for instance, the environment, politics, lifestyle, etc.) and level of professionalism may turn into a likeability for the influencer. However, it can also have the opposite effect. Personal standpoints do not only encourage followers to agree but can also make them dispute, decreasing the respect they have for the influencer.

P4: Influencer respect has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).

6.1.2.3 Similarity

Similarity is the S in the TEARS model and is the third attractiveness component of attractiveness. "*It symbolizes the degree to which an endorser matches an audience in terms of characteristics pertinent to the endorsement relationship – age, gender, ethnicity, etc.*" (Shimp, 2007). Also, Shimp (2003, 2010) argues that similarity between the audience and the endorser is particularly essential when there is a broad range of services or products on offer and where followers are heterogeneous. A reason why this may be the effect was hypothesized by Desphande & Stayman (1994). They believe that this occurs because people trust individuals who are like them. Because of this, they tested and found that endorsers' ethnic status influences the follower's perception of trustworthiness and, as a result, brand attitudes.

Perceived attractiveness is accomplished with any one of these attributes and does not entail that a celebrity encompasses all these simultaneously (Shimp, 2007). However, an endorser who has these three sub-attributes would have a substantially increased endorsement potential. For our paper, we will investigate the effect of the three different attributes of attractiveness to explore why followers follow an influencer on Instagram and what effect this might have on their purchase intention towards the products or services that the influencer endorses. Therefore, our propositions are:

P5: Influencer similarity has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).

6.2 Connection between Influencer and brand

The following paragraphs will use existing articles to build up the concept around the match-up hypothesis. Using Kamins (1988), McCracken (1989), and Till & Busler (2000) as a base for the explanation of the match between celebrity and endorser. Furthermore, the use of the match-up hypothesis in this research paper will concern influencers. The dimensions within this hypothesis explain in full regard the relationship between influencer and brand.

6.2.1 Match-up hypothesis

The match-up hypothesis explains the fit between a celebrity endorsement and the endorser. Petty et al. (1980) found that celebrity status was irrelevant for the evaluation of endorsed product. However, the average citizen liked the celebrity more than an average person, and they could still be a cue for the peripheral route (Petty et al. 1980:138).

As the elaboration likelihood model will be used in a brief regard, this section will briefly explain the model. The elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981) is a base of understanding high and low involvement products. Low involvement products are products with low capital value and reflect routine purchase decisions, i.e. chocolate bar, or peanut butter (Gu, Park, Konana, 2012). Conversely, high involvement products are products with high capital value, goods that are purchased after long and thoughtful consideration (Gu et al., 2012). Sustainable food products fall into the category of low involvement.

Furthermore, the central route is the first type of persuasion in the elaboration likelihood model. "*The central route most likely results from a person's careful and thoughtful consideration of the true merits of the information presented in support of an advocacy*" (Petty et al., 1986:125). Second, the "*peripheral route is most likely to result from some simple cue in the persuasion context (e.g. an attractive source) that induced change without necessitating scrutiny of the true merits of the information presented*". (Petty et al., 1986:125). An advertiser can use the central route, or the peripheral route to stimulate the consumer. The experiment conducted by Petty et al. (1980) was for a low involvement product, disposable razors. These results suggest that the peripheral route must be weighed more than the central route (Kahle & Homer, 1985).

The literature discusses variables of likability, physical attractiveness, and expertise concerning the fit. Petty et al. (1980) suggest that likability is a peripheral attribute to low involvement products. However, Kahle & Homer (1985) argue that if the attributes fit the product, the celebrity does not have to be likable if he or she is attractive. The example used is John McEnroe, which antagonized consumers, but was athletic and physically attractive. These attributes matched what the company wanted to be associated with and was effective (Kahle & Homer, 1985).

Several studies facilitate that a physically attractive source influence attitude change (Baker & Gilbert, 1977; Caballero & Price, 1984). Other studies conclude that expertise, and not physical attractiveness, influence attitudes (Maddox & Rogers, 1980). Physical attractiveness in advertising might influence attitude change on several levels. An attractive model might lure readers into an ad, the effect increasing the ad's involvement by transforming it into a source of information about the topic (Kahle & Homer, 1985). The study furthermore claims that if an attractive person claims to use a beauty product, the product might be assumed to be part of the beauty formula (Kahle & Homer, 1985).

Furthermore, Kamins (1988) suggests that the "*physical attractiveness of a celebrity endorser may only enhance both products- and ad-based evaluations if the product's characteristics "match-up" with the image conveyed by the celebrity*" (Kamins, 1988). An empirical link between an attractiveness-related product, and the use of a 'physically attractive celebrity' (Tom Selleck) and the effect on the spokesperson's credibility and attitude towards an ad, relative to the use of an unattractive celebrity has been set. Consequently, there was no result when the product was not 'attractiveness-related' (Kamins, 1988).

The overall link between physical attractiveness and increased brand attitudes and purchase intention is elusive (Till & Busler, 2000). The lack of evidence implies that the physical attractiveness has a limited effect on products that are unrelated to attractiveness. Therefore, attitudes toward sustainable food brands are, not best influenced by attractive influencers according to Till & Busler (2000). It may, however, affect followers if the influencer is fit when endorsing a healthy product. Which is similar to the Tom Selleck example. As for physical attractiveness, it might increase the follower's involvement in the product, and by that, use the peripheral route to influence as explained by Kahle & Homer (1985).

Expertise is the second primary component of the fit match-up hypothesis. Expertise has been considered relevant in understanding celebrity endorsement effects (Ohanian, 1991). In Ohanian's (1991) study, gender and age had no significant effect on respondent's purchase intention or credibility. Expertise, however, significantly explained the purchase intention, regardless of the product was for personal use or a gift. Till & Busler's (2000) study supported this explanation and

concluded that expertise, rather than attractiveness, may be appropriate for matching products and celebrities.

The fit between brand and celebrity have a positive effect from an expert source, in terms of persuasion for low involvement products (McGuire, 1985). The study indicates that expertise is more critical for matching brands and influencers to low involvement products. Sustainable food products are low involvement, hence there is a theoretical match. Additionally, athletes "fit" better for products related to athletic performance. This fit is related to expertise, as the consumer will perceive the athlete to be knowledgeable within the subject (Till & Busler, 2000).

In practical regards, there has been a critique of the match-up hypothesis due to its simplistic nature. A study conducted by Ang & Dubelaar (2006), looking at ten previous studies for this match-up effect, found mixed results. Of the five studies done on match-up, with purchase intention as the dependent variable (Kamins 1990, Kamins & Gupta 1994; Koernig and Page 2002; McDaniel 1999), only one of the studies gave significant results, being Kahle and Homer 1985 (Ang & Dubelaar 2006). The critique aims towards the neglect of brands and their effect, a lack of 'degrees of fit,' and no real explanation on what the term 'fit' is.

6.2.2 Propositions based on match-up hypothesis

The fit match-up hypothesis will measure the connection between influencers and brands in this research paper. The hypothesis states that there needs to be a natural fit between brands and celebrities (Till & Busler, 2000; McCracken, 1989). In this case, celebrities will be replaced with influencers, as we suspect similar dynamics with influencers as is with celebrities.

To investigate the influencer – brand connection of the FIB-model, the match-up hypothesis will be used as a foundation. The match-up effect is essential for this research paper, as it helps explain the research question of why and how followers are influenced by endorsed content. As elaborated on, there are several dimensions to the match-up hypothesis. The two primary components are physical attractiveness and expertise and how they affect the fit between brand and endorser.

By collecting primary data to gain insight into this relationship we hope to better explain the main components affecting consumers in an influencer context. The purpose of these propositions is to examine the effects of physical attractiveness and expertise and its effect on match-up for endorser/brand. Additionally, the role of the fit variable (Fit, belongingness) will be examined to determine the match up effects in an influencer context.

Till & Busler (2000) point to the role of 'fit' or 'belongingness' as a driver for the match-up process. The process of fitting an endorser and brand builds an associative link between the two. The literature refers to the fit as: belongingness, relatedness, fit, or similarity (Till & Busler, 2000). Based on Till & Busler's statements, we wish to examine the term to get a better understanding of why an endorser may fit better with a brand. Therefore, our sixth proposition is:

P6: A fit between influencer and brand will lead to positive attitudes and purchase intention towards an influencer's endorsed brand

Second, to specify the propositions to variables that have been widely tested in the literature, we will examine the effect expertise has on the fit, and ultimately attitudes and purchase intention (Maddox & Rogers, 1980; Ohanian, 1991; Till & Busler, 2000). Therefore, the seventh proposition is:

P7: A fit between an influencer and brand based on expertise will lead to positive attitudes and purchase intention towards an influencer's endorsed brand

Third, the second variable that will be examined because of its wide use in the literature, is physical attractiveness (Baker & Gilbert, 1977; Caballero & Price, 1984; Kahle & Homer, 1985). The effects the variable has on the fit between endorser and brand for our sector will be determined. Therefore, the eight proposition is:

P8: A fit between an influencer and brand based on physical attractiveness will lead to positive attitudes and purchase intention towards an influencer's endorsed brand

6.3 Connection between followers and brands

Brand equity can be defined in many ways. Yoo & Donthu (2001) define it is as the difference when consumers choose between an unbranded product and a focal branded product given the same level of product features. While Stephen King of the WPP Group explains it as; *"A product is something that is made in a factory; a brand is something that is bought by a customer. A product can be copied by a competitor; a brand is unique. A product can be quickly outdated; a successful brand is timeless."* (Aaker, 1991, p.16).

Furthermore, the consumer-based perspective concentrates on "customer mind-set" and is described with such construct as loyalties, attachments, associations, awareness, and attitudes (K. L. Keller & Lehmann, 2001). Several different models are mostly used by scholars and marketers (Atilgan, Akinci, Aksoy, & Kaynak, 2009). However, the two most prominent are Keller's brand equity model, which concentrates on the differential impact of brand knowledge on consumer reaction of the marketing of a brand (Kevin Lane Keller, 1993). The other prominent model, which we will use in this paper is Aaker 1991. There are five components of Aaker's model: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other proprietary. The brand equity model of Aaker (1991) can be used in a different model such as financial brand equity. However, we will focus on the customer-based brand equity of Aaker's model. Brand equity is defined by Aaker (1991) as the value that consumers associate with a brand. It is the consumers' opinion of the supremacy of a product that has the brand name in comparison to other brands. Brand equity refers to consumers' perception rather than any objective indicators (Lassar, Mittal, & Sharma, 1995).

6.3.1 Brand awareness

Awareness is a crucial element identified in practically all brand equity models (Aaker, 1991; Agarwal & Rao, 1996; Kevin Lane Keller, 1993, 2006; Krishnan, 1996; Maio Mackay, 2001). Aaker identifies some key factors that compile what brand awareness is. They are brand recognition, brand recall, top of mind, brand dominance, brand knowledge, and brand opinion. However, brand awareness can be defined by the ability a customer can recognize and recall a brand under different circumstances that link the brand logo, symbol, and name to specific associations in their memory (Aaker, 1991). Brand awareness can be created in many ways. One example is buying ad spaces on

T.V, radio, newspapers, and other traditional methods. More and more, brands are buying digital space on online media platforms to try and get noticed.

Furthermore, there is creating brand awareness through publicity and word-of-mouth. In newer times, brands are trying to get brand awareness through social media platforms by either creating their own page or paying other pages to endorse their brand. The most effective way depends on what type of brand and what the target audience.

Awareness, although a critical brand asset, cannot by itself create sales, especially for a new product. However, brand recognition is the fundamental first step in the communication task. It usually is inefficient to try to communicate brand attributes until a name is established with the ability to associate the attributes (Aaker, 1991).

P9: Brand awareness has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).

6.3.2 Brand associations

Brand associations consist of all brand-related attitudes, beliefs, experiences, images, perceptions, thoughts, feelings (Kotler & Keller, 2009), and anything that you can link with the brand (Aaker, 1991). The more the consumer is exposed to the association of the brand, the stronger the connection and the brand become. A well-positioned brand will have an appealing position favored by powerful associations. Some desirable attributes that consumers link with the brand are what can differentiate them from competitive brands. In some product classes such as perfumes, wines, and clothing, the numerous brands are not distinguishable by most consumers. Associations of the brand name can then play a crucial part in separating one brand from another (Aaker, 1991). Examples of this differentiation are that Coca-Cola is red, and Pepsi Max is black. Also, they can be associated with red Christmas trailers and Santa, and the other one with famous football players and almost anyone could connect which association is connected to which brand.

Furthermore, many brand associations include customer benefits or product attributes that offer a reason to buy and use the brand. They are a starting point for the consumer's purchase decisions and brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991). Some of the other factors that are connected to brand associations are;

social image, the consumer's perception of the esteem in which the consumer's social group holds the brand (Lassar et al., 1995), Perceived value, *"the perceived brand utility relative to its costs, assessed by the consumer and based on simultaneous considerations of what is received and what is given up to receive it"* (Lassar et al., 1995, p.13), country of origin, *"the place, region or country to which the brand is perceived to belong by its customers"* (Thakor & Lavack, 2003, p.23), and corporate social responsibility, which is one of the more crucial factors nowadays with the emergence of generations z. CSR can be defined in terms of legal, ethics, or from an instrumentalist perspective where the corporate image is the prime concern (McAdam & Leonard, 2003).

P10: Brand associations has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).

6.3.3 Perceived Quality

"Perceived quality is the customer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority that is different from objective quality" (Zeithaml, 1988, p. 3). Contrary, objective quality refers to the quality controls processes verifiable nature of products/services, measurable technical aspect of a product. However, high objective quality does not automatically add to brand equity (Anselmsson, Johansson, & Persson, 2007). Because it is not possible for consumers to make correct and complete assessments of the objective quality, they use quality attributes that they associate with quality (Bello Acebrón & Calvo Dopico, 2000; Zeithaml, 1988). A consumer regularly will not have the motivation to collect and sort out the information that may give an objective look at the quality of the given application. Alternatively, the information may simply be unavailable. Or, the customer may not have the resources or ability to collect or evaluate it. Therefore, perceived quality becomes essential.

The perception of perceived quality can be split into two groups of factors that are extrinsic attributes and intrinsic attributes (Steenkamp, 1997; Zeithaml, 1988). The intrinsic attributes are associated with the physical attributes of a product (e.g., appearance, flavor, color, and form); conversely, extrinsic attributes are associated with the product. However, not the physical component (e.g., price, production information, brand name, a stamp of quality, packaging, and store) (Bernués, Olaizola, & Corcoran, 2003).

P11: Perceived quality has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).

6.3.4 Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty can be defined as the attachment that a customer has to a brand (Aaker, 1991). Furthermore, brand loyalty lives on different levels. Some might be very loyal and never consider other options, while some might buy or use the product most of the time. Behavioral loyalty is connected to customer behavior in the marketplace when they purchase the same product a number of repeated times (Kevin Lane Keller, 2006) or their commitment to re-purchase the brand as the consumer's primary choice (Oliver, 1999). Cognitive loyalty means that a brand comes up first in a consumer's' mind when they need to buy something. Thus, a brand should aim to become the respondents' first choices (cognitive loyalty) and is thus purchased repeatedly (behavioral loyalty) (Kevin Lane Keller, 2006).

However, Aaker (1991) identifies five levels of brand loyalty. From the lowest level to the highest, it is switchers/price sensitive (no brand loyalty), satisfied/habitual buyer (no reason to change), satisfied buyer (with switching costs), likes the brand (considers it a friend), and committed buyer. These five levels are stylized; they do not always appear in the pure form, and others could be conceptualized. For example, some customers can have some mixture of different levels, i.e., buyers who like the brand and have switching costs (Aaker, 1991).

P12: Brand loyalty has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).

7.0 Research Methodology

This section will introduce the methodology for this research paper. All choices in research methodology will be justified as the research philosophy and approach are set. This section will continue by explaining research purpose, research strategy, data collection, analysis procedures, time horizons, the credibility of findings, research ethics, and research limitations. This approach is based on Saunders's (2009) research onion model presented in 1.2. An overall in-depth explanation of our thought process prior, during, and after the research was conducted is made.

7.1 Research purpose

As the research philosophy and approach was presented in the intro part of the thesis, this section will elaborate on strategy and approach to expand on our research approach. Saunders et al. (2009) classify three different purposes within the research methods, exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (Saunders et al., 2009:139). As previously mentioned, this thesis is using the exploratory approach. This approach, according to Robson (2002:59), is valuable to seek new insights, to establish what is happening, and to ask questions and assess phenomena from a new perspective (Robson 2002:59). According to Saunders et al. (2009), there are three ways to perform exploratory research, (1) Reviewing existing literature on the subject. (2) Conducting interviews with industry experts on the prominent subject. (3) Holding focus group interviews. The exploratory approach is elastic and is dynamic as the research paper discovers new insights. These insights can change the overall direction of the thesis. Descriptive studies differ in that it wants to portray persons, events, and situations in an accurate manner (Robson, 2002:59). The exploratory approach "*is particularly useful if you wish to clarify your understanding of a problem, such as if you are unsure of the precise nature of the problem*" (Saunders et al. 2009:139). The latter statement is fitting for the problem statement of this research paper. We want to clarify individual relationships that have not previously been studied in detail. Assumptions have been made, but the uncertainty of the precise nature of the problem remains unknown. Primary data must, therefore, be collected and analyzed before we can understand the problem entirely. Furthermore, exploratory research is worth doing to open for more academic

interest and studies. Additionally, sometimes, "*It may show that the research is not worth pursuing!*" (Saunders et al., 2009:139). Lastly, exploratory research does not mean the absence of direction, and it means that the focus starts broad and becomes progressively narrower as the research progresses (Saunders et al., 2009: 139).

7.2 Strategy

In this section, an explanation of the strategy is presented. The strategy aims to answer our research question and builds on the methodology purpose defined in the previous paragraph. The primary sources of research strategy are experiments, surveys, case studies, action research, grounded theory, ethnography, archival research. (Saunders et al., 2009:141). Each of these strategies can be utilized for exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory research (Yin, 2003). Some of these strategies can be allocated to one approach. Saunders et al. (2009) tell us, however, that this is unduly simplistic, and that no research strategy is inherently superior or inferior to others.

Furthermore, different strategies will be explained briefly. The purpose of an experiment is to study causal links. The causal link can be a change in an independent variable, and if that produces a change in a dependent variable (Hakim, 2000). The most straightforward experiments look for links between two variables (Saunders et al., 2009). The survey strategy is most often used in the deductive approach. The strategy is usually used to answer 'who, what, where, how much, and how many' type of questions. Surveys are popular for exploratory and descriptive research, as they allow for the collection of sizable datasets to analyze (Saunders et al. 2009:144). A case study is "*A strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence*" (Robson 2002:178). Case study differs completely from experiments, as experiments have a highly controlled context, while case studies are not. 'Action research' emphasis the research in action as opposed to research about action (Brannick & Coghlan, 2005). In this strategy, the researcher and subjects work together to create change in the status quo (Saunders et al. 2009:147). The grounded theory should be viewed as 'theory building' through a combination of induction and deduction (Saunders et al. 2009:149). The data is collected over several series of observations, and the strategy is especially helpful to predict and explain behavior and has an emphasis on building and developing theory (Saunders et al. 2009:149). Ethnography's purpose is to describe and explain the social world and how the research subjects

would explain and describe this world. This strategy is rooted in anthropology and is time-consuming (Saunders et al. 2009: 149). The updated term for ethnography in an internet setting is Nethnography and refers to the observation of the subject online.

The context of our thesis is not focused on quantitative data, experiments, or theory building. We conduct a case study on the phenomenon of influencers in the context of Instagram and limit it to the sustainable food sector. A case study has a considerable ability to generate answers to 'why?', and 'how?', thus a case study is suitable for our research question (Saunders et al., 2009: p. 146). Case studies are often used in exploratory research and the data collection method is likely to be used in combination, which may include interviews and observations (Saunder et al., 2009). When using a case study strategy, it is recommended that we use a triangulation. A triangulation refers to the use of different data collection techniques within one study to ensure that the data is telling us what we think it is (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 146).

As a triangulation is recommended by Saunders, our research method will gather primary data using in-depth interviews, focus group and ethnography. Moreover, a multiple case approach is used based on the research question targeting a sector and not a specific brand. Multiple case approach is also the recommended strategy by Yin (2003). Furthermore, we are focusing on a holistic case study strategy as opposed to focusing on a specific sub-unit (Saunders et al. 2009:147).

A case study may be perceived 'unscientific', but Saunders (2009) argues that a case study can be very worthwhile way of exploring and adding to existing theories. It can additionally be a source of new research questions (Saunders et al., 2009: p. 147).

Ethnography is used to supplement primary data to our problem statement to get the triangulation effect. As the purpose of ethnography is to "*explain the social world, the research subjects inhabit in the way in which they would describe and explain it"* (Saunders et al., 2009:149). We deem this strategy fitting for our research objective. We are researching the phenomenon in the context it occurs to get an unbiased observation of the reality of the subject (Saunders et al., 2009:149). As the nature of our research question is online, ethnography will be referred to as "Nethnography". It is defined as understanding social interaction in contemporary digital communications context (Sayal, 2019).

To summarize; the method strategy for the research paper will be a multi-case, holistic case study focusing on the phenomenon of Instagram influencers in the sustainable food sector. Additionally, nethnography will be used as the recommendation from Saunders (2009) is that a case study use a triangulation.

7.3 Data collection techniques & analysis procedures

In the previous section we explained what type of strategy would fit our research methodology the best. While in this section the explanation on how it is going to be executed is described. There are two main options regarding which method of data collection to use. Firstly, the qualitative method is typically synonymous with non-numerical data, such as focus groups and in-depth interviews (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Secondly, the other method is the quantitative method, which is synonymous with data gathering techniques, for example, questionnaires, that can create numerical datasets (M. Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). A researcher can use either one or both methods, and this is referred by mono or multiple method choice (Saunders et al., 2009). To choose a mono method, the researcher decides only to use one data-gathering technique and a matching analyzing procedure. While choosing a multiple method implies that the researcher can use more than one method for analyzing and gathering data. What is different from mono and multiple method research choice is explained by Saunders (2009): *"more than one data collection technique is used associated analysis techniques, but this is restricted within either a quantitative or qualitative world view."* If a study gathers data through in-depth interviews and focus groups, which then is analyzed using a non-numerical procedure, several methods are used together. However, mixed methods allow the liberty to combine qualitative and quantitative methods. This can be accomplished either through mixed-method research where *"quantitative data are analyzed quantitatively, and qualitative data are analyzed qualitatively"* (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 154); or, otherwise, by the use of mixed-model research where quantitative data can be analyzed through qualitative procedures and qualitative data can be measured through quantitative procedures (Saunders et al., 2009). The advantage of a multiple methods style is that it can give more opportunities for answering research questions. This is likely since various methods fit various purposes better than others (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

We chose to utilize qualitative methods, multi-method, data collection techniques to gather the necessary data needed to answer and discuss the mentioned research question because we value the

interaction with respondents more than the information expressed through an anonymous questionnaire. This is in part due to our philosophical assumptions as well as our own espoused values. Additionally, qualitative methods are most suited to answer the research question due to the exploratory approach. Therefore, the methods we will use are in-depth interviews from experts in different fields to understand the brands and the influencers, focus groups to understand the consumer, and nethnography to understand the interaction between follower and brand on a digital platform.

For us to understand the full picture of the connection between brand, influencer, and follower, there were several different data sources that we wanted to utilize. First, our in-depth interviews were to understand the brand aspect accurately. We needed to know more about how and why brands chose influencers to endorse their products. Furthermore, we wanted to understand how they evaluate success or failure and what they expect to get in return from their investments. To do this, we had two in-depth interviews with professionals within their field of influencer endorsement. One of the in-depth interviews was conducted on an influencer manager at Nestlé. This was to get an understanding of how bigger firms with more budget choose their influencers and how they corporate and how they view a successful endorsement.

Furthermore, we interviewed two influencers. One was a micro-influencer and worked on their platform part-time. The other influencer was bigger and had also diversified on other platforms. To get an in-depth interview with them would give us great insight into the mind of their internal discussion on whether to accept a brand's offer of endorsement and it would have a beneficial impact on their Instagram profile. Thereby opening their thoughts and reasoning behind their choices and the consequences of how they interact with their audience.

Secondly, we held one focus group to understand the impact brand endorsement has on the followers of the influencers that are endorsed. Furthermore, it would help us understand why followers choose to follow specific influencers and whether the brands they endorse are likely to be tried or remembered in any way. We also did a nethnography, an online research method originating from ethnography, and is understanding social interaction in contemporary digital communications contexts (Sayal, 2019), to enter the world of online interaction between the influencer and their followers. This was done to find the reason behind the perception of the influencer or the reason behind the loyalty and trust of an influencer.

For our interview, we decided to have a semi-structured typology so that we could cover and get answers and thoughts on all the topics we wanted to cover. Nevertheless, to allow the interviewee to talk freely about their experience contained within the asked about topic. This allowed us as interviewers to add additional questions if required to explore within each topic. The interviews were all accomplished over skype due to reasons that are mentioned in the limitation. However, we managed to keep the conversation light and free flowing, to the extent that it is possible over a video call. Our roles by one being the interviewer and the other the note-taker was organized to make sure not to impose many pauses and confusion.

Due to the reasons mentioned in the limitation, we also had to conduct the focus group online. It usually is recommended to have between four to eight people (M. Saunders et al., 2009). However, we decided only to have three to have more natural control of the environment and to increase the willingness to speak. In an online space, it is more difficult for the moderator to control who should talk since there the only way to communicate is to speak and not with other signals as in using body language or looking. This can create some difficulties in the flow of the conversation (Murgado-Armenteros, Torres-Ruiz, & Vega-Zamora, 2012). However, a digital focus group enables a "safe" space for the interviewee's, as they get to be in the comfortable space of their own home, or choosing, and therefore, they may be open to talk more (Murgado-Armenteros et al., 2012).

Concerning the nethnography, we followed two influencers to understand how they connect and communicate with their audience. We also wanted to understand how often they post and what their posts consist of to relate to the data we get from the interviews. One of the influencers was a micro-influencer with around 6.000 followers, and the other one has around 95.000 followers. They both can be categorized as promoting a healthy lifestyle through food, and they post about what they eat and recipes as well as blogging/vlogging about their life. We tracked everything the influencer did on their Instagram page from the 13th of January to the 7th of April. This included all their posts, comments to their posts, and the influencer's responses to the comments of their comments they received.

Furthermore, we also identified if the post was an ad and what type of post it was. From the stories they posted, we compiled them, and categorized them, and counted the number of ads they show. The

study of nethnography is not just to collect numbers and compile data. However, it is to understand the community that is built around the influencer's page. Nethnography is also an appropriate method for the co-creation of value within social media places and online communities. "*Nethnography recognizes that the cultures of online communities are constructed by the members who are invested in their development; hence their description and any construction of theory should be derived from the community members in question*" (Costello, Witney, Green, & Bradshaw, 2012, p.2). Together with the in-depth interviews and the focus groups, we believe that all the data collected can give us valuable and reliable data to conclude and discuss the research question.

7.4 Time Horizon

Two types of time horizons explain the amount of time that is decided to be used for a research study and the effects of those choices. The first is called longitudinal, which is explained as a diary and has an extended time period. The other one, which is the one relevant for our study, is cross-sectional. Cross-sectional is explained as a snapshot in time and is a shorter study in the essence of time (Mark Saunders et al., 2009).

Since our study is bounded by time, we focus and discuss primary data that is collected in a time-constrained timeframe. However, the data we are collecting is in-depth of what the perception is around the use of influencers. On the other hand, we are unable to return the sample and replicate the research to review whether the data is still valid. Thus, the data we have analyzed and collected is a representation of a snapshot of time.

7.5 Credibility

This section will discuss the validity and reliability of our research findings. Assessing the quality of research is vital if the findings are to be utilized are to be put into practice. Reliability refers to the extent to which analysis procedures or data collection techniques will yield truthful findings (M. Saunders et al., 2009). It can be measured by asking these three questions (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2018): (1) Will similar observations be reached by other observers? (2) Is there transparency in how sense was made from the raw data? (3) Will the measures yield the same results

on other occasions? We believe our study is reliable since our method of questioning is as unbiased as we can. We also interview all the different sides of the story to the best of our knowledge and resources. Since on the influencer side, we focused on one micro and one more famous influencer. On the expertise from the brand side, we interview someone from a more prominent firm that has frameworks and experience. Lastly, we have also interviewed followers, and they had diverse opinions as well.

However, there were four threats we knew in advance but are hard to remove from all data collection knowingly. The first, which is subject or participant error, meaning that the mood of the interviewees can be different from day to day. Secondly, there might be subject or participant bias, meaning that they say either what they think we want to hear or whom they collaborate with. Third, observer error. There might be something that we miss or could not understand the deeper meaning behind the context of their answers and answers we could have made them explain more in-depth. Fourth, Observer bias, meaning that the researchers might have a different way of interpreting the data than other researchers with other backgrounds. These four are threats that might come to effect, especially in qualitative data gathering, however, by being aware of the threats, we can challenge ways to combat them (Mark Saunders et al., 2009). Some of the methods we used to mitigate the threats of observer error were by having one person ask the questions from the interview guide. This was to safeguard that the crucial questions were not asked differently so that it would not be misunderstood. To mitigate observer bias, we review our findings together and, as a pair, concluded how we should understand each response, so that we would not have two different understandings from the different responses.

Validity can be defined as how accurately the account represents participants' realities of the social phenomena and is credible to them (Schwandt, 2007). Regarding the validity of our findings, we have unfortunately not triangulated with another method, such as quantitative data, to confirm if the findings are really what they appear to be.

For the secondary data, we conducted a critical review of the literature to maintain the relevance of which sources we gathered data from and the quality of those sources. Thus, we only used secondary data that we found applicable to our research and which came from trustworthy sources, such as published books from well-known publishers, peer-reviewed journals, periodicals from credible new media, and industry experts.

Generalizability or external validity is if the research applies to other research settings or real-life scenarios. Since our study is not a case about a firm, but rather a general study on influencers, followers, and brands, in the sustainable food industry, we believe that the research should be applicable for other research or indeed for firms to use. However, we do focus on a niche topic that is sustainable food products, and we have not tested whether it is applicable or not.

7.6 Ethics

The study has a research design that should not subject those we are researching (the research population) to embarrassment, harm, or any other material disadvantage. The people we have interviewed were aware of the recordings and were told in the introduction before the interview that if any of the questions should not be answered du to any contractual or personal opinions, then they could just say "pass," and we move on without discussion. Concerning our interview questions, we have not asked individuals about sensitive topics that would make them feel unpleasant. Instead, we have stuck strictly to their professional options. As a result, we consider our research to have been ethical throughout the research process.

7.7 Limitations

The following section outlines the limitations which have influenced the study. The subjectivity of the qualitative data analyzed limits the generalizability of the findings, and thus future research may lead to different results. Additionally, other sociocultural factors, needs, personal attitudes, value, and prejudice of the researchers might have affected the objectivity of the data (Nahrin, 2015).

Furthermore, due to the virus Covid-19, all interviews and focus groups have been conducted digitally. The effect of this is that the interview might not be as personal and interactive as a face-to-face interview. However, our assumption is that most young people are accustomed to speaking online. We also tried to get an interview with the CEO and founder of Raw Halo to get a perspective from a smaller brand whose primary strategy for marketing and building brand awareness through influencer endorsement.

Additionally, due to the nature of the governmental advice of social distancing, we focused on having more in-depth interviews and extending the days on our nethnography rather than collecting more focus groups. However, we believe that the data we received from the focus group gave us enough data.

We started the research paper with focusing on Raw Halo as the brand we wanted to measure the influencers effect against. Several elements affected this decision. First, we found that the nature of the Instagram-influencer in the sustainable food industry use multiple brand endorsements. This approach made it non-effective to try to narrow the scope down to a single brand. Second, our primary data source for choosing this brand were not able to provide us with primary data. These two reasons underline why we have a sector wide approach to the problem, instead of a brand specific one.

Introduction ⇨ Theory ⇨ Methodology ⇨ **Results** ⇨ Discussion ⇨ Conclusion
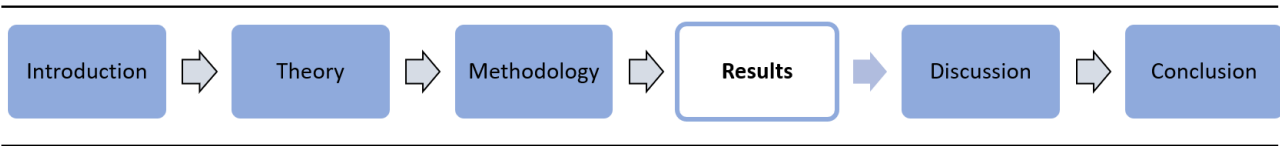
This section will present the results of our in-depth interview, focus group, and nethnography. The results are based on what the participants said, categorized to the different propositions. Some results may fit several propositions. Therefore, some of the examples are used more than once, but from different perspectives.

To give an overview, a brief introduction to our primary data sources will be made.

Radical Broccoli (Appendix A): Two girls running a popular Instagram profile with 22.900 followers. The profile focus on environmentally friendly, sustainable healthy living.

Solvor Nestle (Appendix B): Solvor is a brand manager for Nestle's and has experience from several sustainable food brands from a manager perspective. Solvor has firsthand experience with influencers from her previous position as an influencer manager. She has been a part of the selection process from a brand perspective.

Kaja (Appendix D and E): A woman running a micro influencer profile on Instagram with 6130 followers. The profile focuses on sustainable, vegan, healthy food. Kaja has been making food on Instagram for over five years and have much experience in the field.

Emilie Nutrition (Appendix F): A women running the largest Instagram profile in her niche with 97.100 followers. The profile focuses on sustainable, vegan, healthy food.

Focus group 1: The focus group participants consisted of: Andrea, 24-year-old woman from Norway, Kjartan, 27-year-old man from Norway, Ola, 26-year-old man from Norway.

Proposition 1: Influencer trustworthiness has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product)

The first proposition is based on trustworthiness, which is the first dimension in the TEARS model (Shimp, 2007). This section will outline what discoveries were made from the data collection that fit this dimension before discussing the findings further below in the discussion part.

During our interview with Kaja, she told us that trustworthiness is a crucial factor in the relationship between her as an influencer and her followers. She specifically told us that influencers that used too many posts with '#ads' in their content would lose the trust of their audience (Appendix D, 32:55). This is because she believed the more ads one has on one's profile, the more one loses trustworthiness. Her followers would believe that she was only active on her profile to make money instead of trying to inspire people (Appendix D, 34:05). She explained this as a 'cash-grab' and explained that there are many easy 'cash-grabs' an influencer can take. In her experience, it will ruin her image.

Kaja's primary strategy for building trustworthiness is to be aware of how many #ads she uses. Furthermore, she focuses on creating organic content, meaning content she is not paid for. Organic content is also closely related to the central values and image of her Instagram profile (Appendix D, 9:10, 11:18). This matches how Radical Broccoli explains that trustworthiness is about being authentic and genuine. If you promote a product, it should be a product you like and want to use. If it is a 'cash-grab,' it will shine right through, and this can result in followers losing trust in the influencer (Appendix A, 17:40). Radical Broccoli explains that their influence on their followers is very different depending on the follower. "*Some, we have zero influence over, others, too much [influence].*" (Appendix A, 15:00). They have received messages from followers that have changed their entire life due to their content (Appendix A, 15:00). Other followers have stopped using plastic bags in grocery shops, because of their influence.

Kaja explained that by using the products actively in her content, she gets better reactions from her followers. Rather than holding it in front of the camera and explaining why the product is good (Appendix D, 48:05). This is supported by observation from the Nethnography in appendix F, findings 2.0 and 3.0. She said that when her followers see '#ad' in the content she shares, the products

she promotes lose trustworthiness. They do not know if the product is of genuine interest or just a 'cash-grab.' Kaja's experience is that if she finds subtle ways of promoting brands without it being too obvious, she receives much better feedback and engagement on her content (Appendix D, 48:05). She brings the Helios brand as an example of a perfect match for her, as they are very flexible, and she can use their product in organic content. She describes the relationship as degrees from completely organic content, to completely organized by the brands (Appendix D, 42:40). Additionally, observations from appendix F support that engagement is higher on content where the brands are used in a core activity of making food. (Appendix F)

Furthermore, Radical Broccoli emphasizes the importance of being "*Open and honest about what they do not know*" (Appendix A, 27:50). This fosters trust in their relationship with their followers. They also focus on science-based research, and always try to base their responses to their followers on research, and not just on what they believe to be true. They want to simplify the science, so it is easier absorbable for their followers. They do this to increase the trust, but also to not *"make fools out of ourselves"* (Appendix A, 27:50). As if they spread the wrong information, they fear it will ruin or damage their brand as influencers (Appendix A 27:50).

Solvor provided an example of a successful collaboration they had with an influencer. She deemed the collaboration a big success. On a baby food brand, she collaborated with a single dad called Solberg on Instagram. She pointed to the connection between the brand and the influencer to explain this success. "*He had a high level of engagement with his followers, used humor, was honest and authentic*" (Appendix B, 18:40). He was honest about the struggles of being a single dad and admitted that he sometimes was too tired to make food to his child. He used this to create an endorsement for Solvor's product because it was easy to use, sustainable, and ecological, this was a "Good match," Solvor explained (Appendix B, 18:40).

Solvor explains research they have received in the Nestle corporation claim that 4/10 consumers would rather trust an influencer than friends and family (Appendix B, 28:40). The reason she explains is the strong credibility an influencer can have within a niche. She furthermore explains the relationship created between influencer and follower over time. The follower gets the feeling of knowing the influencer, like a friend. Radical Broccoli said in our interview that they assume it is easier for consumers (their followers) to buy something when someone they follow (on Instagram)

has endorsed the product (Appendix A, 07:45). This is often combined with the influencer having the 'expert' status within a subject – which enhances the credibility further (Appendix B, 28:40).

Kjartan explains that if the product shows positive outcomes, it does not matter if it comes from a friend or an influencer, it will weigh the same in his mind (Appendix C, 52:00). Andrea agrees to this point (Appendix C, 54:55). Kjartan explains that if he follows an influencer over a long period of time and like the influencer, he will consider the trustworthiness on the same level, he would as a friend (Appendix C, 53:00). Andrea needs proof on several levels and gives an example of a product she has seen many places. It was promoted on Instagram, in the newspapers. However, the factor that made Andrea try the product was when one of her friends bought it and said it worked (Appendix C, 54:55).

Ola explains that if an influencer promotes one product, and one can observe the influencer at a later point using another product, this will break trust in his eyes (Appendix C, 25:20). It depends on the person and the relationship, but Ola loses respect when people do things like that. On the contrary, he thinks that Emilie Nutrition builds trust by showing how products genuinely are, and how one can use them in one's life (Appendix C, 26:34). Ola adds that he feels a distaste when he can notice an influencer is trying to sell him something (Appendix C, 18:49). In Ola's eyes, he wants a promotion that is more authentic to the influencer and not something that is written by a corporation.

Kjartan thinks that you cannot build trust until you have followed an influencer over a long period of time (Appendix C, 26:34). He explains that you get to know the person and how they are. He also explains that influencers should not take endorsements they do not like. As promoting brands and products that they do not genuinely like breaks trust. Kjartan adds that by following an influencer you like over time, trust is created, as you get to know the person through their content (Appendix C, 30:00).

The results indicate that trustworthiness is essential for the relationship between the influencer and the follower. If there is a high amount of trust between influencer and follower, the better the reaction will be towards the brand that is endorsed. They are thereby increasing the purchase intention of the consumer. Based on the results, trust is built up over a certain period of time. The influencer must not

damage the trust by giving wrong or misleading information to their followers. Conversely, building trust by giving factual correct information and truthful personal experiences.

8.2 Proposition 2

Proposition 2: Influencer expertise has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).

The second proposition is based on the expertise of the influencer towards their followers and is the second dimension in the TEARS model (Shimp, 2007).

When Radical Broccoli was asked if they considered themselves experts within their field, they explained that they did. The reason they claimed to be experts within sustainable food is because they have read, studied, and asked countless questions about the subject over several years. They wrote a book, which took them over a year of research and writing. Thus, it was comparable to writing a thesis and said it could almost count as a master's degree. (Appendix A, 23:05)

Furthermore, they explain that they are on a journey with different phases of knowledge. In the beginning, they wanted to know 'the truth' about what was the best approach concerning food and the environment. Now, when they get a new follower, they are often at the begging of the same journey as they were. They wish to learn more about sustainability and the environment (Appendix A, 23:05, 12:45). Based on their extensive research and writing on the subject, and their focus on learning, they are in their own eye's experts.

Kaja explains that when her followers see all her content over a long period of time, people view her as an expert because she has extensive experience (Appendix D,11:48). Furthermore, she explains that her feedback also is positive from people who try it themselves. She concludes that seniority and experience are a form of expertise, and this she believes gives her credibility as an "expert" in her field (Appendix D, 12:20).

Solvor confirms in her experience, one reason why influencers are perceived as an expert within their fields is because they have tried so much different within their niche. They most likely know what is

best and have much information to explain their reasoning (Appendix B, 29:10). However, Solvor also mentions that it probably is affected by how scientific the product is or how serious the products are. She believes that the more scientific it is, the more the consumers trust the brand to give them the information and not the influencer (Appendix B, 30:00).

Ola clarifies that expertise is important, but that it is easy to be fooled or persuaded. He brings up the documentary "Game Changer" – a Netflix documentary promoting a vegan diet – and explained that the first time he saw the documentary, he was convinced (Appendix C, 30:40). Afterward, he researched the articles and studies used in the documentary and found that not everything was true. Much of it was framed in a way to convey the message of veganism. He explains that facts are framed and presented, and this can be deceiving (Appendix C, 30:40).

Furthermore, Ola describes that he thinks expertise is less necessary on Instagram, as the platform is more visual. He adds, *"It is easier to get things through on Instagram."* It is easier to go off the first impression and not be critical to the sources used (Appendix C, 32:33).

The discussion rose around Zlatan Ibrahimović (Famous soccer player) and his celebrity endorsement campaign with Samsung TV. Kjartan explained that he respected Zlatan, but he did not understand why he was endorsing Samsung TV's, and neither did the other two respondents (1:05:08). He explained that televisions are highly technical, and that Zlatan does not know more about it than any given person. Ola, however, came with a counterpoint that he believes many will be influenced because Zlatan has a lot of money, and can buy any TV he wants, but he chose Samsung TV (Appendix C, 1:05:40).

Kjartan explains that if the influencer were to make claims as to what product or diet is best, it is essential to have expertise – education within the subject (Appendix C, 33:18). This expertise can be subsidized by providing sources to articles and studies so Kjartan can look at it himself. He also explains that there is a difference if you just make food and recipes you do not need to provide scientific links (Appendix C, 35:00).

Andrea describes, like Kjartan, that if you want to make claims, you need expertise to gain her trust. If you want to hold an opinion for what is healthy, one needs the expertise to back it up. If you are

just making vegan food recipes, you do not need a Ph.D. (Appendix C, 36:18). Andrea explains that she, for example, trusts Kaja, based on her experience of making food on Instagram for several years (Appendix C, 37:20). Which again displays that trust is often built up over time when few mistakes are made.

To sum up, we find that expertise can be identified and have different meanings based on each follower. Some consider expertise as experience, and that experience gives the influencer the knowledge to share what products they think are effective. Others identified expertise as sharing information based on academic and proven data. Therefore, the data shows that expertise is an essential factor for increased brand attitudes and purchase intention.

8.3 Proposition 3

Proposition 3: Influencer physical attractiveness has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).

The third proposition is about the physical attractiveness of an influencer and how it may affect the attractiveness of that person, and therefore it may increase purchase intention. Physical attractiveness is the A in the TEARS model (Shimp, 2007).

During the focus group, questions about the influencer's appearance had any effect on the influencers that they follow. Ola explains that looks sell. Even if you think it does not affect you, it will to some level (Appendix C, 40:05). Ola explains that he believes physical attraction influence him a lot and refer to people selling different products and that there is a reason why they look attractive (Appendix C, 40:05).

Andrea agrees with Ola on this point and claims that it affects you even if you do not want it too. Andrea explains, "*You become more intrigued if you are looking at an attractive person*" (Appendix C, 40:50). Furthermore, she explains that someone would most likely rather buy a healthy product from an attractive looking person, than from someone that is out of shape (Appendix C, 40:50).

Furthermore, Ola explains that if you see an influencer using a product, where they, for example, have lost a lot of weight, it can have a very positive effect on him (Appendix C, 42:10). It does not have the same effect on him if someone that is already fit eats something to lose weight, as it will not show the same accomplishments. He concludes that if you can see an effect from using a product, it has significant influence (Appendix C, 42:10).

During the in-depth interviews, none of the influencers directly say that they may have followers based on their looks. However, Kaja does mention that the pictures that get the most engagement are posts of her, and posts of desserts (Appendix D, 13:00) even though photos of her does not indicate directly that it is because her followers find her physically attractive.

A result of our nethnography with Emilie nutrition is that most of her content is focused on the food and information about food. There are a few exceptions, but most of her posts that focus on a recipe show the finished meal and the ingredients and not herself. When the post is not recipe-related, then she often uses herself in the post. The same is for endorsed products. If the endorsed product is a food product, then she is not in the first photo in the post. The picture where she includes herself and the food, however, does not get more like or comments than posts that only show the food and the ingredients (Appendix F).

Furthermore, from the results from the nethnography, Kajaand had a higher engagement on content she showed her face in. These posts got a significantly higher engagement rate with 153 likes versus the average of 100,25 (Appendix E, 1.0).

To summarize, we did not get too much data from the influencers themselves, as this is a hard proposition to discuss. However, the data suggest that physical attractiveness does not increase brand attitudes and purchase intention itself; it is whether their appearance fits the product that they endorse. Although some suggestions also said that there might be subconsciously driven towards physically attractive people, it does not directly translate into brand attitude and purchase intention.

Proposition 4: Influencer respect has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).

As previously mentioned, the R in the TEARS model (Shimp, 2007) stands for respect and is the second component to attractiveness. Shimp (2007) defines it as admiration based on personal accomplishments or qualities. Influencers appealing personalities, their stands on important issues, and athleticism can be proved for admiration from followers.

In our expert interview with Radical Broccoli, it was prominent that their followers were engaged in the relationship. They have gained their follower's trust by being thorough and researching subjects before they recommend or share it with their followers. "*We have a stamp that we do our research, and this makes our followers believe in what we say*" (Appendix A, 9:10).

Radical Broccoli has a firm stand on the issue of global warming, and their followers want to learn and be inspired to cause less damage to the planet and ecosystems. Their followers are motivated by "*in-depth information, not just visuals*" (Appendix A, 13:30). They do not perceive themselves as climate activists, but that they have a more mainstream approach to sustainable food (Appendix A, 13:30). Radical Broccoli also explained that they had a personal relationship with many of their followers by using the chat function on Instagram frequently, and they always reply to questions from followers. (Appendix A. 26:10).

Additionally, Radical Broccoli explained that they had done pro bono work for organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO). They do pro bono work because the message is consistent with their profile's values. (Appendix A, 20:50). They believe the message is right, and they want to do their part in spreading it. Radical Broccoli believes this is exciting for their followers and what they want to see. (Appendix A, 20:50).

In our focus group, Kjartan explains that a motivation to follow someone might be that he wants to be more like them in some regard (Appendix C, 49:29). Kjartan admired personality traits from this influencer, but also what he had accomplished regarding nutrition and fitness, competing on a high level (Appendix C, 49:29).

One aspect related to the respect variable is appealing personalities. In our in-depth interview's statements surrounding personalities came up. Radical Broccoli explains that good content comes from personality. "*The more we talk to the camera and engage ourselves. It must be fun, it not we will not do it. Personality gives more engagement"* (Appendix A, 45:30). Kaja adds that younger audiences want influencers that are more available in the sense that they expose themselves more directly to the camera (Appendix D, 36:50). Influencer exert Solvor also adds to the personality point, and explain "*connection*" as: "*It seemed like he had a high level of engagement, with likes and comments, he shared giveaways with high attendance, and you could see that he talks directly to his followers, and you can also see it in the comment field"* (Appendix B, 21:30). These statements suggest personality and availability to be important perspectives in the respect variable.

The results suggest that respect has a positive effect on the respondents when concerning the influencers. Influencers like Radical Broccoli have accumulated a following of likeminded individuals with similar values and lifestyles (sustainable and environment focused). From the results, it was also prominent that personality was important in the follower-influencer relationship. More time in front of the camera meant a better connection with the followers our results suggest. As a result, respect can explain part of their attractiveness, as they have a firm stand on the climate issue. To conclude, respect builds attractiveness in the follower-influencer relationship, especially when the core values of the profile is related to an important issue.

8.5 Proposition 5

Proposition 5: Influencer similarity has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).

The similarity is the S in TEARS and is the final component of attractiveness. The similarity is defined as the degree an endorser matches its audience in characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity (Shimp, 2007).

In our in-depth interview with Kaja, she explained that the followers that most often contact and follow her, are women in the same age range as her, and that have the same interests (Appendix D,

17:40). Her followers are usually her age or older, and women with interests for sustainable vegan food. She explained, "*The followers messaging me is girls on my age, that have a similar interest for food, these can be influencers, but also regular people*" (Appendix D, 46:46).

Solvor could also provide insight into similarity, as Nestles brands used similarity in their decision-making process when deciding on which influencers to use (Appendix B, 10:00). She explains that influencers reflect their brand's values moreover, that the influencers they used for their brands were like the target audience they wanted to access. "*We seek influencers that are similar to the target group we wish to influence*" (Appendix B, 10:00). Solvor explained that their process is first to set a target audience for brands strategy. The next step is to find influencers that are like this group, and where the influencer's followers are within this target group. "*The influencer's values must reflect the [wanted] values of the brand or product*" (Appendix B, 9:20).

Radical Broccoli explained that their followers mirror themselves. They see themselves when communicating with their followers and claim, "*They are on a different place in the journey of attaining a more environmentally friendly lifestyle*" (Appendix A, 24:55). Their typical follower is female, around 25 years old, and have a hectic life studying or working. This follower still wants to do good for the environment but are not sure where to start. Their followers are "*Hungry to learn, and want to make the right decisions, but just do not know how*" (Appendix A, 24:00). Radical Broccoli builds trust with their followers by being open and honest, and they are not afraid to discuss personal subjects like mental health (Appendix A, 24:55). The followers of Radical Broccoli are like the influencers in age, gender, and nationality. It is also worth noting that interests and lifestyle similarities are present in this relationship.

From the focus group, Kjartan explains that he follows influencers on Instagram that have attributes that he wants to gain himself. Moreover, he explains that it does not always need to be similarities (Appendix C, 48:50). He agrees that another motivation to follow someone might be that he wants to be more like them in some regard (Appendix C, 49:29). Kjartan's statements suggest that consumers may follow and be influenced by influencers that possess attributes the consumer wants themselves.

To summarize, in our expert interviews, it became prominent that similarity was present. Kaja and Radical Broccoli both confirmed that their most common followers were the same age-range and

gender as them. Solvor from Nestle also confirmed that they used the similarity variable when assessing the right influencers for their brand. She explained that they tried to find influencers with similar values as the target group they wanted to reach (Appendix B, 10:00). These results are exciting and confirm that similarity is an important variable to use in influencer endorsement.

8.6 Proposition 6

Proposition 6: A fit between influencer and brand will lead to positive attitudes and purchase intention towards an influencer's endorsed brand

In the match-up hypothesis, an associative link is built between brand and endorser based on belongingness, relatedness, fit, or similarity (Till & Busler, 2000). This section will explore the fit between an influencer and brand, to get a better understanding of how it is defined and how it affects influencer endorsements based on our primary data collection.

Our results suggest that similarity in values and interests are important factors for describing the fit between influencer and brand. Kaja explain that the brands must have the same values as she has. They must be clean, vegan, and be consistent with what Kaja herself would buy in a store (Appendix D, 2:35).

Additionally, Kaja explains that she must want to work with the brand; this enhances the overall effect of the endorsement (Appendix D, 2:35). She gives an example of 'Prior Kylling' requesting a brand endorsement collaboration with her, which she declines, as the brand sells chicken, and Kaja's profile is vegan only (Appendix D, 4:53).

Kaja furthermore explains that if the values of the brand are consistent with hers, the next criteria are to look at and try the product, then decide based on reward and the amount of work required if she will do the endorsement (Appendix D, 15:05). From Kaja's comments, in her eyes, a match in an influencer and brand setting is based on 'values.' (Appendix D, 15:05). As Kaja's profile is focused on being vegan, clean, and sustainable, these are values she expects from brands that approach her.

Kaja adds that in her experience, her followers were similar to her in specific ways. Not physical similarity, but a similarity in values, interests, and motivations (Appendix D, 18:12).

Kaja gives an example of a successful brand endorsement deal. The sustainable food brands Helios and Supernature, which is owned by the same mother company, have collaborated with high success with Kaja for several years (Appendix D, 7:04). Kaja explains that she would have used these products even if they did not sponsor her, because they fit her profile that well. "*They just flow directly into what I do on my profile, and I would promote them regardless if I was paid or not*" (Appendix D, 7:12, 8:28). These brands fit Kaja's values and core activity. Additionally, the collaboration is better if there is more flexibility, no deadlines, and much freedom, she explains (Appendix D, 42:40).

The two brands have clean products that are visually appealing to look at, she explains (Appendix D, 7:59). On Helios' website we find the slogan "*Love for honest food*," and their vision is to make food choices easy regarding both taste, and that the food does good – for you (as a consumer), and the health of the planet earth (climate). Helios has a burning desire for this (Helios, 2020). Helios' message is consistent with Kaja's message. It is easy for Kaja to integrate their products into her food preparations. The statements on values are consistent with Radical Broccoli's view. When asked what makes a brand fit their profile, they replied: "*Must be doing something for the environment, they must at least start to go in that direction of sustainability. The brand must be a positive experience for our followers, and we must like the product*" (Appendix A, 38:30).

Kaja explains the possible negative side of influencer endorsement as: "*If you chose the wrong influencer… if you chose an irrelevant influencer for your target audience, that is a mistake*" (Appendix D, 44:54). We can assume that Kaja here is referring to the fit of the influencer concerning the brand they are promoting. Moreover, she confirms that this can have negative consequences for the brand.

The core activity for influencers in the sustainable food sector is making food recipes. Radical Broccoli explains that "*The further from our core activity [the endorsement is], the less satisfied the brand is and the less engagement*" (Appendix A, 17:40). An example of an endorsement that did not go well was with a brand providing photo albums. It just was not a good match. On the other hand, they promoted vegan sausages for Seven-Eleven. They do not eat it themselves, but they thought it

would be a good alternative for their followers instead of eating meat (Appendix A, 18:40). Their followers overall appreciated this endorsement as many like to eat sausages, but do not want to eat meat. The Seven-Eleven endorsement was a success because it related to the core values of their profile.

Radical Broccoli further explains that they do not take 'easy cash' deals and gives an example of 'Betakarotene.' Betakarotene is a brand promoted by influencers with lower consumer credibility and is often considered a 'cash grab.' Radical Broccoli are very picky and gave an example where a brand approached them to promote vitamin bears. On the surface, this can seem fitting to the image of Radical Broccoli (Sustainable, environmentally friendly, healthy), but as the duo did more research into the product, they discovered that the vitamin bears contained 90% sugar. Sugar is unhealthy and inconsistent with their values. It was something they could not endorse to their followers (Appendix A, 38:30). They explain that their high credibility comes from their willingness to do thorough research.

Radical Broccoli elaborated on a collaboration that did not go so well based on their fit as influencers and the brand they endorsed. The collaboration was with a high-quality brand called Villeroy & Boch, that sell premium porcelain dinnerware sets. They explained that: "*It was well paid, but we felt the response [from the followers] was not very good, our audience is too young for quality dishes*" (Appendix A, 35:30). Radical Broccoli explained that if their audience were 10-15 years older, they thought the endorsement would be a better fit, and the response better. The response they perceive is the typical variables, likes, and comments, but also link clicks, and response from the brand itself. The endorsement campaign was a miss on the age group of their audience.

Radical Broccoli was asked about which endorsements received the best engagement response. They mentioned Bergans as a brand that immediately requested a new campaign next season due to the success of their endorsement. "*They were very pleased [with the endorsement] and requested a new campaign next season"* (Appendix A, 16:10). Radical Broccoli adds "*We started to use the products and felt the quality and how good it was. People love Bergans*" (Appendix A, 34:00). They received much engagement from this campaign and good sales numbers. "*There have been good numbers. We noticed when the brand asked us for another campaign*" (Appendix A, 16:10). The campaign resonated with their followers and the campaign was a success from Radical Broccoli and Bergan's

standpoint. The duo also mentioned that they could see the amount of product sold through their links. They do, however, admit it can be hard to measure accurately. "*It can take a long time before you buy the product, and it is hard to say what all the factors are*" (Appendix A, 16:10).

Another strong endorsement was with Tise – a secondhand treasures app selling secondhand fashion items. Radical Broccoli explained the reason behind the success as "*We have the same tone, and they make a lot of weird and fun content*" (Appendix A, 40:25). Tise, like Radical Broccoli, is not afraid to be authentic and unique. Their values are also consistent around the climate issue. They were reusing fashion items as opposed to buying new clothes regularly. Radical Broccoli explained that they had much engagement on food endorsements, from both food products and restaurants.

Another success story was with Øyafestivalen, a festival that takes place outside Oslo in the summertime (Appendix A, 40:25). The festival has a focus on the environment, and their values are consistent in that regard. What connects these as success stories for Radical Broccoli is that they are related to the core value of their profile – sustainability and environment.

Solvor from Nestle explained that "*If they [the consumer] follow the influencer, and the brand uses them [for brand endorsement], there is a higher chance to have a stronger influence on the customer*" (Appendix B, 27:15). She further explains that "*From a typical Facebook ad, we do not get even close to the same engagement as we do with influencers*" (Appendix B, 27:15). Here Solvor directly compares influencers to another digital marketing method and claim that the engagement is superior when using influencer marketing. She adds that "*The influence is stronger if it is done right [the influencer marketing]*" (Appendix B, 27:15). These comments suggest an increase in effect if the fit between endorser and brand is high.

Solvor from Nestle explained that from a brand perspective: "*The values of the product must mirror the values of the influencer*" (Appendix B, 07:45). She gives an example of one of their premium food products that an influencer endorsed. These influencers are a couple she refers to as 'hipster parents.' They look good, but not 'pitch-perfect'; they chose eco-friendly and sustainable high-quality products (Appendix B, 07:45). Solvor explains that in their process of choosing influencers, they first choose the right values they want the brand to be associated with, then they try to find influencers that match these values (Appendix B, 09:20).

Solvor also gives an example of an influencer that did not fit their image as a brand. The influencer had many followers, but the content consisted of alcohol-consuming pictures with friends and other vulgar pictures that were not a good fit for their brands. "*It reflected poorly with the brand's image*" (Appendix B, 13:10).

The results suggest that the fit from an endorser-brand standpoint is based on similar values in an influencer context. Similarity in values provides a better fit between the influencers we interviewed and the brands they endorse. Similarities in age, gender, and values are described as creating the fit. Environmentally friendly, sustainable, and healthy brands had a better success rate with influencers that had the same values on their profiles, like Kaja and Radical Broccoli. The influencers we interview are similar in age, interests, and values as their audience. Therefore, the likelihood of them affecting follower brand attitudes and purchase intention is higher if the brand/product fit their profile's values.

8.7 Proposition 7

Proposition 7: A fit between an influencer and brand based on expertise will lead to positive attitudes and purchase intention towards an influencer's endorsed brand

In this section, expertise will be examined to see if it provides an effect on fit in the endorser-brand relationship. Additionally, how expertise effects the fit and thereby the attitudes and intentions of the endorser's followers.

Influencer expert Solvor explains, one reasons why influencers are perceived as experts within their fields is because they have tried so much different within their niche. They most likely know what is best and have much information to explain their reasoning (Appendix B, 29:10). However, Solvor also mentions that it probably is affected by how scientific the product is or how serious the products are. She believes that the more scientific it is, the more the consumers trust the brand to give them the information and not the influencer (Appendix B, 30:00).

The respondents of the focus group were asked about which influencer they thought would be fitting to a product like Raw Halo (Sustainable, vegan chocolate), both Kjartan and Andrea answered "*Kaja*" (Appendix C, 12:10). Andrea and Kjartan already followed Kaja and thought she would fit the brand.

Kjartan explained that he had seen many vegan influencers, but Kaja's values were fitting. He further explained "*... I feel Raw Halo's values have a good fit with Kaja's, because it is what she does. She shows products [Like Raw Halo] we can buy in the store*" (Appendix C, 12:25). When asked what makes her fit Kjartan adds "*... what she does is related to being healthy*" (Appendix C, 13:45). Kjartan explained that the theme of her profile is related to it and that she cares about the health and healthy foods a lot. (Appendix C, 13:45). Kaja fits endorsing a brand like Raw Halo because she has tried many vegan products and it is the core activity on her profile. This can be related to her expertise as she has seniority within the subject.

Kaja further explain that she influences her followers in different ways; "*I focus on recipes and products, that is my thing. I think I influence my followers to try the different products I recommend and the recipes I recommend.*" (Appendix D, 9:10). Kaja admits she influences her followers, and she receives feedback from her followers, claiming they have tried the product or recipe she endorses in her content (Appendix D, 9:45). Kaja explains that "*I have more influence than regular people because regular people do not show everything they eat and do*." (Appendix D, 10:20). She explains here that the influence is due to her consistent content on her profile over long periods (Seniority).

As mentioned earlier, the discussion rose around Zlatan Ibrahimović (Famous soccer player) and his celebrity endorsement campaign with Samsung TV. Kjartan explained that he respects Zlatan, but he did not understand why he was endorsing Samsung TV's, and neither did the other two respondents (1:05:08). He explained that televisions are highly technical, and that Zlatan does not know more about it than any given person. These comments suggest that products with higher technical complexity, such as televisions will benefit from the expertise variable. Conversely, physical attractiveness and a lack of endorser-brand fit may have negative effects for these products.

Our results suggest that expertise affects the fit in the endorser-brand relationship. For food products, an endorser does not need formal education to endorse the products. However, seniority plays a role in the fit between endorser and brand, as respondents reported it as more credible if the influencer has

been active in the topic for a long time. Products with higher technical complexity might better fit the expertise variable for influencers, based on our results.

8.8 Proposition 8

Proposition 8: A fit between an influencer and brand based on physical attractiveness will lead to positive attitudes and purchase intention towards an influencer's endorsed brand

In this section, physical attractiveness will be examined to see if it provides an effect on fit in the endorser-brand relationship. Additionally, how physical attractiveness effects the fit and thereby the attitudes and intentions of the endorser's followers.

The focus groups revealed that the respondents were motivated by influencers that put out physically attractive photos of themselves. "*Steve Cook is an influencer for fitness and healthy eating. When I see that he puts out pictures of his body, I get motivation to train myself*" (Appendix C, 39:00), Kjartan explained, and adds "*I get motivation to become as fit as Steve Cook, by training and eating the same way he does when I see his content*" (Appendix C, 39:43). The statements suggest physical attractiveness makes a fit in products related to fitness. Including healthy food products. Steve Cook's physical looks fit his content of training and healthy food.

Sustainable foods are considered healthier than food that is not sustainable by the focus group. The argument comes up in the discussion that "*I will rather buy [a sustainable food product] from a person that looks like they have used it themselves*" (Appendix C, 41:55) Andrea explains. Andrea adds *"... regarding nutrition, if an influencer endorses a product, the subconscious will rather buy from the fit person, than someone that is overweight ... It matters if you want it to or not. We get attracted to people that look attractive and nice*" (Appendix C, 40:50). These statements suggest that physical attractiveness matters for endorsement deals in the sustainable food industry. However, the most important factor is that the influencer is fit and look like she benefited from the product.

During our in-depth interview with Kaja, she explains that the content she shares that receives the highest engagement is pictures of herself and desserts (Appendix D, 13:00). She measures engagement in likes and comments, but she can also see how many click her links and save posts she

shares (Appendix D, 13:16). The save posts function is essential for food influencers as it provides an insight into how many of her followers have an interest in making the same recipe.

These statements are consistent with the data gathered from the nethnography. A key observation was that posts with Kaja's face in them received a higher engagement than pictures without, on average (Appendix, E). The higher engagement suggest that physical attractiveness affect engagement. One example of this is Kaja's endorsement deal with Möllers Tran (Omega 3 tablets). The first post (March 22.) was a photo of the product by itself, this photo received 49 likes. The second post in the endorsement was with herself in holding the product (March 29.). The second post received 149 likes (Appendix, E). This suggest that physical attractiveness affects the fit based on engagement (likes and comments).

A result from our focus group suggest physical attractiveness affect the fit in the endorser-brand relationship. Respondents claim they are more likely to buy sustainable food products from influencers that are fit and look like they benefited from the product themselves. Additionally, physical attractiveness plays a role whether you like it or not, and the respondents say it has a subconscious effect on their attitudes toward products endorsed. From in-depth interview and nethnography it was prominent that physical attractiveness played a role. It was confirmed from observation and the expert interview that engagement was higher for influencer content that showed the influencer in the picture.

8.9 Proposition 9

Proposition 9: Brand awareness created by influencers has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).

One of the main results is the importance of using influencer endorsement as a way to create brand awareness. Influencers can spread a message to a very precise target group. Solvor mentions that when she was to introduce a new brand of organic baby food for her category of baby food, she needed to build brand awareness around this product. Her strategy was to reach young parents to spread the word-of-mouth in this target group (Appendix B, 4:40). They used influencer endorsement to accomplish this objective, and she explained that "*Influencers [on Instagram] have a big influence*

[over subgroups like young parents]" (Appendix B, 2:30). Following this, Solvor thinks the main result of influencer endorsements is brand awareness and general awareness around the brand and product. Therefore, Nestle needs to work with influencers with the right target audience – the right geographical area, age, and the number of followers (Appendix B, 4:40, 10,40). Solvor also mentions that although they did not see a rise in the engagement with customer service at Nestle, they did get an increased awareness from other influencers that asked if they could get products and promote the products for free (Appendix B, 33:20).

Another statement was Andrea tells us that first, she becomes aware of a brand or product on Instagram. She explains that she must see the product several times before she is comfortable buying it (Appendix C, 1:00:30). This might be related to trust, as when the followers see several people, they trust to buy it, they deem it as more credible, and the risk associated with the purchase to be less. Andrea explains that there is a higher probability that she would buy a product if several influencers promoted the same product, like Raw Halo (Appendix C, 1:01:05). She gives an example of first seeing a specific ice-coffee on Instagram, then on VG (Newspaper), and eventually, she just had to try it. All three respondents agree that it is essential to get confirmation from several influencers before buying. Kjartan also explains that there are so many advertisements these days, that they need to "be in our faces" to affect (Appendix C, 1:03:05).

To summarize, the data cannot signify whether the awareness has a direct correlation to purchase intention, we know that brand awareness is the first step in the consumer purchasing funnel and therefore is one of many factors that signify the choice of purchase or is the first step towards a purchase.

8.10 Proposition 10

Proposition 10: Brand associations created by influencers has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).

One of the results can be identified from the relationship between the influencer and how much an endorsed post focus on the product. Solvor (Nestle) explained that they had more success in using influencer endorsement in 'theme' campaigns than for specific products. The more product-specific

the ad is, the less engagement they got. If the ad was under a 'theme' like sustainability, the ad was much better received (Appendix B, 17:40). She explained that they focus (at Nestle) on making the ad campaigns as much theme-centric and less product-centric as possible (Appendix B, 16:00). This also reduces the 'cash-grab' factor perceived by the followers.

Another association brand want is the ability for the perceived value and attributes of the product to reflect the influencer. Furthermore, for that to be accomplished, the influencer must have the same values and attributes as the product/brand. As Solvor explains, "*the values of the influencers must reflect the products attributes. The attributes and values they want the brand/product to be perceived by must be held by the influencers marketing the products*" (09:20). She used an example of them using 'hipster' parents to promote premium products in their product line. They did this because this influencer couple was perceived as high quality, but not' pitch-perfect.' They use sustainable and ecological food products with high quality – the same attributes Solvor wanted the brand to be associated with (Appendix B, 07:45).

Furthermore, Radical Broccoli explained that they believe that by them endorsing a product or brand, the brand will be associated by consumers with what they stand for. One of the companies they were sponsored by was Rema 1000 (Grocery store). With the connections and associations to Radical Broccoli, Radical Broccoli believed that from the endorsement, the result would be that consumers would view Rema 1000 as more environmentally friendly (Appendix A, 21:45). They describe here a value the brand gets by associating its brand to Radical Broccoli.

There is also a risk involved whenever a brand wants to be associated with another independent actor. Solvor mentioned that associations could go both ways. It can be, as intended, a positive, where the product adds some of the attributes of the influencers to their perceived quality. Nevertheless, it can also be negative (Appendix B, 35:20). Furthermore, Solvor described an example where the influencer made a product-centric ad, that was over-edited and looks very fake. This was a worst-case scenario, as the brand wants to be perceived as clean, natural, and green (Appendix B, 06:00, 14:20).

Another example was when the influencer received a negative comment on the post, reasoning why the influencer was working with this brand (Nestle). The follower associated the brand with a previous

crisis Nestle was involved with. The influencer then chose to stop the cooperation as the influencer did not want to be associated with Nestle (Appendix B, 36:00).

 In the focus group, it was discussed if they have different views on products after influencers promote them. Andrea thinks that as sustainable, healthy, vegan food is very trendy. It is a good fit to use Instagram to promote it (Appendix C, 59:48). There are many users on Instagram within the target group for this theme, and she explains that if many influencers are eating the same products, she assumes others would become interested like she does. However, Ola explains that if a brand does not know the influencer, they send their products to, the influencer might ruin their image by doing something that is not in accordance with the brand (Appendix C, 58:23). Kjartan agrees to this point (Appendix C, 58:51).

To summarize, we encountered many relevant and interesting data that suggest that brand association is essential. What was mostly identified with a brand association is the significant improvement of targeting over traditional online marketing. As brands can use influencers to build a positive association towards sustainability or other wanted associations, it will likely increase the follower's brand attitudes and purchase intention towards the endorsed product.

8.11 Proposition 11

Proposition 11: Perceived quality created by influencers has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).

Perceived quality has many different factors that can change the attitude of a consumer towards a brand. However, the factor that was discussed the most was a stamp of quality, meaning any certification or stamps of approval or "virtual stamps" such as an influencer say that they like the product. There are several examples of this from the interviews. The first being Radical Broccoli that said if we promote Rema 1000, then the followers of Radical Broccoli will think and believe that Rema 1000 is more environmentally friendly (Appendix A, 21:45). Presuming that the followers of Radical Broccoli would view an endorsement from them as a stamp of approval to use.

Second, was in the Focus group were Kjartan explains that he believes influencers can attribute qualities to a brand or product. He uses the example of Axe body spray promoted by David Beckham. "*Of course, I want to smell like David Beckham*," he explains (Appendix C, 1:04:05). He also gives the example of Steve Cook, a fitness influencer, and that he has seen how hard Steve works out. Because of this, he would buy Steve Cook's pre-workout, as he has seen the results (Appendix C, 1:04:05). It gives Kjartan a more positive perception of the product. He is concluding that all these endorsements by famous people is a stamp of approval for him to use the product as well.

Radical Broccoli made another point regarding the certification of products in our discussion. Products, especially those marketed towards health and sustainability, have different physical stamps that are there to show that this product has been certified by someone or has specific attributes. However, Radical Broccoli believed that people do not know what to look after and what the different stamps mean (Appendix A, 10:30). Radical Broccoli further explained that some influencers might have more power to influence than the different certifications (Appendix A, 11:15). However, an important factor was that if they are honest and do not have any mistakes from previous claims that have been false, the influence would be more substantial (Appendix A, 12:00).

Furthermore, Andrea adds to this point by explaining that influencers with a theme on their profile should stick to it. For example, a makeup influencer cannot promote soccer, "*It does not fit*" (Appendix C, 1:06:40). They must have the same values; it must be a context between what the influencer is representing and endorsing.

To summarize, the data suggests that it is significantly important for brand attitudes and purchase intention. A product or brand can increase their perceived quality by getting considered and judged positively by influencers that already have the perceived value that the brand wants. It gives an invisible stamp of approval rather than a visual certification from a lesser-known entity. However, the influencer and brand must be in the same category of assumptions regarding values and attitudes.

8.12 Proposition 12

Proposition 12: Brand loyalty created by influencers has a positive effect/relationship on attitudes and purchase intention (towards the endorsed product).

Solvor mentions that the followers gained on their Instagram page from influencer campaigns, often stick there, and thereby assert brand loyalty to their brand-page (Appendix B, 31:55). This is, however, not a significant number of consumers. These followers will ask questions related to products and seem to be motivated by gaining information according to Solvor (Appendix B, 24:40).

Kjartan explains that he might try a product for the first time based on the influence of an influencer. He will, however, not buy the product a second or third time, unless the product itself is right and fits him (Appendix C, 1:09:20). This means that influencer endorsement can get a product into the consumer's evoked set and influence them to try it. However, to build brand loyalty through repeat purchase, the product quality must be satisfying.

To summarize, the data is not sufficient to support that brand loyalty created by influencers have a positive effect on the latent variables. Furthermore, it is not the influencer that makes consumers loyal customers. It is instead the evaluation of the product after trial.

Introduction → Theory → Methodology → Results → **Discussion** → Conclusion
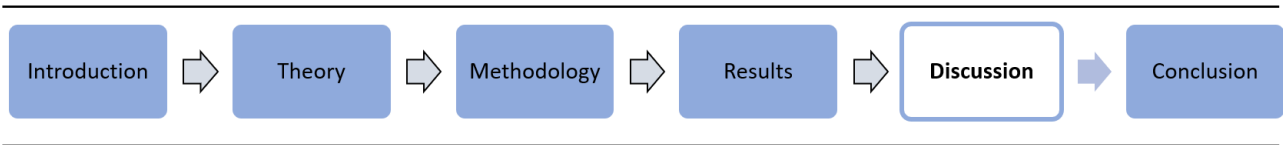
The following section will discuss the previously reviewed results in terms of their broader meaning, relevance, validity, and applicability. We will take a step back and look at the all the results combined with the theory to describe the most interesting findings that have the most impact on the research question.

9.1 Authenticity as a driver for trustworthiness and credibility

This section of the discussion will focus on one prominent variable from our primary data, authenticity. We found authenticity to be related to trustworthiness and credibility. However, our results suggest that they are not the same. The definition of the word is according to the Cambridge Dictionary: "*The quality of being real or true*" (Cambridge, 2020). It refers to the influencers character, and whether they are being consistent to their personality over a period. The reason for the interest, is that our primary data suggest that authenticity is a driver for trustworthiness, and credibility in influencers. It was prominent that authenticity was important for consumers when deciding to trust and buy products the influencer endorsed. It helps explain the research question.

The literature does not mention authenticity. Trustworthiness is the closest we get to the term. The section will investigate the potential implications for the TEARS-model, and additionally take practical perspective on authenticity. Our results suggest the variable that builds influencer trustworthiness and credibility is authenticity in the eyes of the follower. Wording like authentic, genuine, real, 'not fake', was used to describe what we interpreted and collected under the authenticity term.

Brands can benefit from understanding that all influencers are not alike. The number of followers does not determine the influence the influencer has on their following regarding providing value to the brand. For example, Solvor, one of our expert interviews stated that "*I would rather choose the*

right profile with 5000 followers, than someone with 8000 followers that do not have the right profile"
(Appendix B, 12:50).

This section will discuss findings from our results in relation to existing theory and current practical
practices. The overarching goal is to provide clarity to the authenticity variable, while explaining the
possible implications this can have for brand managers.

How primary data sources describe authenticity
Authenticity can be compared to trustworthiness from the TEARS model (Shimp, 2007), representing
the T in the acronym. Trustworthiness is defined as: "*Trustworthiness refers to the personality of the
celebrity in terms of how honest, honorable, and believable he is perceived to be*" (Shimp, 2007:252).

However, the term authenticity seems to have a broader meaning from our interviews and focus
groups. Kaja explains that being more authentic for her is posting less #ads, and more organic content
that is related to her core values and activities on her profile (Appendix D, 9:10, 11:18).

Radical Broccoli explains that trustworthiness is about being authentic and genuine. "*If you promote
a product, it should be a product you like and want to use.*" (Appendix A, 17:40). Additionally, "*If it
is a cash grab, it will shine right through, and this can result in followers losing trust in the
influencer*" (Appendix A, 17:40). Ola adds that Emilie Nutrition is an example of an influencer that
builds trust by honestly showing how the products are and how to use them in real life (Appendix C,
26:34).

The influencers agree that authenticity is built if influencer choose brand endorsements they like and
products they use. These quotes was supported by our focus group, that explained that all trust was
lost in an influencer if an influencer promotes one product, and the influencer can be observed at a
later point using another product (Appendix C, 25:20). The respondents got a distaste if the influencer
tried to sell them something and prefer authentic endorsement of the brand or product (Appendix C,
18:49). By this, one component of authenticity in influencers are consistency in personal and endorsed
brands and products. Meaning an influencer should only endorse products he or she use and enjoy to
be perceived authentic and credible.

In our theory section, attribution theory was elaborated on, and the theory refers to the moment a consumer observes that a person's behavior matches their personality (Jones & Davis, 1965). The study found that consumers pay attention to intentional behavior in others. Consumers look for enduring internal attributes to explain the behavior. Meaning consumers want influencers to act in a consistent manner in all their content and appearances. Consistent with Jones & Davis (1965) study, we found that followers look at influencers internal attributes to explain their behavior. As a result, if followers perceive the influencers behavior to be consistent, the influencer is seen as more authentic. It was prominent form our primary data that being consistent was important. Andrea explained "*It is important an influencer is not one person on Instagram, and someone else in the real world*" (Appendix C, 43:22).

To summarize; our results suggest authenticity is essential in the influencer-follower relationship, as it promotes trust and increases likelihood of follower trusting the influencers opinion.

Authenticity as a motivator for following

The theory on motivations for social networking sites, states three main motivations; remuneration, information, and entertainment as mentioned in 2.2 (Tsai & Men, 2013).

Our primary data suggest that authenticity was a motivation for following and enjoying an influencer. Ola explained that his choice of Joe Rogan was due to his open mindset, his ability to admit he is wrong and that he comes off as authentic (Appendix C, 5:56). Moreover, the consensus in the focus group was that being authentic is prominent. The respondents had other motivations, like information and entertainment, but what made them become influenced by influencer's was related to them being authentic.

Conversely, the reasoning behind disliking influencers is tied to perceiving them as "sellouts." Andrea explained sellouts to be influencers that take any ad endorsement they can get, not because it fits their profile, but because they get paid for it (Appendix C, 8:56).

To summarize, respondents have motivations to follow influencers like information and entertainment. However, if the influencer is to have credibility when endorsing brands to their followers, authenticity is required.

Practical implications for brands

From a brand perspective, our results may have some implications in the selection and strategic use of influencers in marketing. In our discussion, we suggest authenticity as a driver for trustworthiness and credibility, which in turn affects attitudes and purchase intention. Conversely, by being inauthentic, influencers risk being disliked and unfollowed.

We can make assumptions as to how brands may be hurt by selecting influencers that are not seen as authentic and credible based on our results. First, we can assume the brand attitudes of the followers will decrease, which means the brand equity may decrease. Second, if the follower starts disliking the influencer, they may unfollow and not be exposed to the endorsements. Thirdly, negative associations from the influencer can be transferred to the brand. As a result, a change in association towards the brand through attitude can occur (Kotler & Keller, 2009) and affect the perceived quality a follower has towards the brand.

Based on our results from experts and focus group, brands should consider the following when engaging in influencer endorsements. First, select influencers that are genuinely interested and use the brand that is being endorsed. This way the authenticity is intact, and the influencer's credibility is withheld. Authentic influencers also increase the positive effects on the endorsement deal. Radical Broccoli explained, "*It is about trustworthiness, and that you actually would use the product yourself*" (Appendix A, 32:25).

Secondly, influencers need creative freedom. Creative freedom means that brands should not micromanage. "*When a brand trusts us instead of micromanaging [the endorsement], it is much more fun. If there is too much structure, it [the endorsement] loses its personality*" (Appendix A, 32:25) Radical Broccoli explained. Creative freedom was further confirmed as an important factor from our other expert interviews. It creates a better endorsement overall, and the better job the brands do in choosing the right influencers, the less they need to control the content.

An example of a successful endorsement for Radical Broccoli was with Tise – a secondhand treasures app selling secondhand fashion items. Radical Broccoli explained the reason behind the success as "*We have the same tone, and they make a lot of weird and fun content*" (Appendix A, 40:25). Tise,

like Radical Broccoli, is not afraid to be authentic and unique. Furthermore, when they are given the creative freedom to make their own content, the endorsements have a better success rate.

Thirdly, make sure the influencers are considered authentic and credible by their followers. The marketing message is "... *more authentic when it comes from an influencer and seems less like an advertisement*" (Appendix B, 30:00) Solvor explained. Solvor further gave an example of a successful endorsement collaboration with an influencer called Solberg. She explained the success due to his "... *high level of engagement with his followers, he used humor, was honest and authentic*" (Appendix B, 18:40). The influencer was honest about the struggles of being a single dad and admitted he sometimes was too tired to make his kid food. He endorsed Nestle's sustainable food as an easy way of solving the problem. The endorsement went over well with his followers, and Solvor thinks it has much to do with his honesty and authenticity (Appendix B, 18:40).

To summarize, influencers propose an opportunity for brands in the sustainable food industry. If brands can manage to select influencers that have high levels of authenticity and credibility with their followers, the potential upside is high.

Managing influencers
This section aims to give insight into how brands should structure their endorsements.

As Kaja explained, by using the products actively in her content, she gets better reactions from her followers. Rather than holding the product in front of the camera and explaining why the product is right for the followers (Appendix C, 48:05). Additionally, observation from the nethnography in appendix E, findings 2.0, and 3.0 support this.

Kaja further explained that when her followers see '#ad' in the content, she shares, the products she endorses lose credibility. They do not know if the product is of genuine interest or just a 'cash-grab'. Kaja's experience is that if she finds subtle ways of promoting brands without it being too obvious, she receives much better feedback and engagement on her content (Appendix D, 48:05). She brings the Helios brand as an example of a perfect match for her, as they are very flexible, and she can use their product in organic content when she makes recipes. She describes the relationship as degrees from completely organic content, to completely organized by the brands (Appendix D, 42:40).

Additionally, observations from appendix E supports that engagement is higher on content were the brands are a part of the core activity of making food. The average like-count on photos where the product is used in action is 108, and the average was the product that is displayed with no activity is 49,5 (Appendix E). The followers also seem to engage more in informational content on average (Appendix F). Informational content is content that contains a picture of recipes and how to make them, with little to no focus on the influencer, and high focus on the recipe.

To summarize, brands should focus their endorsements on the core activity of the influencer. An example of this is Kaja's endorsements with Helios. She uses their product when making different recipes, and the content she shares have a much higher engagement than other content (Appendix, E).

Trustworthiness as a built-up perception

Shimp (2007) argues that a celebrity endorser is more trusted due to the life they are living personally and professionally; the same can be said for influencers. Shimp (2007) further claims that celebrity endorsers only should reveal attributes that are favored by the public and that their trustworthiness is a built-up perception. These ideas are not consistent with our results. The idea of a 'built-up perception' in contradicting to the argument of being open, honest, and authentic. One reason is the emergence of the internet and social media. If an influencer or celebrity is not consistent overall media, their authenticity and trustworthiness will drop in the eyes of the consumer as we have learned.

Radical Broccoli takes authenticity seriously and emphasizes the importance of being "*Open and honest about what we do not know*" (Appendix A, 27:50). The duo claims that this fosters trust in their relationship with their followers. Radical Broccoli focuses on science-based research and gives its followers information based on science and not their own beliefs. They have gained their follower's trust by being thorough and researching subjects before they recommend or share it with their followers. "*We have a stamp that we do our research, and this makes our followers believe in what we say*" (Appendix A, 9:10). This strategy is used to enhance the trust in the follower-influencer relationship, and to not "*Make fools of ourselves*" (Appendix A, 27:50). They do not want to spread misinformation as this will ruin their authenticity and damage their brand as influencers, and hence decrease trustworthiness. The statements are consistent with the discussion in the focus group.

The comments from Radical Broccoli suggest a more open and honest relationship to the public audience. As opposed to 'only revealing attributes that are favored to the general public' (Shimp, 2007), they focus on sharing their thoughts and being honest when they do not know or are wrong. Built up perceptions for opinion leaders like influencers are obsolete, based on our results. In turn, being authentic will build a stronger relationship with the followers and increase trustworthiness and credibility.

One should probably be more honest in general, and the argument can be made that these comments are applicable for everyone. We do however believe it is more important for influencers, and that it particularly affects the attitude and purchase intention of their followers positively. Conversely, if an influencer fails to be perceived as credible, the influencers effect on follower decision making process drops. This effect became prominent in the focus group.

Consequently, there are two elements that can be taken from the paragraphs above. First, influencers should aim to be open and honest about what they do and do not know. Second, influencers should make sure that the informative content they share is valid and science-based to maintain high credibility and authenticity. Our results are inconsistent with Shimp's (2007) comments on building a perception for trust. As we suggest authenticity as a driver for trustworthiness and credibility. Influencers that admit mistakes and are transparent are perceived as more credible, than influencers that try to make themselves look good as they often are considered insincere.

The influencer-follower relationship
The relationship between the follower and the influencer is integral for this thesis, as it helps to answer our research question. In this section findings related to the influencer-follower relationship will be discussed. The reason is that it might help answer why and how influencers affect their followers.

Solvor from Nestle explains research they have received in the Nestle corporation claims that 4/10 consumers would rather trust an influencer than friends and family regarding a brand or product (Appendix B, 28:40). The reason she explains, is the strong credibility an influencer can have within a niche. She furthermore explains the relationship created between influencer and follower over time. The follower gets the feeling of knowing the influencer, like a friend. The feelings of friendship are

often combined with the influencer having the 'expert' status within a subject – which enhances the credibility further (Appendix B, 28:40).

If this is true, we can assume similarities between the credibility of influencers and friends. Concerning word-of-mouth, brand attitudes, and purchase intention, this has some effects. Kjartan also supports this point. He explained that he could not build trust until he has followed an influencer over a long period (Appendix C, 26:34). As a result of following an influencer Kjartan likes over time, trust is created, as Kjartan gets to know the person through their content (Appendix C, 30:00). By following an influencer over a long period likability and familiarity is established.

We assume that this differs in influencer and celebrity endorsement. The reason being that followers of influencers can identify more with influencers. They feel more similar to, and trust influencers more than celebrities (Schouten et al., 2019). Thereby, our results are consistent with the results from Schouten et al., (2019) study. Additionally, our results suggest a friend-like relationship is more likely to occur in an influencer context. These results are essential as they support our understanding of the overarching problem.

To summarize, authenticity is based on being open and honest and real to who the influencer is. One aspect of authenticity is selecting brands and products that are consistent with what the influencer likes and uses themselves. Additionally, due to the friend-like relationship between the follower and influencer, the effects on influence and word of mouth is enhanced. Conversely, this is opposed to celebrity endorsement, where the celebrity is seen to be on another level than the fan, and hence less relatable (Schouten, et al., 2019). The results gathered makes the existing theory elusive. Trustworthiness does not claim the authenticity variable to a satisfying degree. Our results suggest that authenticity is a main driver for trustworthiness in Instagram-influencing. Furthermore, this may be because influencers are generally seen as less trustworthy, and therefore the variables effect is amplified. Our results suggest that when concerning brand attitudes and purchase intention, authenticity through trustworthiness is overwhelmingly the most important factor for influencers.

This section will discuss the implications from the match-up hypothesis on our research question and influencer context.

Physical attractiveness in influencers

The match-up hypothesis is primarily used to try to explain the fit between the endorser and the endorsed brand in a celebrity endorsement context. The literature discusses this fit in an elaboration likelihood model, where the different attributes are set to the peripheral or the central route (Petty et al., 1980). The explanation of the elaboration likelihood model is in section 6.2.1. In discussing low involvement products, like we argue sustainable food is, Petty et al. (1980), and Kahle & Homer (1985) have opposing views. Petty et al. (1980) suggest that likability is a factor that influences the peripheral route of the consumer in low involvement products. Conversely, Kahle & Homer (1985) suggest the celebrity does not have to be likable if the celebrity is attractive. The literature is split about physical attractiveness as a driver for the match-up effect.

Ola explained that "*Looks sell, even if you think it does not affect you; it does on some level*" (Appendix C, 40:05). Ola's explanation is consistent with Kahle & Homer's (1985) argument that physical attractiveness might lure the consumer into reading the ad, increasing the ad involvement, and hence making the consumer more interested in the topic.

Furthermore, Andrea agrees on Ola's point and adds that she would rather buy a healthy product from a person in shape, than from someone that is not in shape (Appendix C, 40:50). The respondents agree that if a healthy product is being endorsed, the influencer endorsing it must be fit to effectively promote it (Appendix C, 40:50, 42:10).

Furthermore, physical attractiveness is a source for an attitude change in consumers (Baker & Gilbert, 1977; Caballero & Price, 1984), and other studies conclude that expertise, and not physical attractiveness, influence attitudes (Maddox & Rogers, 1980). However, our primary data are consistent with the physical attractiveness as a variable in the fit match-up hypothesis.

Consequently, our results suggest that the physical attractiveness of the influencer must match the product they are promoting or their niche. If an influencer promotes healthy, sustainable brans, it is

more important than they look fit and healthy, than that they are perceived as very attractive. Our results differ from the physical attractiveness described in the literature. The attractiveness of an influencer did not seem to have any effect on the fit between endorser and brand. However, the influencer endorsing 'healthy' products/brands must embody a healthy fit look. The differences between influencer and celebrity endorsement will be discussed later.

Expertise of influencers

Expertise is another widely researched variable for the match-up hypothesis. Studies have found a significant effect on respondent's purchase intention from the expertise factor regardless if the product is for personal use or a gift (Ohanian, 1991). Expertise is supported by Till & Busler's (2000) study that found expertise to be the most effective in matching products and celebrities. Additionally, it has been shown that expertise has a significant effect on low involvement products and the persuasion of consumers (McGuire, 1985). This effect can be translated into the research paper. These articles indicate that expertise is more important for the match-up effect on endorser-brand in sustainable food products.

Expertise in Instagram-influencers appears to be based on seniority, experience, and how active they have been within their niche over an extended time. For example, Radical Broccoli explained that they felt like experts because they have been researching and posting content for many years. Additionally, they have written a book, which they compared to a master's degree (Appendix A, 23:05). The duo holds master's degree in business, and in war studies, this might add to their follower's confidence and trustworthiness in them. Kaja concluded that her extensive experience and seniority are a form of expertise and gives her credibility as an expert in the field as she has tried so many different products (Appendix D, 12:20). The consensus in the focus group is that if the influencer wants to make claims as to what food is healthier, they will need formal expertise to gain trust (Education).

Conversely, if the influencer is making food recipes, they do not need formal education in the topic (Appendix C, 36:18). This statement suggests that formal education is not needed unless the influencer is making claims to what is better or worse. Kjartan also added that formal education could be subsidized by providing the sources of academic articles that can be compared to 'credible

information' (Carroll, 2009; Appendix C, 35:00). The experience accumulated over several years of making food recipes on Instagram is enough for Andrea (Appendix, 37:20).

Overall, our results are consistent with the current literature (Ohanian, 1991; Till & Busler, 2000; McGuire, 1985), as expertise is essential in attitude change and purchase intention towards the endorsed brands. Expertise is important for building trustworthiness in the follower-influencer relationship. Our results also suggest that expertise drives the match-up effect for influencers and brands. Especially in low involvement products. Meaning that influencers with a higher expertise level within sustainable food will fit brands related to sustainable food better. Additionally, our results suggest expertise can be seniority, experience over long periods to a subject, or formal education.

The match-up effect based on product categories

The elaboration likelihood model theory was proposed by Petty et al. (1980) to explain the fit match-up hypothesis. The model entails that cues in advertising would either use the central or peripheral route to influence the consumers. The theory divides low and high involvement products. High involvement products require more of the central route, as this is often more significant purchases such as a car or a house. Furthermore, low involvement products often require the peripheral route, as it is not as impactful of a decision. The experiment concluded that celebrity status did not affect the low involvement product of disposable razors, but that likability could play a peripheral route in the decision (Petty et al., 1980).

As sustainable food is a low involvement category, it can be argued that the endorsement by influencers with high levels of credibility and likability can affect the peripheral route of the followers. Moreover, this stimulates attitude changes and purchase intentions towards the endorsed brand. Radical Broccoli explains, *"they follow us because they seek depth [in information], not just the visuals"* (Appendix A, 13:30) regarding why users follow them. *"Some say they changed their whole life, others "just" bought a bag instead of buying a plastic one"* (Appendix A, 15:00). Radical Broccoli has a high credibility and likability from their followers. The argument can be made that these factors affect the decision-making process of their followers through the peripheral route of persuasion.

As Kahle & Homer (1985) discussed, physical attractive celebrities have a better match-up effect with products related to beauty, as consumers can perceive that the product is part of their beauty formula. This effect can translate into other product categories that are not related to physical attractiveness (i.e., sustainable food).

Our results suggest that there might be an effect regarding vanity towards influencers. Our results gave us insight into the fact that consumers may follow influencers based on them having attributes the follower wants to attain (Appendix C, 48:50). This attribute effect may be relevant to McCracken's (1989) theory of meaning transfer model. Where the influencer gives symbolic attributes to a product, and the follower wants to be more like the influencer or wear the same product to symbolize the same values.

Additionally, influencer's credibility may be amplified by them operating in a small niche. They do not claim to be an expert in everything, but as Radical Broccoli is an example of, they are expert within sustainable and environmentally friendly food alternatives. We can assume that this increases their credibility and therefore their influence. The combination of being in a small niche (with the low level of competition), being an expert based on merit and experience, and having high credibility seems to be an effective combination of elements to change follower attitudes and purchase intentions towards the brands they endorse. This effect has been illustrated several times from Radical Broccoli's examples from promoting Rema 1000, Tise, Bergans, and other brands. (Appendix A, 21:45, 34:00, 40:25).

Consequently, we believe that one of the reasons why the match-up hypothesis has elusive evidence is because different product categories favor different attributes. Beauty products favor beautiful people. Highly technical products and high involvement products favor high levels of expertise. Zlatan Ibrahimović endorsing a Samsung television, for example, was not well received from our focus group. The argument was that televisions are highly technical, and Zlatan has no more expertise in the area than anyone else (Appendix C, 1:05:08).

Attitudes and Purchase intention

One crucial question is if the match-up hypothesis influences attitudes and the purchase intention of the follower. "*Attitudes signal people about whether objects in their environment are good or bad*

and thus perform an important approach-avoidance function" (Fazio, 1986: D. Katz, 1960: M. B. Smith, Bruner, & White, 1956). Two variables furthermore influence attitudes. (1) Strength in the belief of the outcome and probability, (2) Overall evaluation of the outcome is positive or negative (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). If consumers believe that behavior will lead to a specific outcome, they are more likely to have a positive attitude towards the behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975: Azjen & Albarracín, 2007).

In the context of the research paper this means that influencers are opinion leaders that signal that brands are favorable or not. The influencer's credibility will determine the strength in the belief of a brand's superiority. The followers may in varying degree change their brand attitudes based on their trust in the influencer's judgement.

Our results support the current theory on attitudes in the follower-influencer relationship. Respondents reported that if they were exposed to the same product several times, from different influencers, they were more likely to purchase the product/brand themselves. This effect was stronger if it came from trusted influencers than other media. This effect was even more substantial if the product had 'proven results' (Appendix C, 1:00:30). These statements suggest that the more a consumer is exposed to endorsements on specific brands, the more likely they are to act on their attitudes. We can assume this is due to the accessibility and strength of the attitude compounds.

These results are consistent with the study done by Priester et al. (2004) that showed attitude strength significantly affect brand choice in consumers. Our results suggest that influencers might affect attitudes more strongly than other traditional marketing methods. This means that fewer exposures are required before the consumer tries a new product.

Consequently, the link is that a better match between the product and the influencer's attributes in terms of expertise, credibility, authenticity, and physical attractiveness will result in a change in attitudes. Additionally, our results suggest the consumer attitudes created by influencers are 'stronger' and more 'accessible' than what is achieved through traditional advertising. The 'sustainable' and 'environmental' may confirm existing attitudes for the consumers, which in turn increases the purchase intention. Meaning, if a consumer is involved in climate change debate, he or she is more

likely to have strong positive attitudes toward sustainable food products. Although our assumption cannot be generalized unless the proper amount of data is collected to test for such effects.

Attributions and Associations

As discussed earlier, attributions can be an essential piece to the puzzle of match-up between brand and influencer. Petty et al. (1980) suggests likability as a peripheral cue in celebrity endorsement, but Kahle & Homer (1985) argues that the effects can be explained by better matching attributes. The celebrity Petty et al. (1980) used in the experiment is McEnroe, which was known to antagonize consumers, but was athletic and physically attractive. Kahle & Homers (1985) argument was that the attributes McEnroe possessed (Athletes and physically attractive) was a perfect match for what the company wanted to be associated with, which in turn was the base for the effectiveness of the campaign. Thereby, this suggests that a celebrity with attributes a brand wants to be associated with is more effective in advertising, than likability.

Attribution theory tells us that consumers will "*use the information to arrive at causal explanations for events. It examines what information is gathered and how it is combined to form a causal judgment*" (Fiske & Taylor, 1991:23). If a brand wants to be associated with specific attributes, it must look for influencers that hold these attributes in the eyes of their target audience (Petty et al. 1980; Kahle & Homer, 1985).

Consequently, our results support Kahle & Homer's (1985) assumption that the right attributes for the brand creates a better match-up effect in the endorser-brand relationship. Our respondents used different wording, explaining the importance of a match in values between the influencer and the endorsed brand. "*The influencer's values must reflect the [wanted] values of the brand or product*" (Appendix B, 9:20) Solvor explained. Additionally, it became prominent from our expert interviews that similar values for brands and influencers was essential in the match-up effect for influencers.

To summarize, physical attractiveness played a different role in the match-up effect for influencers than celebrities. If the influencer embodies the values of the product, their attractiveness does not matter that much. Fit, healthy influencers that endorse sustainable food brands are considered more fitting, than influencers that do not look fit and healthy our results suggest. These results are consistent with the literature that explain physical attractiveness as a significant affecting the match-up effect in

beauty products (Kahle & Homer, 1985). As is suggested, consumer look at the beauty product as a part of the beauty formula. Using the same logic, consumers look at sustainable, healthy products as a part of the healthy and fit formula.

Furthermore, expertise affected and drive the match-up effect significantly for influencers in the sustainable food sector. As a result, brand attitudes and purchase intention towards the brand endorsed were positively affected. Our results suggest that in low involvement products, expertise is important in influencers and drives the match-up effect. There might be several reasons for this, sustainable food is highly complex, the information is contradicting on the internet, and different opinion leaders claim different products and brands are favorable.

The match-up hypothesis has proven to be consistent with the results collected for Instagram-influencers. However, our results suggest that by facilitating the use of attributes in the selection process for brands, the match-up effect may be more effective. In this case variables like credibility, trustworthiness, and authenticity work as a baseline requirement to ensure the integrity of the brand when selecting endorsers. These variables also increase the effectiveness of the endorsement deal because the consumer attitudes and purchase intentions are easier influenced.

Furthermore, other factors like physical attractiveness, fitness, specific expertise, athleticism, skills in a sport, having a cause can be added on top to select influencers that have the best possible fit. By selecting influencer endorsers using this method, brands may increase their effectiveness in influencing their target group.

An important finding from our primary data was the discussion on how perceived quality from influencers had an impact on the consumer's judgment about the product's overall quality. One of the main discussion points was products with certifications as opposed to influencers' stamp of approval, and which one has the most potent effect. This section will discuss and explore why it is so and how brands and influencers can use perceived quality to improve purchase intention.

The importance of perceived quality for products and brands

The theory of the perception of perceived quality has both extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Extrinsic factors can be product information or a stamp of quality. Furthermore, these factors are ways the consumer can evaluate non-physical components of the product, which may affect the view a consumer has on the product (Bernués, Olaizola, & Corcoran, 2003). Perceived quality happens because consumers are not able to make correct and complete assessments of all the objective qualities a product assesses (Bello Acebrón & Calvo Dopico, 2000). Therefore, visual stamps and certifications or proof of quality and attributes are often used. To be able to visualize a stamp of quality, third party organizations have made certifications such as Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance to prove to consumers that the product has specific attributes. Different certifications have different effects on the various consumers. However, the certification is there to increase the perceived quality of the product, especially in the sustainable and vegan food industry. This is because of the complexity of the consumer decision-making process. It is hard to know what is healthy and sustainably made, and what is not. Radical Broccoli said that *"people do not know what the different certifications mean, is it just paid for, or is it someone who checks up"* (Appendix A, 10:15). Therefore, as there are more certifications, people can become confused if the certification has any meaning or what the meaning is.

When a brand uses an influencer, and they reliably show the product, their support can be seen as a stamp of approval. This virtual stamp can be as effective or more effective than a certification according to the primary data (Appendix A). The virtual stamp can often be presented as an endorsement in different ways, such as, I endorse this product; I use this product; you should use this product (McCracken, 1989). However, these forms can be portrayed either by focusing on the product or in more subtle ways, such as using the product in a recipe. Radical Broccoli explained that *"some influencers might have more power than the different certification"* (Appendix A, 11:15). This

citation is subject to whether the consumer follows the influencer, and if they follow, have a strong connection. This strong connection can be trustworthiness or attributes the endorser possess. The critical issue is that the influencer might then have a more substantial influence on the purchase intention than a certification has on the product. Therefore, influencers are valuable in marketing because they offer a set of characteristics that encourages consumers to evaluate the endorsed product or brand (Martin, 1996).

Contrary, another factor mentioned by Radical Broccoli is that *"as long as you are honest and do not have any mistakes from previous claims that have been false, the influence would be stronger"* (Appendix A, 12:00). This is an essential reason why many firms might fear using influencers because the product they endorse can lose its perceived quality if the influencers do something to decrease trust. However, it may be the same for certifications. If the certification is subject to a crisis, then the products with it will lose its effect among consumers. Furthermore, if the entry-level to get one of the sustainable certifications is too low, then too many products might get it, which makes it lose its value and therefore affect (Confino, 2014).

Perceived quality's effect on purchase intention

The theory from McCracken's meaning transfer model has been explained in section 4. McCracken researched the effect of celebrity endorsement (1989). Although influencer and celebrities are not the same thing, it shares many attributes and assets which both brands and influencer can use to apply meaning transfer. By applying meaning transfer we can discuss what effect perceived quality has on the brand and product to increase purchase intention.

Celebrities, who transfer the cultural association with their work to the brand they endorse, add value to this brand because its products then may possess the celebrity's symbolic power (McCracken, 1986). Instagram celebrities do not have a plethora of cultural meanings traditional celebrities have created in mainstream media. However, using Instagram, influencers have created their own perceived image through previous endorsements and what they post organically. Another differentiation factor is that a celebrity is mostly incorporated into the brand's advertisement, while with influencer endorsement the brand is integrated into the influencers post. So, when Radical Broccoli say *"They [Rema 1000] wish to connect associations with us. They [Rema 1000] think that if our followers [Radical Broccoli] support them [Rema 1000], then they [Radical Broccoli followers] will support Rema 1000. And then our followers will think that Rema 1000 is more*

environmentally friendly. They [Radical broccoli followers] will spread the word to others." (Appendix A, 21:45). Radical Broccoli can get brands to have this association through their values and attitudes they have built up over a long period of time through their personal brand. *"If you want to spread the message that you are sustainable, you can do it through influencers that perceive the same message."* (Appendix A, 07:15).

An endorsement by traditional celebrities could be perceived as a business transaction with the sponsoring brand without any emotional attachment to the brand, whereas Instagram celebrities would be perceived as having higher standards in picking their endorsed brands to which emotional attachment and meanings are assigned (Jin, Muqaddam, & Ryu, 2019). *"Has to be good for the environment, or at least go in the direction of sustainability, a positive experience for the customer, something that makes you feel good, and that we like it"* (Appendix A, 38:40) is what Radical Broccoli responded when asked which brands that fit them. While Kaja responded *"Has to be a brand I really want to work with, food related, has to be vegan and stand for and conform with the same preferences for what I would buy in a store"* (Appendix D, 02:35). When influencers stick to the same type of brands and send the same message over a long period of time it translates into perceived quality. The perceived quality the influencer transfer to the brand then illuminates' aspects of characteristics that the brand wants to be noticed by consumers. And when the perceived quality is noticed by the consumers, the perceived quality can be transferred as one of the key attributes of the brand. An example is Radical Broccoli collaboration with Rema 1000. Before the collaboration, Rema 1000 was not known to focus on sustainability more than other supermarket chains in Norway. The intention of Rema 1000 was to be more environmentally and sustainable focused than before the campaign. After the campaign the followers of Radical Broccoli knows that this is a big supermarket chain, I can trust more than the other big supermarket chains because I believe Radical Broccoli. Therefore, the increased perceived quality of Rema 1000 has increased. Thus, such as our research questions asks, increased the purchase intention of Radical Broccoli's followers towards Rema 1000 and their sustainable food product section. (Appendix A, 21:45)

To conclude the discussion on the effectiveness of the intangible stamp of quality influencer can give brands and products, the potency it has on followers is stronger than certifications given by NGOs and other organizations. The effect is especially effective the more credibility and expertise the influencer has according to our findings. Furthermore, the perceived quality that an influencer can bring to the product or brand is what the paying endorser wants to happen. This increases the

willingness to buy for the target group and therefore increases purchase intention. However, it is crucial to notice the effect when the influencer does not match the product or brand. Then their stamp of quality will not have any effect, and it might be more useful to get a certification rather than an influencer.

9.4 Academic and managerial implications

This section will discuss how some of our findings can be incorporated into academic and managerial implication.

Academic implications

In this research paper Shimps (2007) TEARS model was used to explore the connection between follower and influencer. However, the TEARS model was developed to look at the effect of celebrity endorsement on products or services based on endorser characteristics. Although we did not use the model for its intended purpose, it was the best model to adapt to our purpose. Nevertheless, after collecting out primary data we believe that to better develop this model to test the effect of Instagram influencer on products or services based on endorser characteristics another dimension should be added. The expression of authenticity was brought up several times during our data collection. We compare it to trustworthiness in the discussion as it is the closest dimension, but trustworthiness does not include all the aspects of the definition of authenticity. An influencer can be trustworthy in the sense that all its content is factual, honest, and believable, yet not be authentic in the sense that the content is not enjoyable for the influencer themselves. Conversely, an influencer can be authentic in the sense that they are what they profess to be, or what they are reputed to be, in origin or authorship, yet not be accurate and factual of the scientific truth. Therefore, we believe that the adaptation of the TEARS model when used in connection to followers and Instagram influencers should include the dimension of authenticity. Although we cannot say for sure how powerful this dimension is compared to the other dimensions, it is something to be explored in future research.

Furthermore, we used the match-up theory to understand the connection between influencer and brand. The theory is mostly explored concerning the relationship between celebrity endorsers and brands, and not influencers as we have used it in our paper. Therefore, after our exploration and

collection of primary data we want to develop the theory to further adapt it towards influencers. The theory as it has been explored today focus heavily on the physical attractiveness of the endorser as the most effective component an endorser can have. However, as the result conclude and the discussion describes, the physical attractiveness is only relevant to the point where the physical appearances of the influencer reflects the product they are endorsing. Thus, when this level of attractiveness is reached, it is not as prominent as the other dimensions in the match-up hypothesis. Therefore, we believe that brands should not primarily look at physical attractiveness when choosing influencers to endorse their brands, and rather focus on the other dimensions of the match-up hypothesis. Although, we can only conclude this from the sustainable food industry and not for influencers in every industry. That is interesting to continue to explore and generalize more in future research.

A common critique of the match-up hypothesis is its lack of definition of the term "fit". The lack of clarity of how a brand can define an endorser to be fit is argued among authors. However, we believe that our collection of primary data and discussions can give some clarity of how a brand can more easily define a fit between them and an influencer on Instagram. Thus, this can be added to the theory to clarify for further research and exploration towards Instagram influencers. Our findings in the discussion indicate that the value and attitude the influencers displays through their content on Instagram should mirror those values and attributes the brand want their consumer to view them. Although our finding is limited to the sustainable food industry with influencer endorsement, we believe future research is needed to generalize the findings within the influencer industry.

Managerial implications

For the managerial implication section, we will draw out from the discussion arguments that should impact how brands can choose the right influencer for their brand to increase purchase intention.

Finding the correct influencer for your brand

The struggle for brands is to find influencer that will give them the most ROI. The two most common ways are to use platform that can connect influencers with brands using keywords and other quantifiable indicators. Secondly, they can use an agency that represents several influencers and match the brand with the influencer that best fit the given criteria received from the brand. The main problem we discovered for these two was that it lacks an understanding of what the influencers can

provide. For example, using quantifiable indicators will not indicate the authenticity and credibility the influencer has on its followers. Furthermore, an agency will not understand, in the same depth as the brand, what the values they wish to portray upon their target consumers. Additionally, an agency will not understand, to the same extent as an influencer, the values a brand wish to communicate to the target consumers. However, we understand that this is a method to find influencer that will fit a brand in some aspect out of an enormous pool of potential influencers. Nevertheless, as we discovered when collecting our primary data, the most effective way of finding influencer that mirror what the brands seeks is to become a part of the follower community and seek out influencer that have a lot of followers that match your target audience. Thereby, the brand can follow the influencers over a period of time and understand how their consumers feel about their authenticity and how their connection is using the TEARS model. Additionally, it will give the brand a deeper understanding of how the influencer portrays other products. As we discussed with Solvor some influencers might not portray the brand as they want. However, we understand that this entitles more time then proceeding with an agency and therefore using research on what gives the best ROI using these two methods could be interesting to further research. Additionally, our data is from the sustainable food industry and it might have stronger or weaker effect depending on what industry uses these methods.

Managing influencers in marketing?

When a brand has found an influencer that they want to work with, it is important how the influencer and the brand discuss the working environment for the influencer. The data we collected from our influencers uncovered the importance of flexibility and creative freedom when they endorse for brands. This is another important factor to the previous section on why brands should understand how influencers portrays products and brands, so it is displayed in a way that the brand approves of. If the influencer usually likes to adapt the endorsed product to recipes to showcase the tastiness or usefulness of the product and then for your brand it only displays the product in a staged lighting and has a more professional look. The post will seem unnatural and therefore less authentic than what is normally posted. Thus, the post is more easily understood as an ad, and therefore less intriguing for the followers. Therefore, allowing the influencers to follow its own guidelines and methods allows for a better mirroring and wanted perceived effect of the brand according to our data. If Rema 1000 want to increase their consumers awareness of their sustainability initiative, then the effect that will give the best result is by allowing the influencer to portray them as they see fit. Unless, other factors are apparent such as the followers already have a negative image of Rema 1000. However, by using

the presented method in the previous section, the brand can get a better understanding of how the followers might react before engaging in an endorsement. This conclusion is based on qualitative data from the sustainable food industry and should be explored further for other industries to examine whether the same effects will apply.

Introduction ⇨ Theory ⇨ Methodology ⇨ Results ⇨ Discussion ⇨ **Conclusion**
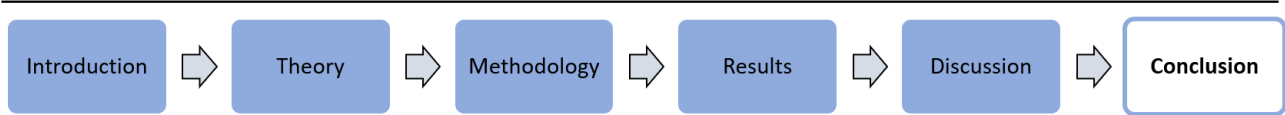
Our research set out to answer the question: *Why and how does influencer's content on Instagram affect their follower's brand attitudes and purchase intention toward sustainable food brands?* To help answer this, we developed 12 propositions. Furthermore, we developed a model based on Heider's balance theory. Each corner of the triangle was defined as follower, influencer, and brand. To complete the triangulation, each connecting side was given a theory that would, from the best of our knowledge, provide us with the most reliable data. The data was collected using multi-method qualitative data. This method was used as the topic is under-researched and our research approach is exploratory. Furthermore, to understand the effect on brand attitude and purchase intention, we used the theory of reasoned action as a fundamental underlying theory to explain consumer attitudes and the effects on purchase intention. Followers change attitudes and intentions based on influencers content. If an influencers attributes match the attributes of the brand, it will provide a better match-up effect in the endorser-brand relationship. As a result, influencers may have a significant effect on follower attitudes and purchase intentions regarding the endorsed brand.

From our results we discussed the most intriguing outcome of our data. Firstly, that authenticity is a driver for trustworthiness and credibility and could potentially be explored as its own dimension. Additionally, this means that authenticity affect followers' attitudes and purchase intention towards endorsed brands in the sustainable food industry. Secondly, we discuss the theory of the match-up hypothesis. We discover that physical attractiveness plays a lesser role if the influencer embodies the values of the product. If an influencer is promoting a healthy product, they should look healthy and fit. Additionally, expertise was a significant driver for the match-up effect in the sustainable food industry. Lastly, we discuss the importance of perceived quality, and how it can affect the consumer attitude and purchase intention towards an endorsed brand. Thus, we conclude that brand attitude and purchase intentions can be significantly affected by influencer endorsement, given the right conditions.

As we discover from the follower-influencer-brand model, there is no one simple answer to the research question, rather a combination of the theories and models used in this paper. We encourage future research on this topic and to explore how to improve upon presented model with the future research as suggested in the paper

11.0 Suggestion for future research

This section will suggest what future research can be done based on the discussions in our paper. It is important to understand that we limited our paper to a rising industry compared to other more dominant industries. Our choice to do so was because we believe that the sustainable industry is an area of business where the consumers value the attitudes a brand perceive towards sustainability and the environment immensely. Therefore, future researchers should utilize our triangulation model between follower, influencer and brand with the supported theories and test using similar methods to see if the outcome is the same as our findings. The more of these studies that can be executed, the more reliable the generalization of the theory and method can be.

Furthermore, as discussed in academic implication, the term authenticity should be further explored as a dimension that could be added in the TEARS model when using the model to test between followers and influencers. We found that in some cases the term authenticity could be a more effective way of increasing consumer attitude. Therefore, it would be of interest if future research executed a quantitative data collection to ask a broader range of consumers within influencer endorsement what has the strongest effect. Thus, increase the generalization of the term and if proved equal to the other dimension it could be a viable inclusion to the theory.

The match-up theory was developed to understand the connection between a celebrity and a brand. However, as we discover, there are a lot more components that could further strengthen the theory between the relationship between an Instagram influencer and a brand then what is prominently used now. Those two components are expertise and physical attractiveness. Although we discuss other components, they are not as well-researched. Therefore, it would be interesting to seek out other dimensions that can explain the term "fit" better. Derived from our finding, a more precise and generalizable theory can be developed to simply managerial implications when they wish to seek out influencers.

Appendix no.	Title
Appendix A	**Interview with Radical Broccoli (@radicalbroccoli), Influencer from Norway.**
Appendix B	**Interview with Solvor, Brand manager, Nestle baby food**
Appendix C	**Focus group with Andrea, Kjartan and Ola.**
Appendix D	**Interview Kaja Andrine Bratvedt (@Kajaand), influencer from Norway.**
Appendix E	**Nethnography summary from following @Kajaand over 3 months on Instagram**
Appendix F	**Nethnography summary from following @emilienutrition over 3 months on Instagram**

Wednesday, 8th of April 2020

Held over Skype

Audio on file

About	Radical Broccoli is two influencers from Norway with 23k followers, and have also written a book and have a podcast about healthy, sustainable living.
03:00	Drevet i to år, selskap som er en influencer platform / blogg / podcast og har skrevet en bok.
03:40	**Hva ønsket dere å få frem gjennom IG**
04:00	Spre et budskap som er tungt og kjedelig, men og lage det lett og inspirerende og underholdene for folk og oss selv. Få det til å være noe som er naturlig for (oss) – prøver å gjøre det mindre komplisert. Det var komplisert før, så de så muligheten til å forenkle det, spesielt i Norge.
06:00	**hvorfor tror det influencer marketing har blitt så populært i nyere tider?**
06:15	Influencer marketing har blitt populært pga. Det er gunstigere – før var det et stort reklamefirma som måtte gjøre dette, nå bare influencere. Mye billigere. Når rett ut til forbrukerne. Spesielt hvis det er en niche. Man kan nå publikum som passer godt til produktet/brandet. Deres bevissthet av temaet. Nå direkte til forbrukerne.

07:15	Hvis du har lyst til å spre budskapet om at man har blitt bærekraftig, kan man gjøre det gjennom influencere som sprer det samme budskapet. Skaper troverdighet.
07:45	Troverdighet – lettere å kjøpe noe når noen du følger har endorsed det.
08:05	**Føler dere at følgere hører mer på dere enn hvis brandet gjør det selv**
08:15	Nesten sånn det er. Før når store kjendiser har tatt på seg jakker så har det blitt utsolgt veldig fort. Celebrity endorsement – slik har det alltid vært – tilknytningen mellom 'kjendis' og forbrukerne. Noen ganger er det mer powerful enn hvis brandet skulle bare lagt frem en egen reklame.
09:00	**Hva med deres IG følgere?**
09:10	Det spørs. Vi kan ha hatt den effekten, f.eks. et shampoo merke. Veldig mange som var skeptiske, men når de (RB) viser det frem, så tenker de (følgerne), åja. Da er det greit. RB har stempel at de gjør mye research (sier de) og dermed tror folk på dem istedenfor å gjøre research selv.
10:20	**Dere snakket om shampoen, Har de ikke allerede sertifiseringer som hvis at de er ditt og datt? Har dere en like stor eller sterkere påvirkning enn det?**
10:30	Folk vet ikke hva de skal se etter og hva de ulike merkene betyr – er det kjøpt og betalt, eller er det noe som sjekkes opp. Ikke like stor tiltro til stempelet. Det betyr ikke at RB har større påvirkning enn f.eks svanemerking.
11:15	Noen influencere kan ha mer makt enn de ulike sertifiseringene – jo større influencer, jo mer makt har en influencer i forbruker tilfeller. Kan gå over sertifiseringer osv.

11:30	Så lenge man ikke har hatt noen tabber eller form for misinformation. Eller man er åpen og ærlig er viktig, være ærlig om hva de ikke vet og deres erfaringer.
12:00	**Dere viser ikke til noe forskning når dere snakker om f.eks shampoo?**
12:15	Det er noe av det vanskeligste vi gjør er å vite hvem vi skal samarbeide med.
12:30	Kan være ting vi finner som ikke stemmer, det er skummelt
12:45	Kaller seg 'forskningsbaserte' på ganske mye, det er noe de tenker på. De vil ikke spre informasjon, fordi det kan ødelegge ryktet deres! (Drite seg ut). Har skrevet bok så de vet hva som skal være. Formidle og simplifisere forskning og formidle det på IG.
13:15	**Hvorfor tror dere følgerne følger akkurat dere?**
13:30	Følgerne følger dem fordi de har mer dybde, ikke bare visuelt. Det fikk dem til lettere å ta valg, samt inspo til vegetar sunn matlaging. Vi deler en del ting om oss, då det er ganske personlig. Ikke så mange som har gjort det samme tidligere. Ikke 'miljøaktivister', men en mer allmenn tilgang til det å spise bæredyktig.
14:55	**Hva slags innflytelse tror dere at dere har på deres følgere?**
15:00	Veldig varierende, noen ingenting, andre skummelt mye. Har fått meldinger om at de (følgere) har endret hele livet sitt. Til i dag tok jeg handlenett istedenfor pose. På alle ender av skalaen, både bra og dårlig. Snakker også om en del, ha det bra og mental helse. Her tror RB at de har truffet veldig bra.

16:00	**Når dere endorser produkter, tror dere følgerne kjøper de produktene?**
16:10	Ja, det har vært gode tall. Merker det gjerne ved at brandet har spurt om kampanjer igjen. Bergans – de får se hvor mange bukser som blir solgt gjennom linken de deler. De var meget fornøyde, og ville gjøre ny, sesongen etter. Andre ganger vet man bare ikke. Vanskelig å måle korrekt, pga. Det kan gå lang tid før faktisk kjøper produktet og hva som var de bak omliggende faktorene.
17:30	**Har dere noen eksempler på brands som ikke matchet så bra?**
17:40	Vi merker det ofte at det er mindre engasjement. Vi hadde et fotoalbum osv. Har ikke så mye å gjøre med profilen. Jo lenger fra core aktiviteten – jo mindre fornøyde er brandet og jo mindre er engasjementet.
18:30	**Hva er det dere tenker på når dere velger / godkjenner brands til samarbeid?**
18:40	Krav at det er miljømessig. Ang. fotoalbumet var det fordi det var noe hyggelig man kunne gi digitalt. RB må også like produktet. Veganske pølser på 7/11 – spiser ikke det mye selv – men det er gøy fordi mange får et alternativ som ikke er kjøtt. Fikk kommentar om at 'haha du spiser pølser'. Veldig godt tatt imot på IG siden mange av dem likte pølser og ville ha noen bedre alternativer.
20:30	**Er det slik at jo lenger unna core, jo mer skal man ha betalt?**
20:50	Vi gjør også Probono arbeid for WHO og andre organisasjoner. Fine prosjekter som passer deres profil, så det vil de ha og promotere uansett. Tror det er

	engasjerende for følgerne og se. Om det er meget kommersielt, vil de ikke gjøre det.
21:35	**Hva tror dere deres profil bidrar til det brandet som dere promoterer?**
21:45	Vi gjør brandet en viss assosiasjon til at de er miljøvennlige. Rema 1000 jobber ikke med influencere, men siden de har gode verdier og en profil som står i stil med hvordan de ønsker å bli assosiert med. De ønsker å koble assosiasjonen til seg selv. De (Rema 1000) tenker at hvis følgerne til radical støtter de, vil de støtte rema hvis de promoterer de. Og da tror følgerne at Rema 1000 er mer miljøvennlig. De får andre til å spre budskapet sitt. Da øker troverdigheten.
23:00	**Vil dere si at dere anser dere selv som eksperter innenfor deres felt?**
23:05	Ja – vi har lest og spurt så mye at vi vet en god del. Brukt et år på å lage en bok – som på en måte blir en masteroppgave. Så de vil kalle seg selv eksperter. Tidligere var de på leting etter 'sannheten' og om hva som er best.
23:45	**Hvem er den typiske følgeren?**
24:00	Jente 25 år, som studerer jobber vanlig hektisk liv, men er opptatt av miljøet, vet ikke hvor de skal starte, og starter gjerne med maten. Sulten på å lære, vil gjøre de riktige valgene, men vet ikke riktig hvordan.
24:45	**Vil dere si at følgerne deres speiler dere på noen som helst måte?**

24:55	Følgerne speiler oss, de minner om hvem RB var da de startet. De er på forskjellige steder i en reise til en mer miljøvennlig livsstil, og ønsker en viss livsstil. Kjenner seg igjen i mental helse problemer, de kan snakke sammen som om de har kjent hverandre lenge. Bygger en tillit, gjennom å være åpen og ærlig. Følgerne sier også ifra hvis de er litt langt ute på kanten. Hvorfor promoterer dere disse, etc?
26:00	**Er det mye interaksjon mellom dere og følgerne?**
26:10	Ja, veldig mye chatting og interaksjon mellom følgerne, de svarer og holder en åpen dialog med deres følgere. Mye dialog rundt stories, og spørsmål rundt posts og stories. Mye spørsmål om hva dere har på dere, hvor det er fra. Mange lange fine tilbakemeldinger ift. Podcasts. Lurer på mange små spørsmål om hva de bruker istedenfor poser osv. Hva er best av det og det. De trenger alternativer.
27:40	**Hvordan bygger dere da tillit med følgerne?**
27:50	Vanskelig å vite hvordan man bygger tillit, men de svarer og passer på å holde en åpen dialog med følgerne. De får nesten et venneforhold til disse følgerne. De bygger troverdighet gjennom å sjekke opp ordentlig, sjekke hvorfor noe er bra før de gir informasjonen videre. Passer på å satse kvalitet i interaksjonene. Hvis de spør hva slags materiale det er i de buksene, så sjekker vi det opp og ikke bare sier noe. Ærlighet.
29:10	**Hvordan finner dere selskap/ samarbeidspartnere**
29:25	80% nådd ut til RB. 20% nådd de har nådd ut til. Vi har alltid hatt en top 20 'drømme samarbeid'. Som de ønsker å kontakte, jobbe seg mot.

29:50	**Er det direkte kontakt eller bruker dere en platform?**
30:00	United Influencers er en platform man kan bruke. Valgt å ikke være under et influencer byrå, de var det i starten og fikk dårlig erfaring med det. Diggest og lettest å gjøre det selv. Virker som brandet synes det er lettere å snakke direkte istedenfor 20 mails fram og tilbake mellom mellom personene. Også tar de 50% av inntektene. Får masse oppdrag gjennom Inspire Me. Den har funket veldig bra. Der får vi masse oppdrag. Siden rett før jul
31:30	**Hva er godt samarbeid?**
31:40	Mange check punkter; god kommunikasjon og tone med de de snakker med, kreativ frihet, om kampanjen gikk bra, om folk likte det, man ble skikkelig verdsatt (bokstavelig talt), når alt klaffer.
32:25	Handler mye om troverdighet, og at du faktisk ville brukt det. At du mener det genuint og det skinner fort igjennom om det ikke gjør det. Når et brand stoler mer på oss istedenfor micromanagement, MYE morsommere enn om det er for mye struktur på det, det mister personlighet. Vi ønsker å være oss selv så mye som mulig.
33:30	**Har dere et eksempel på et godt samarbeid og hvorfor det var slik.**
34:00	Bergans – ble litt overrasket over at de tok kontakt. Begynte å bruke produktene og kjente på kvaliteten, og hvor bra det var. Og folk elsker virkelig bergans.
34:50	Dream iskrem – bra samarbeid – folk digger det, bra betalt, enkelt å promotere. Mange små veganske merker av mat.

35:20	**Hva skiller et godt samarbeid og dårlig samarbeid?**
35:30	Fancy service villeroy & boch samarbeid – godt betalt, men følte ikke det var veldig bra respons – målgruppen er for ung for fint servis. Det var ikke en god match for målgruppen. Hadde MG vært 10-15 år eldre ville det nok gått bedre og blitt bedre respons.
36:35	**Hva betyr dårlig respons?**
36:45	færre likes og kommentarer, og mindre linke-click og meldinger om det. Måle engasjement og reach på hver post. Ser på begge deler, data og 'kvalitative' meldinger.
37:10	En usynlig faktor der – om man har kjemi med brandet, om det er noe gøy, om det virkelig passer fra brand til profil. Om det virkelig er et engasjert samarbeid mellom brand og profil, vil det være mye bedre samarbeid.
37:50	Hvis noen som jobber der følger de (RB) privat og kjenner og har fulgt de lenge, skjønner de mer hva brandet står for etc.
38:20	**Hva gjør at en brand passer til deres profil**
38:30	bra for miljøet, at de hvertfall starter og prøver å gå i en retning av bæredyktighet, positiv opplevelse for kundene, skal føle seg bra av det, og at RB liker det, RB tar ikke de 'lette pengene' fra betakaroten osv., vitaminbjørner (90% sukker) så derfor velger de å ikke ta det selv om det er vegansk. Pga research som er gjort på forhånd og derfor holder de seg troverdig
40:10	**Hvilke brands er det dere får mest engasjement med?**

40:25	Jobbet med Tise (second hand treasures). De har samme tone, de lager mye rart gøy innhold, mye god respons på mat, restauranter og matprodukter, bergans, Øyafestivalen, bok, mye promotering av egen bok og podkast
41:20	**Vil dere si at det dere får mest respons med er det som matcher profilen dere mest?**
42:20	Bergans er lokalt, norsk merke og har vært flinke med å markedsføre seg selv fra før av, god verdi av brandet og god match med RB.
42:50	Øyafestivalen var også en veldig bra match siden det er et av verdens mest miljøvennlige festivaler. Har også en større målgruppe.
43:30	**Har dere noen Strategi for å få flere følgere? Noe dere går direkte inn for?**
43:45	Gikk sykt fort i starten, det vokste veldig fort. Vi trenger ikke gjøre så mye, men vi gjør bare hva som er gøy. Etter hvert legger man merke til hva som fungerer, hva slags bilder og stories følgere vil ha og man vil etter hvert perfeksjonere det. Og etter brands begynner å etterspør rapportering blir man mer bevisste og vil lage det som gir best resultater. Vår strategi skal; bildene skal være fine med god kvalitet, faktisk bra innhold, morsomme ting og spennende innhold så er det morsommere for folk
45:10	**Hva er bra innhold?**
45:30	Jo mer man snakker til kameraet og er engasjert selv, enkle ting man kan gjøre. De har ikke prøvd å pushe det for mye, det skal føles gøy, om ikke dropper man det. Personlighet gir bra engasjement!!!!
46:00	**Hva ønsker dere å oppnå med IG, har dere noen mål?**

46:30	Ingen konkrete mål, de har noen drømme-samarbeid, men ingen store mål sånn sett, de har jobbet litt med sportsklær brand Adidas, resirkulert plast fra havet, ønsker å bygge ut fra IG, og ikke bare IG. Satt opp nettbutikk, legge til varer som folk ser etter, ferdig utvalgt hva som er miljøvennlig. Bygge en bedrift, og ikke bare IG profil. Ta inn brands i deres nettbutikk. Man bør ikke bare holde seg til IG, da det kan gå veldig opp og ned.
48:10	**Pleier dere å ha mye samarbeid med andre influencere?**
48:20	Ja – en god del, og der bare med folk som det føles naturlig med, og som de er venner med fra før av. Eventer som blir delt av andre oslo influencere.
49:00	**Det er det samme som med brands at det speiler dere og deres verdier?**
49:10	Ja, men mange som jobber med fashion også krysser våre veier så kan vi lage noe miljøvennlig fashion f.eks.
49:50	Magefølelse er viktig, hvem man har god kjemi med, 'den usynlige faktoren'.

Appendix B. Summary and quotes from interview with Solvor, Brand manager, Nestle baby food

Thursday, 9th of April 2020

Held over Skype

Audio on file

About	Solvor is a woman working for Nestle and has had a couple of different positions. One of the more important one, regarding this thesis, is her role as an influencer manager for Nestle baby food
00:00	Nestle barnemat hadde 3 kategorier: Baby mat – melk, grøt og 'meals n drinks' Nestle brukte mye influencere til å markedsføre disse produktene. Målgruppen er foreldre med småbarn fra 0-2 år. Kan først begynne å markedsføre fra 6 mnd pga WHO reglementer på når barn kan begynne å spise barnemat. I tillegg må barnet som de bruker i influencer marketing også være over 6 mnd.
1:30	Det er mye interesse å få kunnskap fra Nestle siden det er mye usikkerhet rundt et nytt barn om hva de skal spise etc.
2:30	Hatt mye suksess med influencer marketing, får mye tips fra influencere. Det gir også kredibilitet til deres (Nestle) brand (fra influencer). Parents shaming – skal være de perfekte foreldre – influencere har hjulpet mye med å dempe denne shamingen – det er ok å gi ferdiglaget mat – Nestle sin er veldig god.
4:40	Introdusert nytt brand i 2018. for å bygge awareness rundt brandet, ble det brukt influencer marketing. Da kunne foreldre spre WOM. Influenser har stor påvirkningskraft. Noen influencere som bare snakket om grøt, og noen som snakes om naturenes organic. I år skulle det endre til å heller være tema relatert enn produkt-relatert

06:00	I læringen fra første gang, så ønsket de at det skulle være mindre og mindre fokus på produktet og mer et budskap. Det er også nytt for mange influensene som må lære seg om hvordan de skal gjøre dette. Veldig lett for de å bare vise frem produktet. «hun ene bygget et tårn av produktet og satte babien og satte det ved siden av. Det så ikke ekte eller naturlig ut. Eksempel på hvordan det skal være. «Nå er mitt barn 6 måneder, slik er mine erfaringer rundt det.»
07:45	Verdiene til produktet skal gjenspeile influensene sine attributter – premium produkt à hipster foreldre, ser bra ut, men ikke picture perfect, aktiv livsstil– de velger økologisk og bæredyktig.
08:45	Det andre brandet som ikke var økologisk fokuserte på andre attributter som speilet det produktet, som kos, litt mindre moderne, flere barn, etc.
09:20	Hadde allerede valgt ut faktorer som skal speile bandets verdier., og siktet seg inn på influencere som matchet best mulig. Skal være en refleksjon av det brandet eller produktet. Assosiasjoner kan gå begge veier, det kan bli veldig feil. Hvis brandet var premium, ønsket de at influencer også lagde premium content
10:00	Søker etter influencere som er 'similar' til target groupen de ønsker å påvirke.
10:30	**Hvor mye brukte dere byrå og hvor mye fant dere selv**
10:40	Hun som brand manager har et klart bilde av hvem som skulle brukes som influencer pga. Hennes innsikt – så på stilen av bilde, hvordan de skriver og promoterer og fulgt dem over lengre tid. Fant influencere fra venninner som kunne brukes til kampanjen til produktet hennes.
11:20	Byrået var i Danmark og de skulle ha influencere i Norge. Og Sverige

11:50	Byrået baserer seg mer på kvantifiserte faktorer, hvor mange followers, hvor mye engasjement osv. Hadde også mange bra forslag når det gjaldt tallene men de så ikke alltid på bildene på profilen
12:50	Mer viktig for meg at vi fikk en riktig profil som hadde 5k følgere, enn en som hadde 8k følgere med litt feil profil.
13:10	Forslag, ig profilen hadde mange followers, men om man scroller ned ser man at hun drikker vin med venninner og vulgære bilder, dette passet ikke helt inn i imaget til brandet om babymat. Reflekterte dårlig med brandets image
14:15	**Har du et eksempel på noen dere samarbeidet med som det ikke gikk så bra med?**
14:20	Et eksempel på et dårlig samarbeid med en influencer som byrået hadde foreslått, så etter hvert at hun ikke passet. Superredigert bilde med photoshopped produkter og babyen, men det så helt sykt falskt ut, det skrek 'fake'. Vi vil ha mer naturlige bilder, ikke så satt opp og fake. Var en profil som byrået hadde foreslått. Hun endret hvordan hun tok bilder etter at Nestle forklarte hvordan hun kunne gjøre det annerledes.
16:00	Nestle sender brief, influencere sender forslag, så godkjenner vi (nestle) bildene, etter tegnet kontrakt, og hvor ofte de skal poste. Før det postes sendes det til byrået (Mediacom) som ser på at tags osv er riktig i posten før den går ut, sender den videre til Solvor som ser at alle retningslinjer er fulgt.
17:30	De var villig til å endre og var veldig samarbeidsvillig, det kan være siden de var veldig små (mtp følgere) og var mer villig til å endre og lære.

17:40	Influencer marketing – må gi frie tøyler, og stole på at de klarer å fikse det. Viktig å velge riktig influenser og jobbe med. Derfor er det viktig å velge riktig influencere i starten. Bildene skal ikke være for produktfokusert – ting som ikke stemmer om produktet – ting som blir sjekket gjennom quality assurance (kvalitetssikring).
18:30	**Har du et eksempel på et bra samarbeid?**
18:40	Samarbeid som gikk veldig bra – Solberg, en pappa de jobbet med. Var mer på grunn av connectionen de hadde. Han hadde høyt engasjement med followers, bruker humor, er ærlig og autentisk. Han står opp om morgenen, han er trøtt og orker ikke lage noe fancy mat, bruker da produktet til Nestle. God match.
20:20	Snakket masse med han direkte i IG, og det økte connection da det var mye kommunikasjon
20:50	Når influencere får en bedre connection (med nestle) kan det hende at de legger ut en ekstra post for dem. Denne connectionen er viktig både for influencer og for brand.
21:20	Hva menes med connection mellom han og følgerne
21:30	Connection – det virker som det er høy engagement, likes comments, han delte en give-away, høy deltakelse, man kan se at han snakker direkte til følgerne, og man kan se det i kommentarfeltet. Det var ihvertfall inntrykket, bra engasjement med followers.
22:10	**Hvordan tror du det påvirket brandet mtp brand image og kjøp**

22:22	Vanskelig med IM, ikke så mye 'tangibles' – ikke så mange KPI's og vise til. Du kan se reach og click, engasjement, likes osv., men ikke den kvalitative om folk får et bedre eller dårligere inntrykk av brandet siden du jobbet med den personen. Tror det skaper mer awareness rundt brandet – noen influencere som har rett mengde followers og hvor de kommer fra i landet. Ingen resultater på at kundene liker brandet bedre etter disse IM kampanjene.
24:20	Du merket ikke noe på deres egne sosiale medier om mer engasjerte kommentarer?
24:40	Ikke direkte i våres post. Målte hvor mange som kommenterte på bilde og hvor mange som nevnte brandet. Var en økning på antall som kom inn til IG profilen til brandet. Om de følger oss (på IG) etter en kampanje med IM, vil det si at de liker brandet.
26:45	**Hvordan tror du konsumenter respondere på IM enn vanlig digital markedsføring?**
27:15	Om de følger influenceren, og brandet bruker dem, er det større sjans på å ha høyere innflytelse på kundene. Typisk annonse på FB, ikke i nærheten av samme engagements som influencerne gjør – en sterkere påvirkningskraft om de gjør det riktig.
28:40	4/10 ville heller stolt på en influencer enn en venn eller familie. Dersom influencere gir råd, hører de mer på influencere. Sterk cred.
29:00	**Hvorfor tror du det er slik ref; svar over**

29:10	Følgt influenceren over lengre tid, får de en følelse av at de kjenner de, og at influenceren er en venn, og eller en ekspert – han har nok prøvd så mye forskjellig, at hun/han har kunnskapen om hva som er best.
29:45	**Tror du at forbrukerne stoler mer på influencere enn hvis brandet poster selv?**
30:00	vanskelig å svare på – publikum vet at det er markedsføring når det kommer fra brandet, kan virke mer autentisk når det kommer fra en influencer, og mindre markedsføring. Noen kanskje ikke tenker helt at det er sponset. Åja, hun synes det er bra, da må det være bra. Seriøse/vitenskapelig produkter kan det være stoler de mer på direkte info fra brandet, fordi de kan ikke gi dårlig info.
31:45	Merket dere om noe om dere fikk mer lojale eller mer engasjert kunder etter kampanjen
31:55	Kampanje og influencer samtidig, kan se det går opp ift followers og likes, men ift salg kan de ikke helt se om det har å gjøre med influencer marketing eller normale kampanjer osv, kan være tilfeldigheter. Lojale følgere på sosiale medier, går opp ja, men ikke så mye. Men de har blitt der de som starten å følge. Inntrykket er at de er lojale når de først følger på SM.
33:10	**Var det noe økning i kontakt med Nestle ang spørsmål og interesse om produktet?**
33:20	Har ikke sett eller hørt noe fra de ang det. Oppgang i spm. Ift. Produktinformasjon. Mange andre influencere som spør oss når de andre ser at produktet har begynt med IM. Mange som har lyst å bli mikro influencere – sender ut produkter og de promoterer produktene gratis for nestle.

34:50	**Er det noe mer du vil legge til?**
35:20	Det kan ha mange positive effekter, men også kan ha negative innvirkninger. (ref: trekanten). Follower benefits, får vite om nyheter eller rabattkoder eller tips osv. Reassurance.
36:00	Et eksempel på en influencer som de jobbet med, så postet hun noe om Nestle, noen followers som ikke likte bandet, fikk tilbakemeldinger fra følgerne og spurte hvordan du kunne støtte dette brandet osv. Hun valgte å avslutte samarbeidet pga hennes followers var negative til dette. Followers hadde dermed mye innflytelse på henne, og fikk hun til å avslutte forholdet.
37:30	**Var det noen læring på hva dere kunne gjort før samarbeidet for å minske dette (ref: avsluttet forholdet grunnet negativ omtale)**
37:40	Gir influencerne trygghet gjennom å dele informasjon, og de vil gjerne ha en feeling på at de likte produktene til Nestlé før de tar kontakt.
39:20	**Tror du en negativ kommentar påvirker influenseren og brandet sterkere enn en positiv kommentar?**
39:40	En negativ kommentar kan vekte veldig sterkt – de som er misfornøyde sier ofte ifra, mens de som er nøytrale eller positive ofte er stille. Det var bare 1 follower som skrev det negativt mens det var kanskje 5-10 andre som skrev positive. Har mye med Nestlé som stort selskap å gjøre. Det er alltid noen som vil være negative
41:15	Det er mere negative feedback når brandet markedsfører selv enn hvis det kommer fra en influencer.

Appendix C. Summary and quotes from focus group with Andrea, Kjartan and Ola.

Sunday 12th of April 2020

Held over skype

Audio on file

About	Andrea Kjartan Ola	Andrea is a 24-year-old woman living and working full-time in Copenhagen. She is Norwegian. Kjartan is a 27-year-old man living and working in Bergen Norway. Ola is a 27-year-old man living and working in Stavanger Norway.
01:12	Kjartan	Valgte vegan Fitness info, liker lettlært og lettleste ting. Det de gjør bra er legge frem mange ulike ingredienser og kommer med masse info som er støttet av mange artikler. Ikke kunne relatert til vegan, men også healthy mind, healthy body. Det er fint, ikke hva man typisk ser på Instagram, som er mer kroppsfokusert. Mer rett på sak. Dr Vegan, mye det samme, bare mer fokus på oppskrifter. Dr vegan har intervju med ulike sportsatleter for å få innspill, men stort sett rett på sak. Ingenting fra influensen.

03:26	Andrea	Liker veldig godt Voe, EmilieNutrition. Der går det i det samme, det handler om mat, oppskrifter og hvorfor det er bra for deg, samt videoer om hvordan man lager det. Det er veldig simpelt oppsett. Minimalt med bilder av hun selv, «Se på meg, se hvor fin jeg er» type bilder. Det er fokus på maten. Det er et tema på hele Instagram profilen hennes. Veldig spesifikt sånn. Det er veldig enkelt lagt opp. Oppskrifter, hvordan man lager spennende oppskrifter, vi har prøvd mange av dem.
04:46	Marius	**Er det negativt om en influenser har for stort fokus på seg selv?**
05:01	Andrea	Ja, jeg liker generelt kjente personer. Jeg følger dem av en grunn, det er et tema bak det, Voe vet jeg at jeg får mat. Så har du Herman Flesvik, det handler om humor, det er et spesifikt tema. De følger noen generelle regler.
05:18	Ola	Følger ingen spesifikt om mat. Men av influenser er jeg glad i Herman Flesvik og Joe Rogan. Joe Rogan har litt med kosthold og mat å gjøre.
05:56	Marius	**Hva gjør at du liker Joe Rogan?**

6:00	Ola	Han er veldig åpen, prøve og ikke være låst til måten han tenker på, veldig åpen for nye ting, åpen for å bli bevist at han har feil. Det prøver jeg også selv å være slik jeg ikke har det samme mindsettet hele tiden. Prøver litt forskjellig og ser hva som fungerer. Være litt bevisst på at man er låst i tankemåten.
07:08	Kjartan	Vanskelig å finne en spesifikt jeg ikke liker. En person har jeg i tankene, en Australsk influenser. Healthy lifestyle, ikke helt vegan, men prøver. Hans motto er å holde seg lean mens han bygger muskler. Stoppet å følge han fordi det handlet hele tiden om han, og ikke om infoen som jeg vil ha og oppskriftene. På youtube og, 80% av videoen er om han, og ikke på hvordan han langer mat og hvilket kosthold han spiser.
08:46	Andrea	Generelt sett, den kategorien av eks paradise og ex on the beach deltagere som har vært på tv en gang, og nå er de kjendiser. Det eneste de gjør er å vise kroppen sin for å få oppmerksomhet. Veldig mye på de IG-profilene som er ads, de er rettet mot slikkepinner, «spis denne slikkepinnen så går du ned i vekt». Blir veldig sellout, de er bare her for å få penger få oppmerksomhet og driter i hva de promoterer på Igjen sin. Skal basically bare vise seg selv frem.

10:27	Ola	Leser ikke så mye blogger, men du hører en del om dem. Jeg er litt på de som promoterer veldig mye operasjoner og rabattkoder for det. Du hører om jenter på 10 som sparer for å ta operasjoner. Og influenser bruker 'giveaways' til sine følgere. Det har blitt strengere, men det er fortsatt mye, men det har vært litt den ville vesten, så mye sånne ting har vært lov, det begynner å bli strengere, men det viser hvor mange folk de faktisk kan påvirke. Veldig lite fan av det.
12:10	Marius	**Vi har om Raw Halo, en vegansk bæredyktig sjokolade. Hvilken type influenser passer et slikt produkt?**
12:20	Kjartan og Andrea	Kaja. Jeg tenkte også på Kaja, det første jeg tenkte på.
12:25	Kjartan	Har sett mange vegan influensere, men jeg føler at de verdiene der passer bra til en influenser som Kaja, fordi det er det hun gjør, hun henviser til produkter du kan kjøpe i butikken.
13:35	Marius	**Hvorfor passer Kaja?**
13:45	Kjartan	Hun får det frem at det er det hun driver med, hun vil drive med helse. Hun tar bilde av seg selv, men ikke den oppfatning av at hun vil vise seg selv, hun vil mer spre positivitet. Du får ikke bare maten, men du sprer positivitet.

14:00	Andrea	Typer som Voe kunne fint promotert det. Har promotert vegan burgers. De to er av samme kategori, vi er positive og fokuset ligger på maten, og ikke nødvendigvis at vi skal bli tynn og fin, men at helsen skal være god.
16:30	Marius	**Hvorfor fungerer en promotering?**
16:40	Andrea	det må først være et produkt som treffer din interesse. Gjerne derfor du følger viss influenser, du følger ikke de der du deler noen felles interesser. Mat produkt promotering, så er det viktig for meg, «Vis meg hvordan de bruker det» - enten om det er en video eller bilde med oppskrift. Et eksempel er Voe – hun hadde nettopp en rødbet burger, legger ut annonse, hvor hun sier at dette merket har kommet ut med en ny burger. Jeg brukte den på denne måten og den var kjempegod.
18:00	Kjartan	Kaja bruker produkter, plantebasert sjokolade, vis meg enkle tiltak til hvor jeg kan få dette brukt, noe som er godt, men ikke krever at jeg har en hel handleliste med ting jeg trenger. Et enkelt budskap med noe bra. Da er det en sjans at jeg ville prøvd eller kjøpt produktet.
18:49	Ola	Kan få litt avsmak fordi man merker at noen prøver å selge det. Kommer bare på et eksempel av en influenser som heter Imaqtpie, han legger ut sponsa ads så snakker han veldig sarkastisk, og det er bare tull, det blir morsomt, dette kunne jeg prøvd, fordi fokuset her er ikke på å selge. Det blir en mer autentisk promotering av produktet og ikke opplesning av en tekst en har fått av virksomheten.

20:05	Marius	**Kan dere sette 3-4 ord på en type influenser dere ville kjøpt noe av?**
20:20	Andrea	Likenes, down to earth type personlighet, vanskelig å sette ord på, må ha litt av de samme interessene må ligne på de jeg har selv, og fine bilder, det må jo være faktisk fint å se på – visuelt fint.
21:05	Kjartan	Genuinitet var det første jeg kjente, at de faktisk bruker de produktene de promoterer. At de faktisk mener noe om produktene og liker dem selv. Fine bilder. Positivitet.
21:20	Marius	**Hvorfor skaper det at en influenser bruker produktet selv troverdighet?**
22:02	Kjartan	Har studert markedsføring, jeg har observert mye innenfor dette feltet. Jeg ser på kanaler som Twitch hver dag og andre folk som blir betalt og har sponsorer. Gaming produkter og energi produktet. Jeg som har sett på dem på andre plattformer og. Og om man da ser at de ikke bruker de produktene man promoterer fordi de ikke er holder mål ift. Hva som er på markedet. Vil ha noe jeg kan bruke og ikke bare noe som ser veldig bra ut.
23:05	Ola	Ærlighet, at de vise produktet som det faktisk er, og at det ikke blir så falskt. Som fx. Big mac reklamer hvor flotte burgerne er, jeg vil heller få se hvordan ting faktisk er.

23:53	Ola	Joe rogan prøver å være ærlig, og sier ifra om han har brukt det. Promoterte en side som lager nettsider for deg, forklarte ærlig og greit hvordan han selv brukte det, og hvordan det fungerte, prøvde å legge et ærlig bilde rundt det. Jeg liker ikke så godt om jeg føler folk vil selge noe til meg, da går jeg litt i defensen. Ærlighet, genuinitet og fine bilder.
25:10	Marius	**Hva skaper tillit?**
25:20	Ola	bryter tilliten om du reklamerer for et tastatur, så ser du senere at han bruker et annet. Det bryter tilliten.
25:52	Ola	Kommer an på hvilken person det er, du mister litt respekt når en person gjør sånne ting.
26:34	Ola	Fx Voe, det bygger tillit når hun viser hvordan produktene faktisk er og hvordan man skal bruke de og sånn.
26:42	Kjartan	Du kan ikke bygge skikkelig tillit før du har fulgt en person over lang tid. Du får en viss anelse om hvordan en persons persona er over tid. Det med promotering er en persona i seg selv. Klarer å få frem at det er for penger, så sier du til publikum, at om du synes dette er drit er ikke det dette jeg står for. Det er bedre å ta et standpunkt enn å få sponsor som ikke du vil ha. Omd et er et produkt du ikke liker, er det bedre å få frem at du er en sellout istedenfor å promotere et produkt du ikke liker.
28:45	Kjartan	du blir mer investert, og det er ikke alle som er like lette å skjønne hvem de er basert på to bilder i feeden din. Når du går inn på profilen og ser mye av bildene. Du velger å følge den

		personen, du har første innblikk. Etter å ha fulgt en person i noen måneder, vil du få et større innblikk i hvor ofte de legger ut og hvor mye de bryr seg. Drar inn litt dagsrelevante ting.
30:00	Kjartan	Du blir litt mer kjent med personen over tid, og det skaper tillit (om du liker influensen)
30:15	Marius	**Hva er ekspertise for dere? Har det noe å si om det er formell eller uformell ekspertise? I en influenser kontekst.**
30:40	Ola	Absolutt viktig, men man kan bli lurt av for eksempel Game changer. Første gang du ser den blir du helt overbevist om at det er viktig. Så gjør du litt mer research, og får frem litt mer hvordan det er og hva som er ekte. Får frem faktaene bak det, mens første gang du ser det legger de det frem slik de vil, jeg trodde på alt de sa. Deretter så jeg videoer etterpå hvor de la frem fakta, og da innser du at det ikke er helt sånn.
31:55	Ola	Du kan frame informasjonen på en viss måte. De legger det frem på en viss måte. Til slutt har ekspertise mye og si, og det at de har backet det med studier og vitenskapelige artikler
32:33	Ola	Instagram er det nok mye lettere å bare første inntrykket du får, du ser bildet og leser det som står, så er det kanskje litt verre (og se etter ekspertise). Det er lettere å få igjennom det de legger frem uten at det blir utfordret.

33:18	Kjartan	Viktig å ha, spesielt om han har noen claims, han påstår noe, kommer med en bemerkning, om du skal snakke om kosthold, så synes jeg det er greit at de har en artikkel som viser til dette. Dr. Vegan gjør dette, han viser til lenker og forskning, det er og viktig på måten det er forsket på – ikke bare en liten studie.
35:00	Kjartan	Ikke alle er leger og doktere osv, det er mange fake news og selfmade expert der ute. Men poenget mitt er når du skal komme med en påstand om hvordan noe er, er det viktig (med ekspertise). Om du skal komme med en oppskrift – på en vegan brownies kake for eksempel – du vil bare være med å vise et annet tilbud.
36:06	Kjartan	Jeg stoler ikke på et influenser bilde der de sier at dette inneholder det og det og det. Da vil jeg heller at de har noe å linke til, det gir litt mer tillit fra min side.
36:18	Andrea	skal du komme med en påstand om at noe er bedre enn noe annet må du ha noe å backe det opp. Du må også ha noe ekspertise selv, det nytter ikke om du er en paradise deltager og legger ut noe sånt uten å dokumentere det. Det spørs hva du skal si, skal du ha en mening, må du ha en ekspertise for å backe det opp. Men om du bare skal lage en oppskrift har det ikke så mye å si om du har en doktorgrad eller ikke.
37:20	Andrea	Jeg stoler på Kaja basert på hennes erfaring og det at hun har laget mat i mange år på Instagram.
38:30	Kjartan	Fysisk utseende har ikke noe å si på hvem jeg selv følger, gjorde nok det mer før. Jeg kan se for meg at det gjør det for veldig mange, det har nok noe med kroppspress og gjøre.

39:00	Kjartan	Steve Cook, influenser som driver med trening og kosthold. Når jeg ser han legger ut og hans kropp, blir jeg motivert selv til å trene.
39:43	Kjartan	Du blir mer motivert til å bli fit og spise og trene som Steve Cook når du ser hans content.
40:05	Ola	Utseende selger, det gjør det. Selv om du tror det ikke gjør det, så vil det 'sub conciously' ha mye å si. Du ser det på folk som selger også, når det kommer til produkter og kroppen deres, så er det ofte folk som ser bra ut (som selger det). Det har mye å si.
40:50	Andrea	Om du vil det eller ikke, så blir du mer intriged om det er en attraktiv person du sitter og ser på. Sånn er det jo bare. Om det kommer til nutrition, om det er en influenser som skal promotere noe, underbevisstheten din vil nok heller kjøpe noe av den tynne hotte baben, enn den overvektige 'ser ikke like bra ut typen'. Det har noe å si. Uansett om man vil det eller ikke. Man blir trukket til personer som ser pen og hyggelige ut.
41:55	Andrea	Du vil heller at den personen som selger deg produktet skal se ut som om de har brukt det selv.
42:10	Ola	Om du ser noen som har vært større, så begynner de å bruke et produkt, så blir de mye tynnere, da tror jeg det kan ha en ekstremt positiv effekt. Ei som er dritslank så begynte å spise sjokoladen, hun endrer seg ikke, du ser ikke effekten. Om du ser en stor effekt, vil det absolutt ha en større innvirkning.

42:48	Andrea	Den tykke influenseren vil nok ikke få en stor following før etter hun har vist disse resultatene
43:22	Andrea	Viktig at ade har selvironi. At de ikke på en måte er en annen person på instagram ift virkeligheten. Ikke ta ting sykt seriøst, du kan anses som fake. Om du kan lære å le av deg selv. Om nettavisen legger ut et stygt bilde av seg selv, og laster det opp og bruker selvironi, da liker jeg den personen.
43:58	Ola	De viser at de er mennesker.
44:53	Kjartan	En liten kontring, jeg synes personlighet er viktig og at du har selvironi, men de jeg har nevnt som jeg følger er basically noe som ikke er personligheter, de er kun infobilder, det er to store kontraster der da.
45:36	Kjartan	Jeg føler jeg ikke blir forstyrret i den måten at jeg får den infoen jeg vil ha og ikke mer.
45:45	Ola	Det er liksom produktet som er i fokus, og du blir ikke kastet i den eller den retningen basert på personen.
46:10	Kjartan	Liker at det er lett å lese og lett diguested på en måte.
47:05	Marius	**Har det at influensere er lik dere selv på ulike måter en innvirkning på om dere følger dem eller ikke?**
47:27	Ola	Jeg følger mange morsomme folk – ja både og.

47:40	Andrea	Humor, jeg følger Flesvik og memes. Jeg er på IG for å bli underholdt! Jeg har lyst at de skal ha en likenes personlighet, og det er viktig for meg. Jeg følger ingen IG profiler der jeg får info, jeg skal le på Instagram. Jeg skal ikke lære noe der.
48:25	Ola	Forskjellige folk kan bruke forskjellige medier (forskjellig motivasjoner).
48:50	Kjartan	Jeg følger gjerne personer på Instagram som har egenskaper jeg vil tilegne meg. Det er nok litt vondt å innrømme at jeg gjør det gjennom Instagram. At de har noen kvaliteter jeg vil ha selv, at de er litt mer morsommere eller flinkere på ulike ting. Det trenger ikke alltid være likheter.
49:02	Marius	**Så, det trenger ikke å være likheter, men det kan også være egenskaper du ønsker å tilegne deg selv?**
49:29	Kjartan	Ja, helt klart.
50:10	Marius	**Vil en anbefaling av et produkt fra en influenser ha samme effekt som om en venn anbefalte produktet for deg? Hvorfor/ikke?**
50:58	Ola	jeg hører mer på kompiser – spørs litt på kompisen da. Om en venn har prøvd det og anbefaler det vekter det tyngre for meg.
52:00	Kjartan	Jeg vil si meg enig, du følger en influenser over tid og den endrer seg litt, du merker han har gått ned i vekt, så da kommer han ut med hvilken prosess han brukte. Om jeg da var investert i denne

		personen, vil jeg da ta hans tips, fordi jeg har allerede sett at det har fungert.
53:00	Kjartan	Å veie det på samme måte som en venn, det kommer litt an på troverdigheten med en venn, men om du ser noe fungerer så har det ikke noe å si hvem det er. Men om du har fulgt en person over lengre tid har dus selvsagt en del tiltro til han. Vanskelig å si, men jeg tror jeg ville gjort det cirka på par med enn venn, så lenge det er resultat.
53:40	Andrea	Ja så lenge det er resultat, om noe har fungert over tid, da stiller det like høyt som et råd fra en venn. Jeg vil gjerne se om det funker likevel.
54:55	Andrea	Jeg trenger bevis fra begge, både influensere og venner. Fx i vennegjengen min har di en sånn vippe ting som har vært sykt mye snakk om sånn du får lange vipper. Sett det på IG og vg osv. Min venn kjøpte det, og det fungerte, og da kjøpte hun det selv. Trenger litt overbevising.
55:35	Marius	**Det er mye fake der ute [Online], så du trenger bevis før du faktisk kjøper noe.** **Hva tror du et brand som Raw Halo vil tjene på å bruke influensere i markedsføringen sin?**
57:10	Kjartan	Stor spredning for liten investering – low cost effektiv markedsføring, fra 10k og oppover som sitter ås er på produktet. Kan godt være 1/5 av de prøver det, og en del av dem kjøper det innimellom. Det vil ha en stor påvirkning.

58:23	Ola	Om du ikke er sikker på hva de du sender produktet til står for, kan de han negative konsekvenser. Om det er personer som ikke ville hatt med.
58:51	Kjartan	Du må forstå personligheten litt, så lager de en fin post, men posten etterpå er noe veldig drastisk eller negativt. Da blir det veldig mørklagt.
59:35	Marius	**Okei, så brandet blir assosiert med negative beskjeder.**
59:48	Andrea	Det er trendy å spise sundt vegan. Så det er nok veldig lurt å få det ut på Instagram, det er mange som bruker det (IG). Mange som sitter og knasker på noe blir du nysgjerrig.
1:00:30	Andrea	I første omgang blir jeg oppmerksom (når jeg ser et produkt bli promotert på IG). Jeg må se det veldig mange ganger. Om jeg ser det en gang, tenker jeg 'hmm kult, det har jeg ikke hørt om før' – Men så tar det litt tid før jeg ville kjøpt det i butikken. Må bli mer eksponert for det (Raw Halo) flere ganger før jeg ville kjøpt det.
1:01:05	Andrea	Større sannsynlighet at jeg ville kjøpt et produkt om flere av de influenserne jeg følger promoterer det samme produktet. Begynt å lage en iskaffe, så den først en gang, ble intrieged, så var den plutselig på VG, så bare måtte jeg og prøve å lage den.
1:01:25	Kjartan	Effektivt om du markerer deg i USA, du har mange følgere, ser dem over alt, du begynner passivt å tenke hvordan jeg kan bruke dette (produktet), så ser du det plutselig i butikken så er man jo bare sold.

1:02:10	Marius	**Er det viktig at det kommer fra flere ulike plasser og ikke bare samme influenser eller kilde?**
1:02:25	Andrea og Kjartan	Ja.
1:02:55	Ola	Du blir dratt med, det er sånn vi fungerer.
1:03:05	Kjartan	Det er så mye reklamer nå, at du nesten må få det helt opp i trynet før det har en effekt.
1:03:35	Marius	**Det er mye støy der ute, du må kanskje eksponeres flere ganger før det skal bryte igjennom.**
1:04:05	Kjartan	Tror absolutt en influencer kan gi en høyere verdi til et produkt. Et eksempel er David Beckham og Axe (body spray). Da får jeg lyst til å bruke det og lukte like godt som DB. Bare for en sammenligning, du har ulike influencere, fx steve cook om han skulle anbefalt et pre work out, jeg har sett treningene hans og ser hvor mye han kan yte, om dette er noe han bruker jevnlig og er noe ha promoterer ville jeg kjøpt det med en gang, og jeg ser også mer positivt på produktet.
1:05:08	Kjartan	For å trekke en annen linje – Zlatan og Samsung tv gir meg ingen meining. Han er assosiert med fotball, men for tv? Det står for null kvalitet – tv er veldig teknologisk. Det har ingenting å si om ha er der liksom.

1:05:40	Ola	Zlatan kan kjøpe det han vil, om han velger Samsung er det good shit – sånn er det nok mange som tenker.
1:06:00	Kjartan	For meg så sier det ingenting om merket elle rnoe ting.
1:06:20	Kjartan	Om han hadde promotert fotballsko ville jeg tatt det veldig seriøst.
1:06:40	Andrea	En influencer for smike kan ikke promoterer fotball – det passer ikke. De må stå for samme verdier. Om du er en influencer for smike, promoter sminke, det må være en sammenheng mellom det influenceren representerer og det de promoterer.
1:08:49	Marius	**Er det mer sannsynlig at dere kjøper at produkt promotert av en influenser flere ganger, og ikke bare en gang?**
1:09:20	Kjartan	Jeg tror det vil ha en liten innvirkning (på lojalitet), men for meg er det sånn jeg føler det. Om jeg hadde kjøpt produktet har jeg fått en god forståelse for hva produktet innebærer. Neste gang jeg da kjøper produktet vil det ikke ha noe å si at det er den personen (influenceren) som promoterer det.
1:10:59	Marius	**Først fordi I anbefaler, 2. er det produktet som bestemmer – brand/produktkvalitet basert på produktkvalitet.**
1:12:00	Kjartan	Har ikke kjøpt et produkt som RH tidligere, det er ikke på grunn av produktet i seg selv, men mer fordi det ikke prioriteres penger til det (Student med dårlig råd).

1:12:12	Andrea	Har hatt lyst til å kjøpe – følger Voe, en rødbet burger, det så dødsdigg ut. Nå var dette et norsk merke og jeg bor i Danmark, men hadde det vært tilgjengelig hadde jeg kjøpt og prøvd produktet.

Appendix D. Summary and quotes from expert interview with micro influencer Kaja Andrine Bratvedt (@Kajaand)

Sunday 5ᵗʰ of April 2020

Held over skype

Audie on file

About	Kajaand is an influencer from Norway with 6k followers on Instagram. She has been posting content related to sustainable, vegan food for several years. Kajaand has been endorsed by countless brands within the sector.
00:10	**Hvorfor burde brands bruke influensere i markedsføringen sin?**
00:48	Du får en skreddersydd markedsføring og direkte ut til kundene dine. Du tar rådene til de du følger, ikke som markedsføring, men «dette er et råd» - mer autentisk. Litt mer troverdig, stoler litt mer på det tipset. Hvert fall sånne som meg, som en mikro influenser, man betaler ikke så mye, og jeg tror du får god markedsføring for en billig penge.
02:10	**Matchen mellom en influenser og en brand, hva gjør at du passer en brand og omvendt, hva ser du på?**
02:35	Må være et merke jeg oppriktig vil jobbe med, mat, må være rent, vegansk og stå for og samsvare med mine preferanser for hva jeg ville kjøpt i butikken, og det må være og jeg må føle at «vi matcher litt liksom».
03:30	Har dere hørt om inspireme? En Platform hvor influenser og brands møtes, man har en egen konto som influenser, så kan brands kontakte deg og si, kan du gjøre dette, poste så, så mange poster på så, så mange måneder til denne prisen?

04:20	Kun influensere som finner meg her.
04:53	For eksempel Prior ville ha et samarbeid med kylling, da sa jeg nei, det er ikke en match. Matchen kommer an på selskapet og produktet.
05:25	**Kan du si noen ord på brands du velger og hvorfor?**
05:43	Det har noe med hvor mye penger de tilbyr meg og da. Og hvor simpelt det kommer til å være å gjennomføre.
06:10	Jeg vil å være til ås tole på for følgerne, så jeg arbeider kun med det jeg anser som bra. Det er mye forskjellige grunner til at jeg har valgt å arbeide med de ulike.
07:04	(Et eksempel) Har samarbeidet med Helios og Supernature, de har jeg samarbeidet med i mange år, dette er produkter jeg ville brukt uansett om jeg ikke hadde fått dem gratis. Det flyter bare rett inn i hva jeg driver med, jeg ville gjort den markedsføringen uavhengig om jeg ble betalt eller ikke. Med betalt samarbeid har det mye med summen å gjøre.
07:59	Helios og Supernature har veldig rene produkter, de er fine og se på og det er kvalitet.
08:28	Jeg viser til sund å ren mat, det ville ikke passer seg å markedsføre f.eks. for brus. Så jeg viser jo følgerne mine produkter som er 'rene'.
09:10	Man kan påvirke på mange ulike måter, jeg fokuserer mest på oppskrifter og produkter, det er min greie. Jeg påvirker nok til å prøve de ulike produktene jeg anbefaler, og oppskriftene jeg anbefaler.

09:45	Enig med at det er en form for inspirasjon, «jeg har fått tilbakemelding på at de gjør det».
10:20	Større innflytelse enn vanlige folk, fordi vanlige folk ikke viser frem hva de spiser og gjør. Det er flere som vet hva jeg spiser enn hva du spiser.
11:18	Når man ser på kontoen min så ser man at jeg har laget mye mat. Man ser at jeg har litt peiling på hva jeg driver med, og at jeg har prøvd veldig mange produkter. Vil si jeg har en god oversikt over hva som er bra og ikke bra og godt da. Får tilbakemelding på at følgerne prøver det jeg anbefaler.
12:20	Enig med at denne ansienniteten og erfaringen kan virke som en form for ekspertise som gir følgerne mer troverdighet overfor Kaja.
12:50	**Hvilken type innhold skaper mest engasjement i din erfaring?**
13:00	For det meste desserter, de siste to årene har jeg fått mest engagement for bilder av meg selv. Så meg selv og desserter. Der jeg får flest likes, jeg kan se hvor mange som lagerer postene mine. Viktig for meg som lager oppskrifter, og her er det desserter. Ting med sjokolade og sånn». Litt mer pyntelig.
15:05	Jeg vil ha samme verdier som merket, også utbyttet, produktet eller penger, og hvor mye arbeid som skal legges ned i det. Er de tingene som avgjør det.

15:54	Etter et samarbeid på inspireme legger de igjen kommentarer hvordan det var å jobbe med meg. De fleste samarbeidene blir ikke flere ganger mange engangskampanjer. Varer som regel noen måneder. F.eks. har Orkla mange merker, og hatt mange samarbeider under Orkla, så blir plukket opp av ulike brands som tilhører Orkla – sånn sett blitt brukt flere ganger.
17:40	Den typiske følgeren er en jente min alder eller eldre, mere eldre enn yngre – 20% 18 24 år, 44% 25 34 år, 22% 35 44 år, så få som er yngre enn meg selv, og 82% kvinner 18% menn, de fleste bor i Oslo 10%, neste er London 6%, 30% er nordmenn, så egentlig ikke så mange, skulle trodd det var mer nordmenn.
19:15	Legger ut posts på engelsk – nesten bare utenlandske følgere i starten, tok seg opp etter hvert.
20:45	Følger veksten stagnerte med mitt eget engasjement, stoppet litt opp i 2018, men mistet litt interessen for det også.
21:00	Ble mye tid å opprettholde å poste hverdag. Ville investert i bedre utstyr fått bedre kvalitet, og vært flinkere om og vært engasjert med andre influensere, danna litt mer vennskap.
22:00	Viktig med kvalitet på bilde og at du eksponerer deg til andre influensere for å vokse.
22:40	Strategier for å vokse, i starten kunne man kjøre 'follow un follow' strategi.
23:15	Fokusert på engasjement, og være aktiv gjennom kommentarer osv.

23:35	Aktive betyr å kommentere og like mest mulig.
24:00	Vil si at det har en innflytelse når du er aktiv i kommunitet. Amy hadde få følgere i starten, men har nå over 30k, hun har bare vært super aktiv gjennom kommentarer osv.
25:00	En venn har brukt robot, og det fungerte for henne.
26:00	Bryr meg mindre om følger tall nå, om bare en bryr seg er det bra for meg.
26:30	**Vi ser det er normalt å tagge mange ulike brands i Instagram stories, hva er tanken bak å gjøre det?**
26:55	Hadde veldig fokus på brands en periode, om jeg tok bilde med deres produkter og de repostet, så fikk jeg mange følgere. Har også gjort det for å få samarbeid – viser at jeg er her og at jeg kan gjøre dette for dere på en måte.
27:50	Hashtager ikke ut mot brands, jeg har et dårlig hashtag game, typiske HT's som jeg vet at folk som interesserer seg for mine ting bruker.
28:35	(Hva gjør at du følger noen?) Jeg er ute etter å bli inspirert, andre matbloggere, så er jeg interessert i å se plasseringen, hva de lager og hvordan de setter det opp, for å bli inspirert til å ta lignende bilder. Om de har fine klær osv., hva de gjør – for å bli inspirert på ulike områder.
31:05	Det hender at noen reposter at de har laget samme oppskrift som meg, eller sende en melding. Når det kommer til spesifikke produkter, så blir det mer tilbakemelding – f.eks. gikk jeg igjennom Meny og tok bilder av de produktene hun likte, da fikk hun god respons og tilbakemelding, takk for

	tipset. Følger med på om folk trykker seg inn på lenken eller taget, det er som regel veldig mange som gjør det – virker som de syntes det er interessant.
32:40	**Hva tror du skaper tillit og ikke fra influenserens side?**
32:55	Lurt å ikke gjøre for mange annonser, en veldig viktig ting, jeg skjønner at de jeg følger som har masse annonser da mister jeg troen på at de snakker sant. Det bygger på den tilliten. De jeg følger, jo mere de poster, genuint ikke annonser, tror jeg på dem en sammenheng mellom hvor mye de poster annonser og ikke.
34:05	Har ikke noe behov for å tjene penger på dette her, stoler på andre som ikke har det behovet (Ikke sellouts, mer genuine og autentiske skaper tillit).
35:10	Inspireme har en blogg med mye info.
35:47	**Hvorfor tror du at følgerne dine er samme alder og eldre enn deg selv?**
36:50	Jeg føler de som er yngre enn meg interesserer seg mer for mote og er mer tilgjengelige enn det jeg er. Med tilgjengelig mener jeg at jeg ikke prater masse til kameraet osv.
38:44	Føler meg som en senior i sånn mat bloggere, jeg har holdt på ganske lenge, de som har fulgt meg over en tid har også vært på IG en stund.
39:30	Raw halo, da de startet husker jeg at jeg hadde den fremgangsmåten at jeg kjøpte alt mulig og inkluderte brands i bilder for å bli oppdaget, det funket

	bra, de tok kontakt og ville ha mer, de har sendt meg noen sjokolader i året, og jeg legger ut promo av dem på IG.
40:20	Kjøpte en kampanje av meg for en inspirasjons kampanje, 25 bilder.
40:49	**Hvordan har samarbeidet med Raw Halo vært for deg som har erfaring med de?**
41:00	Samarbeidet har vært bra, de har vært veldig hyggelige og generøse, de har sendt meg mye produkter og hun Meg har vært veldig personlig i måten hun snakket til meg på. I starten var det naturlig pga. at de var små, nå er det motsatt, de har blitt veldig store, de er fortsatt veldig personlige, har personlig kontakt og spør hvordan det går med meg. Veldig hyggelig dame.
42:40	Jeg liker best å samarbeide med de som gir meg frie tøyler, ikke tidsfrister, men gir meg en del frihet da. Jeg liker best ubetalte samarbeide hvor jeg bare får produkter, Helios og Supernature, avtale med dem og de sender meg det jeg vil ha, så gir jeg de en oppskrift i mnd. For det (på IG). Slitsom når noen skal ha spesifikke datoer for posts, og har mange meninger om hva som skal være med i bilde osv., det er veldig slitsomt, det funker kanskje best for de som jobber fulltids med influencing, men som en hobby influenser er det greit at det er veldig fleksibelt og at man kan bestemme selv.
44:54	om du velger feil influenser, om du ikke helt, hvis du velger irrelevante influensere for din kundebase da, det er feil.
45:30	de vet ikke f.eks. at jeg kun har 30% følgere i Norge, det har mye å si, og det er ikke så åpenbart

46:10	**Tror du at følgerne dine er lik deg på noen måter?**
46:46	Ja jeg vil tro de er like meg, de som sender meldinger til meg er jenter på min alder som også interesserer seg for mat, både andre matbloggere, men også vanlige personer på samme alder.
48:05	Vil si at Helios og Supernature er eid av samme selskap, de jeg har samarbeidet med sammen med RAW Halo, jeg tror på en måte jeg ser veldig tydelig at med en gang jeg flytter ordet annonse foran et innlegg, blir det veldig mye mindre interesse for den posten, eller viss produktet er synlig i posten, det er de postene mine som ikke får så mye oppmerksomhet, og pga. det vil jeg si at de samarbeidene som krever at ikke jeg spesifikt viser frem produktet, er de som ofte går bedre, virker mer ÆRLIG, og ikke så «annonsiste», Helios og SN bruker jeg i nesten hver post, det er en naturlig del av hverdagen. Har ikke lov å nevne brands uten å si at det er annonse, det gjør jeg for dem fordi jeg bruker dem hele tiden, har valgt å ikke gjøre det, blir småting – de tjener nok ganske greit på at jeg ikke bruker annonse i postene hvor de nevnes. De samarbeidene er de som blir best tatt imot og best respons til brands. «Litt sneaky».
51:38	Ser ikke på det som noe ulovlig, jeg får ikke betalt og jeg hadde brukt de produktene uansett, med mindre det er tydelige annonser for dem så bruker jeg ikke 'annonse'.
52:25	Fleksibiliteten deres (Helios og SuperNature), de matcher meg veldig bra fordi alle produktene, veldig få av postene mine som ikke har produkter fra dem i, oppskrifter med deres produkter i 99% av postene mine, så sånn sett er det enkelt for meg å inkludere dem uten at jeg må tenke så mye på det, de er fleksible og de kjenner meg og det jeg vil ha, og jeg liker veldig godt den friheten, hadde jeg fått betalt hadde jeg ikke hatt den samme friheten, jeg liker egentlig best det.

54:02	Dårlig kan være på mange forskjellige måter, ingen som har gått direkte dårlig, men, mellom meg og brands, så er det en brand som jeg syntes gikk dårlig fordi de var veldig kontrollerende, da jeg bodde i England, sendte meg 4 flakser med juice, kostet sikkert 20 kr per stykk, det gjorde at jeg ikke engasjerte meg noe veldig i det, jeg delte vel en post på det, det samarbeidet var kontrollerende og ville vite hvilken dag jeg skulle poste osv. De spurte meg etterpå, de ville at jeg skulle gå til butikken, kjøpe det selv, og poste om det uten å få noe som helst for det, gadd ikke svare på det en gang.
56:00	Sender for lite produkt ift. hva de spør om, og vil bli behandlet med respekt
57:25	Inspire me har en kalkulator som du kan se hvor mye du burde bli betalte, noen prøver å gi meg minimum av den summen, jeg synes ikke at den kalkulatoren stemmer fordi jeg må kjøpe inn masse produkter for å lage denne maten, sier ofte i fra. Jeg doblet summen fordi jeg syntes det var alt for lite nå nylig. Er nok mange som takker ja.

Appendix E. Nethnography summary from following @Kajaand over 3 months on Instagram

Over the period of 4 months Kajaand posted 16 posts, and 134 stories to her Instagram profile. 8 of the 16 posts were endorsements. 49 of the 134 stories were endorsements. In the count of endorsed content, we only include content that have been noted with "#ad". Many of the stories and posts that is not endorsements include brands in them. These posts are endorsements, but Kaja was not paid for them. Therefore, these posts will be counted as organic posts and not endorsements.

Kajaand's highest engagement posts measured in likes had a total of 205 likes. Measured in comments, the same post had 12 comments. The range between the least and most liked post was 49 to 205. For comments the range was 1 to 12 comments.

The average likes on her endorsed posts were 100,25 likes. The average comments were 4,5 comments per post. The average likes for her organic posts were 127,625 likes. The average comments were 5,875 comment per post.

The difference in engagement on endorsed and organic content for Kajaand is present, but the difference is not as big as we expected.

The Instagram stories cannot be measured the same way. We do not have access to the viewed numbers and click rates. We can for the stories element only analyze the content, and endorsements to organic content produced by the influencer.

Key observations
- 1.0 Posts with Kaja's face in them have higher engagement.
- 2.0 Showing endorsed products in posts gives the lowest engagement.
- 3.0 Showing how to use endorsed products have medium engagement.
- 4.0 Kaja will give 'free endorsement' to brands that fit well

1.0 Posts with Kaja's face in them have higher engagement
Kaja's most engaging posts is showing her face in it. The post from 12. Jan., 15. Mar., and 29. Mar. got 153, 205 and 153 likes within the first 24 hours of the post being live. The comments were 9, 12

and 2. The posts from 12. Jan. and 29. Mar. are endorsement posts. These posts get a significant higher engagement rate with 153 likes versus the average of 100,25.

2.0 Showing endorsed products in posts gives the lowest engagement

Posts were the endorsed product is showed off yields the lowest engagement. From Kajaand's profile this becomes prominent. The post on 13. March endorsing Raw Halo, and the post on 22. March endorsing Moellers Tran resulted in 50 and 49 likes the first 24 hours. The comments were measured to be 1 and 3. The content of the post did not contain anything other than the product and some accessories.

3.0 Showing how to use endorsed products have medium engagement

Posts were the endorsed product is used in an activity creates higher engagement. The posts on 18. Mar., 24. Mar., and 31. Mar. supports that this is the case. The likes on these endorsement posts were 135, 108 and 82 the first 24 hours. The comments were 9, 5 and 6. The endorsed products are in these posts used to make a recipe in a creative way. This is consistent with the core activity of Kajaand's profile and suggest a higher engagement yield from the followers.

4.0 Kaja will give 'free endorsement' to brands that fit well

Kaja will give free endorsements to brands that fit her core activities well. This observation was made in Kajaand's stories. In 15 of the total 32 stories observed, brands like Helios and Supernature were used to make different recipes. These posts are not noted with "#ad", and we later discovered that Kaja herself gave this free exposure to the brands. The reason for this was because they fit her core activities and she would use them regardless of the endorsement deal. (From her interview 52:25).

Summary

The observed results from the nethnography of Kajaand suggest there are clear differences in how content is presented. Consistent with the theory, content where she shows her face has higher engagement. Additionally, the posts were Kaja uses brands in the activity of making a recipe has better engagement results than showcasing the product. Finally, if the endorsed product fit Kaja's activities well, she will endorse them for free in posts and stories.

Tabell 1: Kaja's posts on Instagram 10. jan - 10. apr

	A	C	D	E	F	G
1	Instagram influencer tracker					
2	Date of post	Likes (24h	Comments (24h	Replies by influencer (2	Ad	Category for post
3	13.jan	153	9	9	Yes	Hair Saloon (Selfie)
4	23.jan	107	2	0	No	Food (Restaurant)
5	29.jan	152	8	0	No	Food (Recipe)
6	14.feb	105	3	4	No	Valentines donuts
7	24.feb	103	4	4	Yes	Ad for goknekke, with recipe
8	25.feb	94	4	4	No	Pancake recipie
9	12.mar	104	3	6	Yes	Breakfast recipie
10	13.mar	50	3	3	Yes	Raw Halo 'shout out'
11	15.mar	205	12	12	No	Selfie
12	18.mar	135	9	0	No	Breakfast Recipie @ing several brands used in the process
13	19.mar	98	7	7	No	Cookie Recipie @ing several brands used in the process @Helios, @Supernature_supermat
14	20.mar	125	2	2	no	Foor prep. Recipe @ing several brands @Helios @oatly
15	22.mar	49	1	1	Yes	Ad promoting Möllers Tran - healthy, vegan, but not so exciting?
16	24.mar	108	5	5	Yes	Ad promoting @Naturli's minced Pea based for taco.
17	29.mar	153	2	2	Yes	Ad promoting Möllers Tran - healthy, vegan, but not so exciting? Trying new approach using herself in the ad
18	31.mar	82	6	6	Yes	Ad promoting @goknekke.
19						

Tabell 2: Kaja's Instagram stories 10. jan - 10. apr

Date	Stories (amour	ads	Categories of stories
19.jan	4	3	Cooking
20.jan			
21.jan			
22.jan	3	3	opening loot
23.jan			
24.jan			
25.jan			
26.jan			
27.jan			
28.jan	2	2	Cooking
29.jan			
30.jan			
31.jan			
01.feb	2	0	Travel/eating
02.feb	2	0	Travel/eating
03.feb			
04.feb	3	0	Recipie @'ing several brands used for the recipe
05.feb			
06.feb	3	0 (?)	New opening of restaurant no #Ad (Showed food etc).
07.feb			
08.feb			
09.feb	5	2	Recipie @'ing several brands used for the recipe
10.feb	3	0	recipe / cooking
11.feb	4	0	recipe / cooking
12.feb	2	0	Restaurant visit @ing the restaurant
13.feb			
18.feb	20	20	Ad for Meny, other products available at meny in the long story
23.feb	5	2	Cooking and food recipies
25.feb	2	0	Restaurant
29.feb	1	0	Breakfast
01.mar	5	3*	Recipie @'ing several brands used for the recipe
07.mar	3	0	Traveling and food
08.mar	5	0	Traveling and food
10.mar	5	0	Traveling and food
13.mar	4	4	Smoothie recipie using different #ad products
15.mar	8	6	Recipie @'ing several brands used for the recipe
18.mar	3	0	She @'ing several restaurants in these corona times and WoltNorge (delivery).
22.mar	3	0	Making breakfast @ing several brand
24.mar	5	5*	Making taco's with @naturli's vegan mince
31.mar	3	3	Goknekke annonse med påsmurte knekkebrød
02.apr	3	0	Breakfast making @ing brands used
04.apr	2	0	Restaurant visit @ing the restaurant
08.apr	5	0	Trip in Oslo, scenary etc.
11.apr	4	0	Buying plantbased vegan icecream and @ing Juicery, claiming its better than regular IC. No #AD. Also received package from Raw (Chocolate bars)
15.apr	3	0	Recipie @'ing several brands used for the recipe
17.apr	3	2	1 random, 2 related to campaign with moellers tran - showing how to use it
19.apr	4	0	recipe @ing sevral brands (Helios)
21.apr	5	2	Recipe @ing Helios & Supernature

Appendix F. Nethnography summary from following @emilienutrition over 3 months on Instagram

Emilie Marie Nereng, also known as "Voe" (born 3 November 1995) is a Norwegian blogger and musician from Hønefoss. She began blogging in March 2009 and by 2010 was Norway's most read blog. In October 2009 alone she had 3.5 million hits. She has since, deleted this vlog and turned to Instagram as one of her new platforms to marketing herself and her as a brand. Her Instagram profile is called emilienutrition, and her focus is only healthy food recipes. She currently has around 95 000 followers.

Over the period of 4 months Emilienutrition posted 60 posts, and 756 stories to her Instagram profile. 10 of the 60 posts were endorsements. 96 of the 756 stories were endorsements. In the count of endorsed content, we only include content that have been noted with "#ad". Many of the stories and posts that is not endorsements include brands in them. These posts can be seen as endorsement, but Emilie was not paid for them. Therefore, these posts will be counted as organic posts and not endorsements.

Emilie's highest engagement posts measured in likes had a total of 4500 likes. Measured in comments, another post had 115 comments. The range between the least and most liked post was 4500 to 1492. For comments, the range was 115 to 8 comments.

The average likes on her endorsed posts were 2191 likes. The average comments were 43.6 comments per post. The average likes for her organic posts were 2759 likes. The average comments were 32 comment per post. For her 8 uploaded videos, 2 were ads and they all had an average view count of 28 631 and an average comment count of 40.

The difference in engagement on endorsed and organic content for Emilienutrion is present, but the difference is not as big as we expected. What can be distinguished is there was a higher like average on the organic post, however the endorsed products got more comments.

The Instagram stories cannot be measured the same way. We do not have access to the viewed numbers and click rates. We can for the stories element only analyze the content, and endorsements to organic content produced by the influencer. However, the number of stories posted were 756 stories and 96 of them were ads.

Key findings:

1. **Post that had informational content had more engagements in average**

2. **Many of the stories are re-posts from other users**

3. **Almost all her content focused on recipes, does not include herself in the picture.**

1. **Post that had informational content had more engagements in average**

Based on the data, the posts that had the most engagement, (both in comments and likes) were posts that presented some informational facts about nutrition. The two highest commented post with 115 and 113 comments were informational posts. On average they created 56.8 comments and 2987 likes. Another interesting finding is that many of the comments receive replies from her indication that there is a high number of personal interactions between the follower and the influencer on these posts. On average she replies to 6.6 comments per post within 24h. However, on the information posts the average is 15.2 response per post.


2. **Many of the stories are re-posts from other users**

Emielienutrion has a high number of stories almost each day. The number of stories in average per day is 8.8. However, many of these stories are re-posts of other users. The posts that are the most shared are posts about users using her recipe to make food or engaging with other products connected within emilienutrion's brand. An example is people buying her book or viewing her IGTV show.

3.   **Almost all her content focused on recipes, does not include herself in the picture.**

There are a few exceptions, but most of her post that are focused on a recipe is dominated by the finished meal and the ingredients and not on herself. When the post is not recipe-related then she
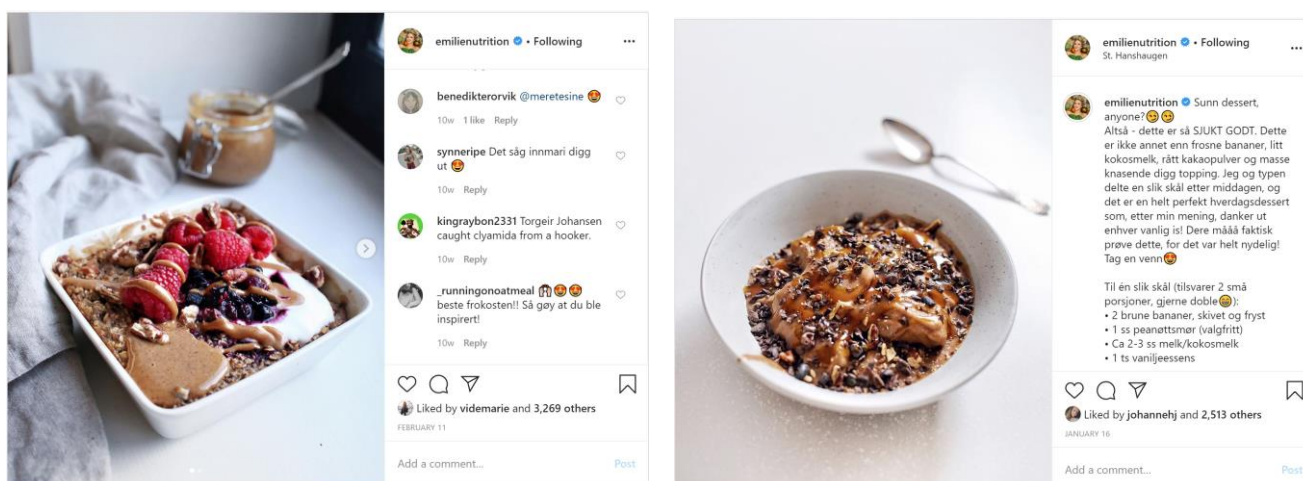
often uses herself in the post. The same is for
the endorsed products, if the endorsed product is a food product then she is not in the first photo in the post.

	A	C	D	E	F	G
1	Instagram influencer tracker					
2	Date of post	Likes (24h)	Comments	Replies	Ad	Category for post
3	15.jan	1981	36	0		recipe
4	16.jan	2423	35	2		recipe
5	17.jan	2562	27	5		blogg, cover of a magazine
6	18.jan	35509	49	17		IG TV epi 01
7	21.jan	1585	26	3		promoting her podcast
8	22.jan	3341	34	5		recipe
9	24.jan	2823	34	0		ad for her IG-tv episode
10	26.jan	36930	38	0		ep. 2 of her show
11	28.jan	2496	17	4		
12	30,01	2383	8	2		recipe
13	30,01	2474	21	1		recipe
14	1,02	22847	36	13	yes	video ad for Bama
15	2,02	2759	12	0		recipe
16	3,02	1930	31	3	yes	recipe, ad for lofoten fiskeburger
17	5,02	4156	23	5		ad for podcast
18	5,02	2594	62	17		recipe
19	7,02	3290	56	3		recipe
20	8,02	3902	34	7		teaser for igtv
21	9,02	24280	56	9		igtv
22	11,02	2978	39	0		recipe
23	15,02	22574	28	0		igtv
24	16,02	4500	37	2		blogg
25	18,02	2777	47	4		recipe
26	21,02	3293	20	2		blogg
27	22,02	2268	39	13		recipe
28	23,02	2714	42	16		recipe
29	24,02	3532	113	34		informational
30	25,02	2337	52	8	yes	annonse for lofoten fiskeburger
31	26,02	1949	48	10		recipe
32	1,03	3496	39	10		recipe
33	2,03	3527	39	7		informational
34	3,03	2790	20	4		recipe
35	4,03	1952	19	3		recipe
36	6,03	3045	29	10		recipe
37	7,03	2701	20	0		recipe
38	8,03	26784	27	1		recipe igtv
39	9,03	3432	19	16		informational
40	11,03	2018	26	9	yes	mollers
41	12,03	3798	23	7		recipe, informational
42	14,03	2151	84	8		informational, tips
43	15,03	2554	21	1		recipe
44	16,03	1935	15	3	yes	lofoten torsk
45	17,03	1870	15	5		ad for podcast
46	18,03	2293	29	11		informational, tips
47	19,03	3687	115	19	yes	annonse plantego peanutbutter
48	21,03	2528	28	6		preview for igtv
49	22,03	29745	51	9	yes	ad for her IG-tv episode/matkanalen
50	23,03	2647	41	8		recipe
51	23,03	2095	48	13	yes	recipe ad coop mega
52	25,03	2753	25	6		recipe
53	26,03	2971	21	0		quote, info
54	27,03	1934	18	0		recipe
55	28,03	2056	18	3		recipe
56	29,03	30378	32	6		igtv recipe
57	30,03	2031	52	17	yes	recipe, Coop Mega
58	1,04	2659	28	6		recipe
59	2,04	2857	37	12		recipe
60	3,04	2485	19	3		recipe
61	4,04	2441	21	0		recipe
62	6,04	1492	10	0	yes	ad for coop, recipe
63	7,04	2419	15	0		recipe

Tabell 4: Emilienutrition's Instagram stories 10 jan. - 10 apr.

Date	Stories (amount)	ads	Categories of stories
13.jan	0		
14.jan	10		new podcast, blogging, posts other people's stories
15.jan	9		vlogging, middagstips,
16.jan	9		recipe, vlogging, reposting followers stories
17.jan	16	2	recipe, vloghing
18.jan	13		recipe, vlogging
19.jan	9		recipe, vlogging
20.jan	7		vlogging
21.jan	7		vlogging, re-post followers post
22.jan	7	3	vlogging, sponset av hairport, recipe
23.jan	0		
24.jan	12		q & a
25.jan	0		
26.jan	4		ad for her tv show, behind the scenes
27.jan	2		ad for her being on a tv show
28.jan	16		recipe, ad for her podcast and appearing on a tv show, vlogging.
29.jan	5		re-post followers stories
30.jan	4		recipe
31.jan	8		vlogging
01.feb	9	2	vlogging, ad for her video bama
02.feb	7		vlogging, re-post followers post
03.feb	7	6	annonse for lofoten fiskeburger, reklame for podcast
04.feb	7		vlogging, ad for her podcast
05.feb	3		recipe
06.feb	10		vlogging, middagstips,
07.feb	1		re-post followers stories
08.feb	0		
09.feb	9		vlogging, ad for igtv
10.feb	10		re-posting followers, vlogging
11.feb	11		re-posting followers, vlogging, ad for podcast
12.feb	7		vlogging
13.feb	9		vlogging
14.feb	5		vlogging
15.feb	12		repostet, ad for igtv, vlogging
16.feb	12		vlogging
17.feb	2		re-post followers
18.feb	15		re-posting followers, vlogging
19.feb	1		vlogging
20.feb	9		re-posting followers, vlogging
21.feb	1		re-post followers
22.feb	3		re-post followers
23.feb	8		vlogging
24.feb	12		informational, vlogging
25.feb	24	6	repost, ad for lofoten, ad for oodcast
26.feb	9		recipe
27.feb	10		re-posting followers, vlogging
28.feb	8		vlogging
29.feb	2		re-posting followers, vlogging

01.mar	3		vlogging	
02.mar	14		informational, vlogging, re-posting	
03.mar	20		recipe, vlogging, reposting followers stories	
04.mar	8		re-posting followers, vlogging, ad for podcast	
05.mar	0			
06.mar	20	5	re-posting followers, recipe, ad for hair salon	
07.mar	12		vlogging, recipe	
08.mar	0			
09.mar	16		informational, recipe, reposting followers	
10.mar	8		vlogging	
11.mar	8	3	mollers, reposting followers	
12.mar	5		vlogging, recipe	
13.mar	8		re-posting followers, vlogging	
14.mar	3		vlogging	
15.mar	9		recipe, re-posting followers, vlogging	
16.mar	10	9	ad for lofoten torsk and how to make it, recipe	
17.mar	13		ad for podcast, re-post followers	
18.mar	7		vlogging, re-post followers post	
19.mar	18	11	recipe ad for plantego, re-post followers, vlogging	
20.mar	10		vlogging, re-post followers post	
21.mar	7		recipe, vlogging	
22.mar	7		repost, ad for her igtv	
23.mar	24	20	recipe, vlogging, ad for coop mega	
24.mar	13		re-post followers, vlogging, ad for her podcast	
25.mar	9		re-post followers, vlogging, q and a with followers	
26.mar	0			
27.mar	7		recipe, re-post followers	
28.mar	2		re-post followers	
29.mar	7		re-post followers, ad for her igtv	
30.mar	15	13	annonse for coop mega, recipe	
31.mar	19		re-post followers, vlogging, ad for her podcast	
01.apr	5		re-posting followers, recipe,	
02.apr	31		vlogging, recipe	
03.apr	8		re-post followers, ad for her igtv, recipe	
04.apr	9		recipe	
05.apr	2		re-post followers	
06.apr	16	16	ad for coop mega, recipe	
07.apr	22		ad for igtv, recipe, re-post from followers	

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