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Increasing the Effectiveness of Influencer Marketing:
Applying Parasocial Interaction and Cialdini's Principles of Persuasion

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Executive summary

This study examines whether parasocial interaction (PSI) (Horton & Wohl, 1956) and the Principles of Persuasion (Cialdini, 1984) can be applied to increase the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Whereas PSI seeks to explain how and why people are influenced by others, Cialdini's research provides a guideline to how the principles of liking, reciprocity, social proof, consistency, authority and scarcity can be harnessed to provoke the mechanisms leading to influence.

Serving each their purpose, the theories are carefully integrated in a joint framework functioning as an influencer marketing guide. The authors test whether the principles of likability, expertise and consistency are influencer characteristics that increase the level of PSI. Subsequently, the principles of reciprocity, scarcity and social proof are tested in order to explore whether they serve as persuasion techniques that increase purchase intention (PI). In accordance with the proposed framework, the latter principles are tested separately and when interacting with PSI.

The study approaches a sequential exploratory research design, where a qualitative method is followed by a quantitative method. With influencer marketing being a somewhat new topic to undergo study, three qualitative studies were conducted introductory. Subsequently, the ten hypotheses substantiating the proposed framework were tested through a quantitative study, using an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed through Facebook and received 358 respondents.

The findings indicate that PSI relationships can be developed towards influencers in social media. PSI relationships are further found to positively affect PI, confirming previous research on the topic. Reviewing influencer characteristics, liking and homophily serve as significant contributors to the development of PSI relationships. These findings extend prior applications of PSI to the field of influencer marketing. Rereading persuasion techniques, when used in influencer marketing, scarcity is found to positively impact PI. The study contributes with insights to how PSI, influencer characteristics and persuasion techniques can be applied in order to effectuate influencer marketing. The guide provides marketers with an overview of factors that should be emphasized when using influencers in a marketing strategy, and factors that are of less importance.

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1.0 Introduction

The power of influencers is undeniable. In 2017, Sophie Elise Isachsen – a Norwegian blogger – raised public awareness of the Norwegian confectionery giant Freia and their use of palm oil. More than 15.000 people shared the blog post, politicians wanted to increase the tax for products containing palm oil (Lorch-Falch, 2017) and one of Norway's largest grocery chains chose to boycott the respective ingredient (Lorch-Falch & Dalen, 2017). In hindsight, a 21-year-old girl managed to create an environmental movement engaging all of Norway, reflecting great influential power.

1.1 The concept of influencer marketing

Digital development has led to considerable growth for online celebrities, namely influencers (Sammis et al., 2015). This development has enabled «the common man» to earn the status of a micro celebrity and become influential. Brands have recognized the value of leveraging such profiles in commercial content, and as a result, influencer marketing has emerged as a successor to celebrity endorsement. For a long time, celebrity endorsement has been used strategically to increase brand awareness and brand preference. People are inclined to trust celebrities they admire, and sometimes want to be like them. The early days of celebrity endorsement date back to the late nineteenth century, when Queen Victoria was associated with Cadbury's cocoa (Sherman, 1985). Since then, brands have used third party endorsement as a marketing practice (Erdogan, 1999).

The concept of influencer marketing differs from celebrity endorsement. While celebrity endorsement attaches the fame of a celebrity to a brand or product, influencer marketing aims to create word-of-mouth advertising, leveraging individuals who are engaged in specific communities in which they are recognized as «specialists». However, the greatest difference between the concepts is that the audience selectively and voluntarily chooses to consume the content generated by influencers. Influencer content is posted in channels consumers use on a daily basis, in between content from friends and family. Commonly, influencers share a combination of niche-oriented content, such as fashion, makeup or fitness and ordinary content from their everyday life. From this, homophily between influencer and follower increases. Moreover, use of social media platforms facilitates for two-way communication, which further lowers the barriers and leave them as more

«accessible». With frequent exposure and intimate content, influencers tend to be perceived as friends rather than celebrities (Ballentine & Martin, 2005).

1.2 Relevance and importance of the topic

Today, influencer marketing serves as a commonly used means for brands to be seen, heard and remembered. The digital age has led to a change in consumer behaviour – consumption of printed newspapers and linear television decreases, while online consumption is an increasing trend. Now more than ever, consumers are turning to credible sources such as influencers to learn how products perform and decide whether it is worth their investment. For brands, engaging individuals with the ability to influence the intended audience is not only attractive, but can also be an extremely effective strategy when managed appropriately (Solis, 2017). A 2016 study conducted by Nielsen Catalina Solutions found that influencer marketing is the most cost-effective online customer acquisition channel, outperforming both organic search, paid search and email marketing. Compared to traditional marketing, numbers from Reinhartsen Media (2017) state that the conversions are three to ten times higher for influencer marketing. Internal reports by United Influencers (2017) further announce that influencer marketing has the highest growth among all forms of marketing globally and has in a short time gained larger parts of marketing budgets.

With the rapid increase in influencer marketing, several companies have «jumped on the bandwagon» without a deliberate strategy. According to digital analyst Brian Solis, influencer marketing has been overused and does as a result underperform as a marketing tool (2017). In a report where marketers were questioned «*whether influencer marketing is strategic*», the responses reflected conflicting views, reaching from «*highly strategic*» to «*not strategic*» (Solis, 2017). The diverse responses substantiate an assumption of uncertainty towards the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Influencers on the other hand, truly begin to cash in on the value they perceive that they bring to brands. This paradox leads prices to increase, running in parallel to brands' perceived uncertainty of such strategies actual effectiveness (Kampanje, 2018). Moreover, 75 percent of marketers' report that identifying the right influencers is the biggest challenge when rolling out an influencer campaign (Schlesinger Associates, 2015).

In practice, influencer marketing strategies tend to be based on vague assumptions that lack empirical support. This leaves the majority of brands to gain experience through trial and error, which justifies further examination of the topic. The forthcoming study aims to empirically test whether parasocial interaction (PSI) (Horton & Wohl, 1956) and the Principles of Persuasion (Cialdini, 1984) can be applied to increase the effectiveness of influencer marketing. As the theories have been used in previous research to examine the effectiveness of both celebrity endorsement and marketing influence, they are thought to be applicable to influencer marketing. However, the combination of how social media relations unfold (Horton & Wohl, 1956) and influential antecedents (Cialdini, 1984) has yet to be examined. With influencer marketing being a new topic to undergo study, this research seeks to fill a gap within the field of influencer marketing, proposing a conceptual model that makes explicit the dynamics, as well as specific components that can make influencer marketing more effective.

1.3 Research aim

In order to understand how and why people are persuaded by influencers, a review will be undertaken in light of PSI (Horton & Wohl, 1956). This theory seeks to explain the psychological, one-way relationship audiences develop to media personas. The application of PSI in research is broad. Since its introduction, where the application was limited to relationships developed to television personas, PSI measurements have been modified and adapted to current media channels, including online contexts and social media platforms (Gong & Li, 2017). The second theory, Cialdini's Principles of Persuasion (1984), offers a complementary explanation to how certain principles can be used to provoke the mechanisms that lead people to be influenced by others. He has composed his research on persuasion to six principles; liking, reciprocity, social proof, consistency, authority and scarcity.

A careful examination of PSI and Cialdini's Principles of Persuasion as separate theories, led to the recognition that the theories could be connected in a joint framework. Whereas PSI tries to explain how and why people are influenced by others, Cialdini's research provides a guideline to how brands can provoke these mechanisms by harnessing certain principles. When combined, the theories are hypothesized to provide an explanation for the dynamics of influencer marketing,

and also which components are central for effectuating such marketing strategy. Characteristics that lead to PSI and the Principles of Persuasion serve as components that can be under managerial control when recruiting influencers. Proposing an integration of the theories and existing literature in one framework leads to the following research questions:

1. When present in influencer marketing, can the principles of likeability, expertise and consistency contribute to increase PSI?
2. Can high levels of PSI lead to increased influencer effectiveness?
3. When used in influencer marketing, can the principles of reciprocity, scarcity and social proof lead to increased influencer effectiveness?

These research questions will be answered through the testing of ten hypotheses.

2.0 Literature review

The forthcoming chapter will elaborate on previous literature within social psychology, emphasising PSI, introduced by Donald Horton and Richard Wohl (1956), and Dr. Robert Cialdini's Principles of Persuasion (1984). Subsequently, a conceptual model for effectuating influencer marketing will be proposed.

Communication and psychology are common denominators of PSI and the Principles of Persuasion. Effective communication is fundamental both for PSI relationships to develop and for the principles to serve their purpose. Similarly, the two concepts can be explained by psychological mechanisms and an individual's subjective perception. Despite their similarities, an integration of the two theories is required in order to strengthen the theoretical basis of the study. Whereas PSI tries to explain how and why people are influenced by others, Cialdini's research provides a guideline to how brands can provoke these mechanisms by harnessing certain principles. Serving each their purpose, the concepts are assumed to yield greater understanding and effectiveness when integrated in one conceptual framework.

2.1 Parasocial Interaction (PSI)

The concept of PSI was first introduced by Horton and Wohl (1956) to describe the psychological, non-reciprocated relationship audiences develop to media personas.

In such a relationship, individuals extend emotional time, interest and energy, while the media personas are unaware of the other's existence (Bennett et al., 2018). With PSI being a one-sided relationship, it automatically elicits an empathic response. It creates an illusion of face-to-face relationships with media persona, and the feeling is described as that similar to interpersonal relationships, with individuals feeling they know and understand the media personas as if they were real, close friends (Perse & Rubin, 1989).

PSI has been addressed in various contexts, reaching from how children develop relationships to television characters (Hoffner, 1996) to how relationships are formed to hosts of TV shopping channels (Stephens, Hill & Bergman, 1996). In recent years, PSI theory has been applied to studying consumer behaviour in an online context (Labrecque, 2014; Ballantine & Martin, 2005; Powell, Richmond & Williams, 2011; Thorson & Rodgers, 2006). Current research has established that the phenomenon of PSI can be used to describe the relationship a follower has to an influencer (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011).

PSI is found to be reinforced as a result of repeated encounters (Auter, 1992). New media platforms, such as forums and blogs, facilitate more frequent exposure compared to traditional media and as a result are found to increase PSI (Ballentine & Martin, 2005; Colliander & Dahlén, 2011). These findings are supported in studies revealing that bloggers can become an important part of people's daily life (Ballentine & Martin, 2005). Through digital development and evolving consumer habits, social media platforms rather than blogs are becoming more frequently used in influencer marketing. As a result, prior studies are inadequate in covering the influencer landscape as it is today. Assumingly, the emergence of social media has led to a change in the nature and intimacy of PSI relationships. Recognizing the availability and frequent use of social media, these platforms facilitate for even more intimate and close relationships. As greater interaction has been found to generate PSI on online forums (Ballentine & Martin, 2005) and blogs (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011), one would expect it to have the same effect on social media platforms that are user-driven, such as Facebook and Instagram. As the phenomenon provides an explanation to how social media relations unfold, PSI is recognized as a cornerstone for the concept of influencer marketing. Whether PSI

can be used as a predictor for the effectiveness of influencer marketing is an important question that remains to be answered.

2.1.1 Attitude and intention as effectiveness predictors

The popularity of attitude as a research subject can amongst others be explained by a general notion of consistency and its assumed usefulness in predicting consumer behaviour (Spears & Singh, 2004). In particular, two attitudinal constructs have been broadly researched: attitude towards the brand (Ab) and purchase intention (PI) (Spears & Singh, 2004; Bagozzi, Tybout, Craig & Sternthal, 1979; Ostrom 1969). Despite contradicting results, brand names add value, and research suggests that brands with higher equity generate significantly greater preference and PI (Chang & Liu, 2009, Berry, 2000; Cobb-Walgren, Ruble & Donthu, 1995).

Related to influencer marketing, celebrity endorsement is found to have positive effects on attitudes towards the advertisement (Aad) and the endorsed product (AP), as well as increasing PI (Amos, Holmes & Strutton, 2008; Erdogan, 1999; Gong & Li, 2017). Further, Aad, AP and PI are found to be interrelated with one another; Aad positively affects AP, and AP enhances PI (Choi & Rifon, 2012; Heath & Gaeth, 1994). Another study on social commerce platforms found that PSI positively affects impulse buying (Xiang, Zheng, Lee & Zhao, 2016). For the purpose of the forthcoming study, PI is used as a measure of influencer effectiveness.

Due to an envisioned friendship, recommendations from an influencer are considered as valuable as recommendations from a real friend. An influencer can help improve the attitude of a consumer, which is important to affect the PI. From a marketing perspective, BA and PI go hand in hand. The attitude of a consumer affects whether the individual will purchase a product or persist as a window shopper. As PSI is found to be a predictor of consumer trends, attitudes and intentions, the following hypothesis is developed:

H1: Parasocial interaction positively affects purchase intention.

2.1.2 Measuring and increasing PSI

In an attempt to understand and potentially influence how one-sided social media relations unfold, a scale to measure the variables that affect the intensity of PSI relationships is required. This thesis emphasizes PSI as one of two ground theories, and a modified PSI scale will be used in the study. Therefore, it is considered useful to examine previous attempts to measure PSI.

Since its introduction, several scales have been proposed to optimize the measuring of PSI. The initial scale consisted of 20 items, with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from «strongly disagree» to «strongly agree», where the participants' involvement with their favourite newscasters was assessed. Since then, the PSI scale has been modified and adapted to modern media channels. Hoerner (1999) was the first to apply PSI scales in an online context, developing a scale for company websites. In 2007, the celebrity-persona parasocial interaction scale (CPPI) was developed by Bocarnea and Brown. The CPPI increased the scales' generalizability, through targeting celebrities exposed in several media channels, rather than television programs alone.

A broad variety of variables has been included in the different scales to measure PSI. Attractiveness and liking (Rubin, Perse & Powell, 1985), predictability and reliability (Skumanich & Kintsfather, 1998), similarity, expertise and likeability (Xiang, Zheng, Lee & Zhao, 2016) and credibility and congruence (Gong & Li, 2017) have been determined as characteristics for PSI relationships. However, which characteristics are prominent for developing PSI relations to influencers has yet to be addressed. With the right insights, brands will be better able to determine the preferable characteristics of a chosen influencer. In order to address antecedents for PSI and commonly used techniques in influencer marketing, a second theory is required.

2.2 Principles of Persuasion

The Principles of Persuasion were introduced in 1984 by Dr. Robert Cialdini, professor of marketing, business and psychology. His work has been published in more than 30 languages and earned him an international reputation as an expert in the field of the psychology of influence (Influence At Work, 2018). In subsequent years, he has expanded his work on persuasion with additional research and areas

of application (Cialdini, 2001; Cialdini, 2009; Cialdini, 2013). The theory suggests persuasion to be governed by six basic principles that are predictably rooted in human drives and needs: liking, reciprocity, social proof, consistency, authority and scarcity. When consciously managing these principles, individuals are armed to persuade others.

The forthcoming sections systematically review the principles, specifying their application within influencer marketing and their link to PSI. Based on their nature, the principles will in this study be divided into two different categories; influencer characteristics and persuasive techniques. The categorization is presented in section 2.4 in which the conceptual framework is explained.

2.2.1 Likability

According to the principle of liking, «*people like those who like them*». By «*uncovering real similarities and offer genuine praise*», liking is helpful in persuading. Whether we like certain people or not is determined by four factors (Cialdini, 2001). In particular, two of the factors are relevant for influencers; physical attractiveness and similarity.

2.2.1.1 Physical attractiveness

Previous research has established the social benefits of attractiveness; favourable traits as talent, kindness, honesty and intelligence are automatically assigned to good-looking individuals (Langlois et al., 2000). In addition, attractive individuals are treated more favourable in hiring and promotion (Dipboye, Arvey & Terpstra, 1977; Landy & Sigall, 1974). Extended studies on cognitive processing show that assessments of attractiveness are drawn rapidly, without requiring much visual information (Olson & Marshuetz, 2005). In the world of influencers, attractiveness could serve as an explanation for why certain individuals are followed and become influential.

2.2.1.2 Similarity

Another factor found to produce liking is similarity. A variety of previous literature has established that people more easily comply to requests of people who are similar to them (Garner, 2005; Van Baaren et al., 2003; Suedfeld, Bochner & Matas, 1971; Emswiller, Deaux, & Willits, 1971). Further, individuals tend to rely on heuristic

processing when responding to a request, for instance sharing a birthday or name with the requester (Burger et al., 2004). Related to how social media relations develop, a follower can actively search for specific content that matches the published content of a given influencer. Subsequently, he or she voluntarily chooses to follow, seemingly due to similar interests with the influencer.

Physical attractiveness and similarity are acknowledged to be antecedents for liking. If liking is present, people are more likely to follow and aspire to be like admirable persons such as influencers. Hence, the following hypothesis is developed:

H2: Influencer liking positively affects parasocial interaction.

2.2.2 Authority (expertise)

The principle of authority states that «*people defer to experts*» (Cialdini, 2001). As reflected in the Milgram experiments (1974), people tend to react to authority in an automatic fashion. According to a study published in the Public Opinion Quarterly, a single expert-opinion news story in the New York Times resulted in a 2 percent nationwide shift in public opinion. Similarly, when aired on national television, public opinion shifted as much as 4 percent (Cialdini, 2001).

Three symbolic factors are found to affect perceived authority; titles (Hofling, Brotzman, Dalrymple, Graves & Pierce, 1966), attire (Bushman; 1988, Bickman, 1974) and automobiles (Doob & Gross, 1968). Related to influencer marketing, influencers do not necessarily hold titles, nor do all of them have luxury cars. However, they are known to promote wealth through expensive belongings, such as high-end handbags, clothing and equipment. Actively displaying such materialistic goods could be assumed to increase the perceived level of authority and expertise. Moreover, influencers in general have over time earned themselves a reputation as experts within their field. Additionally, some have educational background related to their niche. As an example, influencer Berit Nordstrand posts nutrition related content, and is an educated physician with a broad medical background (Berit Nordstrand, 2018).

When comparing the terms authority and expertise, authority is formally given, often by someone with higher authority, while expertise implies that one has achieved a high enough level of skill and knowledge for others to consider one as an expert (Changing Minds, 2018). According to research, perceived expertise is the most prominent factor found to impact source credibility and message effectiveness (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; McGuire, 1969). Further, expertise and credibility are found to increase levels of PSI (Xiang, Zheng, Lee & Zhao, 2016; Gong & Li, 2017). Acknowledging that influencers gain expert status from their followers, the following hypothesis is developed:

H3: Influencer expertise positively affects parasocial interaction.

2.2.3 Consistency

The principle of consistency, states that «*people align with their clear commitments*». When making commitments active, public, and voluntary, people feel compelled to be consistent, increasing the likelihood of being consistent with prior behaviour (Cialdini, 2001). At the same time, the inherent human desire for consistency has been established through a variety of research (Russo, Carlson & Meloy, 2006; Brownstein, Read & Simon, 2004; Bronstein, 2003; Moriarty, 1975; Knox & Inkster, 1968). Also, studies find inconsistency to be considered an undesirable trait (Allgeier, Byrne, Brooks & Revnes, 1979; Asch, 1946).

2.2.3.1 Congruence

Relating consistency to the field of influencer marketing, fit and congruence become topics of interest. Several studies have confirmed that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement is determined by congruence between the celebrity and the endorsed brand or product (Kamins, 1990; Kahle & Homer, 1985; Joseph, 1982). These findings have been supported in similar studies. When congruence is high between celebrity expertise and a product, e.g. a weightlifter promoting a protein bar, brand attitudes become more favourable (Till & Busler, 2000). A high level of congruence is further established as leading to more favourable attitudes towards an advertisement and the advertised product (Choi & Rifon, 2012).

To gain a broader understanding to the topic of influencer marketing, qualitative interviews were conducted when developing research questions for this thesis. An

informant with media consultancy background, stated that an influencer's consistency includes both content – *what* is being said, and tone of voice – *how* it is being said. Influencers that are perceived as consistent, both in terms of content and tone of voice, are thought to be more positively evaluated by their followers. As an example, Coca-Cola's logo has remained unchanged since the 1900s. Consistency has been a strategic commitment to Coca-Cola, both because consistency manages perception, eliminates confusion and ultimately builds a brand over time. In other words, consistency is associated with expertise and familiarity (North Star Marketing, 2015). Similar to Coca-Cola, influencers could be considered to operate as their own brands, hence the following hypothesis is developed:

H4: Influencer consistency positively affects parasocial interaction.

2.2.4 Reciprocity

The principle of reciprocity proposes that «*people tend to treat others the way others treat themselves*» (Cialdini, 2001). In practice, the rule states that when receiving something, we feel obligated to repay the debt. Intensive study by Alvin Gouldner (1960) describes reciprocity as a universal human tendency – all human societies subscribe to the rule. Rooting back to human evolution, the anthropologist Richard Leakey attributes the principle of reciprocity as the essence of what it means to be human; «*we are human because our ancestors learned to share their food and their skills in an honoured network of obligation*» (Cialdini, 2001). The obligation of future repayment has evolved into interdependence among humans; people rely on reciprocity to help them model the behaviour they want to see from others. When applied in business, purchasing managers have revealed that when having accepted a gift from a supplier, they were willing to purchase products and services they would otherwise decline (Cialdini, 2001).

In association with sales and marketing, reciprocation is a prominent factor, for instance, with the use of free samples. By offering free samples, consumers are able to try a new product and evaluate its quality. However, the sample has the benefit of being perceived as a gift, hence activating the rule of reciprocity. While the sender appears with the pure intention of informing, he or she is able to trigger the inherent commitment when receiving a gift (Cialdini, 2001). Influencers are

frequently used in promoting free samples, often referred to as «giveaways». However, beyond branded giveaways, influencers constantly initiate reciprocity by providing content which offers followers great value; entertainment, personalized information, product guidance and recommendations. With reciprocity being considered the core of the relationship between influencers and followers, providing useful content as a technique is hypothesized to increase the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Hence, the following hypothesis is developed:

H5a: Reciprocity positively affects purchase intention.

2.2.4.1 Interaction between reciprocity and PSI

Horton and Wohl (1956) propose that people who become immersed in PSI relationships may declare their loyalty in different ways and their behaviour is likely to be influenced. According to Stasi (1988), persuasion and impulse purchases are more likely to occur with the presence of a PSI relationship between viewer and TV host. This phenomenon is assumed to partially be explained by reciprocity initiated by the TV host displaying and describing products. Similarly, influencers initiate reciprocity by promoting products, providing relevant information and encouraging their audience to purchase. Recognizing the availability and frequent use of social media, influencers are assumed to have even more intimate and close relationships with their followers. When suggesting reciprocity to positively affect PI (H5a), it is likely to assume that these effects increase when PSI is strong. Hence, the following hypothesis is developed:

H5b: The effect reciprocity has on purchase intention is amplified by parasocial interaction.

2.2.5 Scarcity

According to the principle of scarcity, «people want more of what they can have less of» (Cialdini, 2001). An extensive amount of research shows that people evaluate items and opportunities more valuable as they become less available. Tversky and Kahneman explain this phenomenon through the award-winning prospect theory (1986), stating that a loss of a given size hurts more than a gain of the same size feels good. Hobfoll (2001) further suggests that individuals are more motivated by the thought of losing something than gaining something of equal

value. The threat of potential loss as having a powerful role in human decision making, was demonstrated in a 1988 study referred to by Cialdini (2001, pp. 78). Half of the respondents were told that they would save a certain amount of money each day by fully insulating their homes. The rest of the respondents were told that if they chose not to insulate, they would lose the equal amount each day. When exposed to what the authors refer to as «loss language», significantly more people from the latter group compared to the former group chose to insulate their houses.

By harnessing the principle of scarcity, for instance through limited-time or exclusive offers, one has the ability to mobilize action significantly. The proposed techniques are often applied by brands and influencers. For instance, the informant from the service industry stated that they frequently use exclusive offers in collaboration with influencers; influencers promote «exclusive» voucher codes to their followers, such as «blogg_caroline» or «blogg_sophieelise», offering a 50 percent discount on products from the brand. Occasionally, the offers are time limited, in example «50% discount when ordering in January». This frequently used promotion technique has according to the informant been successful, and as a result become the basis for their influencer marketing strategy. However, scarcity as a technique has not been empirically tested across the various product categories influencers operate within, hence, the following hypothesis will be tested:

H6a: Scarcity positively affects purchase intention.

2.2.5.1 Interaction between scarcity and PSI

Previous research has established that bloggers can become an important part of people's everyday life (Ballentine & Martin, 2005), and followers are likely to pay close attention to an influencer's posts (Hung, Chan and Tse, 2011). Acknowledging that PSI plays a central role in endorsement effectiveness (Gong & Li, 2017), it is assumed that harnessing the principle of scarcity will be more effective when PSI relations are present. In example, a handbag promoted by an admirable influencer with an exclusive discount may be perceived as a «must have» – before it is too late. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6b: The effect scarcity has on purchase intention is amplified by parasocial interaction.

2.2.6 Social proof

The principle of social proof states that «*people follow the lead of others similar to themselves*» (Cialdini, 2001) – people determine what is correct by looking to what other people do (Lun, Whitchurch & Glenn, 2007). The principle especially applies to how we determine the correct behaviour in a given situation. A behaviour is perceived as correct when others are performing it. Normally, one will make fewer mistakes by acting in accordance with social proof, rather than by contradicting it. Hence, it provides a heuristic shortcut when deciding how to think, feel, and act.

Social proof is most influential under two specific conditions. The first is uncertainty; when people are unsure of themselves, when a situation is unclear or when there is lack of familiarity, they are more likely to guide their behaviour by looking at what others do (Sechrist & Stangor, 2007; Wooten & Reed, 1998; Zitek & Hebl, 2007). An example is Sylvan Goldman's invention of the shopping cart in 1934. At first, the object was so unfamiliar-looking that no customers were willing to use it, despite signs describing their uses and benefits. In order to reduce the customer's uncertainty, Goldman implemented a strategy based on social proof: he hired fake customers to roll the carts around the store. As a result, his real customers followed along and ultimately the invention has reached the whole world (Goldman, 1951).

The second condition is similarity; we are more inclined to follow the lead of similar individuals (Festinger, 1954; Platow et al., 2005). The conduct of such people provides the greatest contribution to what we perceive as the correct behaviour for ourselves (Abrams et al., 1990; Burn, 1991). Marketers know that a great strategy for selling a product or service to ordinary customers, is to promote «ordinary» people who like and use it. The link between similarity and imitation of behaviour is also confirmed in scientific research, such as a study on fundraising at a college campus (Aune & Basil, 1994). The donations more than doubled when the requester shared the same group identity as the target person, by implying that «I am a student, too».

Advertisers actively promote information such as «fastest-growing» or «largest-selling». When a given product is referred to as best-selling, there is no need to convince the customers that the product is of great quality; by communicating that a large number of people agree, there is proof enough (Cialdini, 2001). The application of social proof has also been observed by some influencers. For instance, the informant with background from media consultancy, highlighted the Norwegian blogger and influencer Camilla Pihl and her use of social proof when launching her skincare brand SKIN Camilla Pihl. By frequently reposting pictures and reviews from satisfied customers in social media, engagement and word of mouth increased tremendously. As a result, the brand was sold out after only a few months. When influencers provide evidence from customers similar to the follower, social proof is assumed to have a strong effect on attitudes and intentions, hence, the following hypothesis is developed:

H7a: Social proof positively affects purchase intention.

2.2.6.1 Interaction between social proof and PSI

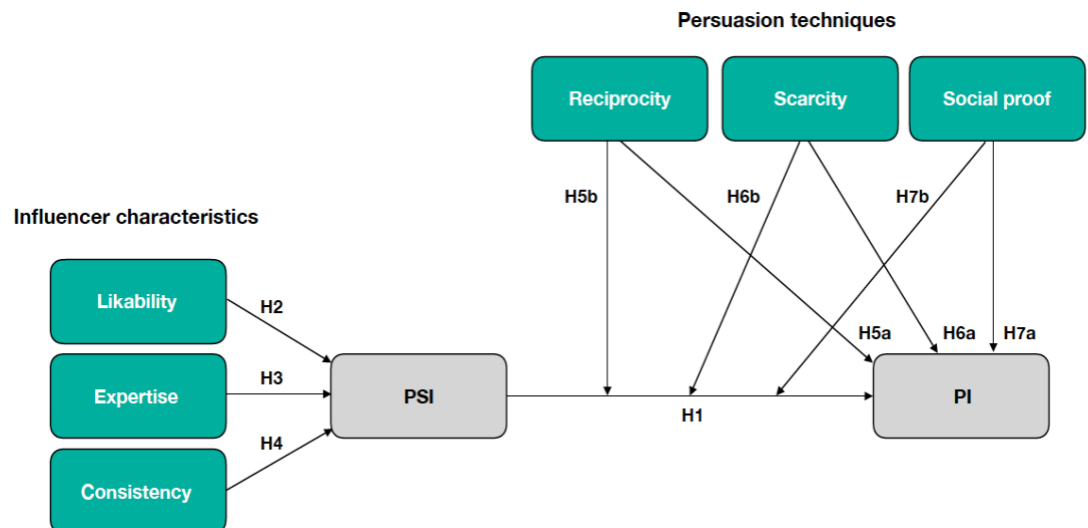
Because parasocial experiences imply that people feel they «take part in social interaction», it may also lead to increased commitment to social norms (Horton & Strauss, 1957). Research shows that the more intense an experience of PSI is, the more committed people feel to social norms (Nass & Moon, 2000; Gardner & Knowles, 2008; Hartmann & Goldhoorn, 2011). When adapting to social norms, social proof provides a heuristic shortcut for how to think, feel and act. From an influencer marketing perspective, people should be more likely to follow recommendations when immersed in a PSI relationship. Providing product recommendations with evidence from customers should further strengthen the presence of social proof. As a result, people may imitate the influencer and likeminded followers by complying to their recommendations, ultimately affecting their purchase intention. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7b: The effect social proof has on purchase intention is amplified by parasocial interaction.

2.3 Conceptual framework

The framework aims to conceptualize PSI and the Principles of Persuasion into an influencer marketing guide. As can be seen in the illustrated model, the six principles are divided into two categories; influencer characteristics and persuasive techniques. The categories are based on the nature of each principle; the first three serve as prominent characteristics of an individual, while the three latter are similar to techniques that are frequently used in influencer marketing.

1. The principles of likability, expertise and consistency can be used to describe personal traits of an influencer. As stated in the PSI section, similar characteristics are found to increase PSI levels. As of this, likeability, expertise and consistency are grouped as influencer characteristics and hypothesized to positively impact PSI through a direct main effect.
2. The level of PSI is hypothesized to positively impact PI through a direct main effect.
3. The principles of reciprocity, scarcity and social proof are treated as persuasion techniques, hypothesized to positively affect PI through a direct main effect. The effect of these principles is further hypothesized to be amplified by PSI through interaction.



Model 1: Conceptual framework

3.0 Methodology

The following chapter provides an overview of which methodology was applied for the thesis. An explanation for the choices made with regards to research approach, design and data collection is presented. Finally, research validity and reliability is evaluated.

3.1 Research approach

Deductive and inductive are considered the two main bases for research approaches. Applying a combination of qualitative and quantitative research, the respective thesis has an orientation towards both approaches. Although there are no set rules, a deductive approach is commonly associated with quantitative research, while an inductive approach is often associated with qualitative research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). An inductive approach was applied in the initial, qualitative part of the thesis, allowing for flexibility and adjustments through the course of the study. However, the hypotheses that were tested through data collection and analysis, are primarily based on existing theory, hence following a deductive approach. A quantitative analysis was carried out, serving as the dominant part of the respective research.

3.2 Research design

In order to test the hypotheses related to the conceptual model, both an exploratory and explanatory research design were used, pursuing a mixed methods design. Mixed method designs are commonly used to overcome weaknesses related to the use of single or mono methods, providing a richer approach to data collection, analysis and interpretation (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). The thesis followed a sequential exploratory research design, with a double-phased analysis where a qualitative method was followed by a quantitative method. The exploratory research design was applied to get insights to current practices within influencer marketing through qualitative interviews. Subsequently, the proposed model was tested through a quantitative consumer survey, applying an explanatory research design.

3.3 Data collection

3.3.1 Qualitative interviews

In order to explore the field of influencer marketing, two semi-structured interviews and one in-depth interview were conducted. Semi-structured interviews are commonly conducted with a list of themes and key questions that are to be covered, while in depth-interviews are informal and used to generally explore a topic of interest (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2016). Such interviews can be advantageous for studies with exploratory elements, where the questions are complex and open-ended. With influencer marketing being a relatively new topic to undergo study, the use of in-depth and semi-structured interviews was considered useful to evaluate the feasibility of conducting research and narrowing the scope of the research topic.

3.3.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the interviews was to become familiar with practices within influencer marketing. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with two firm representatives from different brands, to gain knowledge from their experiences with influencer marketing. The in-depth interview was conducted with a spokesperson from the Norwegian media industry, in order to gain the informants perspective on influencer marketing and the proposed research model. Together, the interviews were useful in uncovering perceived challenges from a practical perspective, while at the same time facilitating framework discussions with people who have hands-on experience.

3.3.1.2 Informants

In order to gain various perspectives to influencer marketing, three firms differing in size and sector were approached in the qualitative interviews. The common denominator is their involvement with influencer marketing. In accordance with the confidentiality restrictions provided by the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD), all traceable characteristics of the respective firms were excluded in the thesis (NSD, 2018). A description of each firm is summarized in Table 1 below.

Firm	Description	Size	Established	Sector
Firm 1	Enduring history and appearance within influencer marketing.	194 employees	2012	Service
Firm 2	Enduring history and appearance within influencer marketing.	125 employees	2004	Product
Firm 3	Notable initiator of influencer marketing in Norway, and an established spokesperson in the Norwegian media industry.	1 employee	2017	Media consulting

Table 1: Firm descriptions

3.3.1.3 Procedure

Prior to the interviews, considerations were taken to factors that could impact participants and their responses. One factor to consider was the appropriateness and convenience of the chosen interview location (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2016). For practical reasons, two of the interviews were conducted per telephone. Interviews per telephone can be advantageous as they are convenient and likely to allow the participant to feel comfortable, in an undisturbed place (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2016). The last interview was a personal meeting at the informant's workplace. Thus, convenience was considered as the interview required less time and effort from the participant.

The three interviews were based on topics and key questions prepared prior to the interviews. All three interviews were carried out in Norwegian. Further, the interviews were translated to English and sent for approval to the respective informants. Key takeaways are applied throughout the thesis and in developing the hypotheses. A summary of each interview can be found in Appendix 1.

3.3.2 Quantitative survey

Based on primary and secondary data, a conceptual model for effectuating influencer marketing has been developed. The proposed framework was tested through a consumer questionnaire. Questionnaires are commonly used for explanatory research, as it enables the researcher to examine and explain causal relationships (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2016).

3.3.2.1 Purpose

The objective of the survey was to test the ten hypotheses substantiating the proposed framework. More specifically, the purpose was to uncover whether applying the Principles of Persuasion in the context of influencer marketing positively affects PSI and PI. The questions were used to test whether the principles of likeability, expertise and consistency are influencer characteristics that increase the level of PSI. Subsequently, the principles of reciprocity, scarcity and social proof were tested in order to explore whether they serve as persuasion techniques that increase PI, both when used separately and when interacting with PSI. The overall purpose was to verify or falsify the effect of the included elements in the conceptual framework.

3.3.2.2 Procedure

The questionnaire was designed as a self-completed survey, as these are likely to provide reliable responses that are not distorted to please the researcher or provide socially desirable responses (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2014). It was developed as a web questionnaire in the online survey tool Qualtrics. Questionnaires that are accessible online can enable the researcher to reach a sufficient, geographically dispersed sample within the population of interest (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2016).

The questionnaire was distributed through Facebook, where people were asked to participate in the survey, and encouraged to share it with their Facebook-network. Distributing the questionnaire within the authors' network could be considered a limitation, providing limited variation in the sample. However, based on theories regarding the scalability of social media, the spread and visibility of digital content is potentially very high. In practice, there is no limitation of how many users the shares can reach (Aalen, 2013). Encouraging participants to share the survey was thought to provide dispersion in terms of geography, age, social status, occupations, and life situations that extend beyond the authors' own networks. Distributing the survey through Facebook is a cost-effective method, enabling respondents to choose time and place for answering the survey (Gripsrud, Olsson & Silkoset, 2011). An online distribution also requires less resources, as there is no need for an interviewer to carry out each survey. Facebook was chosen for data collection, as

gathering responses from individuals using social media and digital platforms in their daily lives was thought to be appropriate when conducting a survey related to marketing in these channels. 84 percent of Norwegians have a Facebook-profile, and approximately nine out of ten visit the platform on a daily basis (Ipsos, 2018).

The data collected was further converted and downloaded as a data file for external analysis in the statistical software SPSS.

3.3.2.3 Sampling

The survey was targeted towards Norwegian consumers. For practical reasons, convenience sampling was applied. Convenience sampling has the advantage of easily obtaining responses at a low cost. However, as a non-probability sampling technique where cases are selected haphazardly, one is virtually in no control over the cases that will be included in the sample (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2016). Another disadvantage of this sampling technique is that individuals with interest for the topic may answer the questionnaire, without the researchers knowing the extent to which they are representative of the population (Gripsrud, Olsson & Silkoset, 2011). Nevertheless, the findings provide an indication of the target group's attitudes and intentions related to the topic. Additionally, Saunders (2012) points out that samples seemingly chosen for convenience often meet sample selection criteria relevant to the research aim. In this case, using a convenience sample has enabled the recruitment of a diverse sample, which also reflects the population of interest; individuals using digital channels, however varying in demographics, interests and behaviours.

3.3.2.4 Description of the questionnaire

The survey questions were developed with specific response alternatives, where respondents were asked to select one alternative. This enabled standardization of the answers, in order to identify similarities and inequalities between respondents. Additionally, by standardizing responses, the sample results can be generalized to explain population characteristics (Johannessen, Christoffersen & Tufte, 2011). In order to obtain complete responses, responses were «forced» for all questions. Operationalization and survey questions are provided in Appendix 2, and the complete survey can be found in Appendix 3.

The survey introduction was based on Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis' (2016) recommendations of how to introduce a questionnaire. The introductory part informed the respondents on the survey objective, and also clarified respondent anonymity. Subsequently, the survey was separated in three different parts.

Part I

Due to the length of the survey, questions regarding demographics were asked in the beginning. General practice is to ask for sensitive information at the end of a survey, however, as the respondent's anonymity was clarified introductory, this was not thought to be a problem. Following, the respondent was asked to choose one of the six following categories; «health and fitness», «fashion and beauty», «sport», «food», «interior» and «kids and family». Each category was represented by a chosen influencer. The respondent was then presented with the Instagram profile of the respective influencer and asked whether he or she was familiar with the person depicted. This was to clarify whether the respondent was familiar with the influencer's characteristics and social media content. As some of the influencers are more known for their content rather than their face, snippets of their Instagram profiles were presented instead of a portrait of the influencer behind.

The forthcoming parts were connected to the influencer in the chosen category. The six influencers in the survey were selected based on three factors: they are well-known influencers that are likely to be publicly known, they promote products and sponsored content in their channels, and run a blog and an Instagram-account. The reason for choosing a specific influencer to present each category, was the ability to manipulate scenarios the respondents could relate to and understand. This was thought to make the presented scenarios easier to imagine and more similar to real-life settings. An example of an influencer description is presented in Appendix 4.

Part II

The second part was used to test whether the principles of liking, expertise and consistency influence PSI. This was done using a modified version of the original PSI scale in which the three principles were integrated. The PSI scale consisted of 20 items, with a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from «strongly disagree» to «strongly agree». 19 questions assessed the participant's perception of PSI, whereas

the final question identified whether there was a connection between PSI and PI. An item with reversed wording was included in order to reduce response bias.

Part III

The third part was used to test the effect of scarcity, social proof and reciprocity on PI. The principles of scarcity and reciprocity were tested through an experiment. The respondent was presented with a picture of the influencer with a promoted product and a related caption. The first condition included a neutral caption, while the forthcoming conditions were manipulated to include the principles of scarcity and reciprocity. For all six influencers, the text was standardized to solely test the principles. Hence, colours, brands, and similar attributes were excluded, and all texts were presented in black and white. The principle of social proof was tested by presenting a written scenario. All questions were asked on a 5-point Likert scale.

3.3.2.5 Pilot test

The questionnaire was pilot tested with respondents similar to those who would complete the final survey. The purpose of pilot testing was to refine the questions to ensure that the respondents would easily understand what was being asked. When distributing self-completed surveys, Bell and Waters (2014) underline the importance of uncovering the suitability of the survey length, clarity of instructions and other comments to topic, questions or layout. The test gave indications of the validity and reliability of the data that was to be collected. Prior to the pilot test, a small group of experts, such as fellow students and supervisor, were asked to provide feedback on the questions' representativeness and suitability. This was useful in order to make necessary amendments (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2016). Fink (2013) recommends a minimum of 10 people for pilot testing a smaller-scale survey such as a master thesis. After one week of pilot testing, 12 pilot tests were obtained, and adjustments were made accordingly.

3.3.3 Measures

A number of variables in the conceptual framework are previously tested in empirical research and have valid measures. For variables with existing measures, these were used. Based on related research and input from supervision, new ones were developed for the variables that had no existing measures.

3.3.3.1 Dependent variables

A dependent variable (DV) will change in response to changes in other variables (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012). In the conceptual framework two equations were to be tested, with PI as the DV in the first equation and PSI as the DV in the second equation. PSI was measured using existing measures, consisting of modified questions from Bocarnea and Brown's (2007) PSI scale. PI, on the other hand, is commonly established through perceptual measures (Spears & Singh, 2004). Perceptual measures include a customer's subjective evaluation of their PI for a given product in a given scenario, and such measures were used in this study.

3.3.3.2 Independent variables

Independent variables (IV) are variables that cause changes in the DV (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012). The first equation has three IVs, namely liking, expertise and consistency. The second equation has four IVs; PSI, scarcity, social proof and reciprocity.

The questions related to liking included physical attractiveness and similarity, constructs found to affect liking of a person (Cialdini, 2001). The wording of the questions was modified from the existing PSI scale by Bocarnea and Brown (2007). Expertise related questions from Shen et al. (2010) were modified in order to measure the expertise of an influencer. As for consistency, questions were developed based on related research and supervisor input. As previously stated, PSI serves as a DV in the first equation. However, the variable serves as an IV in the second equation. Measures for scarcity, social proof and reciprocity were developed through experiments related to the principles. Each condition was based on current practices within the field of influencer marketing. PI for each of the different conditions was measured on a 5-point Likert scale.

3.3.3.3 Control variables

Two control variables were included in the survey; categorical differences and influencer following. In order to account for categorical differences, the respondent was asked to pick one out of six categories. To account for differences between respondents following and not following the influencer in social media, the respondent was asked this specific question.

3.4 Validity and reliability

With both qualitative and quantitative research, concern might be raised about the findings' generalizability (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). Reliability refers to whether or not the findings of a study are consistent at different times and under different conditions. Validity, on the other hand, concerns to what extent a test accurately measures what it is supposed to (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2016). In the following sections, the validity and reliability of the respective study is discussed.

The choice of using a web questionnaire was influenced by several factors, amongst others the desired characteristics of respondents, importance of answers not being contaminated, required sample size, and number and types of questions (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2016).

It was desired for the sample to consist of consumers present in digital channels and social media. Moreover, the respondents had to be somewhat knowledgeable about Norwegian influencers. When using self-completed questionnaires, one has essentially no control of who will complete the survey. However, as the questionnaire was distributed through Facebook and presented to specific accounts, there was high certainty that the intended person would be the one responding. Facebook users are registered with personal profiles and manage their own accounts. Nevertheless, any contamination of respondent's answers would reduce the reliability of the data. For instance, respondents with lack of knowledge to the topic may simply guess the appropriate answer, a tendency known as uninformed response. This is especially likely when the questionnaire has been incentivized (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2016). Therefore, the respondents were not offered a monetary payment for answering the survey. By distributing the survey through a digital social media network, the respondents were thought to be sufficiently knowledgeable about the topic. To further reduce the likelihood of collecting uninformed responses, a screening question regarding influencer familiarity was asked introductory. In order to further increase reliability, incomplete and non-typical responses were removed in subsequent data preparations.

The types and number of questions had to be considered, in order to reduce the chance of respondents dropping out or answering questions without deliberate

considerations. By forcing responses to proceed the survey, some respondents may have answered questions they otherwise would have skipped. However, when designing the questionnaire, developing questions that were easy to understand and perceived similar among all respondent was of high importance. The pilot test was useful to increase the reliability, as it enabled the removal of ambiguous questions and wording. Further, in order to solely test the principles' effect, texts, colours, brands and similar attributes were standardized. This was thought to increase the questionnaires' ability to measure what was intended, hence increasing internal validity (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2016). Further, to better being able to generalize the set of questions to the construct, referred to as construct validity (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2016), existing scales for PSI and attitudes were applied and modified.

The validity of research conducted through Facebook can be questioned. This is largely due to the choice of non-probability convenience sampling, resulting in less control of the cases that are included in the sample (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2016). Moreover, there was a risk present of only individuals with interest for the topic answering the questionnaire, without the researchers knowing the extent to which they are representative for the population (Gripsrud, Olsson & Silkoset, 2011). Additionally, being somewhat limited to the authors' Facebook network, the survey could potentially reach a minor part of the target group. Hence, the sample provides only an indication of consumers' attitudes and intentions, and without knowing the extent to which the respondents are representative for the population, the findings are not generalizable.

4.0 Analysis

4.1 Survey information

The survey was publicly available from the 2nd to the 30th of May. During this period, it was shared 27 times, confirming that the spread and visibility of digital content is potentially very high (Aalen, 2013). The survey received a total of 358 respondents.

4.2 Preparing the data

Having exported the data from Qualtrics to SPSS, the dataset was cleansed by removing standard variables that were not relevant for further analysis. All items

were labelled, while questions with reversed wording were recoded. Dummy variables were created for questions related to product category and following of the influencer. The dataset included both non-metric and metric variables, requiring different measurement levels. Background variables, such as gender, employment, product category, familiarity and following were changed to be measured on a nominal scale, age on an ordinal scale, while the metric variables were measured on scale level (Malhotra, 2010).

A total of 358 respondents took part in the questionnaire, of which 100 unsatisfactory respondents were discarded from the dataset because of incomplete responses. Further, with theory suggesting that familiarity is required for PSI relationships to develop, 83 respondents that were not familiar with the influencer in their chosen category were removed. Having removed a total of 183 unsatisfactory respondents due to incomplete responses or lack of familiarity, the data set was left with 175 respondents, in which the oldest age group, 60 or older had dissolved. The approach of discarding unsatisfactory respondents is thought to be useful in cases where the sample sizes are large (Malhotra, 2010). As the required number of respondents was set to approximately 100, the remaining 175 respondents fulfilled these requirements.

4.3 Descriptive statistics

The univariate technique frequency analysis was used to gain descriptive knowledge of the dataset. The variables reviewed were age, gender, employment status and product category of interest. All tables from the descriptive analysis are attached in Appendix 5.

4.3.1 Age

The majority, 77,7 percent, of respondents are aged between 18 and 29 years. 11,4 percent of the respondents are aged between 30 and 39 years, while 9,7 percent are 40 years or older. Having further reviewed and interpreted the data, it was decided to proceed with respondents aged up to 39 years for further analysis; a total of 158. The representation of age groups in the survey show similar patterns as general statistics for social media usage (Ipsos, 2018). This is considered to justify the decision of omitting respondents aged 40 and above. The remaining sample gave a new distribution with 86,1 percent of respondents being aged 18 to 29.

4.3.2 Gender

76,6 percent of the respondents in the survey are females.

4.3.3 Employment status

The descriptive analysis shows that 51,3 percent of the respondents are employed, while 42,4 percent are students. This was somewhat expected with the majority of respondents being aged between 18 and 29.

4.3.4 Product category

The majority of respondents, 29,7 percent, chose to answer questions about «health and fitness», with «fashion and beauty» and «sport» following as the second and third most chosen categories. Overall, the distribution of chosen product categories was even, implying that the presented categories in the survey captured the respondents' interests. The categorical distribution was aligned with expectations; «health and fitness», «sports» and «fashion and beauty» serve as larger and more common categories of interest. Niche categories such as «interior», «food» and «kids and family» tend to be smaller (Blogglisten, 2018).

4.4 Exploratory factor analysis

To prepare the data material for further analysis, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed. EFA attempts to decrease the size of the dataset, by reducing a larger set of variables to a smaller amount of factors. The objective is to identify an underlying dimensionality that has previously been unknown, while still keeping the majority of the information (Janssens, De Pelsmacker, Wijnen & Van Kenhove, 2008).

The purpose of the EFA was to reduce 14 of the items from the PSI scale to a smaller amount of factors. When performing an EFA, it is recommended for every variable to have at least ten times as many observations in the dataset, while there is a general requirement of minimum 100 respondents (Janssens, De Pelsmacker, Wijnen & Van Kenhove, 2008). With 158 respondents, both requirements are fulfilled. Based on the theoretical framework, three factors were suggested, namely «liking», «expertise» and «consistency». The following analysis was used to review the robustness and appropriateness of these factors.

4.4.1 Assessing the suitability of the data

In order to ensure sufficient correlation between the variables, and further determine whether a factor analysis is appropriate for analysing the data, Bartlett's test for sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) was performed. The null hypothesis for a Bartlett's test for sphericity assumes no correlation between any of the variables.

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.875
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-square	963.977
	Df	66
	Sig.	0.000

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Reviewing Table 2, the null hypothesis is rejected. The test is significant assuming $\alpha = 5$, since $0.00 < 0.05$ and a factor analysis is considered suitable. However, Bartlett's test could be considered a weak test for factor analysis, as it is usually always significant.

Subsequently, KMO is used to further test for correlation between the variables. Interpreting the output, the value of .875 is considered a good fit, indicating high enough correlations between the variables for an underlying factor structure (Janssens, De Pelsmacker, Wijnen & Van Kenhove, 2008).

Lastly, reviewing the anti-image correlation matrix, all measure of sampling adequacy values are above .5. With the lowest value being .807, no variable was to be eliminated. In conclusion, all tests indicate that a factor analysis is meaningful, and a principal component analysis (PCA) may be carried out. The matrix can be found in Appendix 6.

4.4.2 Factor extraction

Factor extraction is the method of identifying the components that best characterize a set of variables (Janssens, De Pelsmacker, Wijnen & Van Kenhove, 2008).

Reviewing the Component Matrix (Table 3), a three-factor solution can be assumed.

Component Matrix			
	Component		
	1	2	3
CON17	.779	.124	-.383
EXP13	.767	.109	-.285
EXP14	.766	.187	-.316
LIK7	.757	-.174	.393
LIK8	.749	-.093	.259
LIK6	.736	-.246	.282
LIK9	.730	-.113	.138
CON15	.730	.291	-.048
CON16	.716	.285	-.059
SIM10	.583	-.531	.193
CON19	.482	.558	.322
Recoded	-.450	.521	.515
<i>Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. A 3 components extracted</i>			

Table 3: Component matrix

However, several aspects should be considered when deciding the number of factors. Kaiser’s criterion, commonly referred to as the Eigenvalue rule, recommends only retaining factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1 (Janssens, De Pelsmacker, Wijnen & Van Kenhove, 2008). Reviewing Table 4, Total Variance Explained, three factors are identified. Together, the three factors explain 67.316 percent of the total variance. However, the Scree Plot (Appendix 7) indicates two relevant factors, as the curve shows a clear break after the second component.

Total Variance Explained								
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings	
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance
1	5.813	48.438	48.438	5.813	48.438	48.438	3.721	31.008
2	1.205	10.042	58.480	1.205	10.042	58.480	3.212	26.764
3	1.060	8.836	67.316	1.060	8.836	67.316	1.145	9.544
4	.764	6.369	73.684					
5	.609	5.074	78.759					
6	.566	4.714	83.473					
7	.517	4.312	87.785					
8	.420	3.501	91.286					
9	.356	2.968	94.254					
10	.279	2.324	96.578					
11	.218	1.816	98.394					
12	.193	1.606	100.000					
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.								

Table 4: Total variance explained

4.4.3 Factor rotation and interpretation

Having tested the combination of variables several times, the best solution became apparent when removing the questions SIM11: «When (Influencer) posts information, he/she seems to understand the kind of things I want to know» and ATT12: «I find (Influencer) to be good-looking». This was done due to low communality values and cross-loadings.

In order to simplify interpretation of the factors, rotation was performed, applying the procedure of orthogonal varimax rotation. As can be seen from Table 5, two of the components are found to have three or more items with loadings above .3, while the third component loads high on only two of the included items. In order to have the smallest possible loss of explanatory power, it was decided to include the third component. The high communality loadings on these items indicate that they are relevant for the definition of the factor. As can be seen comparing the values in

Table 4, the distribution of explanatory power in the factors also changed from 48.438, 10.042 and 8.836 prior to rotation, to 31.008, 26.764 and 9.544 after rotation. As a result, a three-factor solution was retained for further analysis.

Rotated Component Matrix			
	Component		
	1	2	3
CON17	.824	.243	-.177
EXP14	.809	.241	-.086
EXP13	.760	.298	-.124
CON15	.699	.321	.170
CON16	.691	.308	.159
LIK7	.291	.813	.109
LIK6	.298	.770	-.018
SIM10	.099	.753	-.287
LIK8	.388	.692	.082
LIK9	.424	.621	-.012
Recoded	-.353	-.254	.742
CON19	.453	.240	.621
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization Rotation converged in 5 iterations.			

Table 5: Rotated component matrix

The results suggest that the twelve variables are able to describe the underlying dimensions of the three factors. As can be seen, the three factors are independent of one another, and hence orthogonal. Together the three factors explain more than 67 percent of the total variance. Hence, three independent variables were constructed, namely «liking», «expertise» and «consistency». The variables were based on an average of the questions in Table 6.

Item composition in Extracted Factors	
Expertise	<p>EXP14: I find (Influencer) to have expertise about brands and products he/she promotes.</p> <p>CON17: I find (Influencer) trustworthy when he/she promotes brands and products within his/her field of expertise.</p> <p>CON15: I find (Influencer) to be consistent in the kind of content he/she posts.</p> <p>EXP13: I can trust the information I get from (Influencer).</p> <p>CON16: I feel that (Influencer) includes promoted products as a natural part of his/her content.</p>
Liking	<p>SIM10: I feel that I understand the emotions (Influencer) experiences.</p> <p>LIK7: If I saw a news article or magazine story about (Influencer) I would read it.</p> <p>LIK6: If (Influencer) appeared on a TV-program, I would watch it.</p> <p>LIK8: I like to follow (Influencer) on social media.</p> <p>LIK9: I like to read (Influencer)'s blog.</p>
Consistency	<p>CON19: I prefer that (Influencer) promotes brands and products that fit his/her usual content.</p> <p>CON18_recoded: I find (Influencer) trustworthy when he/she promotes brands and products outside his/her field of expertise.</p>

Table 6: Factors extracted

4.4.4 Internal consistency

In order to assess reliability scales, Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the degree to which the measures probe the underlying constructs. The Alpha value for the first factor, «expertise» is .874, while the second factor, «liking» has a score of .851. Both values are greater than .8, which is considered very good (Janssens, De Pelsmacker, Wijnen & Van Kenhove, 2008). An elimination of items in order to increase Alpha is not necessary. However, the third factor, «consistency», has an Alpha score of .034, indicating a fairly poor result (Janssens, De Pelsmacker, Wijnen & Van Kenhove, 2008). Cronbach's Alpha is usually unacceptable with values less than .6. Removing the items with the lowest «Item-Total Correlation» was considered, however, as the factor consists of only two variables, it was decided to keep both. The low value can be explained by the inclusion of only two items, as the measure not only depends on the correlation and covariance of included items, but also the number of items. Also, several factor combinations were initially tested, and the items included in «consistency» did not fit the other two factors. Moreover, one should keep in mind that several tests are required in order to assess how good items are at measuring a concept. Based on theoretical knowledge and prior

reasoning, it was decided to proceed with the factor. Hence, the summated scale was calculated for the three factors.

4.5 Regression analysis

In order to determine the causality between the DV and the IVs, two multiple linear regressions were performed. In both analyses, the confounding variables «following» and «category» were controlled for. In order to enable the inclusion of control variables, two hierarchical linear regressions were carried out. Both control variables were coded as dummy variables. Having run both analyses, none of the nine assumptions that lie at the basis of performing regression analysis (Janssens, De Pelsmacker, Wijnen & Van Kenhove, 2008) are violated.

In order to avoid multicollinearity, one should always include one less dummy variable in the model than there are categories (Janssens, De Pelsmacker, Wijnen & Van Kenhove, 2008). When performing the analyses, «interior» was left out, hence serving as the reference category to which other dummies are compared.

4.5.1 Multiple linear regression: predicting PSI

The first regression was used to test whether «liking», «expertise» and «consistency» positively affect «PSI», hence testing hypotheses H2-H4. The regression model can be stated as the following:

$$PSI = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1liking + \alpha_2expertise + \alpha_3consistency + \alpha_4following + \sum_{i=1}^5 \gamma_i D_i + \varepsilon$$

where

$$following = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if following} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$D_1 = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if health and fitness} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$D_2 = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if fashion and beauty} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$D_3 = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if sport} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$D_4 = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if food} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$D_5 = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if kids and family} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

4.5.1.1 Meaningfulness of the model

The first step is to evaluate the model, to see if the model is able to explain «PSI». Reviewing the R-square, the variables in Block 1 account for 35.5 percent of the variance in the outcome. In Block 2, including all variables from both blocks, the model as a whole is found to explain 67.4 percent of the variability in «PSI». The adjusted R-square statistic corrects for the number of IVs and is therefore considered a better indicator. The adjusted R-square is 32.9 percent for Block 1 and 65.4 percent for Block 2. The predictor variables explain an additional 31.9 percent of the variance in «PSI», even when statistically controlling for «following» and «category» through the inclusion of dummies. Hence, the predictor variables add a significant amount of predicted variance in the DV. Reviewing the Sig F Change, both models are found to be significant at $\alpha = 5$, since $.00 < .05$. This indicates that the addition of the predictor variables has a statistically significant contribution in explaining «PSI». The Model summary is attached in Appendix 8.

Further evaluation of the model is done reviewing the ANOVA table. Looking at Model 1 and 2, the Sig. value tells how the model as a whole is able to explain «PSI» when all the variables are included. The model is statistically significant at a significance level of $\alpha = 5$, since $.00 < .05$. The ANOVA table is attached in Appendix 9.

4.5.1.2 Interpretation of the regression coefficients

The second step is to separately evaluate the IVs, in order to find out how well each variable contributes to the final model. Reviewing Model 2 in the coefficients table (Table 7), three predictor variables and two control variables are included in the equation. The sig. column illustrates that there is only one predictor variable that makes a unique statistical contribution at a significance level of $\alpha = 5$, namely «liking». The standardized coefficient for «liking» has a positive B-value of .702.

Coefficients								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.410	.711		1.984	.049		
	Following	.790	.117	.461	6.769	.000	.920	1.086
	Fashion and beauty	.404	.715	.199	.565	.573	.035	28.941
	Sport	.880	.714	.437	1.232	.220	.034	29.432
	Food	.403	.719	.167	.560	.576	.048	20.680
	Kids and family	.954	.726	.318	1.314	.191	.073	13.700
	Health and fitness	.983	.710	.527	1.384	.168	.030	33.887
2	(Constant)	.977	.670		1.459	.147		
	Following	.059	.109	.034	.538	.592	.542	1.845
	Fashion and beauty	-.534	.526	-.262	-1.015	.312	.033	30.261
	Sport	-.297	.528	-.147	-.562	.575	.032	31.189
	Food	-.828	.528	-.342	-1.567	.119	.046	21.605
	Kids and family	-.318	.541	-.106	-.587	.558	.068	14.721
	Health and fitness	-.371	.526	-.199	-.706	.481	.028	35.984
	Expertise factor	.047	.088	.036	.532	.596	.477	2.096
Liking factor	.702	.072	.726	9.681	.000	.392	2.549	
	Consistency factor	-.091	.078	-.058	-1.159	.248	.871	1.148
A Dependent variable: PSI total								

Table 7: Coefficients from the regression analysis predicting PSI

Interpretation of the model shows that «liking» is the only variable with statistically significant impact on «PSI». A one unit increase in «liking» leads to an increase in «PSI» with .702 units. The two other predictor variables, «expertise» and «consistency» have B-values of .047 and -.091. Thus, «expertise» has a marginal

positive impact on «PSI», while «consistency» negatively impacts the level of «PSI». However, as Table 7 illustrates, these are not found to be statistically significant. Neither were the control variables, and they are hence not further discussed in this section.

4.5.1.3 Collinearity statistics

Optimally, the tolerance of each item in the model should be .5 or higher. Values lower than .5 indicate multicollinearity, and values lower than .3 indicate serious multicollinearity problems. Reviewing the output, none of the predictor variables, «liking», «expertise» and «consistency», are found to have serious multicollinearity problems. The lowest tolerance value is .392. On the other hand, reviewing the low tolerance value of the control variables, these could be said to have serious multicollinearity problems. This is also illustrated in the high VIFs. However, as the variables with low tolerance values and high VIFs are control variables and the variables of interest do not have high VIFs, the values do not serve as a problem. An additional reason to safely ignore the high VIFs is the fact that these variables are indicator (dummy) variables that represent a categorical variable with six different categories (Allison, 2012).

4.5.1.4 Results

The results of the first regression support H2, substantiating that influencer liking affects PSI in a positive manner. No statistical support was found for H3, proposing influencer expertise to positively affect PSI or H4, proposing consistency to positively affect PSI.

4.5.2 Multiple linear regression: predicting PI

The second regression was used to test whether «PSI», «scarcity», «social proof» and «reciprocity» positively affect «PI», more specifically testing hypotheses H1, H5a, H6a and H7a. In order to test hypotheses H5b, H6b and H7b, whether the effect of «scarcity», «social proof» and «reciprocity» is amplified when interacting with «PSI», interaction variables were created. The predictor variable for «PSI» developed from the first regression (PSI total) was used and the interaction variables were mean centred in order to interpret the main effects. The regression model can be stated as the following:

$$PI = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 PSI + \alpha_2 scarcity + \alpha_3 social\ proof + \alpha_4 reciprocity + \alpha_5 (PSI * scarcity) + \alpha_6 (PSI * social\ proof) + \alpha_7 (PSI * reciprocity) + \alpha_8 following + \sum_{i=1}^5 \gamma_i D_i + \varepsilon$$

where

$$following_i = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if following} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$D_1 = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if health and fitness} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$D_2 = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if fashion and beauty} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$D_3 = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if sport} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$D_4 = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if food} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$D_5 = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if kids and family} \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

4.5.2.1 Interaction effects

Firstly, interaction between «PSI» and «social proof», «reciprocity» and «scarcity» was tested for. The output shows that the addition of the three interaction variables to the restricted model (Model 2), does not lead to a significant improvement in the full model (Model 3) (.284 > .05). The restricted model (Model 2), consisting of four predictor variables and two control variables, is therefore selected.

Model summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.438a	.192	.160	1.081	.192	5.977	6	151	.000
2	.672b	.452	.414	.902	.260	17.420	4	147	.000
3	.683c	.466	.418	.900	.014	1.277	3	144	.284
A Predictors: (Constant), Kids and family, Food, Following, Sport, Fashion and beauty, Health and fitness									
B Predictors: (Constant), Kids and family, Food, Following, Sport, Fashion and beauty, Health and fitness, Social proof, Scarcity, PSI total, Reciprocity									
C Predictors: (Constant), Kids and family, Food, Following, Sport, Fashion and beauty, Health and fitness, Social proof, Scarcity, PSI total, Reciprocity, PSIxSocial, PSIxScarcity, PSIxReciprocity									
D Dependent Variable: PI effectiveness									

Table 8: Model summary from the second regression predicting PI

4.5.2.2 *Meaningfulness of the model*

Reviewing the R-square in Table 8, the variables in Block 1 account for 19.2 percent of the variance in the outcome. In Block 2, including all variables from both blocks, the model as a whole is found to explain 45.2 percent of the variability in «PI». The adjusted R-square statistic corrects for the number of IVs and is therefore considered a better indicator. The adjusted R-square is 16.0 percent for Block 1 and 41.4 percent for Block 2. The predictor variables explain an additional 26.0 percent of the variance in «PI», even when statistically controlling for «following» and «category» through the inclusion of dummies. Therefore, the predictor variables add a significant amount of variance prediction. Reviewing the Sig. F Change, both models are found to be significant at $\alpha = 5$, since $.00 < .05$. This indicates that the addition of the predictor variables has a statistically significant contribution in explaining «PI».

Reviewing Model 1 and 2 in the ANOVA output (Appendix 10), the Sig. value tells how the model as a whole is able to explain «PI», including all variables. The model is a statistical significant at a significance level of $\alpha = 5$, since $.00 < .05$.

4.5.2.3 *Coefficients: predictor variables*

Reviewing the coefficients for Model 2 in Table 9, the sig. column illustrates that there are only two of the four predictor variables that make a unique statistical contribution at a significance level of $\alpha = 5$, namely the variables «PSI» and «scarcity». «PSI» is the variable that makes the largest contribution to the model with a B-value of .759, while «scarcity» has a B-value of .281. «Social proof» and «reciprocity», were not found to be statistically significant. However, it should be borne in mind that these results are specific to this sample and collection of variables. Interpretation of the model shows that «PSI» has the greatest impact on «PI». A one unit increase in «PSI» leads to an increase in «PI» with .759 units, while a one unit increase in «scarcity» is associated with a .281 increase in «PI».

Coefficients									
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)	.130	1,096		.119	.906			
	Following	.870	.180	.369	4.838	.000	.920	1.086	
	Health and fitness	2.413	1.095	.938	2.203	.029	.030	33.878	
	Fashion and beauty	1.965	1.102	.701	1.782	.077	.035	28.914	
	Sport	2.240	1.102	.807	2.033	.044	.034	29.432	
	Food	2.492	1.109	.748	2.247	.026	.048	20.080	
	Kids and family	1.820	1.120	.440	1.625	.106	.073	13.700	
	2	(Constant)	-2.037	.972		-2.095	.038		
2	Following	.154	.185	.065	.829	.409	.606	1.651	
	Health and fitness	1.892	.963	.736	1.964	.051	.027	37.625	
	Fashion and beauty	1.575	.949	.562	1.660	.099	.033	30.713	
	Sport	1.888	.964	.680	1.958	.052	.031	32.350	
	Food	2.060	.967	.618	2.131	.035	.044	22.535	
	Kids and family	1.186	.974	.287	1.217	.225	.067	14.863	
	Scarcity	.281	.101	.276	2.783	.006	.378	2.642	
	Social proof	.084	.079	.074	1.055	.293	.754	1.326	
	Reciprocity	-5.515E-	.105	.000	.000	1.000	.376	2.662	
	PSI total	0.759	.150	.437	5.053	.000	.499	2.004	
	3	(Constant)	-2.038	.971		-2.099	.038		
		Following	.157	.185	.066	.847	.399	.604	1.657
		Health and fitness	1.893	.962	.736	1.967	.051	.026	37.767
		Fashion and beauty	1.569	.948	.560	1.655	.100	.032	30.835
Sport		1.897	.962	.683	1.972	.051	.031	32.395	
Food		2.021	.966	.606	2.092	.038	.044	22.655	
Kids and family		1.172	.973	.283	1.205	.230	.067	14.918	
Scarcity		.298	.103	.293	2.891	.004	.361	2.772	
Social proof		.071	.080	.063	.888	.376	.743	1.345	
Reciprocity		.004	.106	.004	.039	.966	.364	2.746	
PSI total		.737	.151	.425	4.894	.000	.493	2.030	
PSI X Social proof		.071	.098	.052	.729	.467	.728	1.374	
PSI X Scarcity		-.093	.119	-.082	-.779	.437	.336	2.972	
PSI X Reciprocity		.171	.133	.141	1.290	.199	.310	3.230	

A Dependent variable: PI effectiveness

Table 9: Coefficients from the second regression predicting PI

4.5.2.4 Coefficients: control variables

The model predicts that respondents from the product category «food» have a 2.060 higher mean value for «PI», all else being equal. As can be seen from Table 9, «food» has the highest mean value of all six categories, followed by «health and fitness», «sport», «fashion and beauty», «kids and family» and «interior». Put

differently; compared to «interior», respondents in the first five categories have higher «PI». However, only «food» was found to be statistically significant.

4.5.2.5 Collinearity statistics

Applying a minimum tolerance of .3, none of the predictor variables are found to have serious multicollinearity problems with the lowest tolerance value being .376. Similar to the first regression, the control variables for «category» seem to have a substantial multicollinearity problem, which is also illustrated in the high VIFs. However, as the variables with low tolerance values and high VIFs are control variables and the variables of interest do not have high VIFs, the values do not serve as a problem. Again, an additional reason to safely ignore the high VIFs is the fact that these variables are dummy variables representing a categorical variable with six different categories (Allison, 2012).

4.5.2.6 Results

The results of the second analysis show that «PSI» positively affects «PI», hence supporting H1. Further, «scarcity» is found to have a positive main effect on «PI», hence, supporting H5a, while rejecting H6a and H7a, as no positive main effect was found for «social proof» and «reciprocity» on «PI». Moreover, the analysis does not provide any statistical support for the interaction effects, hence rejecting H5b, H6b and H7b.

4.6 Simultaneous Equation Model (SEM)

The proposed framework contains two linear equations, each with its own DV, and different sets of IVs. As the objective is to test and explain the framework as a whole, a Simultaneous Equation Model (SEM) was carried out. In contrast to single equation models, SEM models have a set of linear simultaneous equations, with two or more equations in it. This approach enables the handling of the dependent (endogenous) variable «PSI», which serves as an explanatory variable in the second equation in the full system. In other words, the SEM exhibits simultaneity or «back and forth» causation between the X and Y variables (Statistics How To, 2018).

Reviewing the R-square and the adjusted R-square (Table 10), both of the values tell us that 45.2 to 41.4 percent of the variability in «PI» is explained by the variables entered in the model.

Model Summary b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.672a	.452	.414	.902	1.907
A Predictors: (Constant), PSI total, Food, Kids and family, Scarcity, Sport, Social proof, Following, Fashion and beauty, Reciprocity, Health and fitness					
B Dependent Variable: PI effectiveness					

Table 10: Model summary for SEM

The ANOVA table indicates that the model is statistically significant in explaining «PI». The table is attached as Appendix 11. Reviewing the coefficients, the table shows that comparable to the previous regression, only two of the variables make a unique statistical contribution at a significance level of $\alpha = 5$. These are «PSI» and «scarcity». Again, «PSI» is the variable that makes the largest contribution to the model with a B-value of .759, while «scarcity» has a B-value of .281. Again, interpretation of the model shows that «PSI» has the greatest impact on «PI». A one unit increase in «PSI» leads to an increase in «PI» with .759 units, while a one unit increase in «scarcity» is associated with a .281 increase in «PI». As for multicollinearity, identical results as in the linear regression are obtained.

Coefficients											
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tol.	VIF
1	(Constant)	-2.037	.972		-2.095	.038					
	Following	.154	.185	.065	.829	.409	.364	.068	.051	.606	1.651
	Health and fitness	1.892	.963	.736	1.964	.051	.167	.160	.120	.027	37.625
	Fashion and beauty	1.575	.949	.562	1.660	.099	-.175	.136	.101	.033	30.713
	Sport	1.888	.964	.680	1.958	.052	-.030	.159	.120	.031	32.350
	Food	2.060	.967	.618	2.131	.035	.091	.173	.130	.044	22.535
	Kids and family	1.186	.974	.287	1.217	.225	-.045	.100	.074	.067	14.863
	Scarcity	.281	.101	.276	2.783	.006	.364	.224	.170	.378	2.642
	Social proof	.084	.079	.074	1.055	.293	.314	.087	.064	.754	1.326
	Reciprocity	-5.515E-6	.105	.000	.000	1.000	.361	.000	.000	.376	2.662
	PSI total	.759	.150	.437	5.053	.000	.588	.385	.309	.499	2.004
A Dependent Variable: PI effectiveness											

Table 11: Coefficients from the SEM

4.6.1 Coefficients: control variables

The model predicts that respondents from the product category «food» have a 2.060 higher mean value for «PI», all else being equal. As can be seen from Table 11, «food» has the highest mean value of all six categories, followed by «health and fitness», «sport», «fashion and beauty», «kids and family» and «interior». Put differently; compared to «interior», respondents in the first five categories have higher «PI». However, only «food» was found to be statistically significant.

4.6.2 Results

The results of the SEM show that «PSI» positively affects «PI», hence supporting H1. Further, out of the principles, only «scarcity» is found to have a positive main effect on «PI». Hence, supporting H5a, while rejecting H6a and H7a, as no positive main effect was found for «social proof» and «reciprocity» on «PI». Moreover, the analysis does not provide any statistical support for the interaction effects, hence rejecting H5b, H6b and H7b.

4.7 Summary of findings

The below table provides a summary of the findings from the analyses. The table presents whether the hypotheses tested in this study received statistical support.

Results summary	
Hypothesis	Result
<i>H1: Parasocial interaction positively affects purchase intention.</i>	Supported
<i>H2: Influencer liking positively affects parasocial interaction.</i>	Supported
<i>H3: Influencer expertise positively affects parasocial interaction.</i>	Not supported
<i>H4: Influencer consistency positively affects parasocial interaction.</i>	Not supported
<i>H5a: Reciprocity positively affects purchase intention.</i>	Not supported
<i>H5b: The effect reciprocity has on purchase intention is amplified by parasocial interaction.</i>	Not supported
<i>H6a: Scarcity positively affects purchase intention.</i>	Supported
<i>H6b: The effect scarcity has on purchase intention is amplified by parasocial interaction.</i>	Not supported
<i>H7a: Social proof positively affects purchase intention.</i>	Not supported
<i>H7b: The effect social proof has on purchase intention is amplified by parasocial interaction.</i>	Not supported

Table 12: Summary of findings

5.0 Discussion

The use of influencers in marketing has become increasingly popular, both in Norway and globally (United Influencers, 2018). As stated in the introduction, influencer marketing strategies are commonly based on vague assumptions lacking empirical support. However, concepts closely related to the mechanisms in influencer marketing, PSI (Horton & Wohl, 1956) and the Principles of Persuasion (Cialdini, 2001) are topics that have undergone intense study. Emphasising these theories, the objective of this research has been to uncover whether applying the Principles of Persuasion in the context of influencer marketing positively affects PSI and PI. This was done by combining the two established theories in a framework conceptualizing influencer marketing. The components in the framework can to some extent be under managerial control. Hence, the purpose is to illustrate how these components can be mastered for successful influencer marketing. The forthcoming chapter provides a discussion of whether the study results agree, extend, refine or conflict with prior literature. The survey and respective findings for each hypothesis are discussed. Lastly, the chapter provides a discussion of the theoretical contribution and managerial implications, limitations and directions for further research.

First, the potential impact survey distribution could have on the sample should be noted. The majority of the survey respondents are aged between 18 and 29. On one side, this might be a reflection of the authors' network, and further, it might limit the variation in the sample and generalizability of the findings. However, the distribution could be explained by what is called «the digital generation», suggesting different online behaviour between generations growing up with, or without communication technologies and digital information (IGI Global, 2018). Younger generations are found to be both more highly represented and more frequent users of social media platforms (Ipsos, 2018). Based on differences in social media usage among age groups, influencer marketing is commonly applied by brands targeting a younger audience (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2018). Having reached the desired age group of individuals up to 39 years, the age distribution in the respective study is considered not to be an issue. Moreover, the potential network limitations are not recognized as problematic as the survey received a high number of shares – ultimately reaching out to a dispersed age group.

Further, the skewed distribution of gender should be addressed. With 76.6 percent women in the survey, the findings could be considered less generalizable. However, the uneven distribution of gender might be explained by statistics showing that females are more highly represented in social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram (Ipsos, 2018). Further, a study conducted by Nielsen (2012) found that women are more likely than men to have a blog and engage in social media content. As of this, influencer marketing tends to be directed towards females rather than males, justifying the gender distribution.

H1: Parasocial interaction positively affects purchase intention

In accordance with existing literature stating that celebrity endorsement positively affects PI (Amos, Holmes & Strutton, 2008; Erdogan, 1999), PSI was statistically supported to positively affect PI. The support for H1 extends previous findings, suggesting PSI to positively impact impulse buying (Xiang, Zheng, Lee & Zhao, 2016).

H2: Influencer liking positively affects parasocial interaction

Whereas the initial assumption stated that both liking, expertise and consistency positively affect PSI, only liking provided a significant effect. Literature states influencer liking as a natural antecedent for the development of PSI (Rubin, Perse & Powell, 1985; Xiang, Zheng, Lee & Zhao, 2016). Aligned with this expectation, the performed analysis supported H2, confirming influencer liking to positively affect PSI.

H3: Influencer expertise positively affects parasocial interaction

Reviewing existing literature, expertise and authority (Xiang, Zheng, Lee & Zhao, 2016; Skumanich & Kintsfather, 1998) are hypothesized to positively affect PSI. However, no statistical support was found for H3. In hindsight, it is reasonable to question the wording and construct validity for the survey items intended to measure expertise. As for the factor «expertise», the items EXP13 and CON17 include the terms «trust» and «trustworthiness». The trustworthiness of influencers has recently been a widely discussed topic. These discussions are based on the fact that some influencers do not clearly state that certain posts are sponsored content. Additionally, consumers question the credibility of sponsored content and whether the posted opinions are «paid» or real (The Consumer Authority, 2017). Therefore,

these items could be thought to capture the influencers perceived trustworthiness, rather than their expertise.

H4: Influencer consistency positively affects parasocial interaction

Existing theory on congruence and fit (Gong & Li, 2017; Choi & Rifon, 2012), led to the assumption that influencer consistency positively affects PSI. However, no statistical support was found for H4, and surprisingly, the beta-coefficient turned out negative. This implies that consistency is not a requirement for PSI to develop. An influencer with versatile content might be perceived as more authentic, as compared to an influencer who solely presents niche content – i.e. an athlete promoting a variety of content, rather than exclusively sport and nutrition related content. The fact that versatile content is considered favourable, could be related to homophily being an important factor for developing PSI relationships – after all, the chance of being able to identify with someone, increases if the type of promoted content is broader.

The findings of the respective research indicate that consistency in general is of less importance when related to influencer marketing. However, as identified in the EFA, the underlying structure of the «expertise» factor was based on some of the items intended to measure consistency. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that consistency is somewhat of importance in the evaluation of an influencers expertise. This assumption is in accordance with the previously mentioned consistency strategy of Coca-Cola, stating consistency to be associated with expertise (North Star Marketing, 2015). The assumption is further underlined in research having established that inconsistency is considered «an undesirable» trait (Allgeier, Byrne, Brooks & Revnes, 1979; Asch, 1946).

However, it was in hindsight reasonable to question the construct validity of consistency. In contrast to liking and expertise, consistency had no valid measures from previous empirical research. The items intended to measure consistency were not sufficient, and only two items loaded at the «consistency» factor. With only two items constituting the underlying factor structure, it was thoroughly discussed whether or not to proceed with consistency as a factor. Based on previous literature and loss of explanatory power of the developed framework, it was decided to include the factor. However, in retrospect the items are found to measure

congruence and fit, rather than consistency. It was assumed that congruence and fit could be applied as a basis for measuring consistency, as these constructs are highly similar to each other. However, in hindsight it was acknowledged that these constructs should be treated separately. Whereas consistency concerns consistent behaviour, congruence refers to the quality or state of agreeing. From a practical perspective, consistency in an influencer's communication and appearance is independent from whether or not the promoted content is congruent with the influencer's niche.

H6a: Scarcity positively affects purchase intention

The last part of the research aimed to test whether the three remaining principles, characterized as persuasion techniques, had a positive effect on PI. Whereas existing literature suggests that both reciprocity, scarcity and social proof positively affect PI, only scarcity was found to be significant. This confirms an extensive amount of research, showing that people evaluate items and opportunities as more valuable when they become less available (Tversky & Kahneman, 1986). It should be noted that scarcity was easier to manipulate than social proof and reciprocity.

H5a: Reciprocity positively affects purchase intention

Prior research states reciprocation as a prominent factor in sales and marketing (Cialdini, 2001), however, no statistical support was found for the principle to positively affect PI. The lack of support might be attributable to a poor manipulation in the survey. Reciprocity was manipulated by providing detailed product information and user guidance, as this was thought to illustrate an influencers ability to give something of value to the audience. However, the illustration of the principle ended up having a lot of text, which might have been perceived as information overload, hence defeating its own end. This weakness was recognized in the pilot test, however, the results indicate that the adjustments made were not sufficient.

Despite the opposing results, reciprocity is the core of the relationship between influencers and followers. Beyond branded giveaways, influencers provide content which offer followers great value; entertainment, personalized information, product guidance and recommendations. With the influencer frequently providing value to the follower, reciprocity is constantly initiated, but it is close to impossible to

imitate and comprise reciprocation provided by an influencer in a survey. Further supporting the assumption that reciprocity should be considered a central component in influencer marketing is the fact that consumers consult with others in order to reduce uncertainty about perceived risk (Roselius, 1971). In practice, influencers serve as consultants, to whom consumers turn for advice.

H7a: Social proof positively affects purchase intention

Based on previous literature stating that people look at what others do to determine correct behaviour (Lun, Whitchurch & Glenn, 2007), harnessing social proof in influencer marketing was hypothesized to positively affect PI. However, this assumption was not statistically supported. The principle was manipulated through a textual description of a scenario in which an influencer promotes a given product along with a presentation of other satisfied customers. The choice of using text instead of pictures was based on the practical issue of depicting fake customer reviews and feedback in a realistic manner. However, a written scenario might be hard to visualise, and it is acknowledged that a visual manipulation could be more convincing, as visual content is faster processed and thus, more understandable and effective (Eye Insights, 2018). When managed properly, harnessing social proof by seizing customer feedback and recommendations can be a valuable tool. This claim is supported by actual influencer marketing campaigns in which both PI *and* actual sales increased, e.g., SKIN Camilla Pihl and Möllers Tran in collaboration with Marcus & Martinus. These practical cases were discussed with informants interviewed initially.

H5b, H6b and H7b: Interaction effects

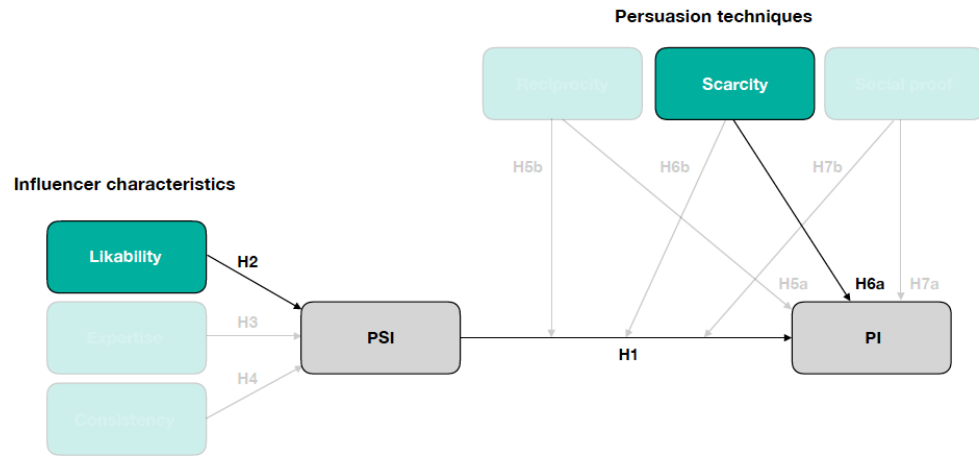
A part of the research tried to identify whether an interaction effect was present between scarcity, reciprocity, social proof and PSI on PI. Three hypotheses, H5b, H6b and H7b, were created in order to test whether interactions were present. However, the study did not find statistical support for any of the hypotheses. With both PSI and scarcity having a statistically significant positive effect on PI when analysed separately, it was somewhat surprising that no support was found for H6b. However, to the authors' knowledge, no previous literature has directly tested or indicated that interactions should be present between PSI and the principles. It should also be noted that the results of this study are specific to this sample and collection of variables.

As noted before, the Principles of Persuasion are rooted in communication and psychology. In order for the principles to work, it is fundamental to use appropriate communication, both in terms of text and pictures. With poor communication, the principles become less prominent, and hence, less effective. Additionally, as the principles' power is grounded in human psychology, persuasion may occur at an unconscious level. Ask yourself, why do you like another person better if you share name or birthday (Burger et al., 2004)? As such complex phenomenon can be hard to describe and understand, the persuasive power of Cialdini's principles can be difficult to manipulate or illustrate in a survey as they do not become real enough.

5.1 Conclusion

In this study, the authors have examined whether parasocial interaction (PSI) (Horton & Wohl, 1956) and the Principles of Persuasion (Cialdini, 1984) can be applied to increase the effectiveness of influencer marketing. Serving each their purpose, the theories were integrated in a joint framework, addressing the following research questions: 1) When present in influencer marketing, can the principles of likeability, expertise and consistency contribute to increase PSI? 2) Can high levels of PSI lead to increased influencer effectiveness? 3) When used in influencer marketing, can the principles of reciprocity, scarcity and social proof lead to increased influencer effectiveness? In order to answer these questions, ten hypotheses (H1-H7b) were tested. Three hypotheses in this study were supported.

In conclusion, the Principles of Persuasion can partly contribute to increase PSI as liking was found to positively affect PSI (H2). Moreover, high levels of PSI can lead to increased influencer effectiveness, as PSI was statistically significant in positively affecting PI (H1). Lastly, the Principles of Persuasion can partly contribute to increased influencer effectiveness as scarcity was found to increase PI (H6). The below model makes explicit which hypotheses were supported, and which were not. As can be seen, «likability» positively affects «PSI», while «PSI» and «scarcity» positively affects «PI».



Model 2: A revised version of the conceptual framework

As pointed out in the discussion, the principles that did not receive support should not necessarily be underestimated. The theoretical background gives reason to assume that effects that were not found in this specific study, could be present would the study have been pursued differently.

5.2 Theoretical contribution

Acknowledging the challenges of influencer marketing and the uncertainty of its effectiveness, this research contributes with an empirically tested framework for using influencers in marketing. The unique combination of PSI and Cialdini's Principles of Persuasion yields new theoretical insights for a trending form of marketing. Firstly, reviewing influencer characteristics, liking and homophily serve as significant contributors to the development of PSI relationships. Secondly, PSI relationships to influencers are confirmed to positively affect PI. These findings extend prior applications of PSI to the field of influencer marketing. Thirdly, reviewing the persuasion techniques, when used in influencer marketing, scarcity is found to positively impact PI. Overall, the study contributes with insights to how PSI, influencer characteristics and persuasion techniques can be applied in order to effectuate influencer marketing.

5.3 Managerial implication

Recognizing the uncertainty and contradicting opinions of influencer marketing effectiveness, this study serves as a verification of its value. The findings confirm that PSI relationships can be developed towards influencers, highlighting the importance of seizing influencers that have a network with authentic social reach

and strong, unique relations to potential customers. Through the emphasis on principles found to develop PSI and persuasive techniques that can increase PI, the conceptualized framework should be used as a practical guideline for influencer marketing. The framework makes explicit the contribution of Cialdini's principles to influencer marketing, by providing six steps for successful influencer marketing; harnessing liking, expertise, consistency, scarcity, reciprocity and social proof.

First and foremost, the findings are applicable for brands seeking to include influencers in their marketing strategy. In example, when choosing to collaborate with a strongly likable influencer whom the audience can relate to, PSI relations are likely to be present. As this study confirms, PSI has a positive effect on PI for products promoted by an influencer. However, also influencers and influencer agencies can benefit from such a guideline. In particular, it is considered useful for influencers to know how different characteristics affect their relationship to followers, and ultimately, how such relationships can impact the perceived effectiveness of their efforts when collaborating with brands. For influencer agencies, the knowledge on characteristics such as likability and homophily could be useful in reviewing their own influencer portfolio. Moreover, knowledge of the effectiveness of different persuasion techniques could be useful when briefing clients prior to campaigns. As an example, this study confirms that implementing scarcity in an influencer's promotion will have a positive effect on PI for the promoted product.

5.4 Limitations and future research

It should be acknowledged that the study has certain limitations. The perhaps most notable is the development of the survey. Primarily, the limitations concern the length of the survey. That the survey might have been too long was reflected in the high amount of respondents dropping out during and after the PSI scale. Moreover, the complexity in the constructs intended to be measured caused low construct validity for some of the factors, in particular «consistency».

Additionally, the manipulation of the persuasion techniques was in hindsight recognized to decrease the quality of the study. With «scarcity» being the only significant condition, it has also been questioned whether the results can be attributable to the order and presentation of the conditions. Scarcity was the first

scenario the respondent was exposed to after the condition with no manipulation, leaving the principle as more prominent than the subsequent. Moreover, due to the length of the survey, it is reasonable to assume that respondents got tired when reaching the last part. An additional limitation could be the effect of only providing one specific product alternative for each category. Even though text and colours were standardized, and brand names excluded, a low PI could be attributable to that the respondent actually did not like the product. In such cases, no persuasive technique would counteract the perception of the product.

Overall, a different method should have been applied in order to properly test the framework. The final results of the study raised doubts towards the survey, and for future research, it is recommended to test the persuasion techniques through a physical experiment instead. This recommendation is further supported by the fact that the majority of Cialdini's work is based on findings from experimental research. This further enables the testing of behaviour, rather than intention, as there are often differences between what one says and what ones does. With the right resources, a concrete example would be to conduct an experiment with an actual influencer having followers with PSI relations present. This would substantially increase the ecological validity, by carrying out the experiment in a real-life setting.

The study did not find statistical support for any of the interaction effects. However, as these concepts have been found to positively affect PI when tested as singular concepts, it can be assumed that some link is present. Further testing for interaction effects could serve as a recommendation for future research.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of qualitative interviews

Company 1

The first interview conducted was with a medium sized firm within the foods- and service sector. They have broad experience with influencer marketing, having used influencers for more than four years. The purpose of the interview was to gain knowledge to why they started using influencers, what adjustments have been required throughout the course of the years and what effects they have seen.

They started using influencers due to successful use of it at a subsidiary. They started out with the most well known influencers, but have included smaller and more specialized influencers at later stages. The adjustment was done due to a perceived wear off effect, using only the same limited number of established Norwegian bloggers. They have seen great effects using influencers. It is cheaper than traditional marketing channels, while at the same time reaching a large part of their audience. Over the course of the years, they have managed to optimize their use of influencers, creating strategies for long term success.

Company 2

The second interview conducted was with a larger sized firm within the food and snack sector. Two leasing snack brands are embedded in the firm, both using influencers in different ways. Both brands have used influencers for more than four years. The purpose of the interview was similar to the purpose of the first interview; to gain knowledge to why they started using influencers, how they use them and what effects they have seen.

The brands saw influencers as a great opportunity to create authentic content at a lower cost. The intent of influencer marketing is as of this content creation and reaching the audience with authentic communication. The two brands combine the use of analytics and influencers. As an example, analysis recognized «overnight oats» as a popular search term. Acknowledging this, influencers are engaged in making content like recipes related to «overnight oats». The brands have both seen great effects of using influencers; the first as part of a rebranding, the second as part of establishing a niche brand online. However, the informant underlines the

importance of internal engagement as required to successfully pursue influencer marketing as part of their strategy.

Company 3

The third interview conducted was with a media and marketing consultant. The informant is a consultant within digital marketing, and has assisted several brands in the Norwegian market to integrate influencers to their marketing strategies. Further, the informant has worked with Cialdini and uses his principles in strategy development. The purpose of the interview was to gain the informants perspective on influencer marketing in a general manner, and to the current use of Cialdini's principles in influencer marketing.

The interview was helpful in shedding light on the rationale brands should have to use influencers. As the audience voluntarily pursues the content of an influencer, they are more receptive than to traditional marketing content. According to the informant, influencers are more useful in increase brand awareness and socially proving brands to an audience, rather than converting directly.

The informant further recognized the proposed research model as useful. Additionally, the informant gave useful examples to how the principles are used in practice, and how they could be differently embedded in the conceptual model.

Appendix 2: Operationalization and survey questions

Operationalization		
PSI	(Modified from Bocarnea & Brown, 2007)	Hypothesis testing
PSI1 PSI2 PSI3 PSI4 PSI5	1. I feel like I know (Influencer). 2. I sometimes engage in the content (Influencer) posts, for instance through comments and likes. 3. I am very much interested in details of (Influencer)'s life. 4. Whenever I am unable to get updates about (Influencer), I miss it. 5. I am not really interested in (Influencer). (reversed statement)	Variables used to establish the presence of PSI H1: Parasocial interaction positively affects purchase intention.
Liking	(Modified from Bocarnea & Brown, 2007)	Hypothesis testing
LIK6 LIK7	6. If (Influencer) appeared on a TV-program, I would watch it.	H2: Influencer liking positively affects parasocial interaction.

<p>LIK8 LIK9 SIM10 SIM11 ATT12</p>	<p>7. If I saw a news article or magazine story about (Influencer) I would read it. 8. I like to follow (Influencer) on social media. 9. I like to read (Influencer)'s blog. 10. I feel that I understand the emotions (Influencer) experiences. 11. When (Influencer) posts information, he/she seems to understand the kind of things I want to know. 12. I find (Influencer) to be good-looking.</p>	
Authority	(Modified from Shen et al., 2010)	Hypothesis testing
<p>EXP13 EXP14</p>	<p>13. I can trust the information I get from (Influencer). 14. I find (Influencer) to have expertise about brands and products he/she promotes.</p>	H3: Influencer expertise positively affects parasocial interaction.
Consistency	-	Hypothesis testing
<p>CON15 CON16 CON17 CON18 CON19</p>	<p>15. I find (Influencer) to be consistent in the kind of content he/she posts. 16. I feel that (Influencer) includes promoted products as a natural part of his/her content. 17. I find (Influencer) trustworthy when he/she promotes brands and products within his/her field of expertise. 18. I find (Influencer) trustworthy when he/she promotes brands and products outside his/her field of expertise. 19. I prefer that (Influencer) promotes brands and products that fit his/her usual content.</p>	H4: Influencer consistency positively affects parasocial interaction.
Effectiveness	-	Research objective
EFF20	20. I am more likely to purchase a product recommended by (Influencer), than I am to purchase a similar product he/she has not recommended.	Establish effectiveness, measured as PI

Operationalization		
Principle	Use of principle	Hypothesis testing
<p>Reciprocity A: Not utilizing reciprocity B: Utilizing reciprocity</p>	<p>Fashion and beauty: - A: I love my new sweater! Swipe up to find it. - B: I love my new sweater! Pull it of with a leather jacket and some cool sneakers. Swipe up to find it. Health and fitness:</p>	<p>H5a: Reciprocity positively affects purchase intention. H5b: The effect reciprocity has on purchase intention is amplified by parasocial interaction.</p>

	<p>- A: I love my new wool set! Swipe up to find it.</p> <p>- B: I love my new wool set! Perfect for outdoor activities or just a cozy night in. Swipe up to find it.</p> <p>Sport:</p> <p>- A: I love my new sweater! Swipe up to find it.</p> <p>- B: I love my new sweater! Perfect for any occasion (except skiing, of course)! Swipe up to find it.</p> <p>Interior:</p> <p>- A: I love my new posters! Swipe up to find them.</p> <p>- B: I love my new posters! I have decorated both my living room and bedroom with posters. Swipe up to find them.</p> <p>Kids and family:</p> <p>- A: I love this new wool set for kids! Swipe up to find it.</p> <p>- B: I love this new wool set for kids! Perfect both for kindergarten and outdoor family fun. Swipe up to find it.</p> <p>Food:</p> <p>- A: I love the result of my new cookbook! Swipe up to find it.</p> <p>- B: I love the result of my new cookbook! Recipes both for quick, everyday dinners and special occasions. Swipe up to find it.</p>	
Principle	Use of principle	Hypothesis testing
<p>Scarcity</p> <p>A: Not utilizing scarcity</p> <p>B: Utilizing scarcity</p>	<p>Fashion and beauty:</p> <p>- A: Check out this sweater! Swipe up to find it.</p> <p>- B: Check out this sweater, only 5 left! Swipe up to find it.</p> <p>Health and fitness:</p> <p>- A: Check out this wool set! Swipe up to find it.</p> <p>- B: Check out this wool set, only 5 left! Swipe up to find it.</p> <p>Sport:</p> <p>- A: Check out this sweater! Swipe up to find it.</p> <p>- B: Check out this sweater, only 5 left! Swipe up to find it.</p>	<p>H6a: Scarcity positively affects purchase intention.</p> <p>H6b: The effect scarcity has on purchase intention is amplified by parasocial interaction.</p>

	<p>Interior:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A: Check out these posters! Swipe up to find it. - B: Check out these posters, only a few left! Swipe up to find it. <p>Kids and family:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A: Check out this wool set for kids! Swipe up to find it. - B: Check out this wool set for kids, only 5 left! Swipe up to find it. <p>Food:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A: Check out my new cookbook! Swipe up to find it. - B: Check out my new cookbook! Only a few left! Swipe up to find it. 	
Principle	Use of principle	Hypothesis testing
<p>Social proof</p> <p>A: Not utilizing social proof</p> <p>B: Utilizing social proof</p>	<p>I would be more likely to purchase a given product if (Influencer) promotes the product with a presentation of other satisfied customers, than if only (Influencer) presents the product.</p>	<p>H7a: Social proof positively affects purchase intention.</p> <p>H7b: The effect social proof has on purchase intention is amplified by parasocial interaction.</p>

Appendix 3: Survey

Dear respondent,

This survey is part of a Master Thesis in Strategic Marketing Management at BI Norwegian Business School on the topic of influencer marketing. Your response is important in enabling us to obtain a broader understanding of this topic.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. As a participant of the survey, your response will be anonymous, and you will not be asked to include your name or address. Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device.

Thank you for your participation, your contribution is appreciated!

Kind regards,

Anna Hjortaas and Regine Øverås

Master of Science in Strategic Marketing Management, BI Norwegian Business School



What is your age?

Under 18

18 - 29

30 - 39

40 - 49

50 - 59

60 or older

Gender

Female

Male

Other

Employment status

Employed

Homemaker

Student

Military

Retired

Unemployed

Unable to work

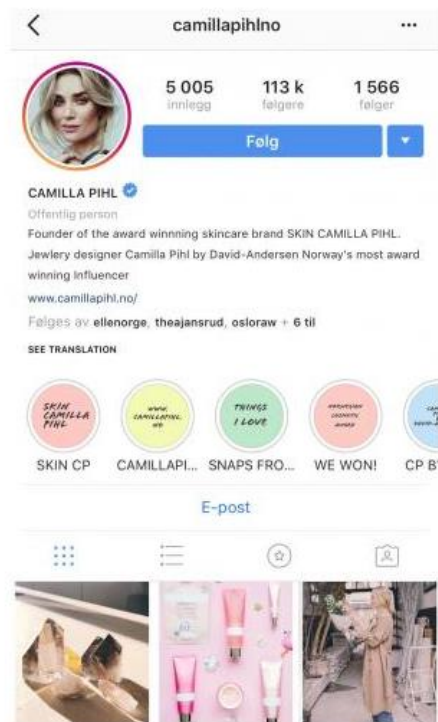
Choose the product category you have most interest in and would like to answer questions about in the following parts. You can only choose one alternative.

Health and fitness
Fashion and beauty
Sport
Food
Interior
Kids and family



Camilla Pihl

Camilla Pihl is a Norwegian blogger, model, business woman and designer. She has designed collections for Bianco and David Andersen, and recently launched her own skincare brand.



Are you familiar with the influencer presented above?

Yes

No

Do you follow Camilla on social media and/or blog?

Yes

No



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

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I feel like I know Camilla Pihl.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes engage in the content Camilla Pihl posts, for instance through comments or likes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am interested in details of Camilla Pihl's life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Whenever I am unable to get updates about Camilla Pihl, I miss it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am not really interested in Camilla Pihl.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If Camilla Pihl appeared in a TV-program, I would watch it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I saw a news article or magazine story about Camilla Pihl, I would read it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to follow Camilla Pihl on social media.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to read Camilla Pihl's blog.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that I understand the emotions Camilla Pihl experiences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When Camilla Pihl posts information, she seems to understand the kind of things I want to know.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I find Camilla Pihl to be good looking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can trust the information I get from Camilla Pihl.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find Camilla Pihl to have expertise about the brands and products she promotes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find Camilla Pihl to be consistent in the kind of content she posts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that Camilla Pihl manages to include promoted products as a natural part of her content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find Camilla Pihl trustworthy when she promotes brands and products within her field of expertise.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find Camilla Pihl trustworthy when she promotes brands and products outside her field of expertise.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer that Camilla Pihl promotes brands and products that fit her usual content.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am more likely to purchase a product recommended by Camilla Pihl, than I am to purchase a similar product she has not recommended.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





Imagine that you like the sweater above. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Based on the information presented, I would swipe up to purchase the product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Imagine that you like the sweater above. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Based on the information presented, I would swipe up to purchase the product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I would be more likely to purchase a given product if Camilla Pihl promotes the product with a presentation of other satisfied customers, than if only Camilla Pihl presents the product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Imagine that you like the sweater above. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Based on the information presented, I would swipe up to purchase the product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

Appendix 4: Example of an Influencer presentation

Health and fitness: Jørgine Massa Vasstrand

Funkygine is a Norwegian personal trainer and writer. She is known as a fitness profile, and runs Norway’s largest fitness blog.

- *Blog: funkygine.com*
- *Instagram: @funkygine*



Appendix 5: Descriptive statistics

Age including respondents 40 years and older					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Under 18	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	18-29	136	77.7	77.7	78.9
	30-39	20	11.4	11.4	90.3
	40-49	10	5.7	5.7	96.0
	50 older	7	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	175	100.0	100.0	

Age omitting respondents 40 years and older					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Under 18	2	1.3	1.3	1.3
	18-29	136	86.1	86.1	87.3
	30-39	20	12.7	12.7	100.0
	Total	158	100.0	100.0	

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Female	121	76.6	76.6	76.6
	Male	37	23.4	23.4	100.0
	Total	158	100.0	100.0	

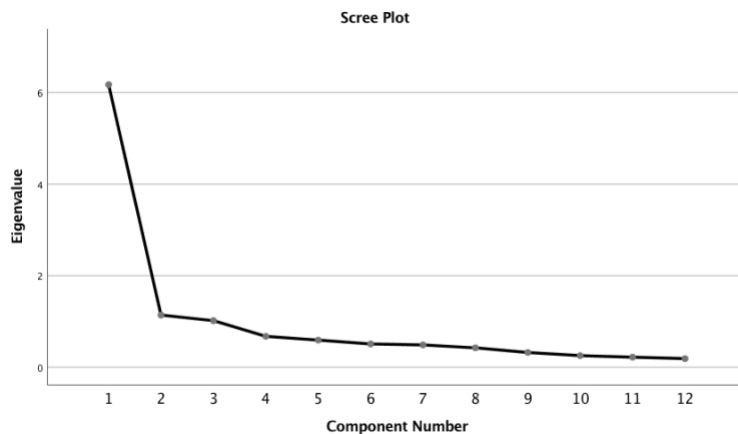
Employment					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Employed	81	51.3	51.3	51.3
	Homemaker	2	1.3	1.3	52.5
	Student	67	42.4	42.4	94.9
	Military	1	.6	.6	95.6
	Retired	1	.6	.6	96.2
	Unemployed	2	1.3	1.3	97.5
	Unable	4	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	158	100.0	100.0	

Category					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Health	47	29.7	29.7	29.7
	Fashion	36	22.8	22.8	52.5
	Sport	37	23.4	23.4	75.9
	Food	23	14.6	14.6	90.5
	Interior	1	.6	.6	91.1
	Kids	14	8.9	8.9	100.0
	Total	158	100.0	100.0	

Appendix 6: EFA – Anti-image correlation matrix

Anti-image Matrices													
		LIK6	LIK7	LIK8	LIK9	SIM10	EXP13	EXP14	CON15	CON16	CON17	CON19	Recoded
Anti-image Covariance	LIK6	.367	-.198	-.008	-.006	-.084	-.081	.065	-.035	-.020	-.045	.069	-.032
	LIK7	-.198	.347	-.096	-.020	-.042	-.011	-.031	.028	-.032	.042	-.095	.019
	LIK8	-.008	-.096	.460	-.130	-.080	.037	-.077	.013	-.044	-.019	-.043	-.013
	LIK9	-.006	-.020	-.130	.492	-.098	-.098	.005	-.062	-.088	.056	.026	.018
	SIM10	-.084	-.042	-.080	-.098	.585	.073	-.006	-.054	.085	-.027	-.013	.181
	EXP13	-.081	-.011	.037	-.098	.073	.339	-.168	-.061	.049	-.071	.028	.014
	EXP14	.065	-.031	-.077	.005	-.006	-.168	.355	-.035	-.012	-.091	-.010	-.001
	CON15	-.035	.028	.013	-.062	-.054	-.061	-.035	.497	-.094	-.034	-.154	-.012
	CON16	-.020	-.032	-.044	-.088	.085	.049	-.012	-.094	.480	-.147	-.070	.002
	CON17	-.045	.042	-.019	.056	-.027	-.071	-.091	-.034	-.147	.353	-.055	.146
	CON19	.069	-.095	-.043	.026	-.013	.028	-.010	-.154	-.070	-.055	.679	-.146
	Recoded	-.032	.019	-.013	.018	.181	.014	-.001	-.012	.002	.146	-.146	.685
Anti-image Corr.	LIK6	.839a	-.554	-.019	-.015	-.182	-.228	.180	-.082	-.048	-.125	.139	-.064
	LIK7	-.554	.854a	-.241	-.049	-.094	-.032	-.089	.067	-.080	.121	-.195	.039
	LIK8	-.019	-.241	.920a	-.274	-.154	.094	-.190	.026	-.094	-.047	-.077	-.022
	LIK9	-.015	-.049	-.274	.909a	-.183	-.239	.012	-.126	-.181	.135	.045	.031
	SIM10	-.182	-.094	-.154	-.183	.862a	.164	-.013	-.101	.161	-.060	-.020	.286
	EXP13	-.228	-.032	.094	-.239	.164	.853a	-.485	-.150	.122	-.206	.058	.029
	EXP14	.180	-.089	-.190	.012	-.013	-.485	.874a	-.083	-.030	-.256	-.021	-.002
	CON15	-.082	.067	.026	-.126	-.101	-.150	-.083	.929a	-.192	-.082	-.265	-.021
	CON16	-.048	-.080	-.094	-.181	.161	.122	-.030	-.192	.894a	-.356	-.123	.003
	CON17	-.125	.121	-.047	.135	-.060	-.206	-.256	-.082	-.356	.876a	-.112	.297
	CON19	.139	-.195	-.077	.045	-.020	.058	-.021	-.265	-.123	-.112	.833a	-.214
	Recoded	-.064	.039	-.022	.031	.286	.029	-.002	-.021	.003	.297	-.214	.807a
Measures of Sampling Adequacy(MSA)													

Appendix 7: EFA – Scree Plot



Appendix 8: Regression 1 – Model summary

Model summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.596a	.355	.329	.70099	.355	13.844	6	151	.000
2	.821b	.674	.654	.50366	.319	48.167	3	148	.000
A Predictors: (Constant), Health & fitness, Following, Food, Kids & family, Fashion & beauty, Sport									
B Predictors: (Constant), Health & fitness, Following, Food, Kids & family, Fashion & beauty, Sport, Consistency, Expertise, Liking									
C Dependent variable: PSI total									

Appendix 9: Regression 1 – ANOVA

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	40.818	6	6.803	13.844	.000b
	Residual	74.200	151	.491		
	Total	115.018	157			
2	Regression	77.474	.9	8.068	33.934	.000c
	Residual	37.544	148	.254		
	Total	115.018	157			
A Dependent variable: PSI total						
B Predictors: (Constant), Health & fitness, Following, Food, Kids & family, Fashion & Beauty, Sport						
C Predictors: (Constant), Health & fitness, Following, Food, Kids & family, Fashion & Beauty, Sport, Consistency, Expertise, Liking						

Appendix 10: Regression 2 – ANOVA

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
	1 Regression	41.905	6	6.984	5.977	.000b
	Residual	176.456	151	1.169		
	Total	218.361	157			
	2 Regression	98.649	10	9.865	12.114	.000c
	Residual	119.711	147	.814		
	Total	218.361	157			
	3 Regression	101.753	13	7.827	9.666	.000d
	Residual	116.608	144	.810		
	Total	218.361	157			
A Dependent Variable: PI effectiveness						
B Predictors: (Constant), Kids & family, Food, Following, Sport, Fashion & Beauty, Health & fitness						
C Predictors: (Constant), Kids & family, Food, Following, Sport, Fashion & Beauty, Health & fitness, Social proof, Scarcity, PSI total, Reciprocity						
D Predictors: (Constant), Kids & family, Food, Following, Sport, Fashion & Beauty, Health & fitness, Social proof, Scarcity, PSI total, Reciprocity, PSIxSocial, PSIxScarcity, PSIxReciprocity						

Appendix 11: SEM – ANOVA

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
	1 Regression	98.649	10	9.865	12.114	.000b
	Residual	119.711	147	.814		
	Total	218.361	157			
A Dependent variable: PI effectiveness						
B Predictors: (Constant), PSI total, Food, Kids & family, Scarcity, Sport, Social proof, Following, Fashion & beauty, Reciprocity, Health & fitness						