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Master Thesis

The Dark Side of Influencer Marketing

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# - The Dark Side of Influencer Marketing -

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# Abstract

Influencer marketing has over time evolved into a trend within marketing, and more businesses uses it as a tool as they consider this to be an accurate and effective way of doing marketing. As this new trend of marketing products and services has received lot of positive publicity, it's easy to forget that influencer marketing, like many other trends, also has its downsides. This paper addresses the disadvantages associated with influencer marketing, where we want to look further into how negative behavior from an influencer, collaborating with a brand, affects both the influencer and the brand.

We want to contribute to the literature by two different studies. Our first study addresses micro influencers negative behavior, by performing between subjects experiments with pre- and post tests. We seek to understand how brands and influencers will be affected due to influencers negative behavior, and if different combinations of influencers (lifestyle- and expert influencers), products (hedonic or utilitarian) and comment section (none, positive or negative) will moderate this effect. We found it to be some differences related to this as expert influencers, when combined with utilitarian products and no comment section, received lower attitude scores from participants on the micro influencers perceived expertise. We found social proof to have an effect when expert influencers were paired with hedonic products. Here, we saw that participants evaluated the expert influencer less favorable when a negative comment section was added.

Besides this, marketing products through influencers makes an illusion of the promoted product being a recommendation rather than commercial, which let us believe that influencers will take most of the harm related to negative publicity for bad behavior. We found that brands who collaborates with negatively behaving influencers will experience some form of fallback, as respondents attitude and willingness to purchase the product decreased after treatment. Furthermore, we found this decrease in attitude to be larger for the negatively behaving influencer than for the brand.

Our second experiment addresses self congruence. We believe that consumers are more able to identify more with influencers as they fall somewhere between celebrities and personal relations. We find this relevant as brands today have to make trade offs related to whether they should appeal to consumers actual- or ideal self in their marketing. This second study is therefore constructed to compare how consumers relate to influencers and celebrities, and found that respondents had greater ability to compare their actual self towards influencers rather than celebrities.

# 1.0 Introduction

Influencer marketing has by the last few years become one of the biggest buzzwords when talking about new ways to both advertise and sell products and services online. Google Trends report (2019) mention that from 2017 until today, "influencer marketing" had a rapid increase in searched words. Forbes magazine (2018) views influencer marketing as one of the twelve biggest trends for businesses to take advantage of in the coming future, and the majority of marketers that have used influencer marketing when promoting products claims it to be effective. (Haran, 2019) As with any buzzword, businesses all over the world are eager to be a part of the new hip trends and use them regardless of their function and effect. Though they may get the attention and publicity they desired, in the short term, with the use of an influencer, many companies are oblivious of the devastating effect these people can cause. Influencers can be considered a double sided sword, that at any time can cause major wounds to your business reputation. The risk assessment of this tool has yet to be discussed and highlighted in the literature, as researchers have been focusing on how to choose the right influencer based on different criteria. Our contribution is therefore to detect the negative effect influencers may have on a brand, and if so, how devastating this effect may be or if the brand just may escape the dagger.

## *1.1 Social media influencer and brand reputation*

Businesses is dependent of monitoring their reputation as this is said to be their most important value for succeeding. (Håkonsen, 2019) Engaging in actions that hurts businesses overall reputation can cause companies to lose a lot of money, especially today as ordinary people have the opportunity to express themselves online for everyone to see. United Airline got to know this when their staff was treating a customer in a bad manner. The customer wrote a song about his experience, distributed it on Youtube, and received more than 15 million views. In his catchy song, he made United Airline being associated with destruction of passengers' luggage, which again was destructive to United Airlines reputation, and resulted in their stocks decreasing by 10%. (Sickler, 2018) This example illustrates how fast it can go wrong for businesses when negative behavior from the company are shared through social media, which puts pressure on companies to act properly

at all times. These fast moving platforms has enabled all types of people to voice their opinions and make their view public for all the world to see.

Even though businesses today see great opportunities in using social media influencers when reaching out to customers, we believe that there are some downsides that might be overlooked. At first, these influencers are impossible for brands to fully control at all time, and brands that choose to collaborate with them risk being punished with unwanted associations if the influencer don't behave in accordance with desirable behavior. Besides this, social media influencers do have the opportunity to reach out to a great number of people, were both their behavior and written content have the opportunity to go viral for everyone to see. Companies are then not able to control the content, when or at which platforms the paid content is shared. Third party agencies usually decides the influencer based on some criteria and distribute the company brief. When working with larger macro influencers as e.g. The Kardashians, firms have more control, but the paid posts are often more commercial which can be at the expense of the influencers credibility, as we will look further into in our analysis. (Hatton, 2018)

Even though the United Airline example used above describes a situation were the customer wanted to punish United Airline on purpose, he established associations towards the company by performing a certain action. Influencers have this same capability and are able to either consciously or unconsciously transfer negative associations to a brand, though often with a greater effect due to their large follower base. There exists many examples of influencers losing their credibility because of their behavior, statements or failed posts in social media. Big celebrity influencer Scott Disick failed when collaborating with Bootea protein shake by posting their brief (when, where and what to post) with the Instagram picture instead of just the promotion text. (Hatton, 2018) This is however a mild example on what can go wrong, causing damage for the influencers' credibility as well as the brands credibility. Other influencers have been connected to racist comments, making fun of suicide or anti-Semitic jokes. Leading to massive backlash and media interest. (Grant & Kim, 2018) PewDiePie, the most subscribed and viewed influencer on Youtube, got his reputation tarnished after making anti-Semitic jokes on his channel. Leading to one of his biggest collaborators, Walt Disney Co. to cut all ties to the influencer due to media frenzy. (Winkler, Nicas & Fritz, 2017)

## 1.2 Why do we still use it?

Marketers can no longer only use regular online ads to reach their segments, as internet users finds online ads to be too aggressive and intrusive making them want to avoid the content. (Benes, 2018) Consumers are now able to install ad-blocking software or skip commercials when browsing on internet. According to a survey performed by eMarketer (2016) 86.6 million American people, 32% of all internet users worldwide, used ad-blocking in 2017. Using influencers is a great way to reach your target audience, because their opinions are still perceived as trustworthy and non-purposeful real opinions. Not likely triggering persuasion knowledge with consumers (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017), making influencer marketing the gateway to communicate advertisements online.

Social media influencers possesses many of the same characteristics as the well known concept of opinion leader (they are informed experts, people look up to them etc..). Britner (2018) categorizes social media influencers as being somewhere between celebrities and close relations as he states that *"..it falls somewhere between the aspiration you have for a celebrity and the trust you have for friends and family".* Major implication with this literature topic, as of today, is that the concept of influencers are often mixed with the concept of celebrities and other types of opinion leaders. Researchers has yet to establish a common ground on what they would refer to as a celebrity and influencer. This is one of our main contributions to the literature which we hope will clarify the differences and similarities with influencers and other type of opinion leaders.

Their label as "trustworthy friends" are not the only reason to use influencer marketing. Their operation methods are very effective, using a "always on" strategy to keep their platforms updated. This type of content production would be hard for a business to be able to maintain using their own content only. By using influencers they are able to distribute their content in a trustworthy and "up to date" channel with a mix of marketing and personal content from the influencer. Social media influencers have evolved alongside new social media channels as Vine, Snapchat, Pinterest, Instagram, Youtube and so forth. Even though blogs still are popular channels used by many influencers (Sammis, Lincoln, Pomponi, Gassmann & Zhou, 2016), it is more common that larger influencers also use more than one channel to reach their audience. This way, they are able to target different audience with the same main message by adapting the content to different channels. They

also use different channels to advertise content and redirect their audience to their other channels. This could be by posting a Snap-story telling their audience to "swipe up" to be able to see their new blogpost about a product review or happenings from their everyday life. This way they use different tools and content to redirect and keep their audience's interest longer.

## *1.3 The business of influencer marketing*

Influencers are not only a great tool to use for commercial marketing, as they are also used within other areas as politics and societal debates. Besides being used as a consumer reviewing products, they have become a spokesperson for the people and engage in societal changes by using their voices in political matters. A well known example in Norway is Sophie Elise Isaksen, who has expressed herself about animal rights, body complexes and climate matters like food consumption. Her participation in the latest "influencer debate" has led to politicians engaging in the matter of prohibiting advertisements for cosmetic operations and injections. The potential of this tool is large and unexplored, though businesses are rapidly finding new ways of using influencers in their marketing.

The providers are now seeing their value, and are no longer satisfied with only receiving free samples from big brands. The prices are varying and it is normal to distinguish between micro- and macro-influencers. Macro influencers have a wider follower base and are more publicly known, while micro influencers are operating with a smaller follower base and often within niche groups of people. According to numbers from Social Media Today (2018) macro-influencers can take up to $ 187,500 for one Youtube video and $75,000 for one Instagram post. However, these numbers decrease by over 98% if choosing a micro- influencer with less than 500,000 followers. Then the estimated prices is approximately $ 2,500 for a Youtube video and $1,000 for an Instagram post. This new type of micro-influencers also makes it possible for smaller companies with less marketing budgets to promote themselves. This research will mainly be focusing on micro-influencers as they have created a new type of opinion leaders that differ from earlier types, like celebrity endorsers and close relations.

## 1.4 Presenting our Research

In our research, we want to look further up on the negative side effects that can harm a brand when choosing an influencer. Influencers are making business out of sharing information about their privacy, and we want to look further into if this makes consumers feel stronger self-congruence towards them. We want to compare this with celebrities as influencers fall somewhere between a celebrity and private person.

Depending on the type of influencer, the audience is able to gain great knowledge of the influencer's everyday life, thoughts, opinions and actions. The more transparent the influencer is, the more risk is it that one unfortunate opinion or action is going to be shared by the influencer. However, with the transparency influencers have to their audience contra celebrity endorsers, their followers may have a stronger relationship to the influencer, giving them more room for "making mistakes".

It is then interesting to see if the authority of the influencer prevail their negative behavior and if the presence of follower's opinions (social proof) may be greater than influencer's authority. We also believe that different type of products may be affected differently by any negative behavior, as will be elaborated more in the literature review bellow. See visual representation of our main model in appendix 1 Main model.

## 1.5 Research questions

*How will influencers negative behavior affect consumers' attitude and is there any differences in how utilitarian products is affected in contrast to hedonic products?*

- *Would the relationship between a negatively behaving influencer (expert or lifestyle) and type of product (hedonic or utilitarian) lead to consumers evaluating influencers less favorable*

- *Will a negative comments-section, and the theory of social proof, lead to less authority for the influencer or will authority prevail when negative behavior is not connected to their field of expertise.*

- *Is it more effective to implement influencers than celebrities as a marketing tool, and will the difference in effect be explained by self-image congruence between consumers and opinionleader.*

With this research, we want to contribute to the research on influencer marketing and expanding our knowledge on the negative effects of attaching an influencer to a product or a brand. We believe that our findings can contribute to explain how this marketing tool affects products and brands in general, as well as being able to give an in depth analysis for the use of influencer marketing and its risks/ precautions. Our aspiration is to contribute to the literature of influencer marketing, and to clarify the meaning and usage of different types of influencers.

# 2.0 Theoretical framework

According to Erdogan (1999), firms have targeted consumers by celebrity endorsement since the late nineteenth century, and product placement has been a strategic brand-move long before Reese´s succeeded in the E.T movie in 1982. (Newell, Salmon & Chang, 2006) Sponsorship had an effect on consumer goods even before its usage "exploded" within television (Lavin, 1995), and the world has always been surrounded by people with great influence on other people's attitude and behavior, also known as opinion leaders. (Lin, Bruning & Swarana, 2018)

## *2.1 Social media is a tool for product information*

Opinion leaders have for a long time been perceived as guiding experts when consumers are finding themselves within uncertain environments. (Loeper, Steiner & Stewart, 2014) Before, it was common to look for product-advice from both family, friends and neighbors as well as celebrities. Consumers are now using another tool for product information: social media. Online informational exchange about product consumption is considered more trustworthy compared to traditional marketing. (Lim & Chung, 2014) Even though consumers still can obtain recommendations from family, friends and neighbors online, social media has made it possible for consumers to gain product-information from a new type of endorser: Social media influencers. (Fredberg, Graham, McGaughey & Fredberg, 2011)

## *2.2 How it differs from celebrities*

Social media influencers can according to Hatton (2018) be divided into macro- and micro influencers. She defines macro influencers as already known celebrities, who are able to reach out to a wider follower base. They are famous for their achievements within e.g. sports (David Beckham), movies (Angelina Jolie) or politics (Barack Obama). Abidin (2018 p. 4) states that mainstream celebrities mostly is associated with either *"achievements, talents or positions"* and people are commonly associating celebrities with a glamorous Hollywood life. Kowalczyk & Pounders (2016) argues that consumers motivation to follow celebrities in social media relates to their curiosity about the celebrity's career and personal life (relationship, family, style and hobbies). They also states that following them in social media gives followers a feeling of experiencing the celebrity as a "real" person.

Marwick (2015) mentions celebrities as something a person *is*, and says that micro-influencers are something someone *do.* Senft (2008) categorizes micro influencers as a form of microcelebrity that earn followers by being open about their personal life online. The term microcelebrity was first used to explain *camgirls* and their audience. (Abidin, 2018) Abidin (2018, p. 11) states that *"these camgirls were knowingly broadcasting themselves to the public on the internet while attempting to accumulate fame".* They gained their popularity by using digital media technologies and platforms, were they branded themselves by interacting with their viewers by emotional labor. (Abidin, 2018) By using camgirls as an example, Senft (2008); Abidin (2018, p. 11) argues that *"microcelebrities on the internet were unlike celebrities in the traditional entertainment industries on several counts-where traditional celebrities practice a sense of separation and distance from their audience, microcelebrities have their popularity premised on feelings of connection and interactive responsiveness with their audience; where traditional celebrities may be known for their performance craft and skills, microcelebrities are expected to display themselves unedited as "real" people with "real" issues; and where traditional celebrities may have extensive fame amon large global audience, microcelebrities exercise a popularity that while narrower in breadth is far deeper".*

Micro influencers are today generating traffic on their social media platforms by sharing perceived exclusive aspects of their lives, but the concept of entertaining others by sharing elements of people's private life in public is not new. According to Abidin (2018) people have for several years been entertained by having "ordinary" people opening up about their daily issues in various talk shows. Ordinary people have for a longer time guested talk shows as Dr. Phil were they talk openly about their issues in private life on television. Grindstaff (2002); Abidin (2018) explains this as *"the money shot"* were these "ordinary" peoples real emotions and reactions to specific elements makes viewers identify more with them, as their reactions are perceived as both real and authentic.

Besides being categorized as micro celebrities, there have been made several definitions about micro-influencers. Abidin (2015) states that many people might relate to micro-influencers as "bloggers", "YouTubers" and "Instagrammers". Hatton (2018) describes micro-influencers as "normal people" with a smaller follower base. Senft (2008, p. 25); Abidin (2016[1], p. 3) defines micro-influencers as *"a new style of online performance that involves people 'amping up' their popularity over the Web using technologies like video, blogs and social networking sites".* A collective term of all these definitions is that micro-influencers are regular people, which have gained their fame by using a variety of social media to reach out to a niche audience.

In the celebrity world, people who are interested in the celebrity is called "fans" while people that engage with micro influencers are called "followers". (Marwick & Boyd, 2011; Abidin, 2016[2]) This makes the illusion of the relationship between "fans" and celebrities being more distanced compared to the relationship between "followers" and micro influencers. (Abidin, 2016[2])

Opposite of mainstream celebrities, micro influencers do not possess any preexisting fame, but have managed to build up their own follower-base organically by writing entertaining content online. (INFLUENCERS THE NEW, 2016) They are giving their followers insight into their personal life by using both textual and visual tools online, and earns money by integrating advertising within their blogs or social media posts as well as conducting exclusive meetings with their followers. (Abidin, 2016[1]) They are most commonly known for *"being famous to a niche*

*group of people"* (Marwick, 2013, p. 114; Abidin, 2016[2], p. 3) were their followers perceive them as being authentic. (Abidin, 2016[1]) Such micro influencers have managed to build up some form of expertise within different product categories, (Audrezet, De Kerviler & Moulard, 2018) and consumers sees them as trusted tastemakers. (De Veirman, et al., 2017)

Here, Lin, et al. (2018) illustrate such online social media influencers by referring to Bethany Mota, who has earned her position by talking about her fashion and traveling experiences online. She started her Youtube channel in June 2009 and have since that managed to earn more than 10 million subscribers. Giving her the opportunity to reach out to a great number of people with her messages, and by that making her valuable for brands. By only looking at the Norwegian market, we find online opinion leaders as Jørgine Massa Vasstrand (funkygine) who is perceived to be an expert within fitness, Caroline Berg Eriksen (fotballfrue) that is known for her desired lifestyle and cooking advice and Vegard Harm who has grown in social media by distancing himself from the glamorous and rather earn status by being funny and folksy.

According to De Veirman et al (2017) micro influencers are providing their followers with content related to their personal, everyday lives, as well as openness around their experiences and opinions. As well as they are making money on various advertised posts, they personalizes this by mixing it up with their everyday life making their followers believe that their advertisement is personally experienced. (Abidin, 2016[1]) People are now following these perceived experts (micro influencers) in social media, and by that followers are being exposed to micro influencers collaborations with different brands. Brands do find these micro influencers attractive to use as followers sees this as a more authentic source of information compared to traditional marketing. (Influencer the new, 2016) Agathe Blanchon-Ehrsam, chief marketing officer of business consultancy and branding company Vivaldi, argues that the use of online social media influencers is an important marketing tool, as people find participating in another person's lifestyle more motivating than the performance of e.g. a top athlete. (Hershman, 2018)

Micro influencers are perceived to be both knowledgeable and passionate about their favorite activities, and are also believed to spend a lot of time learning about their favorite brands. (Frothingham, 2016) Such online opinion leaders are valuable for brands as they according to the two-step-flow communication theory (Katz &

Lazarsfeld, 1995; Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014) are providing their followers with product information based on how they are interpreting the brands message. Consumers will therefore be indirectly affected by the brand, as brands today are seeking out to micro influencers making them endorse their products online by including their products in their daily posts as well as writing complete recommendations.

## *2.3 Influencer marketing changes the game*

Abidin (2015) has established that there is a difference in how consumers view celebrities contra influencers. However, there has been done no research, to our knowledge, on what type of opinion leader (celebrity vs. influencer) that has the most effect and how they appeal to the person viewing their statements.

The use of online micro influencers are bringing some changes to the game. Before, when firms were marketing their products through celebrity endorsement, they did this by using traditional media channels. By having celebrities endorsing their products, brands are able to make their products receive desired associations from the celebrity. (Erdogan, 1999) Celebrities can according to Miciak & Shanklin (1994, p. 52) *«act as a spokesperson for a sponsor´s company or provide a testimonial for its commercial offerings»*. There has been done lot of research on celebrity endorsement, as Keller (2013) argues for this to be a preferable strategy when brands want to shape their image through associations from celebrities. Even though the use of online social media influencer marketing could be compared with the well-known concept of celebrity endorsement, there are some inequalities. At first, using celebrities endorsing products through traditional media channels (television, radio, prints etc.) describes a situation where brands are communicating their messages to consumers, where receivers do not have the opportunity to make official statements about the message. By endorsing products through social media influencers, consumers have the opportunity to interact with the author (sender) by both leaving comments as well as sending direct messages to the contributor. (Lee & Jang 2013)

By followers leaving comments or recommend the social platform to others, they are helping the influencer grow. (Casaló, Flavián & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2018) Britner (2018) points out that the difference between engaging in celebrities- and micro influencers' social media platforms, relates to that it is very unlikely that a celebrity

will reply due to their large follower base. That's not necessarily the case for micro influencers, and Britner (2018) argues for that to be the reason why they see a 60% higher engagement rate within campaigns involving micro influencers. An important aspect considering why micro influencers are stressing engagement within their posts deals with the fact that they depend on their contents to go viral for further growth. By followers recommending, liking and writing recommendations about what content they prefer, their audience have become a co-producer of value benefiting both themselves and the influencer.

This is according to Goldhaber (2009); Hartley (2013) important to consider as internet has made it possible for consumer to go from being passive to active. He states that as of before, consumers were only able to receive media content. Today, they have the opportunity to make actions by also linking, clicking and sharing different content making them become *"producers of the most valuable resource of all: attention"*. (Hartley, 2013, p. 351)

## 2.4 How we relate to influencers and celebrities

When people are engaging with a person's life over time, they start the formation of parasocial relationship with that person. (Escalas & Bettman, 2017) Hurton & Wohl (1956); Escalas & Bettman (2017, p. 298) describes para-social relationship as *«one-sided relationships that a media user establishes with a media figure, leading to a false sense of intimacy»*. Even though consumers are able to develop such a relationship with both mainstream celebrities and micro influencers, Abidin (2015) argues for it to be differences in how this perceived relationship develops between the parties. She argues that consumers are able to get an insight into celebrities' lives by e.g. the celebrity being a guest in various talk shows. This describes a situation where consumers are getting insight into carefully calculated stories from both the celebrity and the talk show host.

On the other hand, Abidin (2015) states that micro influencers gives stories with more impressions, as it seems to be more real and natural. Opposite of guesting talk shows while elaborating on calculated stories, micro influencers shares content that is a result of spontaneous thoughts and feelings. With such unpredictable statements, they have the tendency to be described as somewhat "loose cannons" among practitioners. (Williams, 2018)

## 2.5 Ideal- and actual self

Brands tries to appeal to consumers actual- or ideal- self to create a connection with the brand. They use commercials to portray their products as somewhat "down to earth" as well as creating emotional bonds with consumers when they appeals to their actual self. By doing so, brands appeals to who the consumer believe they are as a person. Others prefer to appeal to people's desires to become something they are not. By appealing to their ideal self, companies are able to "lure" consumers into thinking that buying a certain product will gain them popularity or other desired features. (Mälar, 2011)

On the other hand, consumers find it easier these days to block out commercials through ad- blocking software, meaning that "old marketing tricks" no longer have the desired effect as it used to. According to Gilmore & Pine (2007); Malar (2011) consumers now also crave more authenticity and reality from marketing. By using influencers, marketers are less likely to trigger persuasion knowledge because influencers' opinions still are seen as trustworthy and non-purposeful. (De Veirman et al., 2017)

By using influencers in their marketing they are able to come closer to the consumer and create an emotional bond through an intermediary link. Although we have established earlier that influencers are seen more as friends (Britner, 2018), they still appeal to a somewhat desired lifestyle with the followers. However, this lifestyle might be closer to whom and what consumers already think they are, compared to the lifestyle a celebrity is portraying through their lavish lives.

Both influencers and celebrities have become brands of their own by building their own name through products and services. Therefore, by becoming "branded people", they may appeal to consumers ideal- and actual- self in the same way as a brands can. A product or a brand are only able to construct a feeling based on e.g. intangible attributes or advertising (Sirgy, 1985), but influencers and celebrities are actually able to mimic real personality traits to appeal to one or the other based on their human emotions.

According to Kressmann, Sirgy, Herrmann, Huber, Huber & Dong-Jin (2006, p. 955) *"Self-image congruence refers to the match between consumers' self-concept (actual self, ideal self, etc.) and the user image (or "personality') of a given product, brand, store, etc."*

Sirgy (1985, p. 195) also states *"This congruity, in turn, affects the consumer's product preference and purchase intention."*

## *2.6 Why micro-influencer appeals to people's actual self*

Micro influencers stress what their followers wants to read about, as they today generates traffic by providing their followers with insight into their personal life. (De Veirman et al., 2017) Marwick & boyd's (2011); Adidin (2015) found that providing followers with such personal information, is a tool that can be used to generate an impression of intimacy with followers. Adidin (2015, Influencers and commercial intimacies) describes "intimacy" as *"how familiar and close followers feel to an Influencer"*, and states that this effect is most likely to happen as micro influencers provides their followers with information that feels both exclusive and intimate. Abidin & Thompson (2012) says that influencers are able to generate personal attachments from their followers even though they are motivated by "underlying commercial interests" when doing it. Abidin (2015) argues for this to happen based on four different underlying conditions: *Commercial intimacies, interactive intimacies, reciprocal intimacies* and *disclosive intimacies.*

*Commercial intimacies* happens as micro influencers uses their personal life as a tool to make their followers feel intimate with the micro influencer. (Abidin, 2015) She also argues for commercial intimacies to be stronger for lifestyle bloggers than for specialists, as lifestyle bloggers are mainly focusing on their everyday life while specialists are writing entertaining content about their lives while "hiding" most behind different themes as e.g. parenting, fitness etc.

*Interactive intimacies* happens as followers of micro-influencers have the opportunity to meet the micro-influencer by face-to-face meet-ups in both formal and informal settings. Abidin (2015) describes formal settings as meetups that are sponsored by different brands, whereas informal settings relates to meet-ups that are organized by the micro-influencer itself. What makes such meet-ups special with micro-influencers is according to Abidin (2015) that their followers expect them to be congruent with how they both behave and look in social media, making followers feel more physically attached to the micro-influencer and by that strengthen the felt intimacy.

Abidin (2015) argues that even though people are following celebrities in social media, they do not relate to their followers the same way as micro-influencers do.

While celebrities are distancing themselves more from their fans, micro-influencers are more likely to engage with their followers by both liking, answering as well as giving shout outs. By doing so, micro-influencers are able to generate *reciprocal intimacy*, and such activities will frame followers to perceive the micro-influencer as a friend. (Abidin & Thompson, 2012) Abidin (2015) describes *disclosive intimacy* as a result of the micro-influencer sharing various happenings in their life, making their followers feel like they have access to exclusive information. She makes different events as an example of this, were she tells that influencers use to show pictures of themselves in the dressing room getting their makeup done before various events. This allows their followers to experience such events through the micro-influencers eyes. Danesi (2008); Abidin (2015) says that followers sees this as more interesting than having access to mainstream celebrities "behind-the-scenes" pictures, as micro-influencers are perceived to represent commonality.

Because of these differences, Abidin (2015) states that when it comes to celebrities, people start the formation of parasocial relationship, while they engage in perceived interconnectedness with micro influencers. Even though she argues that followers of micro influencers are more able to get closer to them, she calls it "perceived" as the micro influencer, in the same way as celebrities, do have control over what they want to share about themselves with their followers. It is therefore also interesting to see if it is the self-image congruence between consumers and influencers or celebrities that makes one or the other a better marketing tool. We believe that influencers appeal to the actual self of the respondents, due to their friendly approach in their communication with their followers. They are considered as a trusted friend and not an idol in which celebrities often are described. An idol is short for an ideal or someone that has some wanted qualities. We therefore believe that a celebrity would appeal more to the respondents' ideal self-image and how they would like to be perceived.

*H1: Influencer marketing will have greater, positive, effect on consumers attitude and purchase intention towards a brand. This is based on their ability to connect to consumers actual self, and by that consumers are experiencing self-image congruence.*

## *2.7 Transference of negative associations*

One risk related to collaborating with opinion leaders in general is that brands are not able to control the person's daily behavior, and by that, they risk receiving unwanted associations from the collaborator. (Samuelsen et al., 2010) PepsiCo was a victim of choosing the wrong celebrity endorser by collaborating with Michael Jackson when his accusations of child molestation was at its peak. (Erdogan, 1999) When famous opinion leaders behaves in a way that is contrary to what is accepted, brands are quick in making actions regarding protections of themselves. Some examples of this are Lance Armstrong's loss of sponsors after his doping scandal was published. Kate Moss lost her position as the face of one of Chanel's famous perfumes when the world got exposed to her cocaine abuse in 2005, and Katy Perry was punished for losing her popularity in Europe by the styling giant GHD dropping her as an ambassador in 2013.

White, Goddard & Wilbur (2009) found evidence for consumers evaluating products less favorable if the product was endorsed by a celebrity that was associated with unfavorable actions. Miciak & Shanklin (1994, p. 52) also argue that *«A star whose image is tarnished by allegations of illicit, unethical, unusual, or even slightly unconventional behavior immediately turns into an albatross for the advertiser»*. White et al. (2009) argue for this transfer of associations to be a result of people's perception of new exposure being influenced by how we see significant others (people whom you expect more from). This could lead into transference of associations about e.g. trustworthiness, authority and likability, based on past experiences from their childhood, onto new opinion leaders. By that, this will also have an effect on how people views new products that are being endorsed by celebrities. (White et al., 2009)

## *2.8 The one who speaks takes the noise*

Marketing products and brands through micro influencers gives the receiver a feeling of the message being represented by the content creator (influencer) rather than an advertiser. This is due to consumers absence of knowledge related to whether the micro influencer talks nicely about the brand because they are paid for it, or if they truly like the brand. (Gong & Li, 2017) This also reduces one of the risks related to celebrity endorsement as Keller (2013) states that consumers can think the celebrity is only promoting the product in exchange for money, and not

because the celebrity feels that the product is worth using. A recent disclosure regarding this risk, relates to the collaboration between Kendall Jenner and Proactive. Kendall Jenner, who is a role model for many young girls, revealed that she had struggled with acne in her younger days and that Proactive was her rescue. It was later known that she had been using world famous skin experts and not Proactive for her problem with acne. Media and public was quick to disclaim her endorsement based on comments she had made about her skin in earlier interviews. When humans are collaborating with brands, linkages between celebrities and brands are being established. If brands are in trouble this can also affect the image of the celebrity, but White et al (2009) found that brands will be punished harder than the celebrity when engaging in such unethical actions.

Consumers relation to micro influencers falls somewhere between celebrities and close relations, as consumers admires them like celebrities, but also trust them as they were family and friends. (Britner, 2018) With online social media influencers, followers are in the good faith that content creators are writing product suggestions because they are inner motivated by the product, and do not believe that the person would be writing fake product recommendations in exchange for something else. (Becker-Olsen, 2003) Audrezet et al. (2018) argue for this by stating that social media activities is about expressing information that deals with true love for the product and states that *«…SMI production may be not only simply a means to an end (i.e., to please followers or marketers, to obtain financial compensation, etc.) but also the mean in itself»*. (Audrezet et al., 2018, p. 3)

Based on this, we believe that when engaging in collaborations with micro influencers brands will not be punished as hard as the micro influencer when the micro influencer engage in controversial actions not in direct involvement with the brand. This is due to people perceiving the collaboration less as advertising, and more as a product recommendation from a "friend".

*H2: Brands that collaborates with micro influencer will experience less harm than influencers when influencers engage in controversial actions, as consumers perceives the collaboration to be a recommendation from the influencer.*

## 2.9 Micro influencers, either lifestyle or expert

According to Abidin (2015), lifestyle influencers are focusing more on their everyday life, and updates their followers about their daily activities several times a day (Abidin, 2013). In Norway, typical lifestyle influencers can be recognized as Sophie Elise, Isabell Raad or Kristine Ullebø. These are all influencers that uses their social media platforms to connect with followers by giving them access to their ups and downs through their everyday life. Besides this, they are also giving their followers tips and recommendations provided by both themselves and brands. As these are influencers that shares exclusive aspects of their life with their followers, followers are more likely to be more emotionally attached to them. (Abidin, 2015)

On the other hand, expert micro influencers are considered as influencers that are perceived to have expertise within various fields. Abidin (2015) states that opposite of lifestyle influencers, they do «hide» themselves behind certain themes as e.g. parenting, training or food. As they are more focused on their themes, these kinds of micro influencers are not that open about their personal life, making their followers not being that emotionally attached to them. Some well-known expert influencers in Norway are «Funkygine» (expert within training), «Pappahjerte» (parenting) and «Lavkarbo med Hanne» (Food). They are all focusing on their categories when publishing content and their followers perceive them to have expertise within their categories.

## 2.10 Micro influencers and product type

As brands now uses these types of influencers to promote their products, they will have to consider which influencer that fits best to promote which brand. Melnyk et al, (2012); Klein & Melnyk (2016) argues for consumers to process utilitarian- and hedonic brands different. Cognitive evaluation will be more important when processing utilitarian products and feelings to be weighted more when processing hedonic products. As cognitive processing is more important when evaluating utilitarian products, consumers are more likely to involve themselves within the process by doing more research. (Gürhan-Canli & Maheswaran, 1998; Klein & Melnyk (2016) As social media has evolved to be a source for product information (Oetterbacher, 2013), more people are looking for advice from social media. Here, influencers do have the power of persuading consumers to believe that the product

holds favorable attributes and by that they are able to increase the products utilitarian value (Chae, Stephen, Bart & Yao, 2016). We believe that this will be the case for expert micro influencers as they are known for possessing great knowledge and passion about their favorite activity. (Frothingham, 2016) Besides this, they are assumed to put a lot of time and effort in learning about products that fits with their interests, (Frothingham, 2016) and by that being able to elaborate more on their products of interest, again increasing the value. Getting product advice about utilitarian products, from perceived expert influencers, is therefore more preferring as consumers tends to categorize utilitarian products as a way of satisfying a functional need rather than pleasure. (Klein & Melnyk, 2016)

Chae, et al. (2016, p. 93) explains that *"utilitarian products are more often explained through actions and choices whereas hedonic products are more often explained through reactions and feeling".* When evaluating hedonic products consumers are engaging more in affective processing and will not find the quality of arguments as important, and rather rely on different cues (number of arguments, length of text and other emotional reactions). (Klein & Melnyk, 2016) Lifestyle micro influencers do connect with their followers by talking about their lives, and uses themselves and happenings throughout their days as a tool to make their followers feel more attached to them. (Abidin, 2015) As consumers perceives them to be their (social media) friend, their attachment to lifestyle influencers can be perceived as a reliable source when processing hedonic products. (Oetterbacher, 2013) Consumers are being affected by opinion leaders perception of brands, and lifestyle influencers have by that the opportunity to use their product reviews to increase personal attachment to hedonic products (Chae et al., 2016)

We believe that because of these connections between expert influencer and utilitarian products, and lifestyle influencer and hedonic products, followers will react less favorable to an expert influencer promoting a utilitarian product while portraying negative behavior than with a lifestyle influencer. The same goes for hedonic products. Because lifestyle influencers appeal more to emotions, negative behavior while promoting a hedonic brand will lead to more negative reactions towards that brand. Expert influencers are also known for just that: their expertise. If portraying bad or negative behavior, we believe they are more likely to receive

negative feedback than a lifestyle influencer, which in comparison only display themselves.

*H3: Negative behavior from an expert influencer will lead to consumers evaluating the influencer less favorable when the expert influencer is paired with a utilitarian product.*

*H4: Negative behavior from a lifestyle influencer will lead to consumers evaluating the influencer less favorable when the lifestyle influencer is paired with a hedonic product.*

## *2.11 Authority and social proof: tools for persuasion*

Being perceived as possessing great knowledge within a field generates some authority. (Nair, Manchanda & Bhatia, 2010; Chae et al., 2016) Miligram (1979) conducted an experiment regarding how people relates to authority figures, and found that people are willing to go far in the context of obeying others with perceived authority. In his experiment, respondents were willing to expose others for deadly electricity when told to do so by an authority figure. Cialdini (2001) argues for authority to be an effective tool for persuasion. Expert-opinions are influencing decision making of others, as people perceives this as an easy way of making decisions. Micro influencers are perceived by their followers to possess great expertise within their area on content creation. (Lin et al., 2018)

Due to this, there are some similarities to be made between authority as we know it and influencer marketing. Their many followers are in the good faith of micro influencers recommending products they truly finds favorable, which gives influencers the opportunity to encourage their followers to try different products. Brands are today exploiting this by requesting influencers to integrate their brands in their own personal taste, (Audrezet, et al., 2018) as they know how influential these people are on others attitude. (Bone, 1995; Esmar, Stevens, Breazeale & Spaid, 2018) Due to this, influencers on social media are today generating most of their income by implementing brands within their posts.

Even though people are known to rely on authoritarian figures, Cialdini (2001, p. 75) also states that *"...human beings rely heavily on the people around them for*

*cues on how to think, feel, and act"* as well, which is a concept that deals with persuading people by using social proof. This was illustrated by Asch (1956), were he made respondents match three different lines with an external line. The actors in the experiment was told beforehand to choose the wrong line, with the purpose of gaining understanding about how respondents related to this. Even though it was obvious which line that had the same length as the external line, 75% of the people participating in the experiment chose to stay with the wrong answer as this was in accordance with what everyone else's chose. This experiment showed that people are being affected by social pressure even though it is obvious that the majority are wrong.

Cialdini (2001) also makes an example out of how people relates to others behavior by referring to an experiment done in 1982, first published in Journal of Applied Psychology. Here, researchers found that showing people a list of how many others that already had donated money to a good cause affected people's willingness to do the same. This is also the case for social media users, as online word of mouth allows people to learn about other consumers opinions. Consumers are using online recommendations from others as a reference point for their own opinions towards an object or a person. (Otterbacher, 2013)

## *2.12 Online social proof*

An example of such a web site is IMDB were people can select which movies to watch, based on recommendations made by others. (Otterbacher, 2013) For example, if a film is given a score below what is perceived as good, a person might not choose to see the movie even though that was the person's intention in the first place. Another popular social web page were consumers are basing their choices by others reviews is Trip Advisor. Here, potential customers can base their next travelling decision on others experience and statements. This is a result of consumers using several social media channels as a way of gathering product information from their peers. Consumers do today value product related information from others, independent of the brand, as they sees this as a more reliable source. (Lim & Chung, 2014)

When people, independent of the brand, choose to talk about the brand online, they are engaging in Online-word-of mouth. (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014) Esmar, et al.,

(2018) argues that online word of mouth can have huge impact on businesses performance as customers put a lot of trust into other customers' opinions.

As consumers now have the opportunity to use social media for the purpose of making their own statements about influencers behavior, while reaching out to a greater audience, more pressure to perform are being put on brands. A reason for this is that customers that do feel dissatisfied about a product or service, are more likely to share this information compared to satisfied customers (Anderson, 1998; Esmark et al., 2018) There are several reasons for customers to share negative information; revenge, entertainment, warnings and self-expression. (Esmark et al., 2018) Other people's online reviews are therefore important to monitor, as Cone (2011); Esmark et al. (2018, p 892 ) argues that *"four out of five online consumers have changed their purchase decisions based on a negative online product review"*. It is not just brands that are exposed to others having opinions about them. Today, money and fame are not the only thing that comes with being a public figure. Besides all the benefits, public people will also have to relate to others having personal opinions about them. Especially now as "ordinary" people are free to write whatever they like on social media. A famous, Norwegian, blogger that struggled with being judged by the majority of the Norwegian people during 2018, is Isabel Raad (sraad.blogg.no). By being open about her going through several plastic surgeries, people used various social media platforms to write different opinions about her surgeries and how that made her a bad role model for many young girls. Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler (2004) states that one reason for people to engage within businesses in social media deals with consumption utility. Even though they researched on businesses, we believe this can be used to explain the concept of micro influencers as they represent a type of brand. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) states that consumers obtain consumption utility when they are able to read what other consumers thinks about the same thing. Besides giving value through reading others thoughts, reading what "the everyday man" thinks of an item is a motivating factor for other consumers to leave comments as well. When social media influencers engage in controversial actions (e.g. plastic surgeries), people are quick in making statements about how the negative action explains who that person is. When people first starts to engage with social media influencers platforms by writing positive (negative) comments, others can adapt the observed behavior. According to social cognitive theory, *"individuals observe others, interpret their*

*behavior, and adjust their own behavior in response".* (Stefanone, Lackaff & Rosen, 2010, p. 512)

Lee & Kim (2012) also argues for social cognitive theory to be useful in social media, as it is relevant to explain what motivates consumers to express themselves within social media channels. Therefore, what kind of comments people choose to leave behind, can be affected by what other people are commenting. (Lee, Kim & Kim, 2012)

Comments about someone, made by others, in social media is available for everyone to see. People's comments can have an influential factor on the reader's attitude as Fishbein & Ajzen (1975); Mishra, Akman & Mishra (2014) states that people will be affected by expectations from their environments. Haenschen (2016) uses Facebook as an example when saying that such social media platforms makes it easy to monitor others behavior while thinking they are also being watched. He argues that this will result in people changing their own behavior to ensure they comply with social norms.

Researchers have for a long time been using Theory of reasoned action to explain how people assess different situations, and the model explains how that one's attitude and subjective norms are influencing the viewer's behavioral intentions. (Ajzen, 1985; Doane, Pearson & Kelly, 2014) Fishbein & Ajzen (1975); Mishra et al (2014, p. 30) explains subjective norms as *"the normative belief that a person complies with the expectations from other people, such as a person's family or friends, supervisor, or society at large".*

We believe that subjective norms also will have an impact in social media as consumers are free to read what other people are thinking about an item, and by that having a need to perform in a way that is in accordance with what consumers perceives society to think.

*H5: Negative (positive) comments in the comment section will strengthen (weaken) the effect in H3 and H4.*

# 3.0 Methodology

## 3.1 Population (both studies)

Our convenience samples for both studies are based on the population of the Norwegian people in the age of 18 to 80 years old, who uses social media. We did not want to restrict the study to followers of influencers only, since everyone that are using social media may be exposed to influencers or other type of opinionleaders marketing through targeting ads based on their preferred topics. By not only using followers of specific influences, we were able to get a more nuanced picture of how consumers in general would react to negative behavior from opinionleaders.

## 3.2 Study design study 1

The hypotheses for our main study are based on a causal research design with true experiments with pre-tests and post-test as our main method. The experiment are based on a 2*2*3 study consisting of three independent variables with underlying groups; *«Type of product»* which consisted of two groups - hedonic and utilitarian, *«Type of micro influencer»* which consisted of two groups - expert influencer and lifestyle influencer and *«Type of comment section»*, which consisted of three groups - no comment section, positive comment section and negative comment section. We wanted to see whether there existed any three-way interaction effect by our independent variables on our dependent variables.

We manipulated our independent variables so that various respondents were exposed to different conditions. This was to be able to measure and establish the cause and effect relationship between our independent- and dependent variables between groups, as well as being able to see the changes in attitude after exposure of treatment. (Malhotra, 2010)

To test our hypotheses empirically, we performed one large-scale study for hypotheses H2, H3, H4 and H5 addressing the theme of whether micro influencers bad behavior has an impact on brand attitude and purchase intention. As well as if commentary sections can convey the readers opinions based on the principle of social proof, and again affect brand attitude and purchase intention.

We decided to solely look at the negative behavior of micro influencers, and excluded any positive or normal behavior since we were not interested in the

difference between behavior only the devastating effect that a negative behavior can result in.

## 3.3 Data collection

Data was collected by using a convenience sample from our Facebook- and Instagram friends as well as physical collection at Nydalen. We also encouraged our friends to share the questionnaire online to their own follower base, making the response rate as high as possible as well as gaining a better distribution between men, women and age. The questionnaire was then shared in private Facebook groups, on people's Facebook walls as well as through the Messenger app and Instagram direct messages. This strategy was quite successful, giving us 758 recorded responses in total. It is important to notice that using a convenience sampling like this, could weaken our external validity. (Malhotra, 2010)

## 3.4 Questionnaire build up

All respondents was provided with a questionnaire consisting of 10 blocks with 9 questions and 44 sub-questions in total. The questions were a mixture of five point likert scale, single answer matrix tables, single answer multiple choice and one line text entry. Measured on respectively a nominal and ordinal/scale level. We decided to use a consistent, but few numbers, of different question types to avoid confusing the respondents as well as making the answering process as easy as possible. This way we ensured that fewer people would drop out of the questionnaire due to psychological- or technical difficulties. All pre- and post-test questions was made in the same question form, scale level and with the same type of answering alternatives. This way we were able to compare results between tests as well as making the conversion process easier.

Before the survey was handed out, we performed a pretest on a sample from our population to make sure the degree of difficulty in language, sentences, instructions and the flow of the survey was understandable and appropriate for our population. (Malhotra, 2010) After making small adjustments from our feedback, we were ready to launch the final version (Appendix 2 questionnaire 1 Study 1).

## *3.5 Procedure*

At the beginning of the survey, all respondents was informed of the experiment as well as their voluntary participation. They were asked to confirm or deny their participation. If "yes", the voluntary participation continued until the respondent decided to end their participation, and if "no", respondents were immediately directed to the end of the survey. After confirming or denying their participation, each respondent was randomly assigned into one of 12 blocks consisting of different treatments (See model 1 bellow), starting with a pre-test.

Four of the twelve blocks consisted of randomized type of influencer (expert or lifestyle), presenting bad behavior, and type of product (hedonic: Nike or utility: Nivea). The eight remaining blocks were identical to the four first blocks, only adding a negative- or positive comment section to each blog-post. We choose both influencers to be women since there are more women influencers in Norway. They are usually more popular and women tend to be the larger part of follower bases of influencers, making female influencers more credible to use.
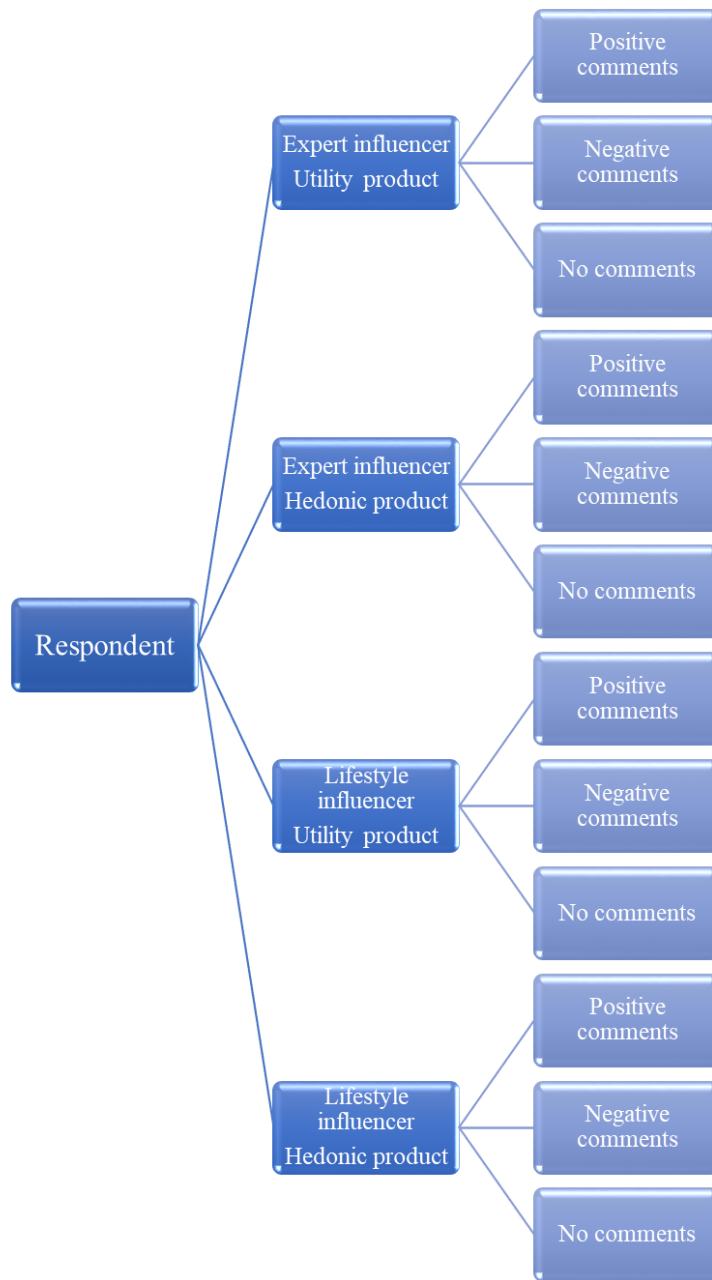
*Model 1: Outline of Questionnaire 1 Study 1*

## 3.6 First part: pre-test

In the pre-test phase, respondents were asked to evaluate either the utility- (Nivea) or hedonic (Nike) brand based on their attitudes towards the brand and their willingness to purchase some of their products. We decided to evaluate attitudes based on the brand as a whole, and purchase intention based on product categories from each brand (either deodorants or shoes). This because we did not want to limit the questions to gender specific products, but rather be more gender neutral in the

description of product types. This way we were able to get more adequate answers from both men and women.

To measure attitude against brand, we used the two main constructs; Attractiveness and Trustworthiness. The six items measuring attractiveness towards the brand and Trustworthiness were adopted by Ohanian (1990) and Spears & Singh (2004). In addition, we also measured respondents willingness to purchase their brands. Five self constructed items was selected to measure purchase intention on respectively trial, recommending, buy and friends choices. By asking participants about their friends purchase intention, we were able to detect respondents real underlying opinion for purchasing the product. (Gripsrud, Olsson and Silkoset, 2016)

Respondents were then presented with a fake Instagram profile, either expert- or lifestyle influencer. (see Appendix 2). After being exposed, respondents was asked to evaluate the influencer based on attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise. The 15 items used to measure the three main constructs were adopted by Ohanian (1990) and later converted to Norwegian wordings, hence the questionnaire is based on a Norwegian population.

Our micro influencers were not real influencers, but fake profiles constructed specifically for this experiment. It would be preferred to use real influencers, but because of the nature of our study, it was not possible to get real micro influencers to risk their reputation by this experiment. By using fake micro influencers, we were able to control for these extraneous variables, giving the experiment higher internal validity. Respondents had however no prior attitudes towards the micro influencer, making it harder for the respondents to evaluate the influencer base on the Instagram profile only. Respondents was not able to see the faces of the influencers adding to the difficulty of evaluating attractiveness. This because most picture sharing sites has restrictions against using downloaded pictures of others in a negative way, if it is possible to identify the person in the picture.

To avoid these restrictions, we decided to use ourselves as influencers. There were a risk of our convenience sample being able to recognize us, resulting in the experiment not getting the desired results. Therefore, all pictures were manipulated so there would not be any recognizable personal signs that could detected our identity. In addition, to be able to control for this, we pretested the Instagram accounts on some of our closest friends and family. The results was unanimous, no

one was able to recognize who was on the images and they genuinely believed the constructed influencers was real.

## *3.7 Assigned condition*

After the pretest, each respondent was given a randomly assigned condition consisting of a fake blog-post from one of the two micro influencers. In the blogpost, the respondent was represented with a product, negative behavior from one of two influencers and a negative-, positive- or no comment section. The negative behavior was consistent through all conditions to avoid different reaction levels to different types of negative behavior, ensuring internal validity. (Malhotra, 2010) We decided on using the negative attitude towards homeless people. This because Norwegian people generally has some compassion towards people that lives on the street, and does generally not have much compassion for others that are ignorant and look down on the less fortunate ones in our society. We therefore believed that this negative attitude from the micro influencer would bring out a strong emotional reaction with the respondents.

In addition to examining the results of negative behavior, we also wanted to look at social proof. This to establish if the influencers authority will prevail against the meanings of the masses. Participants would get one of three alternatives: no comment section, comment section that supported the negative behavior of the influencer, or a comment section that condemned the negative behavior. The comment sections was constructed to look identical to a typical comment section in a bloggers post (See Appendix 3 Comment sections). To ensure the quality, we emphasized the use of slang expressions and a oral language.

## *3.8 Cleaning of data*

Despite our large data set, there were relatively few missing- or incorrect values in the collected data. Already in the making of the questionnaire, precautions was made to avoid this issue. All questions was coded with a "force response" so respondents were not able to move forward without completing each question. However, some variables had not been recorded properly in the transference of data into our data- analyzation program SPSS, and had to be examined further. To treat the missing responses, we used the methods of substituting with a neutral value,

making the missing value equal to the mean value of the variable. E.g. missing age value was treated to the mean of all ages, which was equal to 26 years. (Malhotra, 2010) Where other values than age was missing, we decided to delete the response. This because they may cause bias in our analysis and by interpreting what the respondent might have answered, response error may arise. (Malhotra, 2010) By deleting all respondents with missing data other than age, we were able to ensure high quality in our data.

Furthermore we looked at both the attention test as well as the time frame of each respondents to see if it was necessarily to reduce the data set even more. We deleted all cases were respondents failed the attention test (25 cases), as we wanted to make sure we only kept answers from respondents that paid full attention. We estimated the response time for the questionnaire to be five minutes, which made us conclude with deleting cases were respondents did not meet this time frame. This time frame was also decided as we concluded that respondents needed to spend a certain amount of time to clearly record comments in the comment field. By this we reduced our data set significantly by 221 cases, making our current dataset containing 278 respondents. Even though this made a remarkable reduction in our dataset, we found this necessary to do in order to strengthen our internal validity. (Malhotra, 2010)

When removing all cases mentioned above we were left with none extreme values, only outliers. As these observed outliers were neither a result of data entry- nor measurement error, they were most likely a result of genuinely unusual values. Even though such genuinely unusual values are not preferable from a statistical perspective, we did not find any reason to remove them. (Lærd statistics, 2018)

### Descriptive Statistics

|        |        | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|--------|--------|-----|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
| *Male*   | Gender | 121 |         |         |       |                |
|        | Age    |     | 17      | 80      | 26,29 | 8,103          |
| *Female* | Gender | 155 |         |         |       |                |
|        | Age    |     | 17      | 80      | 26,45 | 9,813          |
| *Anonym* | Gender | 2   |         |         |       |                |
|        | Age    |     | 23      | 31      | 27    | 5,657          |

*Model 2: Descriptive statistics study 1*

# 4.0 Results study 1

After all data was cleaned for missing values or other errors, we were able to look at all constructs individually for then to decide upon which to merge into the same main constructs, for then proceeding with the analysis of the data. Since we have applied pre tested items which in theory are measuring the main constructs of Attractiveness, Trustworthiness and Expertise, we have decided to use these same main constructs, testing them for reliability with the Cronbach's alpha.

## 4.1 Cronbach's alpha

As Cronbach's alpha test is a preferable measure of reliability when multiple Likert questions are used (Lærd statistics, 2018), we performed this analysis to see whether our chosen items were measuring the same underlying dimensions. Items that failed the benchmark of .7 was then deleted as we wanted high level of internal consistency. **(See appendix 4 Cronbach alpha study 1)**

When performing our analysis we decided to keep all constructs for brand that showed high level of internal consistency. We only excluded *"ordinary"* as this did not show to have any high internal consistency with any variables, as well as it seemed like more respondents was not familiar with the term. Even though we had several constructs that had high level of internal consistency for Influencers, we were not that confident if we should merge the variables or not. This is due to limited knowledge of how this construct should be measured as well as respondents had limited opportunities to evaluate the appearance of a person they do not see the face of. We therefore decided to move on with both the variables *"trustworthiness"* and *"Expertise"* and decided not to keep the dimension *"Attractive"* as both *"beautiful"* and *"attractive"* could be related to someone's look while *"stylish"* also could be a description of someone's style in general.

## 4.2 Paired Sample t test

A paired-sample t test was first performed to understand whether there was a mean difference in how respondents evaluated both the brand and micro influencer before and after treatment condition. Before we did this analysis, we made four new variables which we called *«total pre evaluation influencer», «total pre evaluation*

*brand», «total post evaluation influencer»* and *«total post evaluation brand»*. These variables consisted of dimensions that were intended to measure the attitude of the brand/influencer both before and after exposure, so that we could form a picture of whether there were differences in how the participants responded to the micro influencers' negative behavior.

By looking at Paired Sample Statistics table we saw that participants held a better attitude towards both the brand (M = 3.81, SD = .69) and the influencer (M = 3.04, SD = .58) compared to what attitude they had to the brand (M = 3.42, SD = .9) and the influencer (M = 2.2, SD = .75) after exposure. By calculating the effect size for both the changes in brand- and influencer evaluations, we found the effect size for brands to be $\left(\begin{smallmatrix} 0,38933 \\ 0,55441 \end{smallmatrix}\right)$ 0,7 while the effect size for influencer to be $\left(\begin{smallmatrix} 0,81055 \\ 0,71747 \end{smallmatrix}\right)$ 1,13. This can according to Cohen (1998); Lærd statistics (2018) be categorized as a medium effect for brands and a large effect for influencers.

By exposing respondents with the influencers negative behavior, participants overall brand attitude decreased with 0.389 while participants overall attitude to the influencer decreased with 0.811. The influencers negative behavior resulted in a statistically significant decrease in brand-, t(277) = 11.709, p = .000 and influencer, t(277) = 18.836, p = .000 evaluation. This indicates that both the brand and the influencer will be evaluated less favorable after being presented with the influencers negative behavior.

Even though this indicates that both the brand and the micro influencer will be evaluated less favorable after being presented with a negative behavior, we wanted to test H2 to see whether the decrease in evaluation of influencer was statistically significantly greater than the decrease in brand evaluation. This was done by SPSS computing the absolute value between *pre brand attitude* and *post brand attitude* as well as *pre influencer attitude* and post influencer attitude. We then performed a Paired-sample t test on the absolute value for influencer and brand. Here, the Paired Sample Statistics table showed that the mean difference for influencer (M = .839, SD = .683) were greater than the mean difference for brand (M = .477, SD = .683), and that the decrease in participants overall evaluation for influencer were statistically significantly greater than the mean difference for participants brand evaluation, t(277) = -.284, p = .000. Therefore, H2 was accepted as there was a significantly greater decrease in attitude towards the micro influencer compared to brand after treatment.

### 4.3 Three way MANCOVA test

In order to further test H3, H4 and H5, a three-way MANCOVA was performed. The Three-way MANCOVA analysis was performed to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences between the three groups: type of influencer, type of product and type of comment section on our dependent variables while controlling for pre-test variables (covariates). Before the analysis was conducted we tested our data for different assumptions related to a Three-way MANCOVA analysis. When testing assumptions of linearity between the dependent variables, and linearity between the covariate and the dependent variables, we saw by visual inspection of scatterplots that our variables had low degree of linearly relatedness. Even though we experienced some issues related to this, we saw that many of the relationships were linear to some degree, which made us conclude with continuing with the Three-way MANCOVA analysis anyway. This decision was made even though low degree of linearly relatedness could result in our model experiencing loss of power, and reduced capabilities to detect any statistically significant differences between the three groups. (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014; Lærd statistics, 2018))

When performing the three-way MANCOVA analysis we decided to split the inspection of how brands and influencers were affected by our manipulations, making us have to perform two three-way MANCOVAs, one for brands and one for micro influencers.

While interpreting our results from the Three-way MANCOVA for micro influencers, we saw by inspecting the Multivariate Test table that there were no statistically significant three-way interaction effect between type of product, type of influencer and type of comment section on our dependent influencer variables while controlling for our covariates (pre-test variables), $F(6, 522) = 1.785$, $p = .100$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .960$, partial $\eta2 = .020$. The same test was performed for explaining the effect on brand evaluations. The Multivariate Test table showed no statistically significant three-way interaction effect between type of product, type of influencer and type of comment section on our dependent brand attitude variables while controlling for our covariates (pre-test variables), $F(6, 522) = 1.507$, $p = .174$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .966$, partial $\eta2 = .017$. Furthermore, there was a statistically significant difference between type of product on our dependent brand attitude variables while

controlling for our covariates, F(3, 261) = 6.590, p=.000, Wilks' Λ = .930, partial η2 = .070.

By further inspecting the Test of Between-Subjects Effect table for influencers, we found a three way interaction effect for how respondents evaluated the influencers *expertise*, F(2, 263) = 3.335, p= .037, as well as how *stylish* they perceives the influencer to be F(2, 263) = 3.698, p= .026. Even though the Multivariate test table gave no three way interaction effect for all variables, we decided to move further on with the three way interaction on the expertise- and stylish variables for analyzing them by using One-way ANCOVAs. One-way ANCOVAs were also performed to see what effect product type had on how respondents evaluated the brands attractiveness, trustworthiness and their purchase intention.

As the three-way MANCOVA only are able to tell that there are differences between groups, but not which group, we decided to follow this up by performing multiple One-way ANCOVAs. This constituted variables that were measuring *expertise* and *stylish* for influencer and attractiveness, trustworthiness and purchase intention for brand. This further testing was due to our interest in understanding whether our independent variables (type of influencer, type of product and type of comment section) were statistically significant in terms of our dependent variables for both brand and influencers.

### 4.3.1 Expertise influencer

After adjustment for *pre-influencer expertise*, there was a statistically significant three-way interaction effect between type of product, type of influencer and type of comment section on *post-influencer expertise*, F(2, 265) = 3.528, p= .031, partial η2 = .026. Based on these findings we went on with further analysis to determine where these group differences lies. We used IBM SPSS Syntax to compare our independent variables with each other by running Bonferroni tests. For treatment conditions were no comment section was given together with an expert influencer, showed a statistically significant difference between hedonic- and utilitarian products, F(1, 265) = 4.354, p= .038. Expert micro influencer were statistically significantly greater evaluated when paired with a hedonic product (2.330 ± .162) compared to when paired with a utilitarian product (1.861 ± .156). This indicates support for H3.

We see on the other side that negative comment section has an effect when expert influencer are presented with hedonic products, F(2, 265) = 3.795, p = .024 as they

evaluate the expert influencer less favorably when presented with a negative comment section ($1.763 \pm .137$) compared with no comment section ($2.330 \pm .162$). Even though we found comment section to have an effect, this effect did not be true for our combination.

*4.3.2 Stylish influencer*

As an important assumption regarding one-way ANCOVA deals with testing for homogeneity of variance, it is worth mentioning that Levene's test of homogeneity of variance gave us a value of p = .080. Even though we did not violate the assumption of homogeneity of variances, we still find it necessary to report this due to Type 1 error rate. (Lærd statistics, 2018)

After adjustment for *pre-influencer stylish*, there was a statistically significant three-way interaction effect between type of product, type of influencer and type of comment section on *post-influencer stylish*, $F(2, 265) = 3.579$, p= .025, partial η2 = .028. Based on these findings we went on with further analysis to determine where these group differences lies. We used IBM SPSS Syntax to compare our independent variables with each other by running Bonferroni tests. Here, we found that an expert micro influencer that was presented with a negative comment section was evaluated less stylish when hedonic products was involved ($2.098 \pm .174$) compared to when utilitarian products was involved ($2.639 \pm .211$), $F(1, 265) = 3.922$, p= .049, partial η2 = .015. Though we only found evidence for the hedonic- and not for utilitarian products, as specified in H3, we still see a tendency of negative comments affecting the relationship between products and influencer.

# 5.0 Study 2

## *5.1 Study design Study 2*

The second study was performed to investigate H1. This study was based on a causal research design with a one group with pre- post- test pre-experimental design (Malhotra, 2010), regarding the effectiveness of influencer marketing (independent variable) compared to the utilization of celebrity marketing (independent variable), and how these different tools affect consumers self- image congruence (dependent variable). Although the validity of this experiment design might be somewhat weaker due to the lack of a control group, we believe that it would not make sense to have a control group as respondents are exposed either to a celebrity or to an influencer. Adding a control group with none of the above would not give a sufficient element of comparison.

The goal of this experiment was to see if there is a difference in effectiveness and if that effectiveness measured in brand attitude and purchase intention, can among other factors, be explained by the self- image congruence the respondent feel towards the influencer or celebrity.

This study was conducted to see differences between effectiveness of influencer marketing contra celebrity endorsement, and if self- image congruence has a mediating effect on the relationship between type of opinion leader and attitude/ purchase intention towards a brand.

## *5.2 Data collection*

This study is also based on a convenience sample, were we again distributed the survey via Facebook and the Messenger app. The sample were fairly good distributed, giving us satisfying results of both genders and age range. We were able to gain 137 responses in total before the cleaning of our data.

## *5.3 Cleaning of data*

The data was cleaned for all partial responses as well as all responses declining the agreement of participation. In addition, all respondents who did not apply a real influencer nor celebrity in the first section of the questionnaire, was deleted due to their lack of interest and seriousness in the research topic. Some of the respondents

replied with "I don't follow any of them" or "I don't know of any", which gave us the indication that they had no experience within the research topic, and would therefore not be able to give any sufficient answers in the following questions due to this inability error. (Malhotra, 2010) Further, we looked at the aspect of time. Our estimated duration of the questionnaire was about 5 minutes, we therefore decided to delete all responses that had a duration of less than 5 minutes to finish their questionnaire. This because we believe they used too little time in answering, resulting in answers that are not thoroughly thought through. Again, giving us the indication that these participants did not desire to answer truthfully and therefore finished the questionnaire due to boredom. By removing these answers we were able to control for the inability error among our data. (Malhotra, 2010)

After we cleaned the data for all studies by deleting incomplete answers, as well as respondents who denied our use of their responses for this research, we were left with 102 complete responses for study 2.

## 5.4 Procedure

The questionnaire was parted into two main blocks, where respondents was exposed to either a celebrity- or influencer of choice (See Appendix 6 Questionnaire Study 2). Each block consisted of 11 main questions with 69 sub- questions in total. The questionnaire is parted into a pre-test and a post-test with two randomized conditions (either exposed to a celebrity or an influencer). To measure brand attractiveness, we adopted three of the five attitudes dimensions developed by Spears & Singh (2004). Again, we used the same trustworthiness dimensions as in study one (Ohanian, 1990) and we continued using the same purchase intention variables as well. For our self-image variables, we adopted Aaker's (1997) fifteen dimensions for brand personality. Since we believe that influencers are branded people, we found these dimensions fitting. For future research however, it would be benefitting to develop new dimensions for the use of influencers specifically. We performed a small pre-test for a group of people, consistent with our sample, before distribution. This to be able to control for and change any difficult words or sentencing for each question.

## 5.5 Pre-test

Respondents were first informed of the experiment and asked, as with our previous study, to confirm their participation in the experiment. In the end of the survey, respondents was then debriefed and informed that all claims was fake and that the brand mentioned in the texts was not in any way a collaboration with this experiment. (Malhotra, 2010) After the confirmation of participation, respondents was either asked to write the name of a celebrity (defined as a person famous for their skills within acting, sports or music) or an influencer (defined as a Norwegian person well- known for their blog, Instagram or other social media accounts).

We decided that it would be more beneficial for respondents to be able to choose an influencer/ celebrity of their own liking. This way, we can be certain that the chosen opinion leader is someone the respondents like and by that also in some way identify with. Self-image congruence is a vital part of this survey, so to use predetermined opinion leaders, would only weaken the chance of the respondents knowledge and image-congruence with the opinion leader.

In addition, respondents was asked to evaluate the brand Pepsi, which was used as product in both the influencer and celebrity announcement. We decided to use a brand that most likely would fit all types of celebrities and influencers. This is based on their wide range of products and that they have utility products which most Norwegian people has tasted at some point. A huge part of the population in Norway also has Pepsi's sugar free drink, Pepsi Max, as their preferred soda. (Aldridge, 2013)

## 5.6 Assigned condition

Respondents were either assigned to write an influencer or celebrity of choice. This opinionleader was then, through programming of piped-text, linked to all the next questions and texts. By linking their answer to all the next questions we were able to control for the memory- laps respondents may have, reminding them through the entire questionnaire who they were supposed to think about. The assigned condition was a fake news article were the celebrity or the influencer acknowledged their collaboration with the brand Pepsi. We decided to use a news article because using a blog-post for an influencer and a press release for the celebrity could lead to extraneous variables affecting our results. By using the same platform of

communication, the statements had only slight differences based on type of audience. (See Appendix 6)

After respondents was exposed to either a celebrity or an influencer collaboration, they were asked of their perception of fit before the post test of brand attitude and purchase intention.

In the next section participants was asked to rate the opinionleaders image based on their own experience. After that, they yet again got the same 15 dimensions asking them to evaluate their own personality both actual and ideal.

# 6.0 Results study 2

For our second study, we performed a Two-way MANCOVA analysis to detect the differences between the groups of the categorical independent variables Opinionleader and gender in how they responded to our continuous dependent variables of Attractiveness, Trustworthiness and purchase intention towards the brand promoted by the two types of opinionleaders. As well as controlling for the continuous pre-test variables (covariates) for each variable. This way we were able to see the relationship between the independent variables (X) and the dependent variables (Y).

Further in the analysis, we also wanted to detect if *self congruence* (M) had a mediating impact on the relationship between the independent variable *Opinionleader* (X) and the dependent variables *Post_Appeling, Post_Likable, Post_Good, Post_Honest, Post_Reliable, Post_Trustworthy, Post_Try, Post_Recomend, Post_Buy and Post_Friends* (Total attitude and purchase intention towards the brand) (Y) (See Model 2 bellow). This to see if the congruence between the relationship of a respondents actual- or ideal- self up against the image they perceive an opinionleader has, have an effect on how they would perceive the brand after being promoted by that opinionleader.
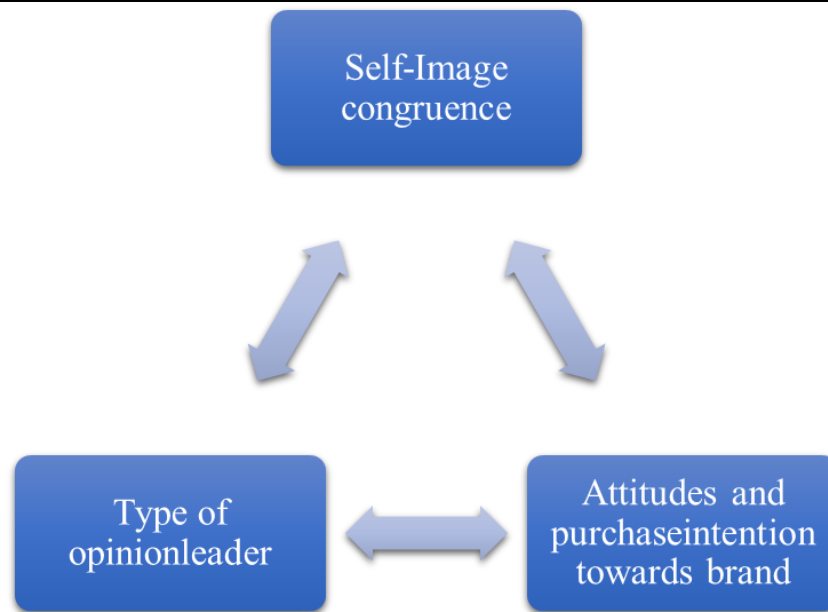
*Model 3: Self-image congruence mediating effect*

## 6.1 Checking for Assumptions

Before conducting the Two-way MANCOVA analysis, we tested our data for different related assumptions. We found that not all pairs of dependent variables were linear. We detected a low - moderate linear relationship when visually inspecting the results through scatterplots. These findings may affect the MANCOVA test, but we decide to proceed with the test, having in mind that this can affect the ability to detect statistically significant differences between the groups of the independent variables *Opinionleader* and *Gender* in the form of the dependent variables, adjusted for the covariates of the pre-variables. (Lærd statistics, 2018)

As assessed by the Box's M test results from performing the two-way MANCOVA, there was not homogeneity of covariances with a p < .001 in all groups of the dependent variables, violating the assumption. (Lærd statistics, 2018) Further we examined the Levene's test of equality of error variances. Here we found that two dependent variables (*Post_Good* and *Post_Friends*) did not meet the assumption with p < .05. By keeping these variables we would have a higher risk of making a type 1 error, rejecting a null hypothesis that in fact would be true. (Lærd statistics, 2018)(Malhotra, 2010) As a result, we decided to remove the two variables causing this violation as well as the associated covariances (*Pre_Good* and *Pre_Friends*), continuing with the reduced set of dependent variables. The new Box's M test stated

that we had homogeneity of covariances with p > .001 and The Levene's test show all non significant results for the remaining dependent variables with p > .05, meaning there is homogeneity of variances for *Post_Appeling, Post_Likable, Post_Honest, Post_Reliable, Post_Trustworthy, Post_Try, Post_Recomend* and *Post_Buy* for all group combinations for *Opinionleader* and *Gender*. (Lærd statistics, 2018)

To perform the Two-way MANCOVA, we had to consult the Wilks' Lambda to see if our interaction term (*Opinionleader\*Gender\*all covariates of pre-variables*) met the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes. We found this to be true with $F(32, 131) = 1.511$, $p = .056$ and by that rejecting the null hypothesis.

Afterwards, we examined the dataset for outliers. There were evidence of univariate outliers in our dataset as assessed by the standardized residuals with values larger than +/- 3. (smallest value at -3.5 and largest value at 4.4) By consulting the Mahalanobis distance, we found no evidence of multivariate outliers in our data with the largest value being 3.06 giving us a p > .001. Because of the evidence of univariate outliers, we had to inspect the data further with boxplots. The outliers consist of genuinely unusual outliers. We therefore decided to proceed with the analysis without removing any outliers.

Next, we inspected the data for deviations of normality. By analyzing the results from the Shapiro Wilks test, we saw that the residuals were not normally distributed with a p < .05. However, the MANCOVA test are considered robust for deviations of normality. (Lærd statistics, 2018) We therefore decide to carry on regardless of these findings, though having in mind that they may affect our final results.

## *6.2 MANCOVA test*

In the final analysis, all respondents with a response time of < 300 seconds (five minutes) was excluded from the analysis as explained in the section for cleaning of data. This left us with a total of 58 respondents, 24 male and 34 female. 27 of them were exposed to the influencer condition and 31 respondents got the celebrity condition.

*Attractiveness*

| | | Appealing | | | Likable | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Group* | | N | Mean | SD | N | Mean | SD |
| *Influencer* | Male | 15 | 3.60 | 1.183 | 15 | 3.80 | 0.775 |
| | Female | 12 | 3.67 | 1.231 | 12 | 3.50 | 1.314 |
| *Celebrity* | Male | 9 | 4.0 | 1.000 | 9 | 4.11 | 0.782 |
| | Female | 22 | 3.50 | 1.102 | 22 | 3.36 | 1.136 |

*Trustworthiness*

| | | Honest | | | Reliable | | | Trustworthy | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Group* | | N | Mean | SD | N | Mean | SD | N | Mean | SD |
| *Influencer* | Male | 15 | 3.47 | 1.060 | 15 | 3.80 | 0.775 | 15 | 3.60 | 0.910 |
| | Female | 12 | 3.33 | 0.888 | 12 | 3.25 | 0.622 | 12 | 3.17 | 0.718 |
| *Celebrity* | Male | 9 | 3.56 | 0.726 | 9 | 3.44 | 0.882 | 9 | 3.56 | 0.726 |
| | Female | 22 | 2.95 | 1.090 | 22 | 3.14 | 1.167 | 22 | 3.18 | 1.097 |

*Purchase intention*

| | | Try | | | Recommend | | | Buy | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Group* | | N | Mean | SD | N | Mean | SD | N | Mean | SD |
| *Influencer* | Male | 15 | 3.53 | 1.506 | 15 | 3.47 | 1.457 | 15 | 3.73 | 1.534 |
| | Female | 12 | 3.67 | 1.497 | 12 | 3.25 | 1.288 | 12 | 3.50 | 1.446 |
| *Celebrity* | Male | 9 | 4.44 | 1.333 | 9 | 3.56 | 1.424 | 9 | 4.33 | 1.323 |
| | Female | 22 | 3.59 | 1.436 | 22 | 3.09 | 1.540 | 22 | 3.41 | 1.563 |

*Model 4: Descriptive statistics study 2*

By examining the Multivariate's test[a], consulting the Wilik's Lambda, in the two-way MANCOVA, we saw that we do have a statistically significant interaction term between the groups of the two independent variables *Opinionleader\*Gender* on the combined dependent post- variables when controlling for the covariate pre-variables $F(8,39) = 2.518$, $p = .026$, Wilks'$\Lambda = .659$, partial $\eta^2 = .341$. We found that the combined adjusted group means were statistically significant for a $p < .05$.

To be able to detect for which variables the two-way interaction was valid, we consulted the Test of Between-Subjects Effects at the interaction term. We saw that there is a statistically significant interaction between the interaction term on the dependent variable *Post_Reliable* when controlling for all the covariate pre-variables, $F(1, 46) = 5.422$, $p = .024$, partial $\eta^2 = .105$.

Next, we performed one-way ANCOVA to investigate the relationship between the interaction term and the dependent variable *Post_Reliable*, applying a Bonferroni correction, where accepted as statistically significant at $p < .006$. (Lærd statistics, 2018) The analysis states that there is no statistically significant differences in the adjusted mean for *Post_Reliable*, $F(1, 46) = .050$, $p = .824$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$.

## 6.3 Self-image congruence

Next, we wanted to look at the self-image congruence between how respondents evaluated the opinionleaders personality and whether their personality differed or matched respondents ideal- or actual- self. To be able to see these differences, we performed Cronbach's alpha tests on all dependent image variables for opinionleader and for respondents actual- and ideal self.

This to see whether our chosen items were measuring the same underlying dimensions. Setting the benchmark at .7, excluding variables that did not meet these criteria to ensure a high level of internal consistency.

We saw that people had difficulties interpreting the variables *"Up-to-date"*, *"Upper class"* and *"Outdoorsy"* for all three main constructs (Image for opinionleader, Actual-self and Ideal-self). This may be because of the Norwegian slang translation or general difficulties in interpreting the meaning of the words. The variables was therefore excluded from all main constructs.

Due to our predetermined scale of measurements, we decided to use the same main constructs of *Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication* and *Ruggedness*. See Appendix 7 Cronbac alpha study 2 for the full construction of each main construct. In addition, three variables were computed to measure

*Total_Opinionleader, Total_Actualself* and *Total_Idealself*. To be able to see the differences between the two types of opinionleaders, Influencer and celebrity, we split the data file in two. It is important to mention that by splitting the file, we are only able to compare within each condition, not between.

Next, we performed a Paired Sample T-test to be able to see whether the mean differences between our three main image-variables were statistically significant. Pairing *Total_Opinionleader* up against *Total_Actualself* and *Total_Opinionleader* against *Total_Idealself.*

By interpreting the paired samples statistics tables, respondents evaluated their actual self for Influencer (M = 3.886, SD = .44) and Celebrity (M = 3.798, SD = .41) lower than their ideal self of respectively Influencer (M = 4.454, SD = .46) and Celebrity (M = 4.454, SD = .40). As the means show, the two groups are fairly similar in the way they evaluate their ideal- and actual- selves. As for the perceived image of Opinionleader (M = 4.059, SD = .54) and the celebrity (M = 4.175, SD = .46) celebrity has a higher mean than the influencer.

Further, by analyzing the Paired Samples T-test, we saw that for the group who got an influencer, their Actual self and the influencers image were not significant with p > .05, meaning that there exist congruence between how people see themselves and how they perceive the influencer (t(26) = 1.468, p = .154). The table also show that there is a significant difference between opinion leaders image and respondents ideal self (t(26) = -3.649, p = .001), meaning that they evaluate the opinionleader more as a "normal person" than someone they idealize.

The results when comparing with the celebrity gave no such indication of congruence between ideal self and the celebrity in which they idealize, with respondents having no congruence between their ideal self and the celebrity (t(30) = -3.097, p = .004). However, we do see that they have no congruence between their actual self and the celebrities perceived image (t(30) = 4.127, p = .000) meaning that they do not see the celebrity as a "normal person" either.

Due to the non-significant results between our independent variables (X) on the dependent variables for attitude and purchase intention (Y), we were not able to continue the investigation of a mediating relationship of the ideal self/ actual self-congruence with opinionleaders image on X and Y.

# 7.0 Discussion

The primary goal of our research, was to identify negative effects a micro influencers behavior can cause, and if these negative associations actually harm the brand or only the influencer itself. We also wanted to look at which effects an influencer has contra a celebrity and if this effect is mediated by the type of congruence people feel to each opinionleader.

Our findings suggest that there is a statistically significant difference in how respondents perceived brands and micro influencers before and after exposure of the treatment condition. Though our findings suggest that both influencer and brands will get a reduced positive attitude from respondents after the negative behavior, we can clearly see who is affected the most. We do see that the brand will get some form of fallback on respondents' attitudes and willingness to purchase their products, but it is mainly the micro influencers reputation that will be damaged. This is in accordance with our previous beliefs of the micro influencer being seen as a friend and therefore not as a product promoter. People see the influencers actions as separated from the brands actions, and therefore do not blame the brand as much as they do with the influencer. Confirming our H2 hypothesis of brands being less punished than the micro influencer, when the influencer engage in controversial actions.

However, we only used two different brands in our analysis, and we cannot be sure if this situation would apply for all types of brands. Using fake influencers may also have an effect on these results. If the influencer is real and known for brand collaborations, this information may affect people's attitudes towards both brands and influencers. In our case, we are specifically focusing on micro influencers. With these types of influencers, because of their low fame and follower base, it is highly likely that their followers not yet are able to recognize brand collaborations, and our constructed experiment would still apply.

Next, we were not able to detect any three way interaction for neither all influencer-attitude variables nor brand- attitude variables up on the interaction term *Opinionleader*product*comment section* when controlling for covariates.

It is possible that we would be able to get a significant effect for brand- attitude variables if we had chosen brands that were not as common and popular as Nivea and Nike. By choosing brands that were not as common and that were more extreme

in their product descriptions for respectively hedonic or utilitarian products, the result may have shown greater divisions in the three way interaction. By also focusing on specific products, and not product categories, we may have been able to see a greater division in the purchase intention for each product.

We saw that for influencer-attitude variables, respondents had a hard time in evaluating the influencers attractiveness when not able to see their faces. People do evaluate attractiveness by style, body figure, facial expressions and body language as well as personality. When only being able to evaluate a person based on three instagram pictures without a facial expression and little focus on in debt personality, respondents had not enough information to make a genuine overall impression. By using a real influencer, as originally intended, respondents would have a greater chance of having some sort of pre attitudes towards the influencer. However, the influencers were perceived as real, making our fake profiles successful in the form of respondents being able to immerse themselves in the task at hand.

Our items measuring attitudes towards influencers were based on predetermined items measuring brand attitudes. Because of the scope and time limit of this study, we were not able to develop specific items for measuring influencer attitudes. By using pre-existing items, we may have missed important aspects on how an influencer attitude should be measured and this would again affect our results. We did however, detect a statistically significant three-way interaction on *Influencer\*Product\*Comment* section on the dependent variable *Expertise* when controlling for the pre-variable. This tell us that in order for the expertise of an influencer to be questioned, all three independent variables have an effect. In the evidence of type of influencer (expert or Lifestyle), Product type (Hedonic or Utilitarian) and Comment section (Positive, Negative or None) the influencers expertise may be affected negatively when the influencer engage in negative behavior.

By further investigating the groups of each dependent variable, we saw that when a utilitarian product was portrayed with no comment section, the expert micro influencer got a lower attitude score on perceived expertise from the participants. According to our preconceived assumptions, expert micro influencers portraying a negative behavior will get a stronger negative reaction from the respondents when a utilitarian product is involved in comparison to a hedonic product. This is due to the notion of expert influencers having a deeper knowledge within their field of expertise. Utilitarian products portray their functionality by focusing on attributes.

These products are processed through cognitive processes in the brain and appeal to rationality rather than emotions. An expert influencer who appeal to their followers through facts and rational arguments, loose their advantage of being an expert when engaging in a negative behavior.

When comparing a negative commentary section with no comments section for expert micro influencer paired with the hedonic product Nike shoes, we saw that the expert influencer's expertise was evaluated to have less value. This leads us to believe that we do have support for our previous claims that social proof has an effect on consumers attitude evaluations. By being primed with a comment section condemning the influencers behavior, respondents portrayed a more negative attitude towards the influencers expertise than when no comment section was present. It is important to ad that the influencer in this case, were not real and had therefore not been able to build any deep feelings of authority with the respondents. With a real influencer, we may have been able to detect how a deep authority level could affect the evidence of social proof. However, we do see that social proof has an effect, and in this case when non supporting comments are portrayed. Again, if we used a real influencer we might have been able to detect how positive/ supporting comments on the negative behavior could change respondents attitudes from being non-supporting to supporting. Especially for the non-followers of the influencer which are not already affected by their authority.

Overall, we do see the tendency of a three way interaction on certain variables as expertise and stylish. By improving the set of items for measuring influencer attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise, along with using real influencers in the experiment, we do believe that this three-way interaction could lead to stronger dissimilarities between the groups in the interaction term. We have found evidence that the type of influencer and the type of brand will result in different attitudes among consumers and that the influencer are the one part that has the most to lose when engaging in a negative behavior. It is however important to state that the brand will be affected as well. The risk of using an influencer depend highly on brand, follower reactions and the type of negative situation. It is therefore highly important that all businesses take these aspects into consideration before signing with a micro influencer.

For our second study, we looked upon if the self-image congruence would have a mediating effect on how consumers evaluate a brand, which is presented in a collaboration with a celebrity or an influencer. The sample size for this study was quite small after the cleaning of the data, which could have led to less clear differences in our results. We were able to see a significant result on the relationship between our independent variables *Opinionleader* * *Gender* on our dependent post attitude variables when controlling for the pre attitude covariates. By further investigating this relationship, we saw that we had a statistically significant relationship between the two-way interaction and the dependent variable *Post Reliable*. However when following up with an ANCOVA we were not able to see any statistically significant results. Because of the lack of a two-way interaction effect between x and y, we had no solid foundation to continue this analysis. We were therefore not able to determine if self-image congruence has a mediating effect. The choice of using Pepsi Max as our brand, may have had an negative effect on these results. We see that by choosing Pepsi, which is a brand that most Norwegian people like or have tasted at some point, respondents already have developed a strong liking to the brand, which are not affected by a collaboration with an opinionleader. By choosing a less known and favored brand, we might have gotten more diverse pre- and posttest answers. We believe that the opinionleaders authority and influence would have had a greater effect with a less liked product than Pepsi Max.

Though we were not able to find a mediating effect, our results on self-image congruence showed some interesting finds. We saw that respondents evaluated their self-image lower than their ideal image. This is no surprise, since Norwegians tend to not brag about themselves. As expected, they did evaluate celebrities self-image as slightly higher than the influencers self-image.

We saw that for the group who got an influencer, their actual self was not significantly different from how they perceived the influencer. While their ideal self-image was statistically significant. Meaning that they do have a self-image congruence between influencer and respondent with the respondents actual self-image. They do not see the influencers as an idol but as equal to themselves, which support our theory of followers seeing influencers as trusted friends.

For the celebrity, we were not able to get such clear results on both counts. Though we did not see a congruence between respondents ideal self and the celebrities

perceived image, as is the predicted outcome, we did get a statistically significant difference between the celebrities image and the respondents actual self-image. This tell us that even though they did not have a congruence with their ideal self for the celebrity, they did not see the celebrity as an equal either.

# 8.0 Conclusions and contributions

With our findings, we are contributing to the literature and the research topic of Influencer marketing by highlighting "the back side of the coin" with the negative effects a micro influencer may cause due to non-acceptable behavior. Our findings show that even though a brand may be linked to an influencer, the risk of losing a good brand reputation may not be as devastating as the media often claims. We see that because of the nature of the relationship between the micro influencer and their followers, it is more likely that this relationship will be severely affected by the negative behavior. People hold the influencer accountable for their own actions, not blaming the brand at the same degree. They see the influencer as a friend and not like a celebrity being a brand ambassador. The link between the influencer and brands they promote may seem to be difficult for people to recognize, and by that not holding the brand accountable for the influencers actions.

These findings are a great contribution to all companies considering investing their marketing budget into influencer marketing. Our results show that the risk of fallback on the brand, if their influencer is misbehaving, seem to be moderate. Their reputation will therefore not be severely harmed if the negative behavior of the influencer is not in direct linkage to their brand or products. However, the severity of the attack on brands reputation, it is important to emphasize that continuous bad relationship with influencers may be more damaging in the long run. Consumers are relatively quick to judge a brand for their bad decisions, and will probably be less understanding the more scandals a brand is in connection with.

Furthermore, we found evidence that an expert micro influencer will get a stronger negative reaction on the level of expertise she portrayed when a utilitarian product was involved in contrast to a lifestyle influencer. This is an important finding, in the sense that product type actually may have a great effect on the final verdict for how an influencer scandal is perceived. For businesses, this means that if they have utilitarian products which they want to pair up with an micro influencer, only one episode of negative behavior from the expert influencer are likely to cause a great

damage in how followers perceive her expertise onwards. Continuing the collaboration with that influencer may give a smaller effect in the future based on the reduced expertise level. It is also uncertain if the products will be harmed if the relationship is continued. Businesses should therefore reevaluate using the same expert influencer after a scandal.

An important finding in our second study was the self-image congruence between influencer and respondents actual selves. This is an important insight, which tell us that influencers are still seen as a "regular person" in contrast with a celebrity. This gives an indication that they do have a closer bond with their followers and that their power of persuasion may be high. Businesses should therefore take advantage of this relationship, using micro influencers to persuade their target groups, by appealing to the followers' actual self.

Though people do not see a clear relationship between brand and influencers today, it has to be said that influencers and their way of marketing is rapidly evolving. Though people might have a hard time recognizing their promotion tricks now, in only a few years' time, consumers will have a much greater knowledge on the field and then be less receptive to this type of marketing. It may then be possible that brands no longer can hide behind influencers, earlier perceived as genuine, trustworthy sources of guidance, but rather portray the relationships for what it really is: Thoroughly planned and paid advertisements with one mission, of reaching the customers on their preferred platforms to sell more products.

## 9.0 Further research and limitations

Our research has been confined to certain aspects of negative behavior from influencers and how this would affect a brand. Due to limitations of time and scope, we had to narrow down our research, specifying it to three main independent variables. We do however believe that this research topic could and should be further investigated in many directions.

It would be interesting to look at more than one negative behavior to see if different actions or opinions could cause different reactions from people. This to see how far from the norm an influencers behavior need to be, before their actions gets a consequence and then harm the brands they are collaborating with. We decided to

only focus on one specific negative attitude to prevent this to become a uncontrolled variable affecting our results. By limiting the scope to one type of behavior only, we neglect to look at how other types of behaviors could affect our results. In addition, our study is based on negative behavior only. By expanding this, it would be of benefit to ad positive behavior to be able to see the absolute differences between positive and negative behavior. It is however important to ad that this behavior would have slight variances depending on the type of influencer chosen in the study. By using real influencers one might be able to mimic their behavior and adding an extreme deviation to that behavior.

A major limitation in our study 1 is the use of fake influencers. Referring to our results, we saw that respondents had a hard time in evaluating the influencers attractiveness based on the Instagram profile only. Respondents were not able to see the faces of each influencer, adding to the difficulty of evaluating attractiveness. With so little pre information to evaluate, it seemed like respondents had a hard time in interpreting the influencers as a whole before they were exposed to the stimuli. Because we had to use fake influencers, we were not able to detect the level of interest each respondent had. By using a real influencer, we would be able to detect differences between followers and non-followers as well as the depth of the relationship each participant had with the influencer. This could be on how many channels they follow the influencer, read their content and if there exist a two-way communication between the follower and the influencer.

For future research, it would be more authentic to use real influencers or use constructed influencers, that e.g. over the duration of a year, gain followers and then are used in an experiment. Using a true environment with real influencers would make it easier for the respondents to immerse themselves in the situation and again being able to give more in debt attitude evaluations. This would on the other hand, be vastly more time consuming as well as expensive. By using real influencers, researchers may be more restricted in how the experiment would be conducted as well as having less control over historical or future behavior the influencer has before, during or after the experiment. Other extraneous variables such as the environment the respondents are in when exposed, e.g. reading quickly on their phone on the subway, are all factors that may negatively affect the results when using a field experiment. (Malhotra, 2010)

In our main study we used two types of products, Nike shoes and Nivea deodorant, each representing its' own product category, hedonic or utilitarian. We decided to use products that could fit both genders and all ages since our population are based on all Norwegian people exposed to influencer marketing. However, by using fake influencers, these being women, we had to use products that would fit their personas. It is therefore possible that because of the use of gender together with the products, male respondents did not see the products as fitting to their needs. Rather thinking the products were meant for women.

A future research on this topic could benefit from not only analyzing female influencer up against different product categories, but also adding male influencers to see the difference in influence towards the products as well as the relationship between male influencers and male followers.

In our analysis, we did find results that a negative comment section can have an effect on how respondents react on the blog-post. However, many participants did not use an appropriate amount of time to conduct the questionnaire. We therefore believe that they may have used too little time to either read the entire blog or comment section or used too little time in elaborating on each question. It is therefore possible that many respondents did not pay enough attention to the comment section. Adding the comment section on another page separate from the blog post could help in preventing respondents from not reading all comments. However, this would affect the realness of the blog-post, resulting in respondent knowing it was constructed and not a real post. Future researchers should evaluate the environment the reader is in and pre-test if a more controlled environment would lead to more elaboration on the comment section.

Related to the lack of research within the field and the time restriction on this study, we were not able to develop our own items to best be able to measure influencer attitudes. By using already existing measurements, we may not get the most accurate results for our hypotheses. It could be beneficial to not only evaluate the influencer as a person, but also separate the influencer and the content produced by the influencer. This especially when the sample consist of non-followers which do not have any prior knowledge about the influencer or if the measurements are made on expert influencers only, were the private person is more separated from the topics than a lifestyle influencer.

This lack of appropriate measurements bring us over to our second study. Again, it would be preferable to develop personality measurements, which is more in line with influencers. Adding items about their friendliness, relatability or genuineness would be, in hindsight, important items reflecting the relationship people feel with the influencer.

A major flaw in this study is the lack of measuring the extent of the relationship respondents had with their individually selected opinionleader. We chose that respondents should be able to select an opinionleader they liked, to ensure a liking and to some degree an involvement between respondent and influencer. However, we saw that it would have been beneficial to split the sample into groups according to their level of involvement with the opinionleader. Then we would be able to clearly see to what extent the relationship had to be, before self-image congruence had a mediating effect on the person's evaluation of the advertised brand. We are therefore not able to know if they have a high or low involvement with the opinion leader and at what level of information the respondents have towards the opinion leader. This may have affected their ability to answer sufficiently when respondents were asked to evaluate the opinion leader's personality traits. However, to implement this element, our questionnaire would have been dramatically expanded which could have affected the response rate significantly. Future research should therefore focus on not only fit and liking, but a deeper connection and involvement between opinionleader and fans/ followers.

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# 11.0 Appendix

## *11.1 Appendix 1: Main Model*
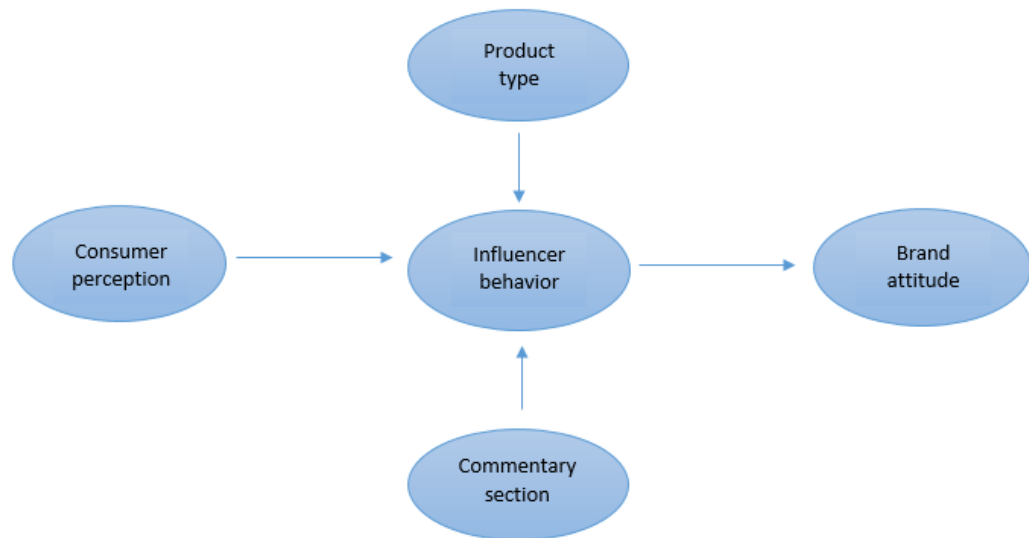


## *11.2 Appendix 2: Questionnaire 1 Study 1*

Q1 Vi (Gina M. Sandholmen og Camilla Ø. Olsen) skriver nå en masteroppgave i Strategic Marketing Management på Handelshøyskolen BI. Vi trenger i den sammenheng å innhente data via denne spørreundersøkelsen omhandlende Influencer Marketing.

Undersøkelsen er helt anonym og vi vil ikke samle inn noen form for identifiserbare personopplysninger om deg. Dette inkluderer også IP-adresser. Svarene fra undersøkelsen vil kun bli brukt til vår masteroppgave og alle innsamlede data vil kun bli delt med prosjektansvarlige og veileder/sensorer. Alle svar og opplysninger innhentet vil bli lagret frem til mastergraden er fullført, ut August 2019.

Det er helt frivillig å delta i undersøkelsen og du kan når som helst avbryte undersøkelsen uten å måtte oppgi noen grunn. Ufullstendige svar vil ikke bli registrert med i sluttresultatet.

Jeg godkjenner herved at mine svar kan bli brukt i forskningssammenheng:

○ Ja

○ Nei

Q2 Du vil i de neste spørsmålene bli spurt om holdningsspørsmål til kropp- og hygiene- varemerket Nivea sine deodoranter.

(Du vil i de neste spørsmålene bli spurt om holdningsspørsmål til trening- og sports- merket Nike og deres sneakers.)

Q3 Hvor enig/uenig er du i påstandene nedenfor angående Nivea (Nike) som merkevare?

| | Uenig | Litt uenig | verken uenig eller enig | Litt enig | Helt enig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Merket er appellerende | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Merket er ordinært | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Merket er attraktivt | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Merket er uærlig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Merket er pålitelig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Merket er troverdig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q4 Hvor sannsynlig/usannsynlig finner du påstandene nedenfor angående Nivea (Nike) deodoranter?

| | Svært usannsynlig | Litt usannsynlig | Verken sannsynlig eller usannsynlig | Litt sannsynlig | Svært sannsynlig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jeg vil prøve produktene? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg vil anbefale produktene til en venn eller familiemedlem? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg vil kjøpe produktene til meg selv? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg vil kjøpe produktene i gave? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg tror mine venner ville kjøpt produktene? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q5 Vi vil nå vise deg instagram-feeden til den kjente norske trenings- og kostholds- influenceren Caroline Sætermoe, også kjent som "Fitnessscarolinee". Etter du har studert profilen vil du bli spurt enkle spørsmål om dine holdninger til Caroline. Ta deg derfor god tid til å studere bildet før du trykker videre.

(Vi vil nå vise deg instagram-feeden til den kjente norske livsstils influenceren Kaja Marie Sandbek. Etter du har studert profilen vil du bli spurt enkle spørsmål om dine holdninger til Kaja Marie. Ta deg derfor god tid til å studere bildet før du trykker videre. )

| fitnessscarolinee ⌄ | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 6 847 innlegg | 60,3 k følgere | 5 516 følger |

Følg

Caroline Sætermoe 💛🍎🥑🥝🥝 ✅
Offentlig person
25 || Norway
🏋 PT
🍏 Healthy inlove with food
🔥 Fitness 4 life
🧘 Yoga gir glede i sjelen. #Namaste
Your brain is stopping you, not your body! Keep on trying. #GirlPower
Elsker å pushe meg max og sprenge grenser. Vi er alle skapt forskjellig, ikke sammenlikne deg med andre, du er din eneste konkurrent.
fitnesscaroline.com

SE OVERSETTELSE

| kajaaa_marie | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 6 847 innlegg | 60,3 k følgere | 5 516 følger |

Følg

Kaja Marie Sandbek 🎀👗👗 ✅
Offentlig person
🖼 Norwegian lifestyle influencer
🧪 Mote, sminke og fotografi
🌍 Elsker å utforske verden, festivalsommer next 👗
🌐 Mat er selve livet
Følg meg i livets mange vakre øyeblikk.
Snapchat: KajaSand
For collabs: kajamariesandbek@gmail.com
kajamariesandbek.com

SE OVERSETTELSE

Q6 Hvor enig/uenig er du i påstandene nedenfor om trenings- og kostholds-influenceren Caroline Sætermoe, også kjent som «Fitnessscarolinee»?:

(Hvor enig/uenig er du i påstandene nedenfor om livsstils influenceren Kaja Marie Sandbek?:)

| | Helt uenig | Litt uenig | Verken uenig eller enig | Litt enig | Helt enig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hun er attraktiv | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hun er stilig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hun er vakker | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hun er ærlig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hun er pålitelig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hun er troverdig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hun er ekspert | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hun er erfaren | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hun er kunnskapsrik | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q7 På neste side vil du bli presentert med et utdrag av et blogginnlegg skrevet av Caroline Sætermoe ("Fitnessscarolinee"). Etter å ha lest innlegget ber vi deg om å svare på relaterte spørsmål. Det er derfor viktig at du leser hele innlegget før du klikker deg videre.
(På neste side vil du bli presentert med et utdrag av et blogginnlegg skrevet av Kaja Marie Sandbek. Etter å ha lest innlegget ber vi deg om å svare på relaterte spørsmål. Det er derfor viktig at du leser hele innlegget før du klikker deg videre.)

# Going Fresh

Annonse i samarbeid med Nivea Norge

På stressende dager med mange møter med reise hit og dit, liker jeg å ha en kjapp morgenrutine som gjør at jeg føler meg fresh hele dagen. I tillegg liker jeg få produkter som er lette å ta med seg i en baggen. En av mine nye go to favoritter er Nivea Energy Fresh deodorant. Denne gir 48 timers beskyttelse og lukter friskt. Den inneholder heller ikke alkohol, så man kan trygt shave rett før påføring om man har dårlig tid.

Over til noe annet... På vei til dagens første møte ble jeg helt sjokkert over hvor mange tiggere og uteliggere det er i denne byen. Kan de ikke gå et annet sted så ikke bybildet skjemmes eller evt. skaffe seg en jobb som alle andre? Jeg mener iallefall at det ikke finnes noen unnskyldning for å se sånn ut som de gjør. Hørt om en dusj og kam?! Man kan jo skaffe seg mye fint tøy brukt eller kjøpe på salg for eksempel.

Uansett... Som sagt hadde jeg en hektisk dag i dag. Selv med mye stress, lange møter og en liten joggetur for å rekke en yoga time, holdt Nivea deodoranten meg fresh og velluktende gjennom hele dagen. Et lite tips til alle dere travle jenter der ute. Stå på! Girl Power!

Del dette inlegget på:  f  𝕏  ✉  ➤  🔖

Legg igjen en kommentar

# Going Fresh

Annonse i samarbeid med Nike

I dag kunne jeg endelig hente mine nye Nike Air VaporMax 2019 Sneakers på postkontoret. Ingenting er vel bedre treningsmotivasjon enn å starte vårens løpeøkter med fresht nytt treningstøy og sko.

På vei hjem fra postkontoret ble jeg derimot helt sjokkert over hvor mange tiggere og uteliggere det er i denne byen. Kan de ikke gå et annet sted så ikke bybildet skjemmes eller evt. skaffe seg en jobb som alle andre? Jeg mener iallefall at det ikke finnes noen unnskyldning for å se sånn ut som de gjør. Hørt om en dusj og kam?! Man må bare ta seg sammen og pushe seg selv til å bli bedre og gjøre bedre.

Uansett, jeg har gledet meg lenge til å få disse skoene. Har alltid elsket Nike sine sko, men VaporMax er et must have. Ikke bare er de sykt behagelige både til trening, men de passer også helt perfekt til et festantrekk. Nike gir deg også muligheten til å lage ditt helt egne unike design. Jeg har selv designet tre par i sort, rød og lilla, men skal klikke hjem to nye i gull og hvit. Ingenting er vel bedre enn litt vår-freshe sneakers.

Del dette inlegget på:  f  𝕏  ✉  ➤  🔖

Legg igjen en kommentar

Q8 Hva heter merkevaren du ble presentert for i teksten?

○ Dove

○ Nivea

○ Adidas

○ Nike

○ Reebok

○ Dr Greve

Q 9 Etter å ha lest blogginnelgget, vil vi nå igjen spørre deg om dine holdninger til trenings- og kostholds- influenceren Caroline sætermoe (fitnessscarolinee) og Nivea samt deres deodoranter.
Klikk pilen i høyre hjørne for å fortsette.

(Etter å ha lest blogginnelgget, vil vi nå igjen spørre deg om dine holdninger til livsstils influenceren Kaja Marie Sandbek og Nivea samt deres deodoranter.
Klikk pilen i høyre hjørne for å fortsette.)

Q10 Hvor enig/uenig er du i påstandene nedenfor om trenings- og kostholds-influenceren Caroline Sætermoe, også kjent som «Fitnessscarolinee»?:

(Hvor enig/uenig er du i påstandene nedenfor om livsstils influenceren Kaja Marie Sandbek?:)

| | Helt uenig | Litt uenig | Verken uenig eller enig | Litt enig | Helt enig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hun er attraktiv | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hun er stilig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hun er vakker | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hun er ærlig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hun er pålitelig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hun er troverdig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hun er ekspert | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hun er erfaren | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Hun er kunnskapsrik | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q11 Hvor enig/uenig er du i påstandene nedenfor angående Nivea (Nike) som merkevare?

| | Helt uenig | Litt uenig | Verken enig eller uenig | Litt enig | Helt enig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Merket er appellerende | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Merket er ordinært | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Merket er attraktivt | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Merket er uærlig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Merket er pålitelig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Merket er troverdig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q12 Hvor sannsynlig/usannsynlig finner du påstandene nedenfor angående Nivea deodoranter (Nike sneakers)?

| | Svært usannsynlig | Litt usannsynlig | Verken sannsynlig eller usannsynlig | Litt sannsynlig | Svært sannsynlig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Du ville kjøpt produktene? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Du ville anbefalt produktene til en venn eller familiemedlem? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Du ville kjøpt produktene til deg selv? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Du ville kjøpt produktene i gave? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Du tror dine venner ville kjøpt produktene? | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q13 Kjønn?

○ Mann

○ Kvinne

○ Annet

○ Ønsker ikke å oppgi kjønn

Q14 Alder? (skriv inn tallet)

_____

Q15 Instagramkontoen, influenceren, blogginnlegget og alle påstandene du ble presentert for er fiktive og kun til bruk i denne undersøkelsen. Påstandene representerer på ingen måte synspunkter og holdninger til merkevare brukt i teksten. Denne undersøkelsen er heller **ikke** i samarbeid med merkevaren som er brukt i teksten.

**Trykk på pilen til høyre for å avslutte undersøkelsen.**

## *11.3 Appendix 3: Comment section*

Negative comments:

| | Kari |
|---|---|
| | 24.04.2019 KL. 19:14 |
| | Herregud dette kan du ikke mene! Ikke alle er like privilegerte som deg her i verden. |
| | Reply |

**Kari**
24.04.2019 KL. 19:14
Herregud dette kan du ikke mene! Ikke alle er like privilegerte som deg her i verden.
Reply

**Silje Marie**
24.04.2019 KL. 19:22
Du burde skamme deg for å si slikt.
Reply

**Anonym**
24.04.2019 KL. 19:55
Ikke alle kan bli rike av å gjøre "ingenting" slik som deg.
Reply

**Martin**
24.04.2019 KL. 20:13
Det der er helt avskyelig å si! du vet ingenting om hva de har gått igjennom.
Reply

**Karianne**
25.04.2019 KL. 09:12
Du bør ikke tro de sitter der frivillig. Respektløst!
Reply

**Anonym**
25.04.2019 KL. 15:33
Nå ble jeg helt sjokkert.
Reply

Positive comments:

**Kari**
24.04.2019 KL. 19:14
Helt enig! godt noen sier det som det er.
Reply

**Silje Marie**
24.04.2019 KL. 19:22
Synes det er uhyggelig når de sitter og tigger ja.
Reply

**Anonym**
24.04.2019 KL. 19:55
Du får sagt det! de bør bli tvangsflyttet.
Reply

**Martin**
24.04.2019 KL. 20:13
Har ikke noe til overs for dem jeg heller.
Reply

**Karianne**
25.04.2019 KL. 09:12
Ikke er de høflige når de får noe annet enn penger heller, så tror ikke de egentlig har det så ille.
Reply

**Anonym**
25.04.2019 KL. 15:33
Det blir bare fler og fler... staten bør gjøre noe asap.
Reply

---

### 11.4 Appendix 4: Cronbach's alpha study 1

| | Main construct | Items | Cronbachs alpha |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Pre brand* | Attractive | Liking<br>Appealing | .865 |
| | Trustworthiness | Honest<br>Reliable<br>Credible | .799 |
| | Purchase intention | Buy in general<br>Recommend<br>Buy myself<br>Buy as a gift<br>Friends buying | .889 |
| *Pre influencer* | Attractive | Attractive<br>Classy<br>Beautiful | .873 |
| | Trustworthiness | Honest<br>Reliable<br>Trustworthy | .793 |
| | Expertise | Expert<br>Experienced<br>Knowledgeable | .901 |
| *Post brand* | Attractive | Liking<br>Appealing | .897 |
| | Trustworthiness | Reliable<br>Credible | .907 |
| | Purchase intention | Buy in general<br>Recommend<br>Buy myself<br>Buy as a gift<br>Friends buying | .921 |
| *Post influencer* | Attractiveness | Stylish | - |
| | Trustworthiness | Honest<br>Reliable<br>Trustworthy | .793 |
| | Expertise | Expert<br>Experienced<br>Knowledgeable | .901 |

## *11.5 Appendix 5: Questionnaire 2 Study 2*

Q1 Vi (Gina M. Sandholmen og Camilla Ø. Olsen) skriver nå en masteroppgave i Strategic Marketing Management på Handelshøyskolen BI. Vi trenger i den sammenheng å innhente data via denne spørreundersøkelsen som handler om Influencer Marketing.

Undersøkelsen er helt anonym og vi vil ikke samle inn noen form for identifiserbare personopplysninger om deg. Dette inkluderer også IP-adresser. Svarene fra undersøkelsen vil bli behandlet konfidensielt og vil kun bli brukt til vår masteroppgave. Alle innsamlede data vil kun bli delt med prosjektansvarlige og veileder/sensorer. Alle svar og opplysninger innhentet vil bli lagret frem til mastergraden er fullført, ut August 2019.

Det er helt frivillig å delta i undersøkelsen og du kan når som helst avbryte undersøkelsen uten å måtte oppgi noen grunn. Ufullstendige svar vil ikke bli registrert med i sluttresultatet.

Jeg godkjenner herved at mine svar kan bli brukt i forskningssammenheng:

○ Ja (1)

○ Nei (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Vi (Gina M. Sandholmen og Camilla Ø. Olsen) skriver nå en masteroppgave i Strategic Marketing Man... = Nei*

Q2 Skriv inn navnet på en norsk influencer du liker i tekstboksen under. (Influencer= person kjent fra blogg, instagram eller andre sosiale medier)

(Skriv inn navnet på en kjendis du liker i tekstboksen under. (Kjendis= person kjent fra film, musikk eller sport))

_____

Q3 Du vil i de neste spørsmålene bli spurt om dine holdninger til leskedrikkmerket Pepsi. Ingen svar er rett eller galt, vi ønsker bare dine egne meninger.

Q4 Hvor enig/uenig er du i påstandene nedenfor angående merket Pepsi?

| | Helt uenig | Litt uenig | Verken enig eller uenig | Litt enig | Helt enig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pepsi er appellerende | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Pepsi er likandes | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Pepsi er bra | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Pepsi er ærlige | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Pepsi er pålitelige | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Pepsi er troverdige | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q5 Hvor sannsynlig/usannsynlig finner du påstandene nedenfor angående produktene til Pepsi?

| | Veldig usannsynlig | Litt usannsylnig | Verken sannsynlig eller usannsynlig | Litt sannsynlig | Veldig sannsynlig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jeg ville prøve ett av deres produkter | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ville anbefalt produktene til en venn eller familiemedlem | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ville kjøpt produktene til meg selv | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg tror mine venner ville kjøpt produktene | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q6 Forrige uke inngikk ${Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} et samarbeid med leskedrikkmerket Pepsi. Fredag formiddag bekreftet ${Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} på sin blogg at samarbeidet var signert, og at ${Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} gleder seg til å kunne promotere Pepsi i tiden fremover. Pepsi sin talsperson beskriver samarbeidet overfor VG som "...en gylden mulighet til å kunne etablere oss sterkere innenfor våre kundegrupper, da vi mener ${Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} har verdier som sammenfaller godt med hva Pepsi ønsker å være". Videre skriver ${Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} på sin blogg at "..Jeg er så glad for at jeg endelig kan avsløre til dere at jeg har fått et samarbeid med Pepsi. Jeg elsker deres produkter og spesielt er jeg en PepsiMax-fan. Jeg er derfor så glad for å kunne anbefale det videre til dere!"

Alternative text:

Forrige uke inngikk ${Q4/ChoiceTextEntryValue} et samarbeid med leskedrikkmerket Pepsi. Fredag formiddag bekreftet Pepsi overfor VG at samarbeidet var signert, og at ${Q4/ChoiceTextEntryValue} gleder seg til å kunne promotere merket Pepsi i årene fremover. Pepsi beskriver samarbeidet som "...en gylden mulighet til å kunne etablere oss sterkere innenfor våre kundegrupper, da vi mener ${Q4/ChoiceTextEntryValue} har verdier som sammenfaller godt med hva Pepsi ønsker å være". Videre skriver VG at "${Q4/ChoiceTextEntryValue} fredag kveld gjestet Senkveld hvor det beryktede samarbeidet her var et tema. ${Q4/ChoiceTextEntryValue} kunne fortelle at bakgrunnen for samarbeidet kommer av at ${Q4/ChoiceTextEntryValue} finner Pepsi svært attraktivt, og er stolt av å være Pepsi sin nye ambassadør".

Q7 Synes du samarbeidet mellom ${Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} og Pepsi er et passende samarbeid?

○ Ja, jeg synes samarbeidet passer

○ Jeg vet ikke

○ Nei, jeg synes ikke samarbeidet passer

Q8 Vi ønsker nå at du skal si noe om personligheten til

${Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue}. I hvilken grad mener du følgende påstander passer

til ${Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} ?

| | Svært liten grad | Liten grad | I noen grad | Stor grad | Svært stor grad |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} er jordnær | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} er ærlig | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} er fornuftig | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} er glad | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} er vågal | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} er energisk | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} er fantasifull | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} er "up-to-date" | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} er pålitelig | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} er intelligent | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Q2/ChoiceTextEntryValue} er suksessfull | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

Q9 Igjen ønsker vi å spørre deg, hvor enig/uenig er du i påstandene nedenfor angående merket Pepsi?

| | Helt uenig | Litt uenig | Verken enig eller uenig | Litt enig | Helt enig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pepsi er appellerende | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Pepsi er likandes | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Pepsi er bra | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Pepsi er ærlige | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Pepsi er pålitelige | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Pepsi er troverdige | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q10 Hvor sannsynlig/usannsynlig finner du påstandene nedenfor angående produktene til Pepsi?

| | Veldig usannsynlig | Litt usannsylnig | Verken sannsynlig eller usannsynlig | Litt sannsynlig | Veldig sannsynlig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jeg ville prøve ett av deres produkter | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ville anbefalt produktene til en venn eller familiemedlem | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ville kjøpt produktene til meg selv | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg tror mine venner ville kjøpt produktene | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

## Q11 I hvilken grad mener du følgende påstander passer til deg som person?

| | Svært liten grad | Liten grad | I noen grad | Stor grad | Svært stor grad |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jeg er jordnær | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg er ærlig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg er fornuftig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg er glad | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg er vågal | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg er energisk | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg er fantasifull | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg er "up-to-date" | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg er pålitelig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg er intelligent | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg er suksessfull | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg er "soss" | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg er sjarmerende | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg er frilufts-type | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg er tøff | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q12 I hvilken grad mener du følgende påstander passer til den personen **du skulle ønske å være**?

| | Svært liten grad | Liten grad | I noen grand | Stor grad | Svært stor grad |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jeg ønsker å være jordnær | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ønsker å være ærlig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ønsker å være fornuftig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ønsker å være glad | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ønsker å være vågal | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ønsker å være energisk | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ønsker å være fantasifull | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ønsker å være "up-to-date" | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ønsker å være pålitelig | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ønsker å være intelligent | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ønsker å være suksessfull | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ønsker å være "soss" | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ønsker å være sjarmerende | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ønsker å være frilufts-type | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Jeg ønsker å være tøff | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Q13 kjønn?

○ Mann

○ Kvinne

○ Annet

○ Ønsker ikke å oppgi

Q14 Alder? (Skriv bare inn tallene)

_____

## 11.6 Appendix 6: Cronbach's alpha Study 2

| | Main construct | Items | Cronbachs alpha |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Opinionleader* | Sincerity | Down-to-earth Honest Wholesome Cheerful | .804 |
| | Excitement | Daring Spirited Imaginative | .795 |
| | Competence | Reliable Intelligent Successful | .814 |
| | Sophistication | Charming | - |
| | Ruggedness | Tough | - |
| | Total Opinionleader | All variables above | .811 |
| *Actual- self* | Sincerity | Down-to-earth Honest Wholesome Cheerful | .717 |
| | Excitement | Daring Spirited Imaginative | .745 |
| | Competence | Reliable Intelligent Successful | .712 |
| | Sophistication | Charming | - |
| | Ruggedness | Tough | - |
| | Total Actual self | All variables above | .774 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Ideal- self* | Sincerity | Down-to-earth<br>Honest<br>Wholesome<br>Cheerful | .828 |
| | Excitement | Daring<br>Spirited<br>Imaginative | .813 |
| | Competence | Reliable<br>Intelligent<br>Successful | .796 |
| | Sophistication | Charming | - |
| | Ruggedness | Tough | - |
| | Total Ideal self | All variables above | .858 |