



LUND UNIVERSITY
School of Economics and Management

The Slender Line from Valentine to Vampire

An experimental study about the appearance of an overshadowing effect on brand recall with the use of influencers

by

Lucia Romina Luzzi and Kim Kassandra Rosengarten

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Supervisor: Johan Jansson
Examiner: Veronika Tarnovskaya

Abstract

- Title:** The Slender Line from Valentine to Vampire –
An experimental study about the appearance of an overshadowing effect on brand recall with the use of influencers
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- Authors:** Lucia Romina Luzzi and Kim Cassandra Rosengarten
- Supervisor:** Johan Jansson
- Examiner:** Veronika Tarnovskaya
- Thesis Purpose:** The aim is to investigate (1) whether the use of influencers in advertisements has a negative effect on brand recall in general and (2) which conditions enhance or weaken such a negative effect.
- Methodology:** A combination of experimental and case based research was applied to establish control (unknown model) and experimental groups (influencer) for different cases in order to test for brand recall under various conditions.
- Theoretical Perspective:** The study is mainly based on theories concerning influencer marketing and social media. Furthermore, theories of celebrity endorsement, especially one study by Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler (2015), are applied as comparative research.
- Empirical Data:** The empirical data of this study was gathered through a web-based questionnaire of 251 male and female participants.
- Results:** The results demonstrate that the use of influencers has partially a negative effect on brand recall. Furthermore, brand and influencer familiarity as well as gender moderate this relationship. Against the profound prediction, influencer-brand congruence has no significant influence on the relationship.
- Conclusion:** The study was able to contribute to existing theory as the occurrence of the vampire effect in influencer endorsement was determined. Marketers therefore have to be aware of the existence of the vampire effect when considering influencer endorsement strategies. However, a direct negative impact can only be found for unaided brand recall. A brand that is using influencer endorsement in an already existing environment can overcome this negative effect.
- Keywords:** *Vampire effect, influencer marketing, brand recall, advertising effectiveness*

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

To begin with, we throw the reader back to the times before the turn of the millennium: Stars covered the walls in teen rooms and we remember the ‘cool kid’ at school everyone looked up to. These people were the influencers of earlier times, with a huge community trying to imitate them. Regardless of kind, everyone knows someone who influences others, from individuals to entire nations. The same goes for brands trying to sell their products through advertising that includes people who have a powerful impact on consumers: celebrities and influencers.

While celebrities have already been studied to a high extent (e.g. Atkin & Block 1983; Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Langmeyer & Walker, 1991a, 1991b; McCracken, 1989; Misra & Beatty, 1990), influencers have rarely been researched within academia. In most of the studies, celebrities are defined as publicly known persons or individuals who are recognised for exceptional performance in a certain area such as acting or sport. And while celebrities are highly present in the media due to their professions (e.g. Baker & Churchill, 1977; Friedman & Friedman, 1979; Kahle & Homer, 1985), influencers are, for example, popular because of certain characteristics or their social status (Van den Bulte & Joshi, 2007). However, celebrities exert influence on the public and their fans by admiration or imitation. Consequently, consumers and fans quickly adopt the brands and products endorsed or used by the celebrity (Meyers, 2009). The concept of influencers on the other hand highlights how certain individuals, ‘influentials’ (Keller & Berry, 2003; Weimann, 1994) or ‘influencers’, possess a combination of desirable attributes. These can be personal attributes such as credibility, expertise or enthusiasm as well as network attributes like connectivity or centrality. Those attributes in turn allow them to affect a disproportionately large number of others (Watts, 2002; Kempe, Kleinberg & Tardos, 2003), especially in a social media environment. One can find vast amounts of definitions for social media in the literature. Those are often general descriptions, for example by Boyd and Ellison (2007), who define social media as “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (p. 211).

In terms of commercial purposes of social media, this evolving network of individuals led to a shift from solely traditional brand advertising strategies to rather new approaches (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Peters, Chen, Kaplan, Ognibeni & Pauwels 2013; Hahn, Scherer, Basso & Brachak dos Santos, 2016). The flows of information about a brand’s products or services are no longer only generated by the marketers itself, but originate in the marketplace (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). This combination of user-generated content through other consumers’ experience and highly interactive networks inference has changed the way in which consumers are influenced - from brand-driven to consumer-driven, namely word-of-mouth

(Milewicz & Saxby, 2013; Perkins & Fenech, 2014). Although word-of-mouth was already seen as important in the beginning of brand management, it did not directly impact the marketplace dynamics as the dissemination of information was at a very low level (Richins & Root-Shaffer, 1998; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Yet, growing interconnectivity and the declining trust in brand-driven advertisement steers word-of-mouth to take on a major role in today's marketing strategies (Bughin, Doogan & Vetvik, 2010; Fashion Beauty Monitor & Econsultancy, 2016). This is mainly due to the fact that word-of-mouth recommendations in online networks, also referred to as electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), are seen as increasingly credible (Lin, Li & Wang, 2017). However, both traditional and social media activities taken together can enhance consumers' behaviour and awareness towards a brand (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). In this context, academic research continuously proves that using well-known people for on- and offline marketing efforts influences consumers in a favourable way (Atkin & Block, 1983; Freiden, 1984; Till, 1998; Keller, 2012). On the one hand, celebrity endorsement provides brands with the possibility to benefit from various positive effects such as creating and maintaining consumer attention to advertisement, standing out from a wide pool of advertisements (Sherman & Langen, 1985), entering foreign markets, and breaking through many blockades (Erdogan, 1999). On the other hand, researchers have also recognised the possibilities of forging alliances with influencers to promote a brand or organisation (Uzunoglu & Misci Kip, 2014). This provides companies with an ability to enhance relationships with key audiences, improve the brand's reputation, drive consumer awareness of the brand's online activities, and collect consumers' comments and feedback (Gillin, 2007). In this context, companies have also noticed the power of the platform's most influential members. While celebrities use their recognition in favour of a brand or product by, for example, being shown with it in an advertisement (McCracken, 1989), influencers can exert a direct impact on their connected network by making suggestions, resulting in the search for purchase and use of products (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996). In order to benefit from the opportunities social media influencers provide, companies seek to take advantage of an influencer's perceived characteristics such as credibility (Schmallegger & Carson, 2008) and expertise (Droge, Stanko, & Pollitte, 2010; Wagner, 2004). However, research conducted within the field of celebrity endorsement shows that there can also be negative effects when using a well-known brand endorser (Cooper, 1984; Kaikati, 1987; Rossiter & Percy, 1987; Mowen & Brown, 1981; Belch & Belch, 2011; Evans, 1988):

“The use of celebrities, if they don't have a distinct and specific relationship to the product they are advertising, tends to produce the ‘vampire effect’: they suck the lifeblood of the product dry; the audience remembers the celebrity but not the product” (Evans, 1988, p. 35).

The vampire effect is seen as the most striking negative effect in a brand endorsement situation and occurs when celebrities overshadow the endorsed brand and a consumer only remembers the celebrity (Belch & Belch, 2011; Rossiter & Percy, 1987). A recent experiment by Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler (2015) confirms the existence of the overshadowing in practice. The researchers used brand recall as the key performance indicator when analysing the vampire effect. Consequently, a crucial concern of marketers is that the consumers will fail to recognise that the brand is being promoted because they focus their attention on the celebrity (Rossiter & Percy, 1987). In light of the development of social media in becoming an increasingly crucial part of a brand's marketing mix (Mangold & Faulds, 2009), the concern

of a possible overshadowing has expanded to the brand's social media activities, particularly with regard to the use of influencers.

In this context, not only the brand-endorser relationship is of importance in order to avoid negative effects. For example, research found that there are crucial differences when it comes to the attention and attitude towards social media advertisements with influencers. This led researchers like Goodrich (2014) to the hypothesis that “[m]ales will pay relatively greater attention to the online advertisements than will females” (p.36). However, in the course of his study, the author found out that although males pay greater attention to the online advertisements, females are more likely to have a positive attitude towards the brand and its advertisement. Therefore, brands also have to take gender differences in online advertisement effectiveness into consideration when working with an influencer.

Nevertheless, general research on influencers is rare as only business-related rather than academic critique can be found. In such articles, it is for example mostly seen as precarious, with little scientific evidence of success. And while celebrity endorsement addresses a bigger crowd, the concept of influencers is criticised for just acting in a given community (Satell, 2014). Yet, as far as we are aware, no theoretical contributions about theory testing on unfavourable conditions of using influencers have been introduced in the academic literature.

1.2 Research Aim and Purpose

Influencers are of crucial importance for today's advertising business through the rise of social media. Hence, the aim of this paper is to investigate (1) whether the use of influencers in advertisements has a negative effect on brand recall in general and (2) which conditions enhance or weaken such a negative effect. In particular, we intend to gain further knowledge about a possible occurrence of the vampire effect, which has already been studied in connection to celebrity endorsement. To do so, we analyse the relationship between influencer endorsement and impaired brand recall within an advertising situation and therefore contribute to a more balanced understanding of the matter. Thus, by expanding the academic literature about the usage of influencers, we aim to provide marketers and researchers with useful insights into the effectiveness of influencer endorsement.

1.3 Research Question

Under what conditions does the usage of influencers in advertisements have a negative effect on brand recall for the endorsed brand?

1.4 Outline of the Thesis

The previous research leads to two problematic conclusions. Firstly, researchers have solely viewed social media influencers according to the old definition of influencers where they are considered the new opinion leaders and market mavens of the digital platforms. Yet, these influencers have evolved into people with celebrity-like characteristics (e.g. Senft, 2008). Secondly, research about social media influencers seems to be mainly devoted to highlighting the possibilities of using them and how valuable they can be rather than looking at possible risks for a company.

In order to determine those potential risks, we draw on previous research about celebrity endorsement and the vampire effect within an experimental study. Although celebrities and influencers, considered individually, exhibit certain different characteristics, both concepts have the same attributes when being considered in connection to their marketing framework: credibility, attractiveness, and power. These characteristics were first introduced by Kelman (1961) who states that a consumer needs to (1) identify with the endorser or influencer and (2) internalise the message transferred. If this is not the case, an overshadowing can occur. In order to measure a possible absence of crucial attributes, those characteristics were integrated in several celebrity endorsement concepts that examine the relationship between the endorser and the brand. Amongst others, those concepts are presented in the following theoretical framework and serve as a basis for the methodology used to conduct our study. Thereafter, an analysis of the data is conducted where the results are put into the relevant research context. The conclusion will give insights into our understanding of the results and analysis. As we aim to provide new and relevant insights into influencer endorsement and its possible negative effects, the thesis ends with practical and managerial implications as well as possible limitations that need to be considered.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Celebrity Endorsement

In academia, celebrity endorsement is described as a promotional technique of marketing and communication actions to enhance the integration of brand, product, and message. This justifies the partly significant expenditures and investments companies are willing to take (e.g. Belch & Belch, 2013; Charbonneau & Garland, 2005; Choi, Lee & Kim, 2005; Kim & Na, 2007). In this context, research is concerned with the usage of celebrities or non-celebrities as endorsers. On the one hand, spokespersons (non-celebrities) are developed by the company and therefore have congruent characters with the brand and target audience. Companies have great control over them. Celebrity endorsers on the other hand, have created their public persona over time and therefore companies have limited control over them (Tom, Clark, Elmer, Grech, Masetti & Sandhar, 1992). Academic opinions vary greatly regarding the benefits of celebrity endorsers. Some researchers (e.g. Tom et al. 1992; Mehta, 1994) support the usage of non-celebrity endorsers due to the strong linkage between them and the brand, as it is unique, and in advertising conditions consumers focus more on the brand instead of the endorser. On the contrary, other researchers found that celebrity endorsers cause more positive attitudes towards advertisements as well as greater purchase intentions than non-celebrities (Atkin & Block, 1983; Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983). Additionally, the studies of Agrawal and Kamakura (1995) and Mathur, Mathur and Rangan (1997) about the celebrity endorser's impact on a company's profitability support the use of celebrity endorsers. Nevertheless, the celebrity's public persona has to match the endorsed products and targeted audience (Erdogan, 1999) as well as entail crucial characteristics such as being credible, attractive, likable, and trustworthy, as well as being able to represent a person with whom a consumer desires to identify him- or herself (e.g. Erdogan, 1999; Evans, 1988; Kahle & Homer, 1985; Langmeyer & Walker, 1991a, 1991b; McCracken, 1989; McGuire, 1985; Misra & Beatty, 1990). Otherwise, negative effects such as the vampire effect can occur.

2.1.1 Brand Recall and the Vampire Effect

Brand recall, being referred to as a powerful mechanism (Till, 1998), serves as a foundation for testing the occurrence of a vampire effect when using influencers as sales tools. Brand recall is part of Keller's (2006) model of Customer Based Brand Equity (CBBE). CBBE refers to the value of the brand, "ultimately derived in the marketplace from the words and actions of consumers" (Keller, 2006, p. 2). Consumers' knowledge of the brand therefore influences their response to it by means of, for example, the brand's marketing activities. In this context, brand awareness is particularly important as it can increase the probability of being recognised by consumers (Keller, 2006; Kapferer, 2012). Whereas brand recognition only measures a potential recallability of the brand through a single brand element, brand recall measures the "consumer's ability to identify a brand under a variety of circumstances" (Keller, 2006, p. 8) such as within an advertisement including an endorser. Brand recall is

measured in two forms: *unaided*, which is the spontaneous recall of the brand and *aided*, referring to a set of brands to choose from (Keller, 2006; Kapferer, 2012). Unaided (spontaneous) brand recall is crucial for the communication of a new brand while aided recall is measured in connection with competitors in the marketplace (Kapferer, 2012). From a managerial standpoint, it is therefore of importance to analyse both unaided and aided brand recall to ensure that the overshadowing is at a minimum when using an endorser. Evans (1988) argued that the vampire effect occurs if the connection between the celebrity and the endorsed brand is absent and the audience therefore only remembers the celebrity. Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler (2015) defined the existence of a vampire effect in celebrity endorsement as a “decrease in brand recall in an advertisement ... with a celebrity endorser compared ... [to] the same advertising stimulus with an unknown but equally attractive endorser” (p. 4). In this context, we test whether the recall of the brand is also negatively affected in influencer endorsement situations with the first hypothesis:

H1: Recall of the brand is lower when the advertisement entails an influencer compared to when the advertisement entails an equally attractive but unknown model.

2.1.2 Models of Celebrity Endorsement

In the context of investigating the characteristics of celebrity endorsement and its usage effects, particularly the vampire effect, several models were introduced in an academic context. These models are interrelated and follow a historical development: The Source Credibility Model, the Source Attractiveness Model, the Meaning Transfer Model as well as the Product Match-up Hypothesis. While the first two models focus on the source, meaning the endorser as a person and their characteristics, several researchers such as McCracken (1989) criticised this one-sided observation of celebrity endorsement. One should also take the brand, the product or the relation between the endorser and the endorsed brand into account. It is for this reason that the two models which were developed thereafter examine the cognitive link and congruence, meaning the perceived fit between the brand and the endorser. All concepts implicated can be measured through brand recall.

Research found that influencers take on celebrity-like characteristics by, for example, accumulating a following on social media through a textual and visual narration of their everyday lives (e.g. Senft, 2008). This extensive involvement in social media networks results in brand-relevant connections to consumers (e.g. Hall, 2010) in the same way a celebrity’s prominence does. Thus, they possibly imply the same effects as celebrities when being used as endorsers. It is for this reason that research about the usage of influencers and its effects is crucial for brands in order to weigh success factors and risks. Thereby, the models established in the context of measuring the effects of celebrity endorsement are of high relevance for our research. Although the credibility or attractiveness of an endorser cannot be directly formulated in a hypothesis, they still affect the endorsement effectiveness (Erfgen, Zenker & Sattler, 2015). Hence, those characteristics are a crucial basis for further research about the relationship between a brand and the endorser where hypotheses can be built.

The Source Credibility Model

The Source Credibility Model suggests that the effectiveness of a delivered message depends on the perceived level of trustworthiness and expertise of an endorser. Therefore, information from a credible source can influence opinions, beliefs, behaviour as well as attitudes (Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953) and is referred to as the internalisation process.

This model has been further studied by several researchers (e.g. Aaker & Myers, 1987; Kelman, 1961; Meenaghan, 1995; Ohanian, 1991; Shimp, 1997; Smith, 1973; Solomon, 1996). One significant contribution was made by Friedman & Friedman (1978), stating that trustworthiness of the endorser is the major determinant of a message's credibility. The researchers could demonstrate that likability is highly correlated with trust. Consequently, when selecting a trustworthy celebrity, advertisers are urged to collaborate with a very well-liked endorser.

The Source Attractiveness Model

As likability is not only related to trust, but also to the attractiveness of the endorser, the Source Credibility Model and its components constitute the basis for the Source Attractiveness Model. According to this model, consumers tend to form positive stereotypes about attractive and appealing people. This is the reason why they are being selected as endorsers for advertisements. Additionally, they are more successful at generating purchase intentions (Baker & Churchill Jr, 1977) and changing beliefs (Baker & Churchill Jr, 1977; Chaiken, 1979; Debevec & Keman, 1984). The physical attractiveness therefore defines the effectiveness of persuasive communication. This process is called identification since consumers desire to identify with such endorsers (Cohen & Golden, 1972). Further factors include familiarity (knowledge of celebrity), similarity (supposed resemblance), and affection for the celebrity (McGuire, 1985).

Kahle and Homer (1985) manipulated the physical attractiveness of an endorser and measured purchase intentions and attitude. Their findings indicated that likability of the product and purchase intentions towards it are higher if the participants have been exposed to an attractive celebrity. Several other researchers agree with this theory (Baker & Churchill Jr, 1977; Friedman, Termini & Washington, 1976; McGuire, 1985; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981; Shimp 1997; Singer, 1983; Solomon, 1996).

Adapting both previously discussed source models to the influencer field, several commonalities can be detected. As stated by Keller & Berry (2003) and Weimann (1994), influencers or influentials possess a combination of desirable attributes like expertise, credibility or trustworthiness. Furthermore, network attributes like connectivity and centrality highly characterise influencers (Barbagallo, Bruni, Francalanci & Giacomazzi, 2012). These attributes make the influencer worth being admired and liked by their followers who can identify with him/her. Accordingly, both theories should remain of great significance with influencers in the same way as with celebrities.

The Meaning Transfer Model

Since consumers and practitioners expect a certain degree of match between the brand and the celebrity (Erdogan, 1999), it is relevant to analyse the relationship between the two components. Celebrities embody examples of a more general meaning transfer process. They add their own symbolic meaning to the endorsement process (McCracken, 1989) and transmit cultural meanings to products (Brierley, 1995; McCracken, 1989). McCracken's (1989) meaning transfer model encompasses three stages: (1) the formation of celebrity images, (2) the meaning transfer from celebrity to product, and finally (3) the meaning transfer from the product to the consumers. In the final step, consumers make the effort to transfer recognised symbolic product properties into meanings for their self-image (Levy, 1959; McCracken, 1989). Over time, the celebrity and the brand can be linked through the endorsement process and the audience might learn that they belong together (Till & Shimp, 1998). Hence, the assumption that a strong cognitive link might weaken the negative effect has been supported by their test results.

In the context of our study, we will not take the cognitive link between the influencer and the brand into consideration since brands often use several influencers as endorsers for their social media advertisements. Therefore, given the nature of social media advertisements, the development of a cognitive link between an influencer and the brand in general is less practicable than for example permanent advertisement with solely one celebrity.

The Product Match-Up Hypothesis

According to the Product Match-Up Hypothesis, the product message and messages conferred by a celebrity's image should be congruent for effective and beneficial advertising (Kamins, 1990). Consistent with several studies, consumers expect congruence between a celebrity endorser's perceived image and the endorsed product (Callcoat & Phillips, 1996; Erdogan, 1999; Ohanian, 1991; O'Mahony & Meenaghan, 1997). If brand-endorser congruence is absent, consumers can obtain the impression that the celebrity has been bought (Erdogan, 1999). In this context, Evans (1988) claims that the vampire effect can be evoked if the celebrity does not have a specific and distinct relationship to the endorsed product. In the context of our study, the perceived fit lies between the influencer's image and field of expertise and the brand. The second hypothesis is therefore as follows:

H2: The negative effect of an influencer on brand recall is greater in conditions of low perceived congruence between the influencer and the brand.

2.1.3 Familiarity

Research encompasses managerial implementations to avoid or eliminate the vampire effect such as developing a high celebrity-brand congruence and/or a strong cognitive link between the celebrity and the brand (Erfgen, Zenker & Sattler, 2015). A study by Misra and Beatty (1990), for example, finds evidence that the extent of the brand-celebrity match depends on the perceived fit between the celebrity's image and the brand. In this context, Erfgen, Zenker & Sattler (2015) examined the moderator brand familiarity in their study about the vampire effect as it was assumed to influence the relationship between the brand and the celebrity. However, despite all expectations, it has no significant effect on the appearance of the vampire effect (Erfgen, Zenker & Sattler, 2015). Nevertheless, when it comes to the use of influencers, we take brand familiarity into consideration. Since a cognitive link between an influencer and a brand is not practicable in a social media context, one can assume that brand familiarity needs to be given in order for a brand to ensure brand recall when advertising with an influencer. It is for the reason of the missing cognitive link between an influencer and the brand in influencer endorsement situations that influencer familiarity might also have an effect on brand recall in the same way brand familiarity does. We therefore hypothesise:

H3: The negative effect of an influencer on brand recall is greater in conditions of low brand familiarity.

H4: The negative effect of an influencer on brand recall is greater in conditions of low influencer familiarity.

2.2 Influencer Endorsement

Research about the role of influencers has been conducted in both offline and online contexts (e.g. Watts & Dodds, 2007). The breadth of the audience was considered the first and foremost indicator of influence in offline contexts. While traditional media are based on broadcasting, social media is interactive. During the last couple of years, researchers have therefore successfully located and explored influencers in online communication as these channels create a high availability of population-scale networked data generated by e-mail, instant messaging, mobile phone communication, and online social networks (Lyons & Henderson, 2005). By exerting e-WOM, the authors further state that online influencers have a wider reach via Facebook, Twitter, and blogs among their online social contacts compared to traditional face-to-face opinion leaders. In this context, other research has highlighted the positive effects of using social media to influence consumer preferences, purchase decisions, and (electronic) word-of-mouth (Michaelidou, Siamagka & Christodoulides, 2011; Kumar & Mirchandani, 2012). Hence, social media has resulted in offering multiple opportunities for brands by enabling the brand to 'work' with the consumer and create better products or services by several means while at the same time achieving internal marketing goals (Stephen & Toubia, 2010; Liang & Turban, 2011; Kim & Ko, 2012).

2.2.1 Social Media Marketing

“Social media marketing is an interdisciplinary and cross-functional concept that uses social media (often in combination with other communications channels) to achieve organizational goals by creating value for stakeholders...” (Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch, 2017, p. 123).

Since interactive online platforms allow the creation and dissemination of consumer-generated content and the opportunity to share information about products in a commercial sense, research has highlighted the effect of using social media to influence consumer preferences, purchase decisions, shopping experiences, and e-WOM (Lin, Li & Wang, 2017; Michaelidou, Siamagka & Christodoulides, 2011, Kumar & Mirchandani, 2012). This is not only due to brand-consumer interactions, but also through the social networks created on a consumer-consumer basis. Accordingly, those networks enable consumers to more strongly evaluate brands as well as purchase products in a well-informed manner (Wang & Zhang, 2012).

The interaction between brands and consumers in a social media environment can therefore be seen as a collaboration rather than a one-way communication (Andzulis, Panagopoulos and Rapp, 2012). But while social media offers brands a profitable opportunity to market themselves and their products in an interactive environment (Stephen & Toubia, 2010), the interaction also needs to be beneficial for consumers, for example, through actively perceiving value from the social media efforts (Andzulis, Panagopoulos & Rapp, 2012). In this context, the authors further state that although social media offers several benefits for brands, the marketing efforts still need to be directed to consumers in a strategic manner: there is no one-size-fits-all strategy on how to generate value for both the brand and the consumer through social media marketing. Social media can provide brands with opportunities to direct the communication to employees, managers, consumers, other brands, and other stakeholders simultaneously, yet requires strategic and at the same time creative ways to implement it as a beneficial tool into the organisational structure (Andzulis, Panagopoulos & Rapp, 2012). It is for this reason that brands nowadays make use of influential characters on those social media platforms in order to reach consumers and potential new customers, as they represent human sales tools that are highly popular among their followers and therefore have the power to influence them while at the same time providing value for both the brand and the consumers.

2.2.2 Influencers as Social Media Marketing Tools

There are three different characters an influencer can exert: *early adopter*, *opinion leader* or *market maven* (Feick & Price, 1987).

Early adopter is the second category in the innovation adoption curve, following the category of innovators and preceding by the early majority, late majority, and laggards (Rogers, 1962 in Robinson, 2012). Research suggests that this type of influencer exerts social pressure and therefore increases the adoption probability of imitators (Bass, 1969).

The concept of *opinion leaders* originates from the theory of two-step flow communication by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1956). This theory claims that interpersonal communication is more powerful in affecting attitudes of individuals compared to mass media (Weimann, 1994). The reason for the influence is primarily the influencer's intense involvement with a product category. This enduring involvement leads to a level of product category knowledge which establishes the title of 'local expert', making them become more authentic (Weimann, 1994).

In contrast to early adopters and opinion leaders whose influences tend to be product-specific, the *market maven* identified by Feick and Price (1987) is a source of interpersonal communication whose influence derives from general marketplace experience and knowledge. The authors further define a market maven as an individual who has information about many kinds of products and places to shop in order to respond to requests from consumers for market information. As marketplace experts, mavens are able to exert substantial influence over consumers' shopping behaviours.

In online contexts, a user's ability to influence the behaviour of others and a user's susceptibility to social influence have been studied (Aral & Walker, 2012; Trusov, Bodapati & Bucklin, 2010). The social media influence is not just depending on the influencer's personal attributes or network characteristics, but rather on the distribution of influence, susceptibility, and the likelihood of spontaneous adoption in their network. In this context, followers become a system of advertorial capillaries by duplicating, amplifying, and multiplying the influencer's content in their own circle of followers and friends (Kozinets, de Valck, Wojnicki & Wilner, 2010). Consequently, brands have to remember that "...what makes [influencers] truly valuable is the number and relevance of their extended or indirect connections" (Hall, 2010 in Booth & Matic, 2011, p. 186) to consumers as they significantly influence the tone and availability of marketing information themselves (Milewicz & Saxby, 2013).

We argue that with an increasing influence and a bigger set of character traits, influencers (in a social media context) can take on multiple roles. They have an expert status and act as online opinion leaders due to their knowledge, expertise, and concealed influential power. With their increasing presence in social media networks, they exert influence in many product categories and they are not solely experts in one. When we speak of influencers, we therefore mean characters which exert a widespread expert status as well as the power to influence others through their presence in social media. For the success of our study, we furthermore determine that those influencers did not gain their prominence in social media through, for instance, former acting roles in TV or movies or through former careers as musicians or athletes, but solely through their frequent involvement with followers on their social media platforms. One can say that they were unknown to the public before being present on social media and frequently involved with their followers.

2.2.3 Online Advertising Effectiveness

Studies about hemispheric processing confirm that visual (advertisement) stimuli activate the right hemisphere whereas the left hemisphere responds more when exposed to verbal incentives (e.g. Meyers-Levy, 1989). Based on these grounds, several researchers found that

gender differences in information processing occur as a consequence of the differences in brain activities (Kimura, 1969; Coltheart, Hull & Slater, 1975). Since men are seen as more selective processors, "...using schemas and heuristics rather than more detailed processing..." (Goodrich, 2014, p. 34), they rely on their right hemisphere (Kimura, 1969) and therefore focus on fewer areas of the advertisement stimuli and especially on images. Women on the other hand use their left hemisphere, which is connected to semantic information processing and analysis, focussing therefore more on all information available, especially by means of text (Schiessl, Duda, Thölke & Fischer, 2003; Pan, Hembrooke, Gay, Granka, Feusner & Newman, 2004; Wirth, Horn, König, Stein, Federspiel, Meier, Michel & Strik, 2007). Due to the nature of social media advertising which involves more graphic- than text-related content, our research might strengthen the findings that men tend not to spread their attention across the advertisement and rather focus on images while females do the opposite (Schiessl et al. 2003; Pan et al. 2004). We therefore hypothesise:

H5: Due to gender specific differences in information processing, the negative effect of an influencer on brand recall is greater on male consumers.

2.3 Endorsement Effectiveness

To conclude, several factors determine the effectiveness of celebrities and influencers. Since celebrity endorsement and its effectiveness is already researched extensively, an influencer effectiveness model can be built based on the given literature relating to credibility and attractiveness of the celebrity as well as the congruence and transferred meaning between the given celebrity and the endorsed brand. Both models are presented in Figure 2-1 and can be seen as an overview of the main factors that need to be taken into consideration when analysing the influencer effectiveness.

Although one can conclude that celebrity endorsers and influencers aim at the same purpose for a brand and possess several similar character traits, they still differ in some crucial points that make our research worth performing. Both are known by a large audience and are seen as credible. With regards to the Source Attractiveness Model, the likability of an influencer can be fulfilled to a greater extent since these brand advocates incorporate an expert-status for a specific product category or multiple ones, while celebrities embody a more representative status. Nonetheless, the attractiveness of influencers and celebrities are important to the same extent. In addition, both have the power to influence a target audience, and embody individuals whom the consumers desire to identify with (e.g. Cohen & Golden, 1972; Hovland, Janis & Washington, 1953; Kapitan, 2015; Kelman, 1961). The most essential difference is represented in the greater influential power of influencers in the social media area. Here, they address a specific community instead of addressing 'everyone' like a celebrity would do.

While celebrity effectiveness is mainly based on credibility, attractiveness, congruence, and meaning transfer, influencer effectiveness has to be measured under slightly different circumstances. One for example has to consider that while familiarity within studies in the

field of celebrity endorsement is mainly related to brand familiarity (e.g. Erfgen, Zenker & Sattler, 2015), our research about influencer effectiveness aims on analysing both brand and influencer familiarity. This is due to our assumption that while the cognitive link between a celebrity and a brand is important for the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, no cognitive link is established in influencer advertisements since brands (1) make use of several influencers at the same time and (2) do not work with a long-term advertisement strategy within social media as would be the case in, for example, TV advertisements. Since today's consumers have more trust in word-of-mouth and e-WOM rather than paid advertisement (Bughin, Doogan & Vetvik, 2010; Fashion Beauty Monitor & Econsultancy, 2016), the trustworthiness of an influencer is higher, referring to the Source Credibility Model. Nonetheless, gaining trust in a fast-moving social environment is difficult for an influencer since an average consumer is streaming online through 3,000 messages daily (Kapitan, 2015). But once the trustworthiness of an influencer is proven through his or her expert status, they serve as a more valuable brand endorser than celebrities.

When doing research in the field of celebrity endorsement, Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler (2015) and other researchers study the effectiveness using solely female participants. Since our research can be seen as the first study of its kind in the field of influencer effectiveness, it is geared towards the most balanced knowledge possible. We therefore take male and female participants into consideration when conducting our study and hence need to take into account the general differences in online advertisement effectiveness among male and female participants. The last difference between the effectiveness models is the social media use of consumers when it comes to the effectiveness of influencer advertisements. While celebrities are broadly known through mass media, we assume that influencers, in the way we define them, are solely known among consumers which are highly active in social media networks. Therefore, the social media activity is important to consider when analysing influencer effectiveness. In the same way as celebrity effectiveness, influencer effectiveness can be measured through brand recall in our study.

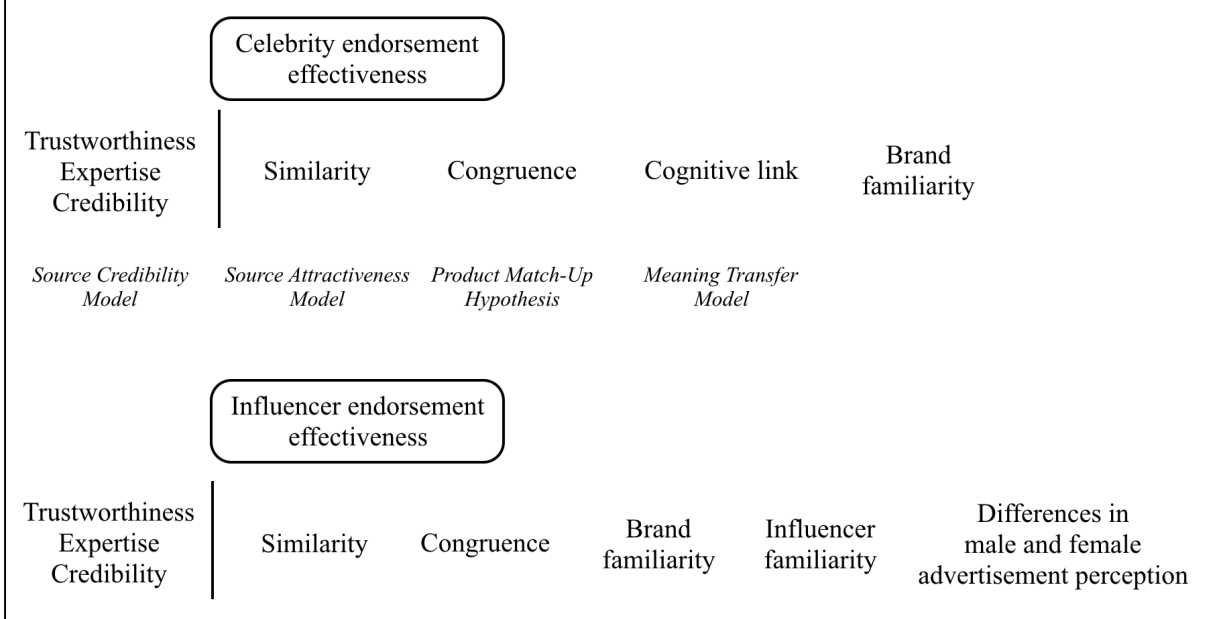


Figure 2-1: Items from celebrity and influencer models included in the study. (Own model)

2.4 Chapter Summary

An influencer study shows that 92% of consumers rely on the opinion of people they know (TapInfluence & Influitive, n.d.). Consequently, influencers are seen as the fastest growing and most effective advertising tool (Tomoson, 2015): Compared to paid advertising such as celebrity endorsement, word-of-mouth and e-WOM generate twice as many sales and a 37% higher customer retention rate (Bughin, Doogan & Vetvik, 2010). While research suggests only low significant economic returns for brands when using celebrities (Ding, Molchanov & Stork, 2011), a company nowadays earns \$6.50 for every single dollar spent on influencers (Tomoson, 2015). Nevertheless, both celebrities and influencers are often part of a brand's marketing strategy, because they exert power over their fans or followers and most likely, in the long-run, can thus change the consumer's purchase intentions in favour of the brand (e.g. Kumar & Mirchandani, 2012). Yet, one sees that endorsement can harm the brand. Through several historical models regarding the correlation between an endorser and a brand, the vampire effect was discovered as the most striking risk for a brand when using celebrity endorsement. In this context, regardless of whether the research in the field of celebrity endorsement addresses the topic in a positive or negative manner, it is abundant. In contrast, academia shows little interest in influencers and their usage effectiveness. However, by looking at the rising interest of companies into influencers as potential endorsers (Stephen & Toubia, 2010; Liang & Turban, 2011; Kim & Ko, 2012), we observe a need to further investigate the topic. In accordance with literature about celebrity endorsement, we discovered five key characteristics to look at when analysing potential risks in influencer endorsement: influencer attractiveness, congruence between the influencer and the endorsed brand, brand and influencer familiarity as well as gender differences in online advertising effectiveness. Consequently, the method that is going to be used to investigate the conditions under which influencer endorsement might harm brand recall also follows existing concepts and theories about celebrity endorsement and its usage.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

To test our purpose, we chose to take on a scientific approach, basing our analysis on a multi-case experiment conducted in 2015 by Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler. The previous research can be used as a comparative tool due to the similar nature of both celebrity and influencer endorsement concepts. By analysing our established hypotheses, we can give insights into (1) the general effectiveness of using influencers as marketing tools and (2) those conditions that possibly affect the occurrence and strength of the vampire effect.

As our study is the first of its kind, it serves as a basis for further research in the field of influencer effectiveness. To briefly introduce the general approach, the study will include a conventionally chosen group of participants to measure the brand's awareness through brand recall when using influencers. Divided in half, the groups are randomly exposed to brand advertisements, which include either an influencer in the experimental condition or an unknown endorser in the control condition. Thereafter, all participants answer the same questions with regard to recalling the endorsed brand - unaided and aided. Additionally, possible moderating effects/conditions are tested. Having the results, we can give statistically proven statements about whether existing theory about the vampire effect in celebrity endorsement also takes place with the use of influencers. Based on our quantitative analysis, we can then interpret the results and give theoretical and managerial implications.

3.2 Research Method

It is of high importance to explain the method used to conduct our study in order to fully understand the aim and purpose as well as the gained results. With regard to the epistemological position of our research, we take on a *positivistic research position* and therefore distinguish our experiment from the opposing position of social constructionists. Hence, our research contains the following assumptions of positivism: the observer is independent, the choice of what to study is of objective criteria and human interests are considered irrelevant. Additionally, problems are reduced into the simplest possible elements and concepts are defined to measure facts quantitatively through the formulation and testing of hypotheses. Furthermore, our explanations demonstrate some extent of causality as we test for the relationship between the usage of influencer endorsers in advertisements (cause) and brand recall (effect) (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). In addition, we also test for possible moderating effects (influencer-brand congruence, brand familiarity, influencer familiarity, and gender distinction).

Although we also used inquiries of social constructionists when reviewing the literature, we want to emphasise that the main comparison data within this research is of positivistic nature (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

The ontological position of our positivistic research is of *internal realistic nature*. We assume that there is a truth in negative effects of influencer endorsement, but this truth is obscure. Following previous research in the field of celebrity endorsement, we know that there are concrete scientific facts about the existence of an overshadowing effect, but they cannot be accessed directly in our field of interest by solely adapting the previous experiment. Internal realism is characterised by (1) the measurement of performance, which we will do by using brand recall as the unit of measurement for our scientific experiment as well as (2) the consideration of human judgement. Furthermore, the research aim is based on exposure, the analysis originates in independence tests and regression, and the generated outcomes are theory-tested. Even though our research has partly strong positivistic aspects such as hypotheses as a starting point and an experimental research design, it is safe to argue that the research is of internal realistic nature (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

Whether a research takes on a positivist or a constructionist perspective, each approach has weaknesses that need to be considered (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). With a positivistic and quantitative approach, our research method tends to be inflexible and artificial and is not effective in understanding processes or meanings as human interests are not perceived to be relevant. In general, positivistic research is not aiming to generate theories. As it is focusing on what is or what has recently been, implications for actions are not very obvious and it is hard to identify which changes and actions should take place in the future (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Nevertheless, a positivistic approach also exhibits crucial strengths. Our research can, for example, offer a wide coverage, is comparatively fast and economical and provides justification of policies and strategies. Additionally, it results in highly compelling conclusions (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). We are highly aware of the weaknesses of our research method. Nevertheless, the strengths outweigh the given weaknesses when it comes to the nature and purpose of our conducted research as this paper is not focusing on generating theory, but rather on testing it in order to identify convincing conclusions and give practical implications.

3.3 Research Design

The design of the research is survey-based (published online on social media platforms) and takes on a quantitative approach. This approach is in line with the positivistic nature of the research as it represents a positivistic character trait. While social constructionists tend to interpret outcomes as new insights or sense-making by criticising previous literature, we will test an existing theory and thereafter potentially modify the confirmed theory to generate a more appropriate version for our field of interest, the influencer sector (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

Through our study, we aim to expose a specific downside of influencer marketing. As a starting point, we therefore chose to build the analysis on five hypotheses. Three of them (H1, H2, and H3) were mainly evaluated through adapting and modifying the guiding experiments by Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler (2015) while at the same time taking related previous literature of the influencer field into consideration. Hypotheses H4 and H5 were established independently, solely based on online advertisement and influencer literature.

Our research contains both contrary approaches: *deductive* and *inductive*. Deductive theory is most commonly present in quantitative researches as it mainly tests existing theory. Consequently, our research process is referred to as a ‘top-down’ approach and is structured from the more general to the more specific. This research is also structured according to the deductive strategy as the five hypotheses of our study are evaluated based on reviewed theory. Furthermore, data is collected through a questionnaire and resulting findings of this questionnaire indicate the confirmation or rejection of all tested hypotheses. Even though it is considerably hard to identify implications for actions with positivistic research, we are able to give theoretical suggestions for further research as well as concrete practical implications based on the gathered data and results to feed them back to the previously drawn theory. This last step is inductive as these implications are derived from specific facts and are applied to the more general. However, it has to be taken into consideration that the rather small sample size does not allow a generalisation to the population as a whole, but rather to give general implications on how this first study contributes to existing theory. This process is needed to fully understand the causation and relationships drawn from the analysis of the collected data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Concluding, our research is mainly of deductive nature.

3.3.1 Reliability and Validity

Reliability, validity, and replication are the three criteria a research needs to meet. *Reliability* deals with the question of whether or not the findings and results of a study are repeatable. In other words, if the measures are consistent. Three factors are crucial for reliability: (1) *the stability of the measures* (i.e. measures of sampled respondents do not fluctuate and in case of readministration, there will be only little variations), (2) *internal reliability/consistency* (i.e. whether or not different indicators relate to the same thing and respondents score equal coherence), and (3) *inter-observer consistency* (i.e. whether or not different observers/respondents give consistent estimates of the same phenomenon) (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The *reliability* of our study will be given based on the ability to replicate the study and get the same results with only little variations at a later time. This will be possible with the same questionnaire design (the same advertisements with the same influencers, corresponding unknown models, and the same brands) and a posting on the same social media platforms under equal conditions. However, it should be noted that an exact replication of the study will only be possible under highly equal conditions such as using the same influencers and brands with an equal number of followers as well as developing similar advertisements as otherwise the necessary equality of the research requirements might not be given. The popularity, image, and familiarity of the influencer can change rapidly and, as the past has proven, social media networks like Facebook and Instagram enormously gained in attractiveness and users. Additionally, internal reliability is tested through the Cronbach’s alpha test.

Validity indicates whether or not a measurement of a concept indeed measures this concept and is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions generated from the research. In general, no research can be valid if it is not reliable. Our research is highly reliable and therefore provides the basis to test for validity. Four types of validity are of high importance in quantitative research: measurement, internal, external, and ecological validity (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Our study covers *measurement validity* as the dependent variable brand recall as well as two of the four tested moderating variables have already been tested in the context of celebrity endorsement. The measures of the devised concepts thereby reflect the concepts they are supposed to be denoting. This reasoning is also applicable for *internal validity* as it relates to the issue of causality and relationship associations and whether or not this relationship between the dependent (brand recall) and the independent variable (usage of influencer endorsers) is stable and demonstrates confidence. For our research, *external validity* is hard to fully assess due to strict time constraints (questionnaire only online for two weeks), limited possibilities to widely spread the questionnaire (no cooperation with an agency), and the experimental nature of the research in general. Furthermore, our research is highly specific as the study is limited to fashion and beauty brands, rather young consumers (participants) between 15 and 35 years, high knowledge about social media platforms as well as a concentration on the social media platforms Facebook and Instagram. Nevertheless, the questionnaire was spread the best possible way to be able to gain as many participants as possible as well as to achieve a meaningful sample and avoid biases. Additionally, the advertisements of the questionnaire were randomly assigned based on the two control questions elaborated later in this section. This highly improves the external validity of the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). *Ecological validity* is given as the questionnaire was conducted online in an atmosphere known by the participants (natural social settings), the designed advertisements are similar to already published advertisements of the brands, and consumers are exposed to such advertisements several times every day. It therefore represents a field experiment. However, the fact of having to answer a questionnaire in general slightly limits the ecological validity of the findings (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.3.2 Experimental Design of the Study

Our research is of *experimental design*. In general, an experimental design provides this paper with considerable confidence in the trustworthiness and robustness of its findings (Bryman & Bell, 2011; de Vaus, 2001).

The classical experimental design focuses on two variables: the dependent variable (the outcome) and the independent variable (intervention - the cause). The aim of this design is to remove the impact of other variables in order to clearly demonstrate the effect of the intervention (de Vaus, 2001). In an experiment, control groups have two purposes: Firstly, they provide us with a certain degree of control concerning possible effects of rival explanations regarding the results. Secondly, combined with a random assignment of the participants, they eliminate threats to validity, especially internal validity. Such eliminated threats are: (1) testing (subjects can become sensitised to the aims and purpose of the experiment), (2) history (possibility that events, not related to the manipulation of the experiment, may have evoked the change), (3) maturation (possibility that changes would

have appeared with or without manipulation), (4) selection (possibility that there are differences between the groups if they have been chosen non-randomly), and (5) ambiguity regarding the direction of causal influence (possibility that it is unclear which variable affects the other). Additionally, the study's nature of a field experiment enhances its ecological validity and can highly touch upon interest areas concerning business and management. Furthermore, the significance of experimentally designed studies is justified since considerable emphasis is placed on the determination of causality as well as the strength and direction of relationships in quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011; de Vaus, 2001).

However, an experimental research encompasses some disadvantages as the participants are not able to ask us if some instructions are unclear. Furthermore, it is always limited in regard to the success of the experimental manipulation, to the extent of the generalisation and representativeness of the findings and conclusion as well as to the replicability and external validity. (Bryman & Bell, 2011; de Vaus, 2001). Additionally, the variety of people around the world may have different interpretations of the instructions (Birnbau, 2004). To minimise possible questions about the instructions, we explained all questions and included detailed instructions. Furthermore, our entire study was tested beforehand by ten appropriate persons to check for possible uncertainties.

3.3.3 Method of the Study

Our study encompasses a case-based structure to get implementable results as well as to answer the research question in more detail (Bryman & Bell, 2011; de Vaus, 2001). In total, our questionnaire encompasses four different case pairs (two male influencers + unknown models and two female influencers + unknown models) as shown in Figure 3-1. In order to strengthen external validity, we chose to include four cases in our study instead of only one representative case.

To test the effect of influencers in advertisements (independent variable) on brand recall (dependent variable), our research experimentally manipulates the independent variable and compares the results of the experimental or treatment group (exposed to an advertisement showing an influencer) to the results of the control group (exposed to an advertisement showing an equally attractive but unknown model). The participants are randomly assigned to the two groups based on three control questions in the beginning: *What is your gender?*, *On what day were you born?*, and *In what month were you born?*. After answering the question about the participant's gender, either an advertisement showing a male (male participants) or a female (female participant) endorser is selected. Based on the date of birth, the participant is exposed to an influencer (male: uneven date of birth; female: even date of birth) or an unknown model (male: even date of birth; female: uneven date of birth). To guarantee the highest degree of randomisation, the allocation based on date of birth and birth month was conducted by lottery. Concluding, the research study consists of four pairs, each including an influencer and a suitable unknown model, and is therefore structured based on a 2x2x2 factorial between subject design.

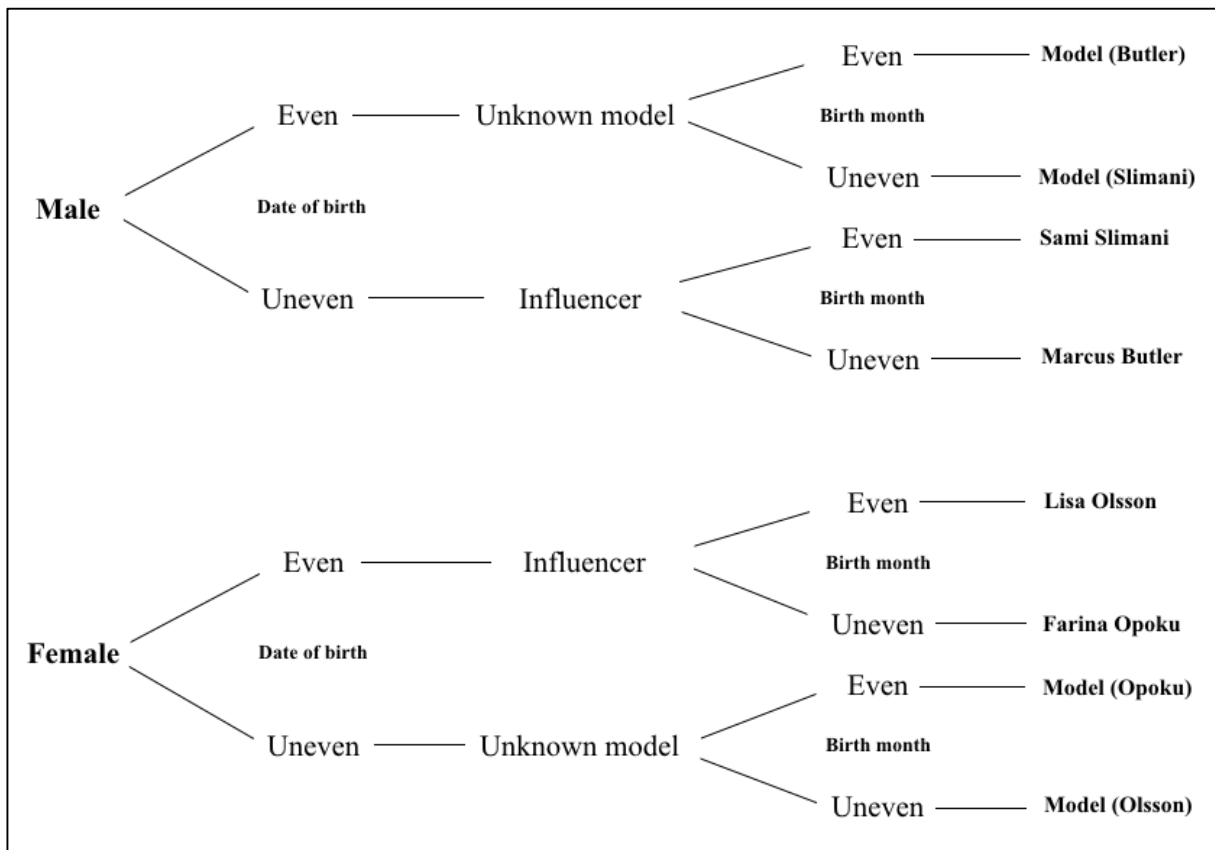


Figure 3-1: Randomisation of advertisements. (Own model)

The reason for the implementation of several cases is to weaken the highly specific design of an experiment. Nevertheless, all four cases have similarities and preconditions which need to be fulfilled: all case pairs show the influencer or unknown model in a traditional print advertisement with a brand the influencer has or had a cooperation with, all chosen influencers have over 450,000 followers on the social media platform Instagram, are known internationally, and started their influencer career by solely posting pictures or videos on social media platforms (they did not gain their popularity based on their previous professional career in the media business such as actor, model, athlete or similar). The choice of suitable advertisement conditions has taken place in two steps. Firstly, suitable and international known brands of the fashion and beauty industry were selected. Secondly, suitable influencers were chosen based on their previous or ongoing cooperation with a known brand as well as on these preconditions. Further information about the four influencers and brands are shown in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1: Information about influencers shown in advertisements.

	Influencer 1	Influencer 2	Influencer 3	Influencer 4
Name	Marcus Butler	Sami Slimani	Lisa Olsson	Farina Opoku (Nova Lana Love)
Nationality	British	German	Swedish	German
Followers on Instagram*	3.7 million	1.4 million	466,000	701,000
Genre	Fashion & Beauty	Fashion, Sport & Beauty	Fashion	Fashion, Travel & Beauty
Social media accounts on Instagram and	YouTube, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook & own blog	YouTube, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook & own blog	YouTube, Twitter, Facebook & own blog	YouTube, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, Google+ & own blog
Endorsed brand	Dolce & Gabbana	Mont Blanc	Puma	Got2b (Schwarzkopf)
Source	Butler, M. (2017)	Slimani, S. (2017)	Olsson, L. (2017)	Opoku, F. (2017)

*Data collected on May 17, 2017

The case advertisements are designed based on already published advertisements by the brand and consequently guarantee a high degree of congruence with original brand advertisements and a professional looking design. The integrated photograph of the influencer was published on his/her Instagram account and therefore ensures a certain degree of publicity and familiarity. For the equally attractive unknown models, we ensured to choose highly congruent and on social media unknown models to guarantee a model who looks like the influencer. As a result, the corresponding advertisement pairs have been designed with a high degree of similarity. Despite the exposure of different advertisements according to the control questions, the entire questionnaire contains the same questions for all eight advertisements (four case pairs). The advertisements of the case-pairs are shown in Appendix A, the questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

It is important to state that the influencers and brands have been selected based on our own judgement and knowledge. However, we informed ourselves about several brands and influencers to a high extent and ensured that we chose influencers of the fashion and beauty genre who are highly representative for the above stated requirements and similarities in order to reduce possible limitations and biases. Due to time and budget constraints, this survey is further limited to only four influencers and therefore only four case-pairs.

3.4 Data Collection Method

To answer our research question quantitatively, *sampling* is of high importance. A sample that is representative of the population is the key of gaining meaningful findings and making valid conclusions (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The population in which our research question is interested is only partly the general population. This can be stated due to the fact that our target population mainly consists of women and men between 15 and 35 years who are using and are familiar with social media platforms. Additionally, due to time and budget constraints, our research only gives first insights into possible negative effects of the usage of influencers in advertisements as well as possible moderating variables (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The target group can be referred to as the later part of the Generation Y, born between 1982 and 1994, and the early group of the Generation Z, born between 1995 and 2002 (WJSchroer, n.d.).

3.4.1 Convenience and Snowball Sampling

Our research uses a *non-probability sampling* procedure, a *convenience* as well as a *snowball sampling*. Convenience sampling is characterised as a sampling procedure that is available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The publication of the questionnaire on social media platforms is considered highly convenient as the target population and target group need to have a certain knowledge and usage of such platforms. Due to this publication method, the possibility that the survey is seen by consumers representing the target group is very high. Consequently, our convenience sampling constitutes an appropriate method for collecting data. Furthermore, we use snowball sampling which is a form of convenience sampling, but nowadays commonly used in academia and therefore worth distinguishing (Bryman & Bell, 2011). With this type of sampling, researchers make initial contact with people or a group of people who are relevant to the research purpose and use them to establish contacts with others (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This is given for our conducted study as the questionnaire is initially published on our social media accounts. We use the posts to establish contact with other users on the given platforms and to have the survey link shared as often as possible. Everyone on such platforms is considered to be more or less the target group and as the present study is the first of its kind, snowball sampling is an appropriate sampling strategy.

Nevertheless, non-probability sampling always has a certain degree of biases (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The possibility is given that human judgement affects the selection process. Consequently, some members of the population are more likely to be selected than others. It is important to highlight that whether with probability sampling nor non-probability sampling, it is impossible to completely eliminate sampling error and to end up with a truly representative sample. However, the chances of a sampling error are greater with a non-probability sampling than a probability sampling. As a consequence, this study has a certain risk of sampling error. (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Furthermore, with these two sampling types, researchers are not able to generalise the findings and conclusions as it is not possible to know of what population this sample is representative. Consequently, these samplings are partly not

random and the research is limited in generalisation (Bryman & Bell, 2011). But, we are aware of this issue and integrated control questions in the questionnaire to guarantee a high degree of randomisation of the research. In addition, these concerns are weakened due to the nature of our study and the attempt to gain participants who are active on social media platforms. Therefore, our research provides a stepping stone for further research and the data allows to be forged with existing findings.

Yet, the research is only considered as a convenience sampling due to the publishing method of the questionnaire. Here, it is important to note that we did not choose the participants by ourselves or based on our own judgement. Consequently, the survey was only available and accessible to a certain number of users who happened to see the posts.

Even though the present research is the first of its kind and uses snowball and convenience sampling, we ensured to spread the questionnaire as well and widely as possible. After sharing it on our Facebook and Instagram accounts, the survey was shared 16 times on Facebook accounts, in five topic related Facebook groups, and four times on Instagram. The questionnaire was shared by persons known as well as unknown by us. It is therefore safe to argue that our questionnaire was spread several times and hereby weakens the negative aspect of the snowball sampling and improves the representativeness of the sample.

A crucial aspect to consider is the *size of a sample*. It highly depends on several factors: time and cost, heterogeneity of the population, and kind of analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Time and cost constraints highly limit the sample size of our study as the questionnaire was published for only two weeks and no expenses could be made. Due to the online publication on social media platforms, the heterogeneity of the population is rather high. Consequently, the sample size needs to be comparatively large (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The present research is of experimental design including control and experimental groups. However, only four case-pairs are tested and the study consists of one overall control and one overall experimental group. Each of the groups takes all four case-pairs (two male and two female) into account, resulting in four subgroups for each of the two groups. According to the statistical rule of at least 30 participants for each group, all eight subgroups need to have at least 30 participants. Taking all the listed aspects into consideration, we are aiming for at least 120 participants for each group, control and experimental. This concludes in a total sample size of at least 240 participants.

3.4.2 Self-completion Questionnaire Method

Our research uses the *self-completion questionnaire method* for the data collection where participants answer the questions by completing the survey themselves. To even further categorise the research method, the questionnaire is a *computer-assisted personal interviewing method* conducted online. This technique was chosen for several reasons: it is cheap and quick to administer, there are no interviewer effects and variability, and it is also convenient for the participant because they can answer it when they want and at the speed they want (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Furthermore, studies published online can achieve larger samples which makes statistical testing very powerful and participants with rare or special characteristics can be recruited (Birnbau, 2004).

Nevertheless, this method also has some primary concerns which need to be considered: no presence of the interviewer to help the respondents, lower response rate, risk of missing data, difficulties to ask a lot of questions and certain types of questions (complex structures, filters), the survey can be read as a whole, the respondents are anonymous, and no collection of additional data is possible (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Furthermore, web-based surveys always incorporate a certain risk of multiple submissions and dropouts, meaning people who begin participating in a survey and quit before completing it (Birnbaum, 2004). Additionally, the participants are asked personal questions (gender, date and month of birth) in the beginning of the survey. We mainly included these questions as they need to be answered to be able to randomly assign the different conditions (advertisements). But, these questions also serve to encourage impatient or reticent people to drop out early (not willing to reveal this information) which leaves only cooperative participants behind (Birnbaum, 2004).

However, due to the nature of our research, several disadvantages can be minimised: the questionnaire cannot be read as a whole as there is no option in the survey tool for the participants to go back, we do not aim to know who answered the survey as anonymity is crucial for this study, the questionnaire was tested by ten suitable participants before publishing it (test persons are later excluded from the study) and this method is highly appropriate for the target population and target group. Additionally, our research is of experimental design and the method therefore needs to enable us to implement randomisation. With the use of the survey tool Sunet survey, provided by Lund University, all the required conditions mentioned above can be covered. Additionally, a lot of disadvantages could be weakened or eliminated. Consequently, a computer-assisted personal interview conducted online is an appropriate method for the present research.

A given risk of this study is to be biased due to non-response of participants. A problem arising with this is that those who agree to participate might differ in several ways from those who do not agree to participate in the survey (Bryman & Bell, 2011). However, the presented study is not analysing a highly specific target group and therefore the non-response has hardly any impact on the results. Nevertheless, we aimed to improve the response rate and decrease the dropout-rate by including an interesting introduction text (cover letter), questions which are easy to read and understand as well as a clear presentation and instructions in the questionnaire (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Furthermore, no 'yes' or 'no' questions were asked in order to give the respondents several answer possibilities and no reason to drop out of the survey (Birnbaum, 2004).

In addition to the conducted research, the present paper also uses *secondary analysis of data*. Such data has been collected by other researchers (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As the study of Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler (2015) functions as the comparative research, we utilise the findings and conclusions of this article. Additionally, several research streams of the celebrity and the influencer field are used to fully understand both areas in order to establish a profound literature review and theoretical framework as well as the hypotheses this study is testing.

3.5 Data Analysis

For the analysis of the collected data, the computer software for the analysis of quantitative data for social scientist called SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used. The applied survey tool Sunet supports this software by directly exporting the collected data into SPSS (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

In general, the gathered data of our study was analysed using bivariate and multivariate analysis. On the one hand, *bivariate analysis* is referring to the analysis of two variables at a time in order to uncover if the two variables are related or not. Here, it is important to note that these kinds of analysis methods only reveal relationships between two variables and cannot infer that one variable causes another. On the other hand, *multivariate analysis* entails simultaneous analysis of three or more variables at a time, takes the effects of all variables of interest into account, and any variable can be treated as independent (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Generally, the dependent variable for all five hypotheses in our study is always brand recall and of categorical nature (0 = Right brand, 1 = Wrong brand). Consequently, only analysis methods able to test this type of dependent variable are appropriate for this study. Furthermore, the rather small sample size of 251 participants needed to be considered to a high extent during the selection process of appropriate analysis techniques.

3.5.1 Independent-samples t-test

The applied bivariate analysis method is the *independent-samples t-test* which is of parametric nature and therefore needs to fulfil several assumptions: (1) the dependent variable is measured at a ratio or interval level, (2) a random sampling, (3) the independence of observations, and (4) a normal distribution (Pallant, 2013). The t-test is conducted to check the precondition attractiveness by comparing the mean attractiveness scores of each of the advertisement pairs (influencer and unknown model). This technique is highly appropriate as the rated attractiveness of the influencer and the unknown model needs to be equal and the used variables do not violate the assumptions of the test.

3.5.2 Chi-square Test for Independence (χ^2 test)

An applied multivariate analysis is the *chi-square test for independence (χ^2 test)*. This is a parametric technique which explores the relationship between two or more categorical variables, each consisting of two or more categories. It compares the proportions of cases that occur in each category (expected and observed frequencies/values) and is based on a cross tabulation table (Pallant, 2013; de Vaus, 2001). For this test, three assumptions need to be fulfilled: (1) random samples, (2) independent observations, and (3) expected frequencies of at least 10 (Pallant, 2013). The variables needed for testing H1, brand recall (aided and unaided) and endorser (influencer and unknown model), are of categorical nature (only measured in 0 and 1) as well as random samples, and independent observations. Additionally,

the variables do not violate any of the required assumptions. The same can be stated for the variables influencer-brand congruence (H2) and gender distinction (H5).

Here, it must be noted that non-parametric methods are not as powerful as their parametric counterpart techniques because they tend to be less sensitive and can consequently fail to detect existing differences between groups (Pallant, 2013). However, there is no parametric alternative for a chi-square test (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Pallant, 2013). For the purpose of our study, it is therefore sufficient to apply this technique as it reveals relationships between two or more variables.

3.5.3 Logistic Regression

The main difference between a chi-square test and *logistic regression* constitutes the independent variable. For the former, the independent variable can only be categorical. However, logistic regression can apply predictors of either categorical or continuous nature (Pallant, 2013).

Logistic regression is exploring, inter alia, causal relationships among variables and is based on correlation. Furthermore, it tests the predictive power of a set of variables and assesses the relative contribution of each individual variable. It is a special form of multiple regression as the dependent variable needs to be *categorical*. Furthermore, this technique can handle ordinal or nominal data as the independent variable (Pallant, 2013).

This technique does not make any key assumptions of linear regression, particularly regarding normality, linearity, measurement level, and homoscedasticity. Nevertheless, some other assumptions need to be fulfilled: (1) the dependent variable needs to be binary, (2) the factor level 1 of the dependent variable represents the desired outcome, (3) only meaningful variables should be included, (4) error terms need to be independent, and (5) a quite large sample size (Pallant, 2013). As the present study has a rather small sample size, logistic regression, as an advanced analysis technique (Pallant, 2013), was only used in particular cases, i.e. if the control of a third variable was required or one variable did not meet the requirements of the chi-square test for independence.

To conclude, the following analysis techniques were used to obtain the data: Firstly, the prerequisite of equal attractiveness among the case-pairs was checked using an independent-samples t-test. Secondly, the relationship between the dependent variable (brand recall) and independent variable (endorsers) was tested applying the chi-square test for independence. As this test is not capable of controlling variables, logistic regression was additionally conducted to control this relationship for attractiveness as a possible factor influencing the results. Thirdly, the influence of the moderating effects influencer-brand congruence and gender distinction were tested using the chi-square test for independence. Finally, logistic regression was applied for the moderating variables brand and influencer familiarity as both are categorised as familiarity. In this case, this advanced analysis technique needed to be used as the independent variable brand familiarity is of continuous nature and the chi-square test is not capable of analysing this type of variable (Pallant, 2013).

3.5.4 Coding of the Data

In general, proper coding of the gathered data is crucial to ensure reliability. To analyse the data in the most appropriate way, numbers are assigned to each respondent automatically by SPSS and all variables are labelled and defined by us to ensure suitable and unique names. Through the survey, several different types of variables were conducted: nominal/categorical and dichotomous variables (e.g. gender), ordinal variables (e.g. age groups with not identical ranges) as well as interval and ratio variables (e.g. opinion of the respondents with a 5-point Likert scale or questions including frequencies) (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Consequently, to prepare the collected data for the analysis, a few variables are coded with the help of dummy variables (0 and 1).

3.5.5 Descriptive Statistics

After checking the data set for errors and out-of-range values, several descriptive statistics were conducted. Therefore, variables were checked for any violation of the assumptions underlying the conducted statistical methods and address the research question (Pallant, 2013). These methods are mostly an univariate analysis and test only one variable at a time (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

For categorical variables (e.g. gender distribution, group and subgroup sizes), the use of frequencies is sufficient and provides essential information about the sample including indicators for appropriate analysis techniques. On the other hand, for continuous variables (e.g. age or attractiveness), basic descriptive statistics like mean, standard deviation, skewness or kurtosis, which provide a basic summary, are crucial.

As a first step of the entire analysis procedure, descriptive statistics were gathered in order to test for any assumption violation required for the conduct of the statistical analysis methods as well as to gain a first overview of the data needed to assess the hypotheses (Pallant, 2013).

3.6 Measures

The conducted questionnaire is focusing on the usage of influencers as brand endorsers and their effect on brand recall. Therefore, the four main celebrity endorsement models, the comparative study of Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler (2015) as well as crucial literature of the influencer area were utilised. Combining all this, four possible moderating effects were determined: influencer-brand congruence, brand familiarity, influencer familiarity, and gender distinction. An overview of the studies serving as sources to adapt the measure approaches are shown in Appendix C.

When it comes to the advertising stimuli, we neither asked the participants directly, nor did we set a specific time for them to look at the advertisement. Whenever they felt ready, they could go on with the next questions. Here, the respondents had to calculate three mathematical exercises in order to distract them from the recently shown advertising stimuli.

3.6.1 Effect on Brand Recall

After seeing the advertisement and answering the maths exercises, the participants were asked to *recall the brand*, first unaided and then aided, presenting them several options to choose from. The answers were computed using dummy variables (0 = Right brand named/chosen, 1 = Blank field or wrong brand named/chosen). Here, *equal attractiveness* of the endorsers was a prerequisite. In a first step, we therefore tested whether our chosen unknown models are equally attractive to the corresponding influencers. Respondents were asked to rate those indicators on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = “Completely disagree” to 5 = “Completely agree”) adopted from Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler (2015) and Ohanian (1991) with the values attractive, classy, beautiful, elegant, and sexy. Here, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was used in order to validate the reliability of the given scale.

3.6.2 Influencer-brand Congruence

The procedure of measuring the *congruence between the brand and the endorser* was slightly adapted from the studies of Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler (2015) and Sengupta, Goodstein and Boninger (1997). However, the participants were not asked directly about the perceived congruence between the brand and the influencer as high familiarity of the influencer would be required in order to answer such questions. Instead, influencer-brand congruence was measured by asking the participants to rate seven brand- and endorser-related characteristics on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = “Completely disagree” to 5 = “Completely agree”). We then calculated the difference in mean scores between the two groups of attributes. Due to the fact that there were no intermediate steps on the given scale, we considered a $\pm 10\%$ deviation from 0 as appropriate for being considered as congruent since all values in this range are always rounded off to 0. Therefore, results ranging from -0.5 to 0.5 received the dummy variable 0, whereas all other values received the dummy variable 1, therefore seen as not congruent.

3.6.3 Familiarity

In order to give statements about the moderating effect of both brand and influencer familiarity on the effect of endorsers on brand recall, we asked the participants to rate their *brand familiarity* on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = “Totally not familiar” to 5 = “Totally familiar”). This procedure was based on Misra and Beatty (1990) and adopted from the studies by Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler (2015) as well as Kent and Allen (1994).

When it comes to *influencer familiarity*, four items (“I recognise the face”, “I have seen the person in other advertisements”, “I have seen the person on social media”) had to be rated on another 5-point Likert scale for each item from 1 = “Not at all” to 5 = “Very much”. We then calculated the mean of all four categories and assigned the dummy variable 0 = Not familiar to those participants who answered 1 = “Not at all”. All other values (2 to 5) received the dummy variable 1 = Familiar.

Concluding, the variable of brand familiarity stays continuous, however the variable of influencer familiarity had to be coded into a categorical variable. In order to ensure the reliability of the influencer familiarity scale, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was used once more.

3.6.4 Gender Distinction

In order to figure out whether there are *gender differences* influencing the relationship between endorser conditions and brand recall, we split the dataset by gender before conducting the brand recall analysis again.

4 Results

4.1 Descriptives

To test our hypotheses, we conducted a web-based empirical study with experimental design, including four advertising stimuli pairs with either an influencer or unknown model and several hypotheses-related questions. Table 4-1 gives an overview of the general and personal-related collected data. In total, we gathered data from 251 respondents, of whom 126 were male and 125 female. The mean age of all respondents was between 22 and 25 years. From a total of 282 page visitors, 31 respondents terminated the survey. Therefore, the dropout-rate is around 11%. As the survey was conducted in an online environment, no statement can be made about the non-response. The participants were randomly assigned to an advertising stimulus entailing a model of the same gender. As shown in the descriptives table, the respective distribution of participants for each advertisement pair is fairly even, ranging from a total of 60 to 66 respondents per brand.

Table 4-1: Summary of personal-related descriptive statistics.

		N	Range	%	Mean	SD
Personal						
1	Gender	Female	125	49.80		
		Male	126	50.20		
2	Age	1: Younger than 15	6	2.40	3.96	1.03
		2: 15-17	13	5.20		
		3: 18-21	46	18.30		
		4: 22-25	122	48.60		
		5: 26-30	47	18.70		
		6: 30-35	17	6.80		
3	Advertisement distribution	Brand 1: D&G	66	26.30		
		Unknown	32			
		Influencer	34			
		Brand 2: Mont Blanc	60	23.90		
		Unknown	31			
		Influencer	29			
		Brand 3: Puma	65	25.90		
		Unknown	31			
		Influencer	34			
		Brand 4: Got2b	60	23.90		
		Unknown	30			
		Influencer	30			

Furthermore, Table 4-2 provides a summary of statistics regarding the survey data that was used to analyse the hypotheses. Through asking the participants whether they recall the name of the brand displayed in the advertisement, first unaided and then aided with different options to choose from, we tested for the existence of the vampire effect (H1). In the unaided recall situation, a total of 173 participants stated the right brand, whereas 78 named the wrong

brand. On the other hand, when given several options to select from, 213 respondents chose the right brand, while 38 participants still chose the wrong one. In order to assess the possible moderating effect of influencer-brand congruence as well as the familiarity of respondents with either the brand or the influencer (H2, H3, H4), the participants were asked for their opinion on several brand- or influencer-related characteristics and questions regarding the intensity of their familiarity with the shown stimuli. The mean value for attribute congruence was -0.5 meaning that the average respondent perceived the endorser and the endorsed brand as fairly congruent. The measured brand familiarity mean was 3.18, whereas the influencer familiarity mean was 1.34. Furthermore, a possible difference in terms of the strength of the vampire effect across gender (H5) was tested through conducting the recall analysis (H1) again while splitting the dataset accordingly.

Table 4-2: Summary of research-related descriptive statistics.

		N	Range	%	Mean	SD	Frequencies					Cronbach's Alpha
							1	2	3	4	5	
Research related												
1	Total unaided brand recall	Right Wrong p	173 78	68.92 31.08		.000						
2	Total aided brand recall	Right Wrong p	213 38	84.86 15.14		.000						
3	Brand familiarity*	Total %	251	100	3.19	1.08	18 7.17	60 23.90	43 17.13	117 46.61	13 5.19	
4	Brand attributes**	Luxurious			3.19	1.12	13	67	62	77	32	
		Innovative			2.95	.93	14	67	93	72	5	
		Traditional			3.00	1.08	19	73	63	80	16	
		Sporty			3.31	1.20	17	58	50	83	43	
		Unconventional			2.86	1.00	24	64	93	62	8	
		Stylish			3.64	.91	6	23	59	130	33	
		Authentic			3.26	.96	11	43	83	98	16	
	Total	251			3.18	.45	104	395	503	602	153	
	%		100				5.92	22.48	28.63	34.26	8.71	
5	Influencer familiarity***	I just recognise the face.			1.08	.40	174	32	18	13	14	
		I have seen him/her in other advertisements.			1.65	1.17	214	22	7	5	3	
		I have seen him/her on social media.			1.25	.71	212	11	9	11	8	
		I follow or like him/her on social media.			1.37	.98	239	8	2	1	1	
		Total	251			1.34	.67	839	73	36	30	26
	%		100				83.57	7.27	3.59	2.98	2.59	
6	Influencer attributes**	Authentic			3.11	1.02	21	40	97	77	16	
		Unique			2.57	1.03	40	81	85	37	8	
		Classy			2.98	1.08	27	59	68	87	10	
		Conventional			2.84	.94	18	77	86	67	3	
		Sporty			2.84	1.03	13	32	47	128	31	
		Modern			3.53	.94	10	16	45	139	41	
		Stylish			3.74	.94	10	11	54	130	46	
	Total	251			3.22	.51	139	316	482	665	155	
	%		100				7.91	17.99	27.43	37.85	8.82	
7	Attractiveness**	Attractive			3.79	.89	4	20	46	135	46	
		Classy			3.05	.98	19	50	89	86	7	
		Beautiful			3.43	1.02	12	32	76	99	32	
		Elegant			3.25	.97	10	51	70	106	14	
		Sexy			3.53	.88	5	27	71	125	23	
		Total	251			3.41	.62	50	180	352	551	122
	%		100				3.99	14.34	28.05	43.90	9.72	
8	Attribute congruence	Minimum		-1.86								
		Maximum		1.71								
		Total	251									

*Note: Measures used 5-point Likert scale with 1 = "Totally not familiar" to 5 = "Totally familiar"

**Note: Measures used 5-point Likert scale with 1 = "Completely disagree" to 5 = "Completely agree"

***Note: Measures used 5-point Likert scale with 1 = "Not at all" to 5 = "Very much"

4.2 Results of Hypothesis Testing

After gaining first insights from the descriptive statistics, each of the hypotheses was analysed in-depth using several different techniques.

4.2.1 Effect on Brand Recall

Although the scale attractiveness was also used by researchers of the comparative study, we tested its reliability. The Cronbach alpha coefficient indicates an internal consistency of .67. The coefficient shows an acceptable level of consistency and was also used by Erfgen, Zenker & Sattler (2015). Therefore, the attractiveness scale can be seen as an appropriate measure for equal attractiveness of the models shown in the advertisements. The independent-samples t-test results showed no significant differences in mean scores. In all four groups, the Levene's test for equality of means indicated values above the significance level of $p = .050$. Since equal variances are therefore assumed, the corresponding Sig. (2-tailed) values demonstrate no significant mean differences for each of the groups. Table 4-3 displays the exact values.

Table 4-3: Independent-samples t-test comparing attractiveness means.

Model attractiveness		Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Group 4	
		Butler (u)	Butler	Slimani (u)	Slimani	Olsson (u)	Olsson	Opoku (u)	Opoku
N		32	34	31	29	31	34	30	30
Mean		3.24	3.15	3.17	3.35	3.46	3.31	3.74	3.93
Std. Deviation		.51	.57	.41	.07	.73	.73	.44	.57
Std. Error Mean		.09	.10	.53	.10	.13	.13	.08	.10
p		.470		.135		.422		.161	

Note: (u) = unknown model, p = significance level, N = sample

In this context, the histogram also showed a normal distribution of results, nearly following the form of a bell-shaped curve. Furthermore, the normal q-q plot implied a normal distribution of points along the line while the detrended normal q-q plot indicated a random distribution without any ascending or descending patterns. We can therefore consider the endorser pairs as equally attractive. When it comes to the observation of unaided and aided brand recall in the different endorser situations, the chi-squared test for independence (χ^2 test, with Yates Continuity Correction) confirmed a significant association between unaided brand recall and the different endorser groups, $\chi^2(1, N = 251) = 9.06, p = .003, \text{phi} = .20$. In the unknown model condition, a total of 78.20% stated the right and 21.80% the wrong brand. In turn, 59.80% of respondents stated the right brand, compared to a wrong-response-rate of 40.20% in the influencer condition. However, aided brand recall was not significantly influenced by the different endorser conditions, $\chi^2(1, N = 251) = 3.45, p = .063, \text{phi} = .13$. The results showed that 89.50% of respondents marked the right brand when exposed to the unknown endorser, compared to 80.30% in the influencer condition. Only 10.50% of participants chose the wrong brand when being presented with the unknown endorser, whereas 19.70% still chose the wrong one in the influencer condition.

To further validate our results, we performed logistic regression in order to control for attractiveness as a factor which might have influenced the results, which are displayed in Table 4-4. The model showed significantly impaired unaided brand recall in the different endorser conditions while controlling for attractiveness, $\chi^2(2, N = 251) = 10.62, p = .005$. The significance level of $p = .441$ for attractiveness confirmed that the attractiveness of the endorsers did not directly affect unaided brand recall. However, the negative B value for attractiveness (-.17) implied that an increase in endorser attractiveness can weaken the vampire effect. The performed logistic regression further showed no significant relationship between aided brand recall and the different endorser conditions when attractiveness was controlled, $\chi^2(2, N = 251) = 4.44, p = .109$. However, the negative B values for attractiveness (-.17 unaided, -.14 aided) suggest that an increase in the attractiveness of the influencer endorser can weaken or further avoid the vampire effect. After controlling for attractiveness, the choice of endorser therefore does not significantly impair aided brand recall, although the endorser itself showed a significance level of $p = .044$. Therefore, we only found partial support for H1. This implies that there is a further need to investigate under which conditions the vampire effect increases within unaided brand recall. Nevertheless, we still take aided brand recall into consideration. By doing so, we want to find out which moderating effects hindered a significant overshadowing of the brand.

Table 4-4: Logistic regression A and B predicting unaided and aided brand recall.

Predictor		Model A (UR)			Model B (AR)		
		B	p	OR	B	p	OR
Endorser	UR	-.885	.002	.413			
	AR				-.742	.044	.476
Attractiveness	UR	-.171	.441	.843			
	AR				-.136	.627	.873
Constant	UR	.185	.812	1.203			
	AR				-.942	.334	.390
Nagelkerke R2	UR	.058					
	AR				.031		

Note: Separate logistic regression for UR = unaided brand recall and AR = aided brand recall; B = regression coefficient, p = significance level, OR = odds ratio

4.2.2 Influencer-brand Congruence

The χ^2 test for independence indicated no significant association between impaired brand recall and endorser-brand congruence, unaided: $\chi^2(1, N = 251) = .45, p = .504, V = .04$, aided: $\chi^2(1, N = 251) = .03, p = .861, V = .01$. Of the respondents that perceived the influencer and the brand to be congruent, 61.40% of the participants spontaneously stated the right and 38.60% the wrong brand. When they were asked to choose from several brands, 81.90% chose the right and 18.10% the wrong brand. In the case of incongruence, 56.80% stated the right and 43.20% the wrong brand in the unaided recall situation. Aided recall on the other hand had a right-response-rate of 77.30%, compared to a wrong-response-rate of 22.70%. Therefore, we did not find significant support for influencer-brand congruence as a moderating effect on brand recall and thus must reject H2.

4.2.3 Familiarity

A reliability analysis of the applied scale used to gather the data was performed and, even though only four items were included, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .79. Our scale used to identify influencer familiarity can therefore be seen as reliable.

Table 4-5: Logistic regression A and B predicting unaided and aided brand recall.

Predictor		Model A (UR)			Model B (AR)		
		B	p	OR	B	p	OR
Endorser	UR	-0.864	.004	.421			
	AR				-0.582	.134	.559
Brand familiarity	UR	-0.636	.000	.530			
	AR				-0.619	.000	.539
Influencer familiarity	UR	-0.277	.366	.758			
	AR				-0.739	.050	.477
Constant	UR	1.718	.000	5.575			
	AR				.773	.157	2.166
Nagelkerke R2	UR	.180					
	AR				.150		

Note: Separate logistic regression for UR = unaided brand recall and AR = aided brand recall; B = regression coefficient, p = significance level, OR = odds ratio

The full logistic regression model performed with unaided recall as the dependent variable as shown in Table 4-5 was statistically significant, $\chi^2(3, N = 251) = 34.30, p = .000$. With an associated probability close to 0, brand familiarity was the strongest predictor for impaired unaided brand recall, directly followed by the difference in endorser conditions ($p = .000$). Against our prediction, influencer familiarity did not significantly contribute to the relationship ($p = .366$). When it comes to aided recall, the full model also showed significant results, $\chi^2(3, N = 251) = 22.56, p = .000$. Looking at the individual variables, brand familiarity ($p = .000$) as well as influencer familiarity ($p = .050$) were the strongest predictors for impaired aided brand recall. The negative B values further indicate that an increase in both brand and influencer familiarity lowers the risk for impaired brand recall. Thus, we found support for H3 as well as partial support for H4.

4.2.4 Gender Distinction

The χ^2 test for independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) indicated a significant association between endorser condition and impaired unaided brand recall in the male dataset, $\chi^2(1, N = 126) = 13.18, p = .000, \phi = .34$. In comparison to a total of 23.40% of female participants, more than half of all males (57.10%) stated the wrong brand when being presented with the influencer advertisement. Consequently, no significant association between endorser condition and impaired unaided brand recall can be found in the female dataset $\chi^2(1, N = 125) = .87, p = .769, \phi = .05$. Influencer endorsement therefore highly impaired unaided

brand recall of male respondents. When it comes to aided brand recall, the χ^2 test for independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) showed the same significance distribution. While the male dataset shows significantly impaired aided brand recall in the influencer condition, $(1, N = 126) = 4.17, p = .041, \phi = .20$ with a total of 27% wrong brand choices, the female dataset implied no such association, $\chi^2(1, N = 125) = .04, p = .851, \phi = .04$. Therefore, gender differences can be identified, which supports H5.

4.3 Result Summary

Together, the results provide important insights into the occurrence of the vampire effect within influencer endorsement. Three main findings emerged: Firstly, the conducted experiment gives proof that the field of influencer endorsement is affected by the vampire effect. Secondly, brand familiarity is the most striking moderator on the relationship between influencer endorsement and brand recall. Thirdly, significant gender differences in brand recall emerge. With regard to the research question, these findings allow us to give an accurate statement about the effect of influencer-brand congruence, brand and influencer familiarity as well as gender differences on the general occurrence of the vampire effect. In this context, an effect on unaided and/or aided brand recall can also give insights into the strength of the vampire effect. Thus, as an introduction to the analysis, Table 4-6 presents an overview of the results across all hypotheses.

Table 4-6: Summary of the results.

Hypothesis	Dependent variables	Method used	Moderators	Vampire effect		
				Unaided brand recall	Aided brand recall	
1	Recall of the brand is lower when the advertisement entails an influencer compared to when the advertisement entails an equally attractive but unknown model.	Unaided brand recall Aided brand recall	Independent samples t-test Chi-squared test for independence Logistic Regression	-	Supported	Not supported
2	The negative effect of an influencer on brand recall is greater in conditions of low perceived congruence between the influencer and the brand.	Unaided brand recall Aided brand recall	Chi-squared test for independence	Influencer-brand congruence	Not supported	Not supported
3	The negative effect of an influencer on brand recall is greater in conditions of low brand familiarity.	Unaided brand recall Aided brand recall	Logistic regression	Brand familiarity	Supported	Supported
4	The negative effect of an influencer on brand recall is greater in conditions of low influencer familiarity.	Unaided brand recall Aided brand recall	Logistic regression	Influencer familiarity	Not supported	Supported
5	Due to gender specific differences in information processing, the negative effect of an influencer on brand recall is greater on male consumers.	Unaided brand recall Aided brand recall	Chi-squared test for independence	Gender differences	Supported	Supported

5 Analysis

5.1 The Existence of the Vampire Effect within Influencer Endorsement

Studies on the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement indicate that overshadowing effects occur and significantly impair brand recall (Erfgen, Zenker & Sattler, 2015). Therefore, the researchers report a strong relationship between the choice of endorser and brand recall. As brand recall is a measurement concept of customer based brand equity (Keller, 2006), it is especially important for brands when they make use of social media since the literature sees social media as a platform that is primarily influenced by consumers (e.g. Lin, Li & Wang, 2017). Despite the evaluation of various positive aspects of social media (e.g. Stephen & Toubia, 2010; Liang & Turban, 2011), negative critique was raised from several practitioner's point of views (e.g. Satell, 2014). The present study was therefore designed to determine the effect of influencer endorsement on brand recall.

With that being said, our empirical study shows, for the first time in an academic context, that we can support the hypothesis that an overshadowing effect within influencer endorsement occurs and, consequently, impairs unaided brand recall. Yet, the experiment did not detect any evidence of the vampire effect in the case of aided brand recall. Comparing impaired unaided and aided brand recall shows that 20 percentage points (pp) more participants spontaneously stated the wrong brand when being presented with an influencer advertisement. The study of Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler (2015) identified a difference in impaired unaided and aided brand recall of 13.42 pp in the celebrity endorser condition. Our findings therefore seem broadly consistent with these results. However, the considerably lower sample size suggests the use of caution when comparing the findings. Nevertheless, the test was successful as it was able to identify the partial occurrence of the vampire effect within influencer endorsement and therefore confirms the association between different endorser conditions and impaired brand recall.

In consequence, our results further support the general idea of existing risks that come across when brands collaborate with popular characters, meaning both celebrities and influencers. However, this relationship may also partly be explained by several moderating factors. Those were taken into consideration in a further step of the empirical study in order to examine their relevance.

5.2 The Importance of Moderating Factors

Contrary to expectations and previous literature suggesting that influencers are characters which exert an expert status and, in turn, become more authentic when advertising products from categories they are involved in within their social network (e.g. Weimann, 1994), the present study shows a weak link between influencer-brand congruence and impaired recall as no significant results were found. This outcome is further contrary to that of the study by Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler (2015) in the field of celebrity endorsement. Even though the finding shows no significant evidence for the need of influencer-brand congruence, the individual results indicate that slightly more participants (4.60 pp) spontaneously stated (unaided) or chose (aided) the wrong brand in a situation of incongruence. In light of the rather small sample size, the result might have been stronger with a larger group of respondents.

However, the results of the study on moderating aspects on the association between influencer endorsement and impaired brand recall were significant in two major respects. Firstly, in reviewing the literature on celebrity endorsement and impaired brand recall, no data was found on the moderating effect of brand familiarity. Nevertheless, as literature on influencers suggest, our study indicates significant evidence for the moderating effect of brand familiarity on both unaided and aided brand recall in an influencer endorsement situation. With an associated probability close to zero, brand familiarity is a highly significant moderator between influencer endorsement and brand recall. Secondly, research further pointed out that a strong cognitive link between a celebrity and the endorsed brand, meaning the perceived fit between both, can weaken the vampire effect (Misra & Beatty, 1990). On the contrary, we assumed that a cognitive link between influencers and brands cannot be as easily established since the cooperation takes place in a fast-moving social media environment. Therefore, instead of investigating the importance of a cognitive link, an additional objective of the study was to identify whether influencer familiarity might play a role in the association between influencer endorsement and impaired brand recall. When it comes to unaided brand recall, the experiment did not detect any significant effect of influencer familiarity on impaired brand recall. On the contrary, the results were found to be significant in terms of aided brand recall.

Concluding, research in the field of celebrity endorsement has suggested that brand familiarity does not have a moderating effect on the association between celebrity endorsement and impaired recall. Yet, our findings are able to detect a significant effect of brand familiarity on both unaided and aided brand recall as well as of influencer familiarity on aided brand recall. It can therefore be assumed that, other than in the case of celebrity endorsement, the relationship between influencers and impaired recall is significantly moderated by brand and influencer familiarity. However, caution must be applied as these findings do not exclude the cognitive link between an influencer and the brand as a possible factor that could further weaken the overshadowing effect.

5.3 The Gender Effect

While research about the vampire effect in the field of celebrity endorsement refers to female respondents, we took both genders into consideration. From a general point of view, previous research suggests that there are differences in online advertising effectiveness (e.g. Kimura, 1969). Several studies imply that while females are focussing on all information available, males are more likely to selectively process what they see while mostly looking at visual-rather than textual content (e.g. Goodrich, 2014). Since the cooperation between influencers and brands takes place in a social media environment where advertisements are mainly based on graphic content, we hypothesised that the vampire effect is stronger on male respondents.

The results of our study confirm the difference in association between influencer endorsement and impaired brand recall. Compared to female respondents, 35 pp more men spontaneously stated and 14.50 pp more men chose the wrong brand when being presented with an advertisement containing an influencer. Therefore, the findings significantly support the idea of previous research suggesting that males focus more on visual (in this case the presented models) rather than textual stimuli and thus are more likely to have impaired brand recall.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Theoretical Contribution

The purpose of the present study was to examine influencer endorsement and its effect on brand recall. Although influencers are gaining more and more interest from brands as social media is said to be on the rise to complement traditional marketing channels, existing theory concentrates on research about the benefits that can be drawn from the relationship between influencers and brands. With that said, the experiment was able to identify the partial occurrence of the vampire effect - an overshadowing of the brand that is triggered by the influencer and significantly impairs unaided brand recall. As we aimed to contribute to a more balanced knowledge of influencer endorsement and the vampire effect, we are now not only able to confirm its existence, but also to give predictions on various factors which can enhance, and respectively also weaken, such an effect. In this context and with further respect to the research question, more detailed theoretical insights can be drawn from the analysis of various conditions in which the vampire effect can be enhanced: Firstly, brand as well as partially influencer familiarity play a crucial role when it comes to unaided and aided brand recall. Secondly, influencer endorsement overshadows the brand significantly more when it is addressed to males. Thirdly, influencer-brand congruence turned out to be no significant moderator in the relationship, yet partly plays a role as brand recall is still lower when the congruence is missing. Overall, our study therefore strengthens the general idea of impaired brand recall when popular characters are used in advertisements, both in traditional mass media and online. However, as it is the first study of its kind, it cannot be generalised to the whole population and therefore only gives first theoretical insights as a starting point for future contributions to the field of investigating negative effects within influencer endorsement in an academic context.

Yet, as the theoretical construct of social media marketing sees influencers mainly as beneficial value creators, the key strength of the present study is that it provides evidence for the need to also investigate potential downsides of the concepts as those can harm the brand, in the long run possibly even from a financial point of view. Although academia has not focussed on these negative sides of influencer endorsement yet, even more literature on celebrity endorsement can be found and was considered when conducting the present research. It is for this reason that we used literature and studies that confirm the existence of the vampire effect in the celebrity field as a basis for our study. The findings particularly contribute to this growing body of literature by demonstrating that, even though modern theory on influencers claims that they can be seen as ‘micro-celebrities’, celebrities and influencers need to be considered as separate endorsement components. This is due to the fact that we contradict existing theory about endorsement in two major aspects. Firstly, the main difference which can be observed is that while celebrity endorsement is not moderated by brand familiarity, the same factor on the other hand exerts a significant effect on the relationship between influencer endorsement and impaired brand recall. In contrast to celebrities who are generally well-known characters, influencers are particularly known in

their circle of followers which thereby can be an explanation for the stronger need for brand familiarity in endorser situations that are also aimed at reaching consumers outside this direct influencer environment. Yet, as the small sample size limits the present study to its own boundaries, this explanation only serves as a first attempt of explaining its finding in a general environment. Secondly, experiments on the occurrence of the vampire effect within celebrity endorsement extend the theory solely through research on females. However, as the present study focusses on both genders, the evidence suggests that males are more likely to be negatively affected by the influencer endorsement.

Those findings complement investigations of earlier research outside the boundaries of celebrities or influencers where gender differences in brain processing of visual advertisement stimuli were found. This discussion raises an important question about the nature of current research on celebrity endorsement and impaired brand recall exclusively with females participants and highlights the importance of considering both genders when examining the success of both celebrity and influencer endorsement.

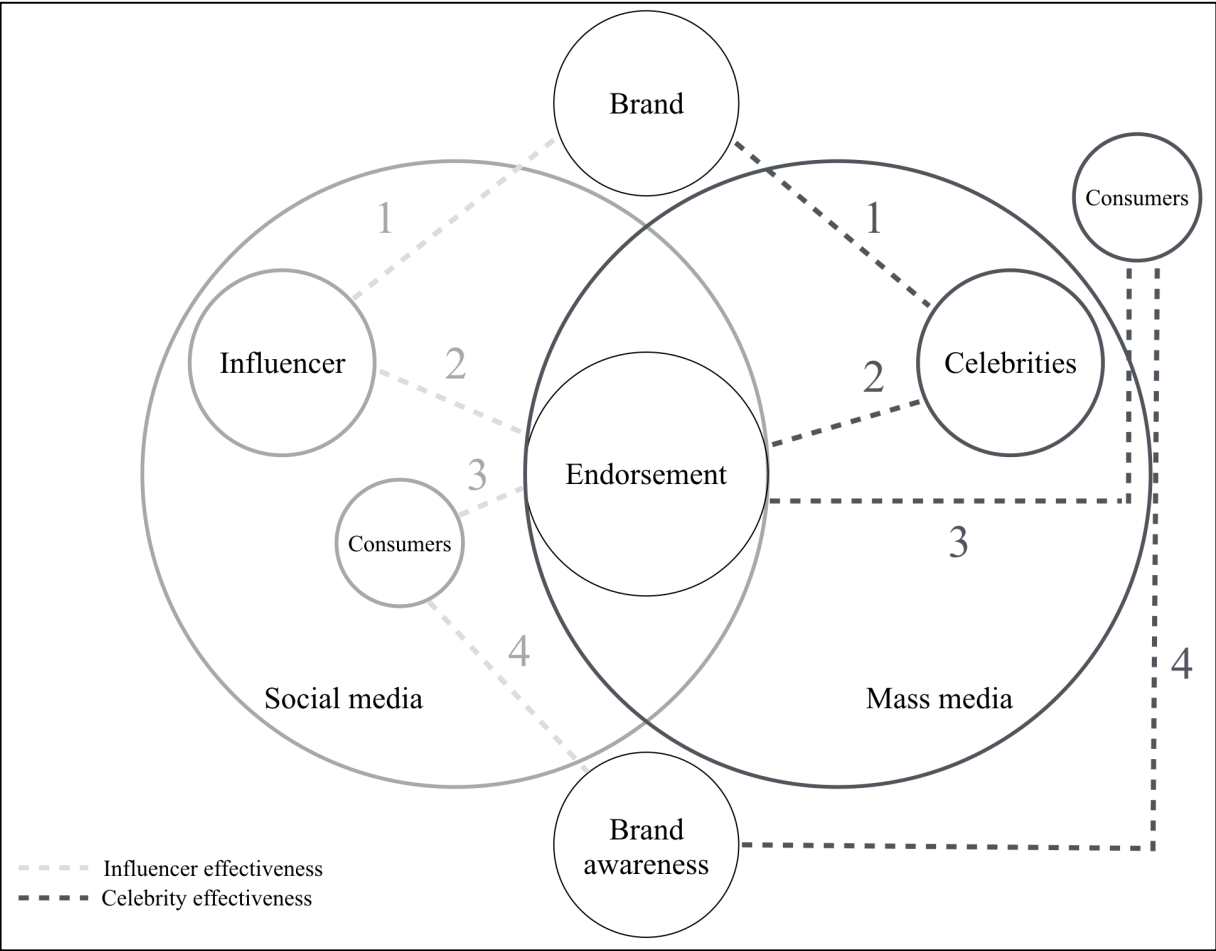


Figure 6-1: The course of influencer and celebrity effectiveness. (Own model)

The study has gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of influencer endorsement. By combining existing theory and the results from the experiment, it provides a first theoretical framework for the exploration of influencer effectiveness as shown in Figure 6-1. Despite the first equal steps of both endorsement concepts (1 and 2), major differences can be observed when it comes to the effectiveness itself. While celebrities exert influence over consumers outside the boundaries of the mass media environment, influencers have a direct connection to consumers in their network as well as indirect power over those that are not in their direct environment, but still move in the social media setting (3). To speak in a visual language, the way from the influencer to the actual endorsement and from there to the consumer is much shorter and does not leave the social media circle. In the same way, the effect on brand awareness within influencer endorsement directly comes from the social media circle, whereas the consumers' awareness of the brand in a situation of celebrity endorsement has to go a long way around the actual endorsement environment (4). Consequently, the framework indicates that the existence of the vampire effect is an even higher risk within influencer endorsement than it is in the context of celebrity endorsement. Thereby, it contributes to existing theory as it particularly enhances our understanding of the strength of the relationship between the brand, the influencer, and the consumer. To conclude, it is a slender line from valentine to vampire, because when the vampire effect occurs, the strength of this relationship can be a preventive tool, yet at the same time a potential enhancer.

6.2 Practical Implications

The findings of the study have a number of important implications for practice. First and foremost, brands that want to use social media as a marketing platform can and should cooperate with influencers for two reasons. Firstly, our study shows that the broader audience outside the borders of the influencer's direct network is not as familiar with the influencer as they would be with a celebrity. Consequently, the risk that an overshadowing effect occurs in the first place is lower. In this context, research shows that influencers usually have a huge amount of followers over which they exert powerful influence. In turn, those followers have a positive attitude towards the influencers and consequently, are more likely to be in favour of the advertised brand (Kozinets et al. 2010). Secondly, as aided brand recall is not directly affected by the overshadowing, the endorsement relationship between an influencer and a brand turns out to be of a strong nature.

However, as research has pointed out, spontaneous (unaided) brand recall is especially important for the communication of a new brand, whereas aided recall measures the brand in connection to its competitors in the marketplace. A reasonable approach to tackle the issue of the occurrence of the vampire effect in unaided recall situations is therefore by avoiding influencer endorsement in advertising a new brand in the marketplace. Our findings confirm this recommended course of action since brand familiarity can be considered as an important factor in weakening or avoiding the vampire effect. Although the study did not detect a significant impact of influencer-brand congruence on the relationship between influencer endorsement and brand recall, we recommend that influencer characteristics should still be in line with the brand's characteristic, purpose and image.

Consequently, the challenge for practitioners now is to find endorsement strategies which are both effective as well as beneficial for all parties involved, meaning the brand, the influencer, and the consumer. Brand awareness consists of unaided and aided brand recall. Thus, even though aided brand recall was not significantly affected by the vampire effect, brands have to make sure that their influencer marketing strategies steer the effect in a positive direction. This can especially be fulfilled by ensuring that the brand is familiar in the environment it should address. Furthermore, influencer endorsement within social media is based on visuals rather than text. Since males are seen as more negatively affected by stimuli that contain both visuals and text, they are also more affected by the negative side effects of influencer endorsement. Therefore, it would be recommended that influencer endorsement is targeted to females.

Taken together, the findings show that a lot can already be done to weaken or avoid the vampire effect in practice. Nevertheless, a lot of future research is needed on this topic in order to find more specific trigger points of the vampire effect and in turn, find ways that can enhance future influencer endorsement.

6.3 Future Research

The aim of this study was twofold: (1) to investigate whether the use of influencers in advertisements has a negative effect on brand recall in general and (2) which conditions enhance or weaken such a negative effect. This study is the first of its kind and therefore functions as a stepping stone for various further research. Consequently, the results of the study revealed five potential areas of interest for continuing research:

1. Even in the previously studied areas of this thesis (e.g. moderating effects like brand or influencer familiarity) further research with different preconditions and sampling methods can be conducted. It is of high interest to include more advertisements in the questionnaire as well as to gather data from a greater sample size.
2. As influencers have their own fan community and followers, it is highly interesting to perform a study like this with specific experiments which are only aiming on the direct set of followers of a particular influencer. Here, the precondition of following the investigated influencer needs to be included in the study.
3. One of the main findings of this study is the effect of gender on the relationship of influencer usage and brand recall. Accordingly, males are more likely to be influenced by the advertising stimuli than females. However, this study is the first indicating such an effect. Therefore, further research investigating the influence of gender on brand recall is particularly interesting, for example through eye-tracking studies that are able to detect male's attention focus and therefore can give implications on how social media advertisement can be designed to lower the risk of an overshadowing effect.
4. The conducted study only included brands from the fashion and beauty industry. Nevertheless, the overshadowing effect might also arise in different kind of industries like, for example, food or interior design. Therefore, repeating this study with brands and influencers from other industries than fashion is highly recommended.

5. Due to time and budget constraints, this study only applied non-probability sampling methods (convenience and snowball) concluding in a rather small sample size and partly lacking randomisation. Consequently, advanced analysis methods could not be performed and it is particularly recommended to repeat this study through gathering the data using probability sampling techniques.

6.4 Research Limitations

While conducting the research, a number of limitations concerning the nature of the study and its methods as well as resulting general limitations for the entire research paper occurred.

6.4.1 Data Collection and Analysis

The research has a *quantitative approach*. Consequently, it fails to distinguish people and social institutions from the ‘world of nature’ and the measurement process can possess a spurious sense of accuracy and precision. Additionally, due to the reliance on the conducted procedure of data collection, the connection between the research and the everyday life is partly hindered. As the research is analysing relationships between variables, it creates a static social world which is distinct from the individuals who constitute this world (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

In respect of the *data analysis*, some variables needed to be dummy-coded in order for us to be able to perform appropriate analysis techniques. Most of the time, a clear distinction of the different categories was given. However, for certain variables, like influencer-brand congruence, the distinction point between the two categories 0 and 1 was mathematically developed. Therefore, the results might vary depending on which mathematical calculation is applied.

One of the main limitations of this research lies within the *experimental research design*. Due to the nature of experimental studies and the sampled data, the findings cannot be generalised to the entire sample population. Furthermore, the replicability of the research is limited as several preconditions and settings need to be given in order to replicate the study and to get similar results.

In regard to the *questionnaire design*, the survey tool Sunet did not provide the option of randomisation. As a consequence, we needed to include two personal control questions (day of birth and month of birth). As research is stating, personal questions in the beginning of the survey increase the dropout-rate as respondents are not willing to reveal such information about themselves (Birnbaum, 2004; Bryman & Bell, 2011). For this reason, the data collection was slightly compromised by the survey design and encompasses a research limitation.

6.4.2 Sample and Sampling Error

There is always a certain potential for *sampling error* (Birnbaum, 2004; Bryman & Bell, 2011). However, our research sought to minimise this risk by collecting and investigating a sample as large as possible. Additionally, the data was gathered in a highly structured way and without any prejudice.

Due to the *technical restrictions* of the survey tool Sunet, the several advertisement conditions (influencer or unknown model) were not automatically randomly assigned through the system itself. Due to the random selection based on the two personal control questions, the distribution of the eight subgroups (each four advertisements for male and female) is not 100% equal and slightly varies with a maximum difference of 15 pp (a total of 29 to 34 participants). Furthermore, the applied convenience and snowball sampling is considered to be self-selected. Consequently, the findings and implications cannot be generalised and are only representative for the analysed sample of this study.

6.4.3 Selection of appropriate Brands and Influencers

This research is limited regarding the selection of the case brands and influencers. Mostly, the researchers based their selection of the brands on the comparative study of Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler (2015). However, this study does not focus only on Germany and brands known by Germans, but rather on internationally known brands to adapt the preconditions to the highly international influencer industry and to cover a higher reach. Furthermore, as the questionnaire is published online on social media platforms, there is only a certain extent of control over which nationalities are participating in the survey. For this reason, we conducted a profound research of appropriate brands followed by fitting influencers. Nevertheless, the choices are biased as they are solely based on our knowledge. To gain a high coverage, all brands and influencers as well as the design of the advertisements are addressed to western oriented cultures. Yet, this needs to be labelled as a research limitation as well as the pure application of fashion and beauty brands.

6.4.4 Differences in numbers of followers

A further limitation has to be noted when it comes to the differences in the numbers of followers between the male and female influencers. However, since our given research concentrates on male followers in the male influencer conditions and on female followers in the female influencer conditions, the opposite sex in the total numbers has to be excluded in each of the experimental situations.

6.4.5 Type 1 and Type 2 Error

With quantitative research and analysis comparing groups, Type 1 and Type 2 errors resulting in wrong conclusions are not avoidable. The errors are inversely related, meaning decreasing a Type 1 error, increases a Type 2 error. To minimise the occurrence of both errors, we considered all three main confidence levels (95, 99, and 99.90). As the sample size of this study is rather small and the data is gathered using non-probability sampling, the analysis was conducted applying the most commonly used significance alpha level of $p = .050$ (95% confidence interval).

6.4.6 Time and Budget Constraints

The time frame for conducting this research was highly limited. Furthermore, the research was not supported financially or by a professional agency. Firstly, this resulted in only one conducted study and a rather small sample size as the questionnaire was only available for two weeks. Secondly, we had to make compromises regarding the selection of case brands and influencers as well as applied data analysis methods. But, to guarantee high reliability and validity of the research and results, statistical significance for all analysed data was measured and comprehensive testing of all methods including controlling for third variables was performed.

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Appendix A: Advertisement Pairs

	
Influencer Marcus Butler	Unknown model
Note: no official advertisements!	

	
Influencer Sami Slimani	Unknown model
Note: no official advertisements!	

	
<p>Influencer Lisa Olsson</p>	<p>Unknown model</p>
<p>Note: no official advertisements!</p>	

	
<p>Influencer Farina Opoku (Nova Lana Love)</p>	<p>Unknown model</p>
<p>Note: no official advertisements!</p>	

Appendix B: Survey

Introduction text:

Welcome to our survey!

We are students at the Lund University (Sweden) and are currently writing our Master Thesis.

The answer you will give in the following minutes will result in important insights into the perception of you as a consumer. Of course, all the gathered data will be handled confidentially and your participation will be anonymous through the entire survey.

Please feel free to leave any comments about the survey on the last page!

Thank you very much for participating in our study! We appreciate it a lot.

Lucia Romina Luzzi and Kim Cassandra Rosengarten

Survey:

1. What is your gender? (*Advertisement shown below depends on the answer to Q1*)

Female Male

2. On what day were you born? (Please only type in the exact day. For example: is your birthday on the 5th of March, please only type in 5.)

3. In what month were you born? (Please answer in numerical values. For example for January type in 1.)

ADVERTISEMENT with influencer or unknown model (randomly chosen due to the control Q 2 and 3)

4. What is 80-14? _____

5. Do the math for: 2 x (4-1) _____

6. What is 74 x 2? _____

7. Which brand was displayed in the recently shown advertisement?

8. Which of the following brands was displayed?

- Apple Dolce & Gabbana Mont Blanc Puma
 Schwarzkopf Got2b Garnier Roberto Cavalli Nike

9. How familiar are you with the brand?

- Totally not familiar Not familiar Neither Familiar Totally familiar

10. To what extent do you use the brand's products?

- Not at all Very little Little Much Very much

11. In your opinion, do the shown attributes fit to the brand?

Luxurious

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

Innovative

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

Traditional

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

Sporty

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

Unconventional

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

Stylish/fashionable

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

Authentic

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

SHOW influencer or unknown model again (not in an advertisement!)

15. To what extent is the shown person an influencer?

- Not at all Very little Little Much Very much

16. What is the name of the previously shown person? (In case you don't know, leave it blank)

17. Please answer to the following statements regarding the shown person.

I just recognise the face.

- Not at all Very little Little Much Very much

I have seen the person in other advertisements.

- Not at all Very little Little Much Very much

I have seen the person on social media.

- Not at all Very little Little Much Very much

I strongly follow the person on social media.

- Not at all Very little Little Much Very much

18. In your opinion, do the attributes below fit to the person?

Authentic

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

Unique

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

Classy

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

Conventional

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

Sporty

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

Modern

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

Stylish/fashionable

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

19. How would you rate the attractiveness of this person?

Attractive

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

Classy

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

Beautiful

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

Elegant

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

Sexy

- Completely agree Agree Neither
 Disagree Completely disagree

20. To what extent are you using social media platforms?

- Not at all Very little Little Much Very much

21. Which one(s)?

- Facebook Instagram YouTube Twitter
 Snapchat Other

22. How many influencers are you following on Instagram?

- None 1-5 6-15 16-20 More than 20

23. How often do you use Instagram? (Please choose the most realistic one.)

- Once a month Once a week Once a day Several times a week
 Several times a day

24. What type of influencers are you following?

- Interior Fashion Beauty Food Travel
 Fitness Other

25. What is your nationality?

- German Swedish Dutch Italian Spanish
 Mexican Chinese Japanese British American
 Other

26. How old are you?

- Younger than 15 15-17 18-21 22-25 26-30 30-35

27. Do you have any comments? _____

Appendix C: Measures

Latent construct	Items	Source (adapted from/based on)
Attractiveness of the endorser*	In your opinion, how would you rate the attractiveness of this person? - attractive - classy - beautiful - elegant - sexy	Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler (2015) Ohanian (1991)
Influencer-brand congruence*	In your opinion, do the shown attributes fit to the brand/this person? Influencer attributes: - authentic - unique - classy - conventional - sporty - modern - stylish Brand attributes: - luxurious - innovative - traditional - sporty - unconventional - stylish - authentic	Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler (2015) Sengupta, Goodstein and Boninger (1997)
Brand familiarity**	How familiar are you with the brand?	Erfgen, Zenker and Sattler (2015) Misra and Beatty (1990) Kent and Allen (1994)
Influencer Familiarity***	What describes your relation to/knowledge of the person best? - I just recognise the face. - I have seen the person in other advertisements. - I have seen the person on social media. - I strongly follow the person's social media account(s). What is your gender?	- -
Gender Distinction	- Female - Male	

* Note: Measures used 5-point Likert scale with 1 = "Completely disagree" to 5 = "Completely agree"

** Note: Measures used 5-point Likert scale with 1 = "Totally not familiar" to 5 = "Totally familiar"

*** Note: Measures used 5-point Likert scale with 1 = "Not at all" to 5 = "Very much"