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# How can luxury fashion brands use hip hop artists to mix and master their influencer marketing campaigns?

*With the rise of hip hop's popularity in pop culture and influencer marketing as a strategy adopted by companies, how can luxury fashion brands employ both to market their products?*

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# Abstract

Influencer marketing is now an integral part of successful marketing campaigns, with companies across all markets adopting this strategy. Luxury fashion brands have been using various personalities to market their products for years, and are also aligning their strategy to current trends. The rise in popularity of hip hop personalities sees a growing trend of luxury brands working alongside them. Endorsements from these celebrities vary from being included in adverts by the brand, receiving products from the brand and putting them up on their social media account, and wearing them to public events. This research aims at clarifying which method appeals to the consumer the most and could possibly lead to an improvement of brand behaviour, recognition and intention among consumers. A sample of 107 respondents were subjected to a survey showcasing three posts of a single type of endorsement, traditional, active, or passive depending on the group they are in. Then the effect of these influencer marketing efforts on the respondents' intentions concerning the brand in question was measured. Results showed that the difference in groups only had an effect on brand recognition, as participants were more familiar with the brands presented by traditional and passive endorsements. On top of the differences of groups having an effect on dependent variables, a difference in influencers endorsing luxury brands was found to have an effect on both brand behaviour and brand recognition. An effect of celebrity recognition on brand intention was also confirmed by research as individuals would have better performing results if the celebrity endorsing the brand was recognised. The practical implications ensuing from these findings concern the design of future influencer marketing campaigns. Marketeers can see through this study that the manner in which their brand is being endorsed and by whom it is endorsed can have a different effect on the target group. This information will lead to influencer marketing campaigns to be more meticulously designed and possibly fulfil the brand's desire better.

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# 1. Introduction

Popular (pop) culture is one that stems from media and norms of what is considered coveted by the general population (Katz, 1959). This culture is dictated by various factors such as an artistic movement, a style of writing, filmography, common events, and music. Norms set by pop culture dictate how a certain era behaves and their ideologies (Abercrombie, 1990). In this study, the manner in which the musical aspect of pop culture affect the luxury fashion industry will be researched. As it is the case in general, pop culture in music is one that evolves over time, from Elvis Presley, The Eagles, The Beatles and rock dominating from the fifties through the seventies, to Michael Jackson, Madonna, Britney spears, and pop being prominent from the eighties to the early noughties. The pop culture we are living in right now saw a rise in popularity of hip hop music with Jay Z, Kanye West, and Drake being at the forefront of it. The dominating music movement in pop culture has been proven to have an influence on fashion, whether their outfits follow certain trends to reinforce the movement, or they stray away to make a statement and start a movement of their own (Power, & Hauge, 2008; Wark, 1991).

Hip hop and fashion are influenced by each other, now more than ever. The mentions of brands in lyrics is ever-present, and rappers or hip hop personalities are regularly invited to fashion shows, some even make it to the main stage and serve as models at shows. This phenomenon sparked interest in looking into what extent fashion brands, big or small, are now working alongside rappers to market themselves. These celebrities end up being part of advertisement campaigns for established fashion brands, like Travis Scott for Saint Laurent (Billboard, 2018). The problem that fashion brands are having to adapt to a new generation of customers that are active on social media and subjected to a different type of advertising. A switch in their communication strategies may be needed in order to solve that problem by adapting their practices to this new audience. Influencer marketing is a rising practice that resonates well with the current pop culture target group (Childers, Lemon, & Hoy, 2018). In addition to turning to that strategy, incorporating hip hop personalities in this practice may prove to be effective. This leads to this paper's research question: What are the effects of different types of endorsement by influencers on the performance of influencer marketing campaigns?

Answers to these questions and findings through quantitative research will provide an understanding of practices fashion brands may want to avoid or adopt when looking into

different forms of influencer marketing. In order to answer the research question target groups will be reacting to three practices currently employed by luxury brands where personalities are brought in for a traditional advert, sent clothes from their collection and have the personalities put up posts wearing them, and when these personalities get pictured wearing these brands at public events.

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1.    Cultural background

Hip hop culture has always been about the glitz and glamour available to artists when they become successful. Rappers are commonly associated with wearing flashy outfits, jewellery, and being more in your face than regular artists (Romero, 2012). Their demeanour and popularity among their fans help making generate more attention around a growing trend. An example of that may be the rise in popularity of the Japanese brand A Bathing Ape (Bape), this was caused by Pharrell Williams joining forces with the brand (Highsnobiety, 2019) and Kanye West designing his first shoe with them showcasing the iconic bear from his first album, College dropout (GQ, 2017). These events resulted in up and coming artists riding the trend and wearing Bape in their music videos and during public appearances, and the brand remains a staple in streetwear culture to this day.

Generations growing up among this shift in popular culture are more than familiar with the popular faces of that music genre, making marketing through these artists beneficial. For years, rappers would be ambassadors of lower-end, streetwear brands, but this is shifting. In 2016, the Harlem-born rapper A$AP Rocky became the face of high-end fashion brand Dior (Billboard, 2016). The narrative of owning articles from those brands as a status symbol that only very successful artists can achieve switched at that point. Fashion brands were seeking popular figures in hip hop to get this newer generation interested in their market (Burkhalter, & Thornton, 2014). Since then the likes of Drake, Future, Travis Scott, Donald Glover and more have been regulars in the conversation about hip hop's presence in fashion. The most striking event is undoubtedly the rise of Virgil Abloh, formerly the DJ of Kanye West. After being the creative director of Kanye West's agency, he launched his own high-end streetwear brand named Off white (Vogue, 2018). The continued success of his work, whether it was in collaboration with luxury brands like Moncler or on his own, put him on the path to now being the artistic director of the 'crème de la crème' of luxury brands, Louis Vuitton (GQ, 2018).

## 2.2.    Celebrity

This study will be dealing with influencers having attained a celebrity status. Boorstin (1962) defined a celebrity as 'a person well known for his well-knownness', meaning individuals can become renowned by being well-known by a large group of people. This definition loosely explains what a celebrity is, letting individuals under an umbrella of celebrity whether they are well-known in a community of three thousand or three million people. Epstein (2005) explains that individuals gain fame through their craft and achievements gain through it and become celebrities through the broadcast of that achievement. Celebrities that were chosen in this research satisfy both Epstein's and Boorstin's criteria as they are well-known by their community and recognizable due to their fame, that fame was gained through their craft and attained celebrity status through their broadcast of it.

## 2.3.    Celebrity recognition

Celebrity recognition determines a consumer's familiarity with the celebrities endorsing the brands presented. A celebrity is someone that enjoy public recognition and have distinct features (Silvera and Austad, 2004). Their recognition by a large public, just like a brand, can lead to these individuals having a loyal following and ensure the success of their business ventures, whether it is for their own products or by endorsing another brand's products (Malik, & Sudhakar, 2014). As individuals form attitudes in relation to numerous things, celebrities included, establishing the recognition of a celebrity may prove to be a factor in a consumer's brand intention (Luo, Chen, Han, & Park, 2010).

## 2.4.    Branding

In this study, branding applies to both the luxury brand itself or a celebrity's personal brand. Aaker described a brand as being 'a name or symbol, trademark and package design that uniquely identifies the products or services of a retailer, and differentiates them from those of its competitors' (Aaker, 1991, pp.7). This is valid for both clothing brands and celebrities used for this research as they each have unique attributes that sets them apart from their competitors and can prove to be a campaign's selling point. A brand name can be the company's name or a popular product, and for celebrities this would be their name or stage name. Kwek, Lai, and Lau (1970) emphasize that possessing a strong brand name will lead to attracting new customers and making them confident in purchasing their products. This is the case due to a brand name constituting extrinsic cues that lead consumers to have an idea of the product's

quality regardless of ever having used this brand's products before. In the particular case of the research, the brands dealt with are luxury brands. Vigneron and Johnson (2004) describe goods from a luxury brand as goods 'for which the simple use or display of a particular branded product brings esteem to the owner, apart from any functional utility'. Goods from luxury brands are viewed by consumers as high quality, expensive, non-essential, prestigious, and offer high level of symbolic and hedonic values through their experience (Tong, Su, & Xu, 2018).

## 2.5. Brand recognition

Brand recognition determines the familiarity with the brand and through which means consumers have gained knowledge of that brand. A brand's recognition can be built up through audio, visual, and audio-visual means within mass media (Karrh, 1998). Brennan and Babin (2004) confirmed that the effort brands put into sponsorships and product placement are looking to increase brand recall and recognition. A brand being able to be recognised by consumers ultimately contributes to their identification with it and their relationship with it, which constitutes loyalty to that brand (Erdoğmuş, & Çiçek, 2012). These efforts highlight the importance to brands of consumers being able to recognise them and recall their marketing spots as it may lead to increased brand loyalty which results in sales (Keller, 2008).

## 2.6. Brand intention

Brand intention which measures the likelihood of a consumer interacting with a brand. Through the communication performed by the brand in order to build their salience in a consumer's mind, this will end up dictating their intentions towards the brand (Malik, & Sudhakar, 2014). Malik and Sudhakar (2014) explain that should a consumer have a positive image of a brand, they may intend to look into their products, recommend their products to their peers, or purchase products themselves. Zaichkowsky and Fraser's (1993) research shown that consumers' attitudes varied according to the brand name on the objects presented, as knowledge of the brand may indicate the product's attributes and expected performance. Therefore, brand recognition is considered one of the antecedents of brand intention. In this research, Brand intention measures the likelihood of individuals looking into a brand's products, recommending that brand's products to their peers, purchasing a product from that brand should it be financially responsible, with each item being measured with and without the influence of a celebrity's endorsement.
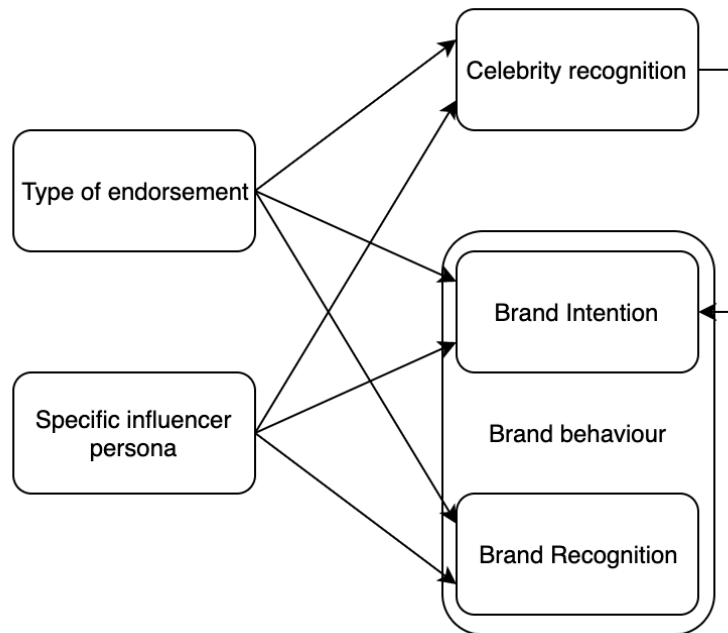
## 2.7.     Brand behaviour

Brand Behaviour in this study is a term used to group up the past two indicators of a consumer's attitude towards a brand. Brand recognition was found to possibly lead to loyalty and an eventual improved brand intention through sales (Keller, 2008), and the positive image of a brand was found to increase the likelihood of looking into, recommending, purchasing products from a brand (Malik, & Sudhakar, 2014). Thus their complementarity was put to light, and the grouping of these behavioural aspects to a single variable was made. Values of Brand Behaviour were drawn up by computing the means of brand recognition and intention items.

## 2.8.     Influencer marketing

The specific marketing strategy that is focused on for this study is influencer marketing. Influencer marketing is the effort employed by organizations where social media influencers (SMI) are used to advertise a company's products. The Interactive Advertising Bureau defines SMIs 'as those who "have the potential to create engagement, drive conversation and/or sell products/services with the intended target audience"' (Childers, et al., 2018). As celebrity and brand have been defined, celebrity endorsers are people that are well-known and possess this agency of adding traction to the entities they decide to associate with through their public recognition (McCracken, 1989), thus satisfying the criteria of being SMIs. Childers, et al. (2018) clarify that influencers can range from 'micro targeted professionals or non-professional "peers"' to celebrities, however only the latter is considered in this research. In order to market their products, organizations may call upon celebrities to participate in campaigns, as long as these personalities fit with their image, the product and the target audience (Pornpitakpan, 2004). The fit between a company and the personalities that endorse it is crucial to ensure the success of an influencer marketing campaign, as the 'low-fit celebrity endorsement generates negative cognitions, which, in turn, have a negative effect on brand evaluations' (Bergkvist, Hjalmarson, & Mägi, 2016). Companies plan that the that the endorsement of their products by celebrities will bring attention to them and transfer the celebrity's likability to their products (Erdogan, 1999). However, Erdogan (1999) also highlights the risks of celebrity endorsements, such as overshadowing the brand, sparking controversy among the people already loyal to the brand, and possibly changing the current brand's image with this collaboration. The use of influencers to market their product provide companies with a gateway to reach different audiences and niche groups that relate to the SMI and not their brand, which leads to more

impactful results than other forms of advertising (Childers, et al., 2018). As these efforts are a form of advertisement, regulation requires influencers to include disclosure of a persuasion attempt of an ad, such as '#ad', in order to protect the consumer from being deceived or misled (Evans, Phua, Lim, & Jun, 2017).



*Graph 1 – Conceptualization of the research model*

## 2.9.    Hypotheses

This research looks into the effect of different celebrity endorsements on a consumer's Brand Behaviour. The three different endorsements that are tested are where celebrities get included in adverts on the brand's social media platforms (traditional), where the celebrity puts out content of putting forward a brand on his social media channels (active endorsement), and where celebrities get pictured wearing a brand's products at a public event and that image gets published on social media channels dedicated to this type of content (passive endorsement). As passive endorsement posts clearly present the brands, the celebrity, and showcases the combination in a public setting, this type of endorsement is seen as the one that will perform the best in the eyes of respondents. The first few hypotheses that arises are the following:

*H1: A passive endorsement by a celebrity outperforms both traditional and active endorsement on the effect on brand behaviour.*

*H1.a: A passive endorsement by a celebrity performs best in Brand recognition out of the three conditions.*

*H1.b: A passive endorsement by a celebrity performs best in Brand intention out of the three conditions.*

Following this three-part hypothesis, this research dives deeper in celebrity recognition performances. As the random sample may not be familiar with all the celebrities presented some celebrity recognition may be lower depending on the personality presented. The final hypothesis and question that arises from that is does the recognition of the celebrity endorser positively influence an individual's brand intention?

*H2: The recognition of a celebrity will result in a better performance in Brand Intention.*

In addition to these hypotheses, the difference in influence within each group will be researched. This means that there will be a comparison of each influencer's effect on the dependent variable to find out whether there is a difference between them. This results in the following research question: Can the influence of the personalities participating in influencer campaigns be differentiated?

# 3. Method and instruments

## 3.1.    Design of instruments

This research employs a quantitative data collection method. Data was collected through a survey comprising three conditions: influencer marketing, passive endorsement, and traditional marketing. Traditional marketing is the control group for this paper, as it is the reference of how luxury brands market their products and the use of influencers constitutes a new method.
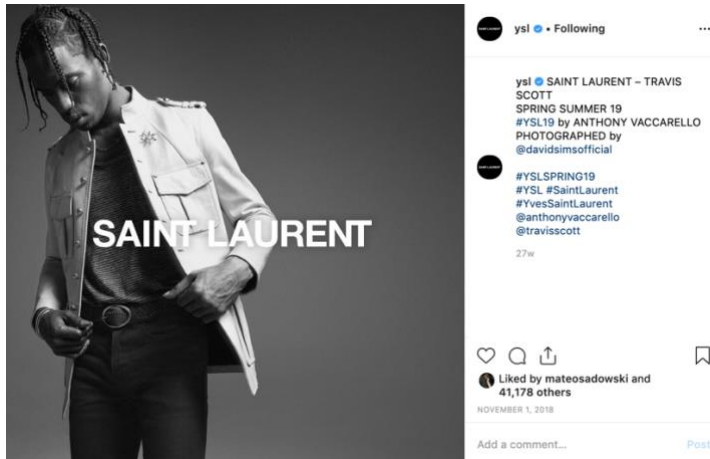
Image 1: Travis Scott in a traditional advert post



Image 2 – A$AP Rocky in an active endorsement post



Image 3: Drake in a passive endorsement post

Each condition consists of three Instagram posts followed by questions regarding the variables measured in this research. The Instagram posts depict a hip hop celebrity wearing luxury brands. The researcher conducted an informal pre-test among members of the target audience in order to establish which celebrities are the most well-known in that genre which resulted in

Travis Scott, A$AP Rocky, and Drake being chosen for this research. As Drake does not endorse luxury brands on official adverts, a regular advert from Louis Vuitton was chosen to be shown to respondents. The luxury brands depicted in this survey vary as these personalities are not consistently brought in by the same brands. The brands chosen are Balenciaga, Calvin Klein, Loewe, Louis Vuitton, Prada and Saint Laurent.

The variables measured in this research are brand recognition, brand intention, celebrity recognition, and brand intention in relation to celebrity endorsement. Brand recognition was measured with statements about the respondents' familiarity with the brand and whether they heard or had seen references of that brand prior to this survey. The questions were drawn from the theoretical framework where Brennan and Babin (2004) studied the effect of audio-visual brand placement on brand recognition and familiarity. Brand intention was measured with statements about the likeliness of the respondent of looking into the brand's products, recommending this brand's products to their peers, and purchasing a product from that brand should it be financially responsible. These questions were chosen in accordance to Erdoğmuş and Çiçek's (2012) research on brand loyalty from social media marketing, which addresses brand intention. An additional three questions asking whether respondents would be more or less likely to look into the brand's products, recommend the brand's products to their peers, and purchase a product from that brand should it be financially responsible were added. Only the items asking respondents whether they were more likely to follow on their brand intention were taken in consideration as the response from the negative items were not useable. This modification was made due to Erdogan's (1999) explanation of pros and cons of celebrity endorsement and the risks of a low-fit collaboration highlighted by Bergkvist, Hjalmarson, and Mägi (2016). Similarly to the brand recognition statements, celebrity recognition followed the model of Brennan and Babin (2004) by having respondents judge statements about whether they are familiar with the celebrity and have heard or seen references about that individual. Finally, brand intention in relation to celebrity endorsements was measured with an altered model from Erdoğmuş and Çiçek (2012). These statements were modified in a way to see whether respondents would be more or less likely to look into the products, recommend the products to peers, and purchase products should it be financially responsible.

In order to analyse the data collected through this survey, the program SPSS is used and tools such as Repeated Measures ANOVAs and a simple linear regression were carried out. The Repeated Measures ANOVAs was used to analyse data to test the three-part hypotheses. The within-subject factor was defined as the respective influence each influencer has on the subjects taking part in this study. As each influencer has their own unique attributes

that differentiates them from their peers, their relatability and influence cannot be considered to be exactly the same. Therefore, on top of the difference of influence on Brand Behaviour's variables each endorsement has, the influence of the showcased influencer will be discussed. A simple linear regression will be carried out to measure the effect of celebrity recognition on respondents' brand intention in order to test the second hypothesis.

## 3.2.     Validity of measures

A factor analysis was carried out to ensure the validity of the measured factors. Each survey consisted of twelve questions, which were found to measure three different factors. The first factor, composed of six questions, measure the variable brand intention with statements measuring the likelihood of participants looking into, recommending, and purchasing a brand's product, whether it is endorsed by a celebrity or not. Three of the statements in this factor loaded adequately in both this and the second factor, it was decided to attribute these items to Brand Intention. This decision was made as these items were written to measure that factor and not the one of Brand Recognition. As these statements were also similar to the ones that load to Brand Intention, attributing these statements to that factor seemed logical. The second factor, comprising of three questions, measures the variable brand recognition with statements measuring a respondent's familiarity with the brand depicted in the question. The third and final factor, comprising of three questions, measures the variable celebrity recognition with statements measuring a respondent's familiarity with the individual depicted in the question.

Table 1

*Factor analysis of dependent variables*

| | Component | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Brand Intention | Brand Recognition | Celebrity Recognition |
| I am familiar with the brand depicted | | .862 | |
| I have heard references of the brand depicted | | .865 | |
| I have seen references of the brand depicted | | .898 | |
| I am likely to look into this brand's products | .573 | .550 | |
| I am likely to recommend this brand's products to my peers | .652 | .448 | |
| If products of this brand were to be affordable to me, I am likely to purchase some. | .638 | .422 | |
| I am familiar with the person depicted in the post | | | .887 |
| I have heard references of the person depicted in the post | | | .930 |
| I have seen references of the person depicted in the post | | | .929 |
| I am more likely to look into this brand's products after this person's endorsement | .878 | | |
| I am more likely to recommend this brand's products to my peers after this person's endorsement | .891 | | |
| If this brand's products were affordable to me, I would be more likely purchase some products after this person's endorsement | .872 | | |

## 3.3.    **Reliability of measures**

In order to ensure the reliability of the statements used to measure each variable, they were all subjected to a reliability test. After conducting an initial pre-test consisting of six respondents to have an assessment of the reliability of the statements, a full reliability test was carried out. Statements regarding brand recognition were able to measure that variable with a Cronbach's Alpha of .89, according to the rule of George and Mallery (2003) regarding reliability tests, a Cronbach's Alpha above .8 is considered a good method of measurement of a variable. Statements about brand intention were able to measure that variable with a Cronbach's alpha of .93, in accordance to the rule of George and Mallery (2003), a Cronbach's alpha higher than .9 is considered excellent. Celebrity recognition's statements were able to measure their

variable with a Cronbach's alpha of .9, this alpha is considered to be of excellent reliability (George, & Mallery, 2003).

## 3.4.    Sample

Sampling was done using convenience sampling and snowball sampling. The researcher used the social media platforms Facebook and Instagram as well as personal communication means to form a sample group. This method of gathering participants due to their accessibility, proximity, or availability to participate define convenience sampling (Etikan, Musa, Alkassim, 2016), which was the case in this study. A snowball sampling methodology counts on respondents of the study to refer the survey their peers in order to gather more respondents (Goodman, 1961). The sample group consists of respondents, of which 106 responses were usable for this research. The research was directed towards 18 to 25-year-olds and the sample collected for is mostly within that age group, with only five respondents falling outside of it, making the sample's age range between 16 and 28. This age group is one where more than half of the population is present on Instagram, the platform showcased in this study (Sproutsocial, n.d.). The mean age of the sample group is 21.46 with 75 percent of the sample being between 16 and 23 years old. The sample had a majority of female respondents outnumbering male respondents by seventeen, with that population consisting of 61 participants or 57 percent of the sample. One participant did not identify with either gender. The sample group was international as 55 percent of respondents were from either the Netherlands or Germany, and the rest from other countries. Respondents were mostly students with only 14 of them being either employed or unemployed. Finally, the participants' education level were mostly undergraduates as 75 percent of the sample have had either only completed middle or high school. However, 26 of the 106 respondents have completed their bachelors, six of them additionally completing a masters, and a single participant having obtained a PhD. This sample is the right one

## 3.5.    Data collection procedure

Data collection was performed through an online survey. As previously stated, the survey consisted of three different conditions, with each presenting respondents with three Instagram posts and questions regarding brand recognition, brand intention, celebrity recognition, and brand intention in relation to celebrity endorsement. In addition to the usage of personal ties to gather participants, the survey was also put on the Instagram story of a UK Instagram influencer

by the name Williamcult. As this influencer is mainly focused on fashion topics, responses resulting from exposure on his account were by individuals opinionated on fashion, from a wider age group, and a great variety of nationalities. Individuals deciding to take part in the survey would be first directed to a consent form, should they choose to consent to taking part in the study, they were then briefed about the study. The briefing asked participants to act as if they were scrolling through Instagram and came across the posts in this study, then to answer the questions related to each post. The survey then randomly assigned one of the conditions to each participant in a more or less even manner. The posts in each condition were also randomized in order to avoid the likelihood of the same last post being hastily looked at by respondents wanting to end the survey. Then the respondents were asked demographics questions, and finally were debriefed about the goal of the goal of the study and given the option of contacting the researcher should they have any resulting questions.

# 4. Analyses and results

The first analysis carried out is a repeated measures ANOVA looking into Brand Behaviour, Brand Recognition, and Brand Intention. Travis Scott, A$AP Rocky, and Drake are named as Influencer 1, Influencer 2, and Influencer 3 respectively in the following analysis. As the options in the 5-point Likert scale were coded as 1 being agree to 5 being disagree, the lower the result is the more desirable it is.

## 4.1.     Brand behaviour

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of (IV) endorsement type on (DV) brand behaviour in passive endorsement posts, active endorsement posts, and traditional advertisement posts. There is no statistically significant difference between group means as determined by the Repeated Measures ANOVA ($F$ (2, 104) = 1.74, $p$ = .18). This means that there is no proof of an effect on the mean of Brand Behaviour depending on a respondent's group. This result disproves H1, as a lack of effect means that a passive endorsement does not outperform an active endorsement and traditional marketing in Brand Behaviour scores.

As determined by the tests of Within-Subjects contrasts, there is a statistically significant linear effect on the difference of influencer means ($F$ (1, 104) = 13.39, $p$ = .00). This effect has a partial Eta squared ($\eta_P^2$) of .11, meaning there is a medium-sized effect on the

mean difference depending on the influencers seen by respondents. The only statistically significant result found in these comparisons concerns Influencer 3 ($p < 0.5$), as the mean of their result score lower than both Influencer 1 and 2. This means that Influencer 3's posts on average provide a better Brand Behaviour than its peers, making that influencer the most attractive to a luxury brand looking into employing influencers to improve consumers' brand behaviour for their behalf.

Table 2

*Mean and Standard deviation of Brand behaviour between influencers across groups*

| Which group? | | Influencer 1 | Influencer 2 | Influencer 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Passive | Mean | 2.72 | 2.33 | **2.25** |
| | Std. Deviation | 1.001 | .872 | .929 |
| Active | Mean | 2.66 | 3.37 | **2.39** |
| | Std. Deviation | 1.261 | 1.222 | 1.117 |
| Advert | Mean | 2.61 | 2.64 | **2.46** |
| | Std. Deviation | .810 | .918 | .671 |
| Total | Mean | 2.67 | 2.75 | **2.37** |
| | Std. Deviation | 1.020 | 1.082 | .909 |

Influencer 3 is the best performer in influencing Brand Behaviour compared to its peers, consistently scoring lower than them across the types of endorsements. Influencer 1 scored similarly across the three conditions and performed the best with its traditional advertisement post, unlike its peers whose passive endorsement posts performed best. Influencer 2's active endorsement post clearly underperformed compared to its peers, with its traditional advertisement post slightly underperforming compared to influencer 1. Influencer 2 seems to be the worst option out of the three should a brand look to influence their Brand Behaviour in consumers.

Results found a medium-sized within-subjects effect, meaning that different influencers do not affect brand behaviour the same, although results showed no statistically significant differences between the groups regarding brand behaviour. As expected, influencers possess a different degree of influence on respondents due to their unique attributes. In this case, Drake (Influencer 3) had the lowest scores compared to his peers, meaning that respondents were more familiar with the brand and likely to interact with it positively. In conclusion, should a brand be looking to improve brand behaviour among their audience, an influencer campaign containing Drake would prove to be successful.
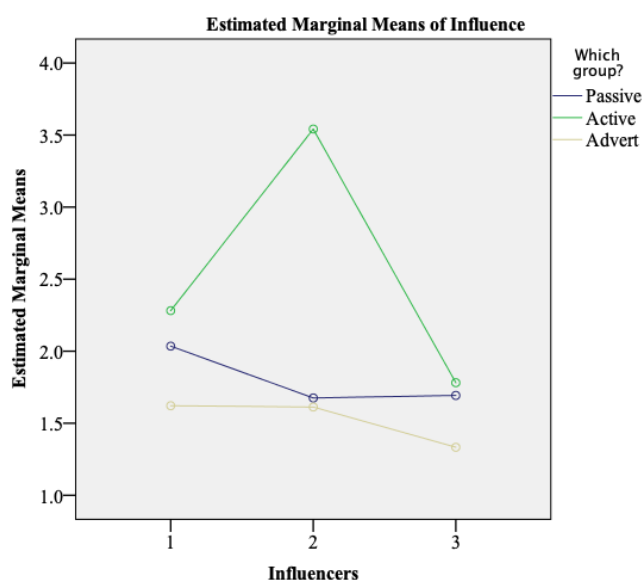
## 4.2.      Brand recognition

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of (IV) endorsement type on (DV) brand recognition in passive endorsement posts, active endorsement posts, and traditional advertisement posts.

There is a statistically significant difference between group means as determined by the Repeated Measures ANOVA ($F$ (2, 104) = 9.87, $p$ = .00). This means that there is proof of an effect on the mean of brand recognition depending on the groups. The difference results in a large-sized ($\eta_p^2$ = .16) effect on the change of means of each subject concerning the group they're in. The post-hoc test highlighted two statistically significant differences in means between groups, adverts scoring -1.01 compared to active endorsements ($p$ = .00), and passive endorsements scoring -.73 compared to active endorsements ($p$ = .00). However, there is no statistically significant difference between passive endorsement and traditional advertisements. These results cannot rule out nor confirm the confirmation of H1.a as passive endorsement posts only outperform active endorsement posts statistically significantly.

The within-subjects contrast test determines a statistically significant linear difference between influencers ($F$ (1, 104) = 9,90, $p$ = .00). This difference has a medium-sized effect on the change of means of responses depending on the influencer seen by respondents ($\eta_p^2$ =.09). Influencer 3 highlights this effect as it scores .-38 compared to Influencer 1 ($p$ = .00) and -.67 compared to Influencer 2 ($p$ = .00).

Graph 1

*Estimated marginal means of influence of the three influencers on brand recognition according to the group they are in.*

As seen on graph 1, Influencer 2's active endorsement post largely underperforms compared to every other post as a higher mean signifies a lower brand recognition. Traditional adverts outperform both groups regardless of the influencer, the difference being the least apparent between Influencer 2's advert post and passive endorsement post with their means being 1.61 and 1.68 and standard deviations being .98 and 1.05 respectively. Influencer 3 consistently performs well in respondent's Brand Recognition, with only Influencer 2's passive endorsement post performing as well with a mean of 1.68 and standard deviation of 1.05 compared to Influencer 3's mean of 1.69 and standard deviation of 1.27. Influencer 3 has the greatest influence across groups to influence consumers' Brand Recognition with an overall mean of 1.60 and a standard deviation of 1.17.

Table 3

*Means and Standard deviation of Brand recognition of different influencers across groups*

| Which group? | | Influencer 1 | Influencer 2 | Influencer 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Passive | Mean | 2.04 | **1.68** | 1.69 |
| | Std. Deviation | 1.490 | 1.053 | 1.274 |
| Active | Mean | 2.28 | 3.54 | **1.78** |
| | Std. Deviation | 1.557 | 1.757 | 1.466 |
| Advert | Mean | 1.62 | 1.61 | **1.33** |
| | Std. Deviation | .836 | .980 | .624 |
| Total | Mean | 1.97 | 2.21 | **1.60** |
| | Std. Deviation | 1.340 | 1.542 | 1.168 |

As previously stated, results proved a difference in groups on brand recognition with a large-sized effect. In this study, respondents were more familiar with the brands depicted in the advertisement group. This means that in order to ensure a high brand familiarity, brands would be recommended to carry out traditional advertisements including influencers. On top of this effect, the difference in influencers also played a role in respondents' brand recognition, as a statistically significant medium-sized effect between influencers was found. Similarly to brand behaviour, respondents were more familiar with the brands depicted when showcased by Drake (Influencer 3).

## 4.3.     Brand intention

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of (IV) endorsement type on (DV) brand intention in passive endorsement posts, active endorsement posts, and traditional advertisement posts.

There were no statistically significant differences between group means as determined by the Repeated Measures ANOVA ($F$ (2, 104) = 1.98, $p$ = .14). This result disproves H1.b, the hypothesis of passive endorsement outperforming active endorsement and traditional adverts in Brand Intention.

There is a statistically significant linear interaction between influencers and the groups as determined by the Repeated Measures ANOVA ($F$ (2, 104) = 5.49, $p$ = .00). The effect is of medium-size ($\eta_p^2$ = .1) on the change of means of each subject depending on the influencers they see depending on the group they are in.

Brand intention did not depict a statistically significant difference in groups, however, there was a significant interaction effect between influencers and groups. This means that depending on the group they were in, an influencer could see changes in his influences on the respondents' brand intention. A$AP Rocky (Influencer 2) saw the biggest changes between groups as both of his active and advertisement posts resulted in a neutral brand intention from respondents and his passive endorsement post yielded a positive brand intention. In this case, Travis Scott (Influencer 1) seems to be the influencer of choice should a brand want to carry out an active endorsement campaign to improve brand intention. On the other hand, A$AP Rocky would be the better choice in a passive endorsement effort from the brand.

## 4.4.     Celebrity recognition

A simple linear regression was carried out to measure the effect of Celebrity Recognition on Brand Intention. A significant regression equation was found ($F$ (1, 105) = 24.92, $p$ < .000) with an $R^2$ of .19. The Beta of this effect is .438, as this beta is positive this means that for each 1-unit increase of Celebrity Recognition, results of Brand Intention will increase too. This result proves H2 as a lower mean in celebrity recognition will mean a lower, thus more desirable brand intention in respondents.

# 5. Conclusion and discussion

This paper's aim was to research how hip hop influencers endorse luxury product affect the effectiveness of an influencer campaign. Through the study of a sample composed of 107 participants that were subjected to three different measures of luxury brands using influencers to market their products, it was concluded that the only statistically significance seen between groups concerned brand recognition. Thus to answer the research question, the manner hip hop influencers endorse luxury products effectively affects brand recognition among consumers. This result goes in line with Brennan and Babin's (2004) research showing that product placement leads to increased brand recognition, albeit the product placement being on an influencer's social media post in this study. Results showed that respondents were most familiar with brands when presented to them through traditional advertisements and passive endorsements rather than when influencers actively endorse them. This was the case due to Influencer 2's active post performing badly in brand recognition among respondents. The better performance of passive endorsements and traditional adverts may be due to the posts explicitly naming and showcasing the brand of the clothing worn, as opposed to an active endorsement remaining more natural and influencers captioning it similarly to their usual posts. This finding shows that the manner in which bands advertise their products traditionally remains more effective than when influencers do so, proving that the manner in which brands are advertised are still significant in the mind of individuals. Additionally, these results confirm Luo, et al.'s (2010) assumption of celebrity recognition being a factor in a consumer's brand intention as the effect was statistically significant.

The method was adequate to finding results on this research as it provided me with a measurable understanding of several effects. Firstly, the sample used was from the desired age group as these individuals are some of the most active on the platform showcased, knowledgeable of the celebrities presented, and most susceptible to form brand intention on the luxury goods presented. These results may be representative of the general population and could carry over without major changes to studies employing a larger sample. Secondly, the survey used measured the researched factors reliably and validly in order to carry out a research with valid results. Finally, the tool used to analyse the data gathered provided a clear understanding of the researched effect in a measurable manner.

# 6. Theoretical and practical implications

Theoretically, this study provides three implications. Firstly, this research divides influencer marketing in three distinct categories on top of the existing size-related categories Childers, et al. (2018) established, this new variable can be further looked into by researchers. Secondly, this study highlighted that there is a difference in the influence depending on the influencer participating in a campaign, which can be subject to further research looking to find more about the traits that cause these differences. The celebrity-product fit discussion has already been researched by Pornpitakpan (2004) and Bergkvist, et al. (2016), however it may be wise to further research than solely examining the fit and researching the values, expectations, and impact of content linked to the influencer after having establishing that they would be a good fit to the brand. Finally, there was proof of influencers having more or less of influence on brand intention depending on the category of endorsement. This finding may result in researchers looking at the variables, such as influencer following, impact of content, or the influencer's target group, causing this change in influence and providing an understanding of the intricacies of influencer marketing.

Practically, this study also provides three implications. research has proven that the difference in the three distinct categories have impacted the effectiveness of their campaign, which is knowledge that marketers can use when designing an influencer campaign destined to improve a brand's recognition among consumers. Secondly, the proof of an influencer's influence differing across the category of endorsement may be useful for marketers. This finding may help marketers design more thoroughly researched influencer marketing campaigns in the future as this consideration may be done depending on the goal of the brand. Finally, should luxury brands be trying to carry out an influencer marketing with a similar target group to this study, the results may provide three suitable influencers depending on the type of post they are aiming for.

# 7. Limitations

This research is not free of limitations. Firstly, the measures used to create a sample, convenience sampling and snowball sampling, are known to be non-random and rarely resulting in a representative population as it differs from a randomly-selected sample (Etikan, Musa, Alkassim, 2016). This lead to the lack of significant results concerning half of the

presented hypotheses. Ensuring the randomisation of the sample can add to the generalizability of the results as it would more accurately depict the selected population for this study. This manner of sampling was done as the time constraint and my lack of resources could not enable me to randomly sample my respondents group. Secondly, the targeting of the sample may have gathered individuals that are not knowledgeable or interested in fashion, this fact could possibly lead to a negative bias towards luxury fashion brands. This was the case due to the method of sampling, as my network may not only consist of knowledgeable fashion enthusiasts.

The design of the survey can leave some uncertainty on the data as it may have been too long. The survey presented each participant with 41 questions, which would subject them to factors such as fatigue when reaching the latter stages of answering the survey (Porter, Whitcomb, & Weitzer, 2004). This was the case due to the decision of having three different influencers instead of a single one in order to avoid unusable results due to the influencer not being recognised. Therefore, with the two additional influencers, the same rounds of questions were added in order to have a standardised method of measuring each variable across influencers. Additionally, the scales used were initially inconsistent as brand intention was measured with six items asking respondents whether they were more or less likely to look into, recommend or purchase a product from a brand after the endorsement of an influencer. These items were halved and only the items asking whether a respondent was more likely to proceed with these brand interactions were taken in account. Moreover, this survey may have benefited from a pre and post-test model in order to more accurately measure the effect of the endorsements on the participant's brand behaviour. This was not done in order to avoid adding to the survey fatigue as the initial round of questions set out in the survey was already considered lengthy.

There was a lack of consistency concerning the brands and influencers shown to participants. Drake is the only influencer not appearing in traditional advertisements, therefore the group subjected to advertisements saw a regular advertisement from Louis Vuitton and saw the other two influencers appearing in traditional advertisements for Prada and Saint Laurent. These influencers wore different brands, resulting in some brands not being present in all three conditions. The passive endorsement group saw posts depicting Prada, Calvin Klein and Balenciaga, and the active endorsement group saw posts depicting Louis Vuitton, Loewe, and Balenciaga. This diversity in brands and influencers may have resulted in extra noise in the results, this should be a point to be taken in consideration for further research. The consistency between influencers was favoured over the brands as the focus of this study is mainly on influencers endorsing brands and their effect on consumers. I deemed the possibility of

comparing influencers across different conditions more interesting than researching how brands perform depending on their type of endorsement. Some of the posts originally described a series of brands rather than focusing on a single brand. Some posts were able to be modified to only describe a single one, however others would not look natural if such modifications were made. Having unnatural posts due to modifications would have jeopardised the premise of the survey as respondents would not have been able to react naturally to posts as if they saw them while scrolling on Instagram as they would in their free time. This may have shifted the focus off of the desired brand, thus possibly causing inconsistencies in results, this fact should be taken in consideration in further research.

Finally, in order to avoid making the survey too long and make the research manageable, only a few of the variables susceptible to affect the measured variables were taken in consideration. The selected factors were the ones deemed to have the largest presence in marketing efforts as presented by the literature used throughout. As Instagram posts are mostly focused on showcasing images, measuring brand and celebrity recognition seemed to be appropriate, and diving deeper when researching brand intention seemed logical. Diving any deeper may have led respondents to think more about the presented posts than they would usually, possibly providing results that would not be consistent with day-to-day behaviour. Factors such as brand likeability, celebrity likeability, or attitude towards luxury fashion could be valuable to be taken in consideration by future research looking into influencer marketing in luxury fashion.

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# 9.  Appendices

## A- Literature study log

**Research question literature study**

This literature study is aimed to provide a theoretical understanding of this paper, background of research carried out on the subject, and give an understanding of the concepts employed in this study. The research questions for this literature study are the following: How are current influencer marketing campaigns carried out and what effect do they have? How similar are influencer marketing campaigns to the long-implemented celebrity endorsement campaigns phenomenon? What are the dominant aspects dealt with during influencer marketing campaigns?

The first concept dealt with is influencer marketing, which is a method of marketing products that has become increasingly popular with the rise of social media platforms. As individuals on these platforms happen to gather a community around their content, companies have found the benefit of providing these influencers with their product in exchange for coverage on their platform in order to appeal to their community. The first research question will look into how these campaigns function and the effect they have on individuals subjected to them.

The second concept dealt with is celebrity endorsement, which could be considered a predecessor to influencer marketing. Celebrities, individuals well-known to individuals, endorse a brand and thus increases interest in that company among a new community. However, celebrities are much more high-profile compared to social media influencers. The relationship with the fanbase and the size of the fanbase are entirely different, thus the effect cannot be considered the same. Therefore the second research question will look into the similarities between the two methods of marketing.

## Criteria preferred materials

A wide range of materials will be dealt with in this study as I found an insight into the cultural background of the subject to be important. Therefore, to provide an understanding of what hip hop is, news articles and blog posts will be sifted through. These texts covered important events that lead to the current dynamic in today's fashion world, thus I find their inclusion in the research to be crucial. These documents' recency depend on the event they cover, and their

language will be somewhat professional and impartial as I am looking for a fair expository coverage of these events. Then, books and scientific articles will be looked into in order to cover the concepts and variables present in the study. An expert look into all these theoretical subjects is required in order to get a better grasp of what is being researched in this paper. The documents covering influencer marketing and social media era marketing will need to be no older than 9 years as these would have covered the shift in society with the uprising of online platforms. The documents covering other concepts such as celebrity endorsement, branding, pop culture, or other linked constructs do not have a specific required level of recency as these are long-discussed subjects where findings in research can still apply to recent times. The language of these documents will have to showcase scientific expertise over the subject that is dealt with. Exploratory research can be taken in consideration but more informed papers will be favoured.

## Select databases

Scopus has been chosen as the main database to find scientific articles. This database is appropriate to use as it will ensure that the documents presented to me are qualified as peer-reviewed scientific articles and that their findings are usable for my research. As a back-up to Scopus, Google scholar was used to further look for documents treating articles as that search engine provides a wide range of results. However due to the less rigorous exclusion of papers, documents found through Google Scholar have gone under more scrutiny in order to ensure their legitimacy. Finally, in order to find blogs and news articles discussing events for cultural background, Google was used. The fact that these sources do not have to satisfy as strict a professionalism criteria, a more lax search engine was deemed appropriate.

## Relevant terms

| Concepts | Related terms | Smaller terms | Broader terms |
|---|---|---|---|
| Influencer marketing | Social media marketing, engagement, followers | Influencer, social media influencer, online community | Online marketing, community targeting, social influence, advertising |

| Celebrity endorsement | Product placement, traditional advertisement, fanbase | Celebrity recognition, product recognition | Celebrity branding, Association with fame, Promoting, Marketing |
|---|---|---|---|
| Branding | Image, sentiment, recognition | Trademark, Unique identifier | Name, symbol, Company, Products |
| Pop culture | Popular culture | Subculture, society, community | Trends, Societal norms, Mass consciousness |
| Brand Behaviour | Intent to buy, intent to recommend, intent to look into | Interaction with a brand, action | Buying, recommending, looking into, |

## Search actions

| Date | Search engine | Search action | Search technique (and/or/truncatie/phrase searching) | Number of results |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26/02 | Scopus | "Fashion brand" AND hip hop | Phrase searching, AND | 10 |
| | Google Scholar | "Fashion brand" AND hip hop | Phrase searching, AND | 27 300 |
| | Scopus | Celebrity | | 7 206 |
| | Scopus | "Influencer marketing" | Phrase searching | 47 |
| | Scopus | Celebrity AND endorsement | AND | 537 |
| | Scopus | "Brand recognition" | Phrase searching | 393 |
| | Google | Pharrell Bape | | 1 410 000 |
| | Google | Kanye west college dropout Bapesta | | 13 600 |
| | Google | Asap Rocky Dior | | 913 000 |
| | Google | Instagram demographics | | 39 200 000 |
| | Google | Travis Scott Saint Laurent | | 6 400 000 |

| 8/03 | Scopus | "Attitude" AND Brand | Phrase searching, AND | 13 841 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Scopus | "Brand intention" | Phrase searching | 15 |
| 21/03 | Scopus | "Purchase intention" | Phrase searching | 5 147 |
| | Scopus | "popular culture" | Phrase searching | 10 133 |
| | Scopus | "pop culture" | Phrase searching | 946 |
| | Scopus | "pop culture" AND effect | Phrase searching, AND | 73 |
| | Scopus | Music AND fashion AND effect | AND, AND | 90 |
| 10/04 | Google scholar | "Pop culture" AND fashion AND effect | Phrase searching, AND, AND | 567 000 |
| | Scopus | "luxury fashion" AND popularity | Phrase searching, AND | 3 |
| | Scopus | Fashion AND popularity | AND | 823 |
| | Scopus | "luxury fashion" AND popularity | Phrase searching, AND | 3 |
| 22/05 | Scopus | Fashion AND popularity | AND | 823 |
| | Scopus | "luxury fashion" AND popularity | Phrase searching, AND | 3 |
| | Scopus | Fashion AND popularity | AND | 823 |
| 3/06 | Scopus | Convenience sampling | | 8 356 |
| | Scopus | "Convenience Sampling" | Phrase searching | 5 869 |
| | Scopus | Snowball sampling | | 2 666 |
| | Scopus | "Snowball sampling" | Phrase searching | 2 377 |
| 20/06 | Google Scholar | "Brand Behaviour" | Phrase searching | 1 900 000 |

Reflection

In order to get qualitatively good information for my research I looked into papers treating my subject in a similar manner. Their angle had to be somewhat aligned to mine in order for me to be able to apply their findings into the background of my study. Their proceedings helped me in the design of my own study and provided guidelines of what to look into and take in consideration when treating their subject. I oriented myself on the subject in a way to identify the benefits of influencer marketing compared to traditional marketing, thus identifying the different aspects they have in common and looking into how those vary compared to one another. My search actions were to find out about the overarching terms used in my study by using phrase searching. Then the effect or the combination of these concepts was looked into by using the terms and joining up with 'AND'. The important actions were the phrase searching of "popular culture" and "influencer marketing" as there is an extensive amount of research surrounding these subjects and that is how I came up with a clear understanding of these concepts. An important combination of terms came between "pop culture" AND effect as this showcased me research that confirmed my observation of the shift in popular culture also has an effect on individuals and the things that they gravitate towards. I have assessed the relevance and quality of the found documentation through the amount of times they were cited, how many sources they base their assertation of facts on, and their recency and alignment to my subject. In a next search operation, I would employ more diverse search engines as there may be more interesting angles concerning my subject that were not presented to me with the ones I have used for this study. That way I may avoid the use of Google Scholar and prevent the added skepticism I had when selecting articles on that database.

## B- Stimuli used in survey

**Passive endorsement**



Image 4 – A$AP Rocky wearing Calvin Klein in a passive endorsement



Image 5 – Travis Scott wearing Prada in a passive endorsement



Image 6 – Drake wearing Balenciaga in a passive endorsement

**Active endorsement posts**



Image 7 – A$AP Rocky promoting Loewe on Instagram in an active endorsement



Image 8 – Travis Scott promoting Balenciaga on Instagram in an active endorsement



Image 9 – Drake promoting Louis Vuitton on Instagram in an active endorsement

**Advertising posts**



Image 10 – A traditional Louis Vuitton advert featuring a low-level celebrity (Octavian)



Image 11 – A$AP Rocky appearing in a traditional advert for Prada



Image 12 – Travis Scott appearing in a traditional advert for Saint Laurent

## C- Survey questions

## Consent form

Thank you for taking the time of completing this survey about the use of influencer marketing in luxury fashion!

This survey will expose you to three instances of marketing posts on Instagram. Then questions relating to these posts will be asked and you will be answering them to the best of your capacity.

This will take approximately 15 minutes.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can opt out at any time. Further, your personal data as well as your given answers are treated anonymously and confidentially. Your data will only be used for the purpose of this research. Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the information obtained by this study.

If for any reason you want to remove your data, you can contact me, Karl Huggenberger, at k.t.huggenberger@student.utwente.nl                                                                     .

If you agree, please read carefully and press on "I consent and agree to take part in this study" to begin the questionnaire!"

- I consent and agree to take part in this study
- I do not consent nor agree to take part in this study

## Briefing

You are at home scrolling through Instagram and come across the following posts. Please act as you would in that situation and answer the following questions.

## Brand Recognition

I am familiar with the brand depicted.

- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree

- Disagree

I have heard references of the brand depicted.
- Agree

- Somewhat agree

- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree

- Disagree

I have seen references of the brand depicted.
- Agree

- Somewhat agree

- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree

- Disagree

## Brand Intention (pt.1)
I am likely to look into this brand's products.
- Agree

- Somewhat agree

- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree

- Disagree

I am likely to recommend this brand's products to my peers.
- Agree

- Somewhat agree

- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree

- Disagree

If products of this brand were to be affordable to me, I am likely to purchase some.
- Agree

- Somewhat agree

- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree

- Disagree

## Celebrity Recognition

I am familiar with the person depicted in the post.

- Agree

- Somewhat agree

- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree

- Disagree

I have heard references of the person depicted in the post.

- Agree

- Somewhat agree

- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree

- Disagree

I have seen references of the person depicted in the post.

- Agree

- Somewhat agree

- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree

- Disagree

## Brand Intention (pt.2)

I am more likely to look into this brand's products after this person's endorsement.

- Agree

- Somewhat agree

- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree

- Disagree

I am less likely to look into this brand's products after this person's endorsement.

- Agree

- Somewhat agree

- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree

- Disagree

I am more likely to recommend this brand's products to my peers after this person's endorsement.

- Agree

- Somewhat agree

- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree

- Disagree

I am less likely to recommend this brand's products to my peers after this person's endorsement.
- Agree

- Somewhat agree

- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree

- Disagree

If this brand's products were affordable to me, I would be more likely purchase some products after this person's endorsement.
- Agree

- Somewhat agree

- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree

- Disagree

If this brand's products were affordable to me, I would be less likely purchase some products after this person's endorsement.
- Agree

- Somewhat agree

- Neither agree nor disagree

- Somewhat disagree

- Disagree

## Demographics

What is your gender?
- Male

- Female

- Other [          ]

How old are you?

[        ]

Where are you from?
- Netherlands

- Germany
- Other [          ]

What is your occupation?

- Student
- Employed
- Unemployed
- I'd rather not say

What is the highest level of education you completed?

- Middle School
- High School
- Bachelors
- Masters
- PhD
- I'd rather not say

## Debrief

Thank you for participating in my survey!

The goal of this research is to compare the impact of celebrities actively endorsing a brand by putting them on their social media account on consumers brand intention to the impact of them being pictured publicly endorsing brands at social events.

Should you have any questions regarding this research, please contact me at k.t.huggenberger@student.utwente.nl