

Social influencers in the digital environment

The effect of social media influencer's gender and age on credibility and purchase intention.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Nowadays, marketers are focusing on influencer marketing as influencers play an increasingly dominant role in shaping the buying behavior of consumers. The decision to select the appropriate influencer is a major concern, as it is challenging to find out which specific characteristics of influencers are effective in terms of advertising efficiency. In this context, perceived credibility seems to play a crucial role in the persuasiveness of influencers on consumer's behavior. Also, gender and age are seen as base tools for the segmentation of the market. These factors also have a dominant role in shaping perceived credibility.

Objective: The current study aims to identify to what extent an influencer's gender and age affects the perceived credibility and the purchase intention of consumers when considering a certain product. The study takes the effect of distinctive product types into consideration. The setting of this experimental study is the promotion of a smart watch and an analog watch by an influencer on the social media platform Instagram.

Method: A 2(gender) x2(age) x2(product type) between-subject experiment was conducted in order to test the hypothesis. A total of 258 Dutch-speaking participants who are older than 18 years were recruited by using the snowball sampling method. The main study includes 8 mock-up Instagram posts in which the social media influencers will promote the product. Participants were randomly exposed to one of the eight conditions. Previously validated measurements will be used to measure the items on a 7-point Likert scale.

Results: This study showed that the influencer's age and gender have an impact on perceived credibility. A younger social media influencer was perceived to be more attractive than an older social media influencer. This study also pointed out that a female social media influencer was perceived to be more attractive than a male social media influencer.

Discussion/Conclusion: This study can support companies in a way to find innovative ways to promote their products and services and have a clear understanding of the purchase decision-making process. It is crucial for marketers to take influencer's age and gender into consideration when selecting an endorser. Marketers' preference should be on younger social media influencers as well as female social media influencers when endorsing a product.

Keywords: *Social media influencers, social media, Instagram, credibility, product type, gender, age, purchase intention, attractive, product type, social media marketing, word of mouth marketing.*

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1. Introduction

In the last couple years, because of the increased popularity of social media and an increase of its usage, a worldwide marketing phenomenon known as “influencer marketing” has emerged. In this kind of marketing strategy, several brands and companies get in touch with their potential customers through social media endorsers (Alotaibi, Abdulrahman, & Saad, 2019). Social media platforms have become a crucial factor in influencing a number of aspects regarding consumer behavior such as, awareness, gathering of information, attitude, buying behavior and post-purchase conversations as well as ratings. The increased use of social media leads companies to interact with their customers by using social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). It also allows customers to interact with each other, which can be seen as an expanded form of conventional word of mouth communication that provides customers with the opportunity to share their opinions to a wide range of people. Although firms do not have the ability to control over the messages between customers, they are however able to influence these interactions. This can be done through influencer marketing (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

Nowadays, marketers are focusing on finding people who are influential in the digital environment. Companies need these influential people for commercial purposes, such as for product promotion. The so-called ‘social media influencers’ are seen as a type of third party endorsers who can shape the buying behavior as well as the public opinion of the target group (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey & Freberg, 2011). Generally, compared to the traditional channels such as television and magazine advertisements, nowadays 77% of the buyers prefer to listen to the endorsements or recommendations from people in their environment such as family and friends. In addition, online user reviews are also taken into account (Nielsen, 2013). This is also in accordance with Einarsdóttir (2017), who indicates that people take experiences as well as recommendations of influencers into account when deciding to purchase a product or not. According to a study by Twitter in 2016, the trust that people have in social media influencers are equal to their trust in their peers or relatives. Furthermore, about 40% of this group have bought a product online after it was introduced by an endorser on twitter (Alotaibi, Abdulrahman, & Saad, 2019). Thus, in the last few years more attention towards social media influencers is given. One of the underlying reasons for this is that these influencers are effective in convincing, and are seen more professional as well as credible when it comes to bringing out content that is appropriate and useful. In turn, this creates an impact on consumers’ buying behavior (Boateng & Okoe, 2015).

The increased interest as well as the behavior of consumers, can be seen as significant aspects for companies as they may be incorporated into a company’s marketing plan (Ferrinadewi, 2008). In addition, demographic features such as age, gender and race have a great impact on the purchase intention. Consumers varying in age have different attitudes (Madahi & Sukati, 2012). Regarding their social status, personal properties and appearance, including demographic features such as age, gender and civil status, certain consumers may be differently affected than others (Zhang, Moe & Schweidel, 2017). That’s why it is important that companies look for innovative ways to promote their products for the purpose of effectively drawing the attention of the consumers and contributing to the brand preference. For instance, companies may use endorsers such as famous people, specialists and common people (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2008). Especially in photo and video-sharing social networking services such as Instagram, influencers can endorse a product by sharing and tagging the brand on the picture or video (Izea, 2017; Vaibhavi & Leena, 2018).

Numerous studies have been conducted in order to identify which specific characteristics in spokespersons are effective in certain circumstances regarding advertising efficiency. Yet, the results lacked clarity and were not adequate enough to use it as a base for marketers to decide their communications upon (Schimmelpfennig & Hunt, 2019). As can be inferred from the aforementioned examples, the selection of a suitable influencer is of great concern. A range of factors should be taken into account when selecting an influencer for product promotion. In this context, perceived credibility is an important factor in advertising. A range of scholars have used the “source credibility” concept in order to explain the impact of the influencer on consumers (e.g. Lafferty, Goldsmith, & Newell, 2002; Ohanian, 1991). Besides that, previous studies pointed out that demographic features also have an impact on consumer responses regarding advertising stimuli (Mensah & Asuamah, 2013). Factors such as age and gender might have an effective role in consumer response regarding advertisements (Keshari & Jain, 2016). Companies should consider the importance of social media influencer’s age and gender when setting up their marketing plan.

As ‘influencer marketing’ is quite a new phenomenon, therefore information gaps can be found, especially in the area of academic research regarding social media influencers on Instagram platforms (Braatz, 2017). Specifically, limitations regarding empirical research into the impacts of age and gender regarding influencer marketing can be found. Previous researchers have explored the impact of gender and age on source credibility however, the mixed results of these studies suggest that further research is needed in this area (Bigham, Meyers, Li & Irlbeck, 2019).

By taking the aforementioned gaps into account, in this study, the effect of the influencer’s gender and age on credibility and purchase intention is researched. Previous studies mostly focused on celebrity endorsers. However, this study focuses on social media influencers as there is less research in this area. This study also seeks to make a difference by targeting a new generation. The focus is on the impact of the influencer’s gender and age on credibility and purchase intention. The results of this study will provide further explanation on the importance of perceived credibility and will add practical as well as theoretical value to “Influencer marketing” and the marketing plan of companies. This leads to the following research questions:

“To what extent do influencer's gender and age influence credibility and purchase intention?”

“To what extent are the effects of the influencer's age and gender on credibility and purchase intention dependent on the product type?”

In order to answer these questions a research framework has to be established. This will be presented in the next chapter.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this section, the context of the research question will be discussed. The theoretical framework is divided into seven sections. First of all, social media marketing will be discussed followed by an introduction of influencer marketing. In the third section, the source credible model will be introduced. Then, the impact of the independent variables on the dependent will be analyzed. This section also includes the Social Role Theory, stereotyping and ageism. In the last two sections of the theoretical framework, the interaction effect between the independent variables and the conceptual model will be discussed.

2.1 Social media marketing

In the last few years, due to the introduction of the social media, a notable shift in the way firms communicate with their customers have been considered. This lead to new ways of interaction among customers regarding products, brands, services and personalities (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). With the increase of the popularity of social media platforms, especially Instagram, a great part of the marketing budget is invested in social media marketing (Casaló, Flavián & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2018). This marketing strategy enables companies to connect with their prospective buyers right away. In addition, this leads companies to be able to provide tailored content by taking a person's desire into consideration (Lee & Watkins, 2016).

Next to the importance of social media for managing customer relationships, it is also widely used to find influencers and to get in touch with buyers via these influencers (Harrigan, Soutar, Choudhury & Lowe, 2015). Social media influencers can be identified as individuals who become popular by creating and sharing content through social media networks such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Snapchat. These kind of social media influencers, concentrate on a specific area such as, healthy living, food, travelling, beauty and fashion (Alotaibi, Abdulrahman, & Saad, 2019). One way a firm can use influencer marketing is by sending a product that's free of charge to social media endorsers in the expectations that they promote these products by reviewing and providing recommendations to the followers. Alternatively, influencers get paid by firms in order to promote their brands and products on their web log or social media networks (Sammis, Lincoln & Pomponi, 2016). Recommendations and reviews made by influencers have an impact on the target group's buying decision and brand or product usage (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996). This type of marketing has a positive impact on communication, such as recognition of the brands, attitude towards the brand and purchase intention (Elberse & Verleun, 2012; Erdogan, 1999; Hung, Chan, & Tse, 2011; Ohanian, 1991; Spry, Pappu, & Cornwell, 2009). Thus, firms as well as influencers both benefit from this kind of marketing strategy. Meaning that influencers earn money or are in possession of products, while it is a cost-effective marketing strategy for firms as it provides a directly way to get in touch with their target group (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

2.2 Influencer marketing

Advertisement through social influencers can be referred as social influencer marketing, which is a type of strategy or a new way of endorsement strategy in where an influencer uses his or her social networks to advertise a particular product or service (Childers, Lemon & Hoy, 2018). In this kind of marketing strategy, several brand and companies get in touch with their potential customers through social media endorsers (Alotaibi, Abdulrahman, & Saad, 2019). Influencer marketing is related to discovering influencers that have the ability to influence the target audience and are involved in the sales activities of a brand by means of sponsored content (Scott, 2005). Influencers generate and publish content, in connection with a range of interest or expertise such as fitness, food and video games on several social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Then, users can follow and can get in touch with these influencers in order to stay informed about the recent developments and trends regarding their interests (Weismueller, Harrigan, Wang, & Soutar, 2020).

According to several literature studies, people take others' opinions into account during their decision-making process and they trust recommendations of their fellow (Blauwhoff, 2018). Thus, consumers see peer recommendations and opinions as an information tool that shapes their buying behavior (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975). Purchase intention can be defined as a person's deliberate plan in order to attempt to buy a brand (Spears & Singh, 2004). Several factors such as previous experiences (Barber, Kuo, Bishop & Goodman, 2012), brand awareness as well as trustworthiness (Khan, Ghauri & Majeed, 2012) and different sources that are influential such as alternative consumers (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975) can have an impact on the purchase intention.

By publishing content through influencers' personal social media platforms, influencers are capable of supporting a brand. Although the features of networks have an impact on the outcome, it is tough for firms to find and reach out to the ideal influencers to inspire the shared consumer-specified stories (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins & Wiertz, 2013). Due to a variety of aspects such as the amount of shared posts, follower ratio, and the aim of the company to use influencers, it is seen as a challenging process to find the ideal influencer (Neves, Vieira, Mourão & Rocha, 2015). In addition, because each person has different features such as age, gender, mental and external features the same posts shared by different individuals on social media platforms, may be considered in a dissimilar way (Schwartz et al., 2013). According to Einarsdóttir (2017), people take experiences as well as recommendations of influencers into account when deciding to purchase a product or not. Compared to celebrities and public leaders, social media influencers are more sympathetic and are perceived trustful. They involve their followers into their private lives and share their experiences and point of views leading to have an impact on their behavior, thoughts and choices (Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). In addition, the more a person feels linked to the endorser the more likely it is that this person purchase the promoted products by the endorser (Sokolovaa and Kefia, 2019).

2.2.1 Benefits of social influencer marketing

There are several benefits in using social influencers rather than using a marketer's Instagram account. First of all, an advertisement published by a social influencer may be seen as a person to person communication, whereas an advertisement published by a brand can be seen as a mass media advertisement. Person to person communication is known to be more influential when it comes to influencing consumer behavior when comparing to mass media. Thus, promotions by social influencers have a more positive impact on brand attitude (Weimann, 1994).

Another benefit from a consumer perspective, is that social influencers are perceived more trustworthy and credible when compared to conventional media (Diffley, Kearns, Bennett & Kawalek, 2011). The underlying reason for this could be that Instagram users are more likely to identify themselves with social media influences than with a certain brand. Therefore, promotions made by social influencers are perceived more credible. Also, using social influencers can be seen as low cost marketing strategy whereas it offers marketers to get in contact with their potential buyers (Latiff & Safiee, 2015). Thus, taking into account that this type of marketing enables brands to get in touch with a large amount of consumers in a short period of time as well as its low cost, it may become an interesting move for brands to get the attention of consumers through social media (Nijs, 2019).

2.3 The source credibility model

This model is introduced by Hovland and his colleagues (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951). Source credibility consists of three elements namely, perceptions of trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990). When a customer perceives an influencer trustful, expertise and attractive, the influencer is perceived as a credible person (Schimmelpfennig & Hunt, 2019).

Expertise can be identified as previous experience of the person that promotes the content regarding the product or service. On the one hand, trustworthiness is considered as to what extent the receiver perceived the message of the source, aiming to provide information in an honest way (Hautz, Füller, Hutter & Thürridl, 2014). The third element, attractiveness is not only associated with looking good, but it also includes a range of different characteristics such as, resemblance, familiarity and liking the source (McGuire, 1985). In addition, attractiveness is also related to mental skills, character, way of living or body image (Erdogan, 1999). Physical attractiveness plays a crucial role in the effect of celebrity influencing on purchase behavior (Kahle and Homer, 1985). According to Bar-Isaac & Tadelis (2008) influencers that were perceived more attractive were prone to stimulate purchase intention more when comparing it to influencers that were perceived less attractive. People are more likely to believe in messages when the endorser is perceived as credible and other way round (Grewal, Gotlieb & Marmorstein, 1994).

Prior studies highlighted the importance of perceived credibility of the source, leading consumers to be affected by an advertisement and change their buying behavior (Hautz et al., 2014). Credibility can be explained as having faith in someone who has great knowledge or is a spokesperson of several brands that can be trusted by consumers (Hikmawati, 2019). According to Hikmawati (2019) several studies highlighted the importance of endorsers 'credibility on the purchase intention of consumers. The perception of credibility of an endorser is decided in a subjective way, which is evaluated by the individual and may have an impact on purchase intention. Thus, endorsers may have a positive impact and bring more positive consumer responses (Hikmawati, 2019).

Hovland and Wiess (1951) emphasize that when the endorser is perceived as credible by receivers, they also perceive the message trustworthy. In addition, Gupta, Kishore and Verm (2015) demonstrated that the credibility of a celebrity influencer has an important role in the purchase intention of consumers. Thus, source credibility focuses on the extent to which an individual considers the shared information and the endorser truthful and objective. As a consequence, this triggers consumers to believe that there is no financial interest and the purpose of sharing this content by the endorser is not to make a direct profit but due to the good quality of the product or service (Owusu, Mutshinda, Antai, Dadzie & Winston, 2016). Although several studies have been conducted in this context it is still a challenging subject as it does not give clarity about the underlying reason why some influencers that are perceived credible and attractive are more efficient for some marketers than others (McCracken, 1989).

2.4 The influencer's gender

2.4.1 Social Role Theory & stereotyping

It is widely known that some people are perceived more credible than others. Authorities in different expertise areas like politics and economics are evaluated more trustworthy than the community. The underlying reason for this is that those leaders have deeper knowledge compared to average (Borsson & Plotnikova, 2017). This leads individuals to feel secure and provide evidence when they have knowledge about what others in their environment are doing. Columnists, artists, researchers, innovators or celebrities can be given as an example. Most of the time these types people are called opinion leaders, appreciating the respect they receive within their area of specialization. In terms of social media, influencers are capable of having a greater impact in the online environment as they can reach out to a large target group (Zietek, 2016).

According to Johnson (2006), it is widely known that men are generally perceived to have more competence and credibility than women. In addition, women are stereotyped as being less skilled, less straight-thinking, and are believed to have a lack of confidence. On the other hand, men are automatically stereotyped with authority. In order to be on equal considerations, women need to show their capability and expertise (Acker, 1990). The level of competence has an effect on perceived credibility (Brann & Himes, 2010). Furthermore, numerous studies indicated that compared to women, men are more competent (Wood & Karten, 1986; Canetto, Kaminski, & Felicio, 1995; Conway & Vartanian, 2000). Especially in the context of leadership. While the credibility of the male leaders was evaluated regarding their perceived authoritativeness, the credibility of the female leaders was evaluated regarding their character (Kang, Hubbard and Hong, 2019). A question that arises is what the underlying reason is for evaluating males and females' testimonies different from each other. One reason could be due to cultural differences. Golesorkhi (2006), pointed out the impact of culture on perceived trustworthiness. This study pointed out that cultural differences were related to misunderstanding cues regarding trustworthiness (Golesorkhi, 2006).

It might also be due to that, men and women have different communications paths, and we may evaluate one communication path more credible than the other. Various studies on gender differences in the context of communication styles can be found. At the same time, there is also a widely spread believe that stereotypes exist about the way men and women interact (Schreurs, 2020). For instance, some widely believed common stereotypes for men is that compared to women they are considered to be competitive, emotionless, logical and, determined. While women are considered to be emotional and less ambitious in their communication (Brownell, 1993). Whether these perceptions are true or not, it might be that people judge statements of men and women by taking these stereotypes into account. For instance, a woman's claim may be perceived less credible by a person that have prejudice about women because of her gender (Fricker, 2007, p.1)

According to the social role theory, sex is genetically defined (Dainton & Zelle, 2008), whereas gender can be defined as "the consensual beliefs about the attributes of women and men" (Eagly & Karau, 2002, p. 574). An important point here is that each community links behaviors to both sexes. Thereby, gender cannot be considered to be the same thing as sex but can be associated with it (Dainton & Zelle, 2008). In western countries for instance, girls commonly get dolls and cooking equipment and are informed to be "sugar and spice and everything nice". On the other hand, boys commonly get car toys and toy guns. In addition, boys get informed to not to "cry like a girl". Also differences can be seen regarding adults. While it is expected from women to be main caregivers, it is expected from men to be the heads of households (Dainton & Zelle, 2008). Women and men are stereotyped in terms of communal and agentic qualities (eagly, 1987). The former one is associated with behavior that shows care to others, for instance concern, empathy, help, understanding and nurturance. In addition, women are associated with communal qualities. Agentic qualities are related for instance to confident, control, self-assured, and determination. Generally, men are stereotyped to these qualities (Dainton & Zelle, 2008).

A study conducted by Kang, Hubbard and Hong (2019) pointed out that differences in the evaluation of man and woman leadership could be seen. While the credibility of the men leaders was related to perceived authority, for women, it was the character that had an effect on their credibility. Meaning that, without regard to a woman's authority, when a female leader is not liked, people will have less trust in her words. On the other hand, male leaders will be perceived credible as long as they are considered to be authoritative by people. In addition, while likeability played an important role in the credibility of a woman, it did not apply to men (Kang et al., 2019). In a wider sense, women are perceived less credible when they became leaders with 'male-gendered' tasks (Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004). In order to consider a person trustworthy, people go through a fast and unconsciousness mental process. This information process depends on stereotypes (Armstrong & Nelson, 2005).

One of the most notable stereotypes is gender (Deaux & Lewis, 1984). This suggests that stereotypes about gender have the most effect on the information processing.

Armstrong and Nelson (2005), pointed out that in the context of news processing and informative content, individuals generally focus on gender cues such as personal pronouns. These cues are used to make fast judgements such as about the message credibility. In their study, participants read a text completely when an official source was not used. This implies that the participants had to decide the level of credibility. On the other hand, participants read the text partially when the official source was used. Thus, participants' evaluated credibility by taking the source into account that was (or was not) mentioned. It is interesting that when an official or "expert" was mentioned, a large number of respondents lean on their gender stereotypes and believed that the source was a male (Armstrong & Nelson, 2005).

According to the "gender credibility gap" people are likely to perceive women and their arguments less credible because they are women (Schreurs, 2020). Studies on descriptive gender stereotypes showed that compared to men, women are considered as having less expertise and have lack of knowledge (Carli, 2001). However, exceptions for instance can be seen with products that rely on high women expertise such as products that are made for women (Carli, 1999; Wood & Karten, 1986; Feldman-Summers, et al., 1980).

The abovementioned information leads to raise the question of the relevance of gender in this research. It is widely known that the impact of gender on source credibility and behavior change is highly determined by the context as well as the gender of the source as well as the receiver of the message (Carli, 2001; Wolin, 2003; Harmon & Coney, 1982). Despite the fact that a range of studies indicated that men are more influential than women, it cannot be concluded that these findings can be used as a base (Carli, 2001). According to Wolin (2003), results from different researchers on the impact of gender on source credibility as well as behavior change are conflicting and controversial. It is presumed that the impact of the source's gender on source credibility is dependent on the context (Kamphuis, 2017).

Previous studies pointed out that demographic features also have an impact on consumer response regarding advertising stimuli (Mensah & Asuamah, 2013). Gender could be seen as an effective factor in consumer response regarding advertisements (Keshari & Jain, 2016). According to Deaux and Kite (1987), a number of studies has highlighted the major similarities as well as the distinctions between genders. As gender is seen as a base tool for the segmentation of the market, especially in the context of advertising, differences in gender are fundamental (Meyers-Levy & Sternthal, 1991). This highlights the importance to realize the differences between the sexes in their buying intentions in order to support their existence as well as to strengthen the growth of online purchase. (Chiu, Lin & Tang, 2005).

Meyers-levy (1989) pointed out the differences in the work process of the brain among genders and argued that the way different genders process information also differs from each other. For instance, differences between men and women in the context of how they communicate with their audiences or followers can be seen (Lokithasan, Simon, Jasmin, & Othman, 2019). A study focusing on gender differences, showed that women are more focused on creating a positive self-image in social media platforms (Haferkamp, Eimler, Papadakis & Kruck, 2012). Both female and male social media influencers use different paths to reach out and communicate to their audience (Lokithasan, Simon, Jasmin, & Othman, 2019).

Current studies brought light to the remarkable differences in behavior regarding social network platforms among genders. For instance, compared to men, women spokespersons react faster to offers of friendship from the other gender. Also, a difference in the usage of social media among genders can be seen. These differences can be seen in a range of areas, such as in terms of protection, and sharing information with their mates (Lokithasan, Simon, Jasmin, & Othman, 2019).

Instagram is quite stereotyped in representing gender. A high number of Instagram use can be seen among females (Statista, 2019). In the context of influencing marketing, a higher number of female influencers can be seen. Approximately, 84% of sponsored posts were shared by female influencers in 2019 (Guttmann, 2020). Thus, the level of engagement regarding Instagram may differ in terms of influencer gender. Such as that, as men are less frequently on Instagram and can lead to be more eye-catching, Instagram users may be more interested in male influencers than female. (Boftski, 2020).

Prior research on marketing, pointed out that the gender and the endorser's attractiveness in advertisement may have an effect on a person's perception regarding the product that is promoted (Baker & Churchill, 1977). Furthermore, these findings can also be seen as a base for influencer marketing (Jaakonmäki et al., 2017). According to these researchers, the gender of the influencer is considered as one of the principal factors in influencing customer engagement, in which posts shared by women have a higher engagement than posts shared by men. A study based on the effects of age and gender of subjects on perceived facial attractiveness, pointed out that faces of female were perceived more attractive than faces belonging to males (Bodtski, 2020). Regarding the level of networking, it is also indicated that women are seen more effective in their communication compared to men. A study on differences in behavior of genders, such as the way of communicating in social network platforms, pointed out that women are more likely subject to the concept of homophily than men and therefore tend to associate and bond with similar others. The underlying reason is that females trigger more positive behavior among participants (Szell & Thurner, 2013). Another study on the differences between male and female conducted by Vaiciukynaite (2019), pointed out that while posts shared by a female influencer gets more likes, posts shared by male influencers receive more viewers. It can be said that, posts shared by female influencers can be effective to stimulate participations of inactive consumers.

Here it is important that female influencers ensure that the created posts trigger the visual attention of consumers, specifically with sponsored products as visual attentions may bring a boost shaping behavior (Vaiciukynaite, 2019). Gender as well as physical attractiveness of an advertisement model both have an impact on people's ratings. Furthermore, a person that is physically attractive will provide a higher advertisement evaluation than a person that is less appealing (Baker & Churchill, 1977).

A study based on the effect of gender on source credibility showed that blog posts written by men were perceived more credible by participants than posts shared by women. Meaning that, the shared blogs were perceived more credible when it was shared by men (Pearson, 1982). Another study focusing on the effects of newscasters' gender and age on credibility indicated that, news messages that were read by female newscasters were seen more credible than when it was read by men. However, male newscasters were perceived more credible than female (Weibel et al., 2008). Same results could be seen in a study conducted by Goldberg (1968), where participants responded more positive to messages that were shared by male communicator than a female one. However, contrast to the aforementioned studies according to the results of a study conducted by Vigliano (1974), females were perceived more credible specifically, in terms of trustworthiness, dynamism and competence.

One underlying reason for the mixed results regarding differences in perceived credibility among genders may find its origin in extrinsic and intrinsic credibility. Meaning that, features of a person such as personality, sex or previous prestige may have an impact on the receiver's perception of credibility before the communication take place. It could also be due to the widely known believes people have about stereotypes among genders. For instance, people may see males more skilled when they share messages related to stereotypical roles, and perceive females skillful when they are presenting messages regarding "traditionally female topics" such as childcare and nursery (Pearson, 1982).

The impact of gender in marketing is considered as a trendy topic (Denkers, 2020). A range of studies emphasized on the effect of gender in processing of information, peripheral cues, graphic design, or advertisements on the internet (Denkers, 2020). A large part of these studies focused on the consumer's gender. However, limited research on the gender of the influencer can be found. Especially in the context of empirical research (Denkers, 2020).

According to Todd and Melancon (2017), a source can have a positive effect on the message's persuasiveness and effectiveness. However, in this study the impact of the source's gender was not taken into account. The limited empirical studies on the impact of gender's source in the context of influencer marketing, leads to an interesting research gap. By taking the aforementioned literature and gaps into account the following hypothesis are formed;

H1a: A male social media influencer is perceived more trustworthy than a female social media influencer.

H1b: A male social media influencer is perceived to have more expertise than a female social media influencer.

H1c: A female social media influencer is perceived more attractive than a male social media influencer.

H2a: The effect of influencer gender on purchase intention is mediated by trustworthiness

H2b: The effect of influencer gender on purchase intention is mediated by expertise.

H2c: The effect of influencer gender on purchase intention is mediated by attractiveness.

2.5 The influencer's age

Factors such as age, experience, status, faith and resemblances with the source, shape perceived credibility. Consumers varying in age may have different attitudes (Madahi & Sukati, 2012). A nineteen years old teenager may behave in a different way when compared to a twenty-five years old young adult (Nabil & Imed, 2010). A study conducted by Strickland (1980), focused on the impact of newscasters' age on credibility and examined that older newscasters were perceived more credible than young ones. This was also in line with the results of Wood (1979). According to Chatzigeorgiou (2017), the age of the influencer is a crucial factor when analyzing the impact of the influencer on millennials. The underlying reason for this is that, millennials trust social media influencers whom they like or see them as a resemblance of themselves such as being at the same age. Thus, age can have a significant effect on perceived credibility. That's why it is very crucial for marketers to take age into account (Chatzigeorgiou, 2017).

2.5.1 Ageism

Next to the prejudices of individuals about genders, also in the context of age, discriminations can be found. Ageism which is developed by Butler (2008), can be described as a type of stereotyping that is systematized and it has to do with discriminating someone because of one's old age. Negative ageism, which is related to a negative impact on internet usage, contains humiliating behavior and possibly, additionally, discriminatory behaviors. For instance, the believe that an old person cannot learn something new due to his or her age (Palmore, 1999). According to Keita (2014), age discrimination can be considered as one of the most approved and institutionalized type of prejudice. Especially differences between older adults and young people can be seen. For instance, due to life experiences and because they have gathered more knowledge through life, older adults are perceived as having more expertise in making decision such as in the field of health, finance and consumer than the youth (Carpenter & Yoon, 2011). The underlying reason for this is that people associate experience and knowledge with age (Bristol, 1996).

Several studies pointed out that age stereotyping is not only related to the legal age, but it is also related to physical features. Features such as, wrinkling, hair greying and hair loss are perceived as unattractive and are linked with increased age (Hummert et. al, 1994; Muscarella & Cunningham, 1996). For instance, a research on facial attractiveness conducted by (Maestriperi et. al., 2014), showed that younger stimuli were perceived more attractive in contrary to older stimuli. Meaning that age has a great impact on perceived attractiveness. Prior studies focusing on stereotypes of aging pointed out that compared to young adults, older adults were perceived less attractive (Ebner, 2008; Löckenhoff et al., 2009).

Despite the effectiveness of the influencer's age on attractiveness, it is also very crucial for the segmentation of the market as well as marketing strategies (Pratap, 2019). Demographic features such as age, gender and race have a great impact on purchase intention (Madahi & Sukati, 2012). Age goes along with a person's need. Meaning that, as people get older, a change in their needs can be found. These changes can also be recognized in their decision- making process in the context of purchase (Chatzigeorgiou, 2017). By taking the aforementioned literature into account the following hypotheses are formed;

H3a: An older social media influencer is perceived as more trustworthy than a younger social media influencer.

H3b: An older social media influencer is perceived to have more expertise than a younger social media influencer.

H3c: A younger social media influencer is perceived more attractive than an older social media influencer.

H4a: The effect of influencer age on purchase intention is mediated by attractiveness.

H4b: The effect of influencer age on purchase intention is mediated by trustworthiness.

H4c: The effect of influencer age on purchase intention is mediated by expertise

2.6 Product type – age and gender

Previous studies showed the moderating effect of the type of product in reviews made online to the customers to be irrespective of the variety context of product types (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010; Suwelack, Hogreve, & Hoyer, 2011). According to Sundaram and Webster (1999), customers may be influenced differently by online reviews as a result of product features. According to two studies, customer's attitude (Misra & Beatty, 1990) and their evaluation of the person's effectiveness regarding the product (Till & Busler, 2000) are based on the match of the endorser and the product that is endorsed. Meaning that, when the endorser and the endorsed products match, customers will show a positive attitude regarding the brand and will perceive a high effectiveness of the endorser. This is also in line with a study conducted by Kamins and Gupta's (1994) pointing out that, a strong interaction between the endorser's features such as age, gender and race and the type of products lead to higher credibility of the endorser.

2.6.1 Age and product type

Prior research indicated dissimilarities among younger and older endorsers regarding credibility. For instance, overall, an endorser is perceived as credible, if the endorser is considered as an expert or has a deep understanding regarding the product (Belch & Belch, 1995). The underlying reason for this is that, in most cases experience and knowledge are related to age (Bristol, 1996). Thus, the older a person is, the more they are perceived as having more knowledge and experience. This hypothesis is also in accordance with a study conducted by Milliman and Erffmeyer (1990), pointing out that participants perceived as an older and middle-aged endorser are more credible than younger ones.

With the introduction of several changes regarding technology, a range of stereotypes arose. In the context of work. For instance, it is widely known that it is more challenging for older adults to apply and learn about these technological changes than for young workers (Skupin, 2017). Furthermore, the tendency for internet usage among old adults are less compared to younger people (Hetzner, Tenckhoff-Eckhardt, Slysachak & Held, 2014). Prior studies have demonstrated the impact of age on m-commerce (Li, Glass & Records, 2007). The age of the source may foresee if a person will use a mobile technology or not (Sarker & Wells, 2003). For instance, due to that old adults have a lack of experience with smartphones and IT tasks, and are less skilled regarding technical products, people have a general preconceived opinion about old adults, thinking that old adults are less efficient than younger adults (Czaja & Sharit, 1993). This leads to presuming that, when focusing on technical products, young adults may be perceived as credible due to the person's familiarity with the product.

As younger people are more familiar with technology and have a deep knowledge, they also might be more suitable to promote modern products, while older people may be more suitable to promote less complicated and traditional products. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H5a: A younger social media influencer is perceived more trustworthy than an older social media influencer when promoting a technical product compared to a non-technical product.

H5b: A younger social media influencer is perceived to have more expertise than an older social media influencer when promoting a technical product compared to a non-technical product.

H5c: A younger social media influencer is perceived more attractive than an older social media influencer when promoting a technical product compared to a non-technical product.

2.6.2 Gender and product type

Throughout the years, stereotypes regarding use of technology and gender have been formed. Compared to males, females have more negative behavior regarding technology and its usage. In addition, females may be less involved in actions and behavior related to technology (Canada & Brusca, 1993). Prior studies pointed out that females lack confidence in using new technology and are less often involved in jobs in the context of information technology (Michie & Nelson, 2006; Reinen &plomp, 1993; Shuttleworth, 1992; Wood & Li, 2005). Gender divide can be seen as one of the long-lasting technological inequalities. For instance, compared to females, more males own a computer and use computers and internet more frequent. In addition, according to several studies, male take more part in technological classes and are highly motivated to learn digital skills (e.g. Cooper, 2006; Correa, 2010; Fallows, 2005; Livingstone & Helsper, 2007). Despite the fact that these gaps between the genders faded away, differences regarding women and technology, especially computers as well as internet can still be found (Dixon et al., 2014)

According to the results of a study, customers showed more positive attitude towards a vehicle ad when it was promoted by a male, whereas a sofa ad was perceived more favorable when it was endorsed by a woman. This study highlights that customer's attitude is related to the match between the endorser's gender and the product that is promoted (Kanungo and Pang, 1973). According to another study conducted by Foster (2004), participants were keener to be informed by males about housing improvements than female salespersons. The underlying reason for this is that men are perceived to have more expertise in DIY items than females. In contrast to this, customers choose rather to be informed about cosmetic products by females than males due to the link between expertise knowledge regarding the product that is endorsed and femininity (Foster & Resnick, 2013). Thus, customers trust a seller based on their level of expertise or knowledge regarding the product being introduced (Crosby, Evans, & Cowles, 1990). Boyd and Shank (2004) argued that, male athlete spokespersons were perceived more effective than female ones.

This is because in general, male sportspersons were evaluated higher in the context of trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness in contrast to female sportspersons. Thus, Boyd and Shank (2004), concluded that a male sportsperson endorser may be more effective than the opposite sex.

Gender differences have also an impact on preferences of sexes regarding product choice in the online environment (Ling & Yazdanifard, 2014). According to Sebastianelli, Tamimi and Rajan (2008), in contrast to men, women prefer to buy apparel products such as outfits, footwear and bags. In addition to this, medical and cosmetic products, toys, games, in and out door decorations are also preferred more by females than males. Conversely, males prefer more to buy computer equipment and programs, and electronica products than their opposite sex. This study also concluded that men are keener to buy search products such as books, electronic products, computer hardware and software etc. whereas, females preferred to buy experience-based products such as apparel and cosmetic products (Sebastianelli, Tamimi and Rajan, 2008).

Although prior research highlighted the importance of gender and product type regarding online purchase, a gap in the context of the impact of gender and product choice on consumer’s behavior regarding online purchasing still exist (Parkm Yoon & Lee, 2009). Especially in the context of the impact of endorsers’ gender on responses (Klaus & Bailey, 2008). A technical and non-technical product type will be used in this study. Contrary to non-technical products, technical products are accepted (Mackiewicz, 2009) as products that require skills that need further learning as a means of using the products’ duties efficiently (Chen & Xie, 2008). By taking the aforementioned literature as well as social roles and stereotypes into account It is presumed that, a men endorser will be more suitable to promote a modern, complex product as men are more technically professional whereas, a woman endorser will be more suitable to promote a traditional product as it is less complicated. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H6a: A male social media influencer is perceived more trustworthy than a female social media influencer when promoting a technical product compared to a non-technical product.

H6b: A male social media influencer will be perceived to have more expertise than a female social media influencer when promoting a technical product compared to a non-technical product.

H6c: A male social media influencer will be perceived more attractive than a female social media influencer when promoting a technical product compared to a non-technical product.

2.7 Conceptual model

Based on aforementioned hypotheses, a conceptual research model is developed. Within the model it is expected that the influencer’s age and gender has an impact on the three dimensions of credibility namely, perceived trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness leading to higher purchase intention. Furthermore, the variable ‘product type’ was added as a moderator, affecting the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables. Figure (2.1) below illustrates the process that is described in this section. This study consists of eight conditions.

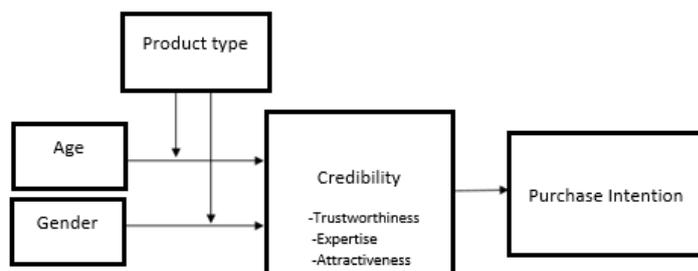


Figure 2.1: Significant points discussed in this section and an illustration of the relationship among the research variables.

3. Method

This part of the report includes the method section that consist of five parts. In the first section an overview of the design is provided. In the second section the procedure of the research can be found. In the third part, information regarding the participants can be found. The stimulus materials of the main test including the pre-test and manipulation check can be found in the fourth section. In the last section of this part, the measurements of the dependent variables and the construct validity as well as reliability results are discussed.

3.1 Design

The aim of this study is to explore whether the influencer's age and gender has an impact on perceived credibility and purchase intention, and if there is a moderating effect by product type. In this study three independent variables *the gender of the influencer*, *the age of the influencer* and *the product type* were manipulated. Influencers that were older than 25 and 50 were used for this study. A technical and a non-technical product namely, a smart watch and an analog watch represented the product type manipulation. Therefore, a 2 (male vs female) x 2 (25+ vs 50+) x 2 (analog watch vs smart watch) experimental between subject was conducted in order to test the hypotheses. This lead to eight difference research conditions (see table 3.1).

Table 3.1.

Research conditions

Conditions	Gender	Age	Product type
1	Male	50+	Smart Watch
2	Male	50+	Analog Watch
3	Female	50+	Smart Watch
4	Female	50+	Analog Watch
5	Male	25+	Smart Watch
6	Male	25+	Analog Watch
7	Female	25+	Smart Watch
8	Female	25+	Analog Watch

3.2 Participants

A total of 290 participants were randomly recruited for the research. The appropriate sample size was gathered by taking 30 participants for each condition. This research focused on Dutch-speaking participants who are older than 18 years. Only the cases that fit these two criteria and completed the experimental study were selected for this study. The underlying reason to choose this specific age group is that this group has a high frequency level of Instagram use (Tran, 2020) and 80% of them made their purchase of products or services through Instagram (Facebook, 2019). In addition, this specific target group is mostly used in influencer marketing. From the remaining 258 participants, 66 were male (25.6%) and 191 were female (74%) and one person (0.4%) rejected to reveal the gender. Regarding the education level, a variation from a high school diploma to a university specialized diploma was found.

The majority of the respondents are familiar with the social media platform Instagram (96%) and social media influencers (91%). Furthermore, a great part of the respondents has an Instagram account (94,2%) and 82% are daily users. Table 3.2 provides an overview of the demographics as well as Instagram use.

Table 3.2.

Distribution of the demographics and Instagram use (N=258)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	191	74
Male	66	25.6
Total	257	99.6
Education level		
High school	24	9.3
MBO	72	27.9
HBO	106	15.1
Bachelor's degree	39	0.8
Master's degree	15	41.1
University specialized diploma	2	5.8
Total	258	100
Instagram use		
Never	14	5.4
A few times in a year	8	3.1
A few times in a year week	25	9.7
Daily	211	81.8
Total	258	100

3.3 Stimulus materials

3.3.1 Pre-test

Before the main experiment, a pre-test was carried out in order to select the proper stimulus for the experiment. In the pre-test fake influencers were used as stimulus materials. The aim of this study was to identify a male and female influencer and also identify the age of the fake influencers. The pre-test included a total of eight different influencers that are in no way famous; four females and four males. The selected influencers were all wearing a white shirt, arm-crossed and standing in front of a white wall. The setting of the eight photos that were used in this pre-test were similar. However, small differences regarding the person's look could be seen as different persons were used. The selection of the materials was based on inspirations by real Instagram influencers and their posture. The eight different influencers were exposed to and evaluated by 10 participants. Participants were asked to evaluate the age and gender of the influencers. Influencers that were perceived around the age of 25 and 50 were selected for the main research. An overview of the entire pre-test can be found in figure 7.1 appendix 1.

3.3.2 Main study

By taking the results of the pre-test into account, the main study included 8 different mock-up Instagram posts. The underlying reason to use Instagram for this study is that a large number of companies use this social media platform to reach out to their target group by means of influencers (Latiff & Safiee, 2015).

This study used a technical (smart watch) and a non-technical (analog) product type. A watch has been selected as a promotion product as it is the fourth-leading industry with the largest influence of social media influencers (BusinessNES, 2020). In addition to this, people use a watch regularly. The conditions of both watches were alike regarding the image and price.

The mock-up Instagram posts consisted of an identical photo of the influencers having a watch on the wrist. In addition, the influencer's name, a short description of the post, number of likes and comments were added to the posts. This leads to a total of 8 different conditions. Materials for the experiment were designed by using Instagram faker tool and Adobe Photoshop. Figure 3.1 shows the stimulus materials for the research condition; a woman aged 50+, showing a smart watch and a man aged 25+, showing an analog watch. All of the eight stimulus materials can be found in figure 7.1 appendix 2.

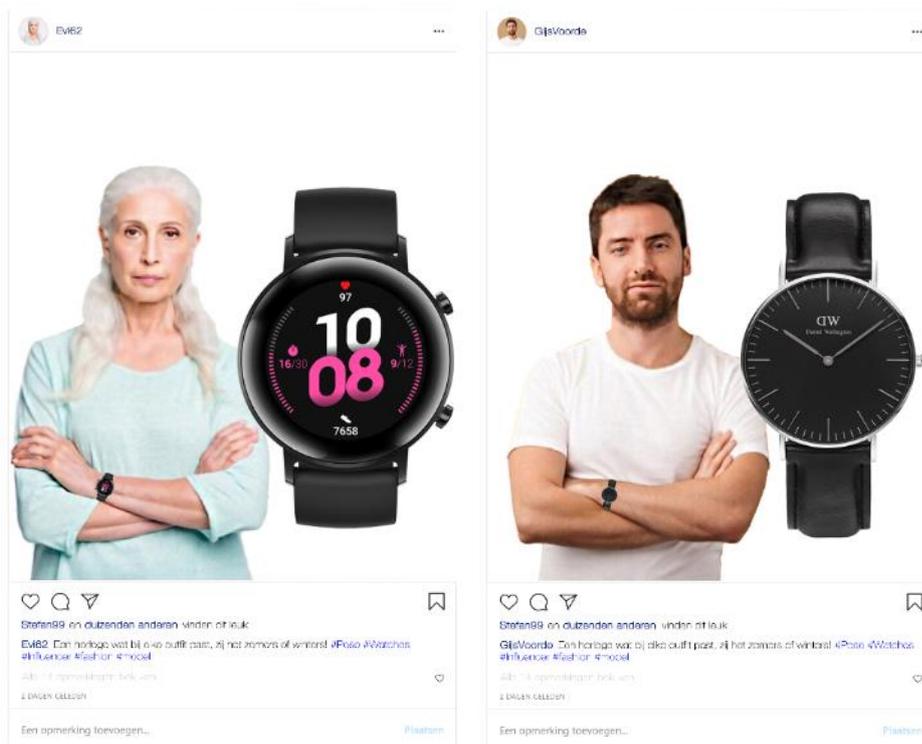


Figure 3.1 Two examples of the stimulus materials used in the main study

3.3.3 Manipulation check

To confirm that participants understood the manipulation in the online survey, a manipulation check for influencer's age and gender was implemented. These checks were performed after participants were exposed to the stimulus materials. The manipulations check consisted of the following statements: "How old do you think that the social media influencer is?" "What is the gender of the social media influencer?" During the analysis a T-test was implemented in order to check if the conditions were perceived correctly and whether the outcomes differed significantly. The results of the independent samples test pointed out that the differences for both gender; male ($M = 1.03$, $SD = .16$), female ($M = 1.97$, $SD = .16$); ($t(256) = -46.22$, $p < .001$) and age; young ($M = 1.01$, $SD = 0.09$), old ($M = 1.95$, $SD = 0.22$); ($t(256) = -43.69$, $p < .001$) were significant (see appendix 3, table 7.3.1 and table 7.3.2).

3.4 Procedure

The experiment was conducted online by using an online tool Qualtrics. Participants were recruited through the social environment of the researcher by using the snowball sampling method. The link to the questionnaire was sent through email, social media platforms and WhatsApp.

Before the experiment took place, as a preparatory to the test, participants were firstly informed about the topic and purpose of this research. After that, participants were requested to fill in an informed consent form and answer the demographic questions including gender and age. A short description of Instagram and Social media influencers were provided to participants. Followed by a series of questions regarding familiarity with Instagram and social media influencers as well as use of Instagram. Participants that did not speak Dutch and were not older than 18 years were excluded from the research as they did not fit to the requirements.

After the approval of the participants to take part in this study, participant could start with the survey and they were randomly exposed to one of the eight social media influencer conditions. Participants were required to analyze the Instagram post for a minimum of 5 seconds. Then, a next button appeared on the screen and participants were asked to fill up questions regarding the post they have seen. 15 items measured the dependent variable perceived credibility and 3 items measured the dependent variable purchase intention. The survey ended with an acknowledgement followed by the Email address of the researcher in order to answer their (future) questions. See Appendix 2 for the complete version of the Online survey.

3.5 Measures

This part of the report provides an overview of the measurements that were used. In order to measure the moderator (product type) and the independent variables gender and age on the dependent variables influencers' credibility and purchase intention of the customers, previously measurements that were empirically validated were used.

3.5.1 Source credibility

Source credibility was measured by using 15 items from Ohanian (1990), who divided source credibility into three components namely, source trustworthiness (5), source expertise (5) and source attractiveness (5). Participants were asked to indicate to what extent they perceived the social media influencer be, on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from totally disagree (1) to totally disagree (7). Items ranged for instance from "unattractive" to "attractive" "undependable" to "dependable", and "not an expert" to "an expert"

3.5.2 Purchase intention

Purchase intention was measured by using 3 items adapted from Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991) Participants were asked to rate the statements "I pretend to buy the promoted watch", "It is likely that I will buy the promoted watch" and "I am willing to buy the promoted watch" on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from totally disagree (1) to totally disagree (7).

3.6 Construct Validity and Reliability

In order to test the validity of the measurements a factor analysis has been conducted. With a KMO value of .92 all measurements had discriminant validity (see Appendix 3, table 7.3.3). Table 3.3 gives an overview of the factor analysis.

Table 3.3.

Principal components factor analysis with Varimax rotation.

Construct	Item	Components			
		1	2	3	4
Credibility					
Attractiveness	I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo... - not attractive: attractive.			.79	
	I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo... - not classy: classy.			.76	
	I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo... - ugly: beautiful.			.84	
	I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo... - plain: elegant.			.82	
	I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo... - not sexy: sexy.			.77	
Trustworthiness	I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo... - undependable: dependable.		.73		
	I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo... - dishonest: honest.		.79		
	I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo... - unreliable: reliable.		.83		
	I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo... - insincere: sincere.		.87		
	I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo... - untrustworthy: trustworthy.		.86		
Expertise	I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo... - not expert: expert.	.81			
	I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo... - inexperienced: experienced.	.85			
	I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo... - unknowledgeable: knowledgeable.	.82			
	I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo... - unqualified: qualified.	.80			
	I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo... - unskilled: skilled.	.82			
Purchase intention	I pretend to buy the promoted watch.				.79
	It is likely that I will buy the promoted watch.				.88
	I am willing to buy the promoted watch.				.85

To test the reliability of the scales a reliability test has been conducted. According to the results all scales were above Cronbach Alfa level (.70). Credibility was divided into 3 measurements: Attractiveness (.90) Trustworthiness (.94) and expertise (.95). In addition, with alpha .85 purchase intention was tested reliable (See table 3.4).

Table 3.4.

Cronbach's Alpha results

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of items
Attractiveness	.90	5
Trustworthiness	.94	5
Expertise	.95	5
Purchase intention	.85	3

4. Results

This chapter reviews the (relevant) results based on statistical analyses of the experimental study. The collected data was analyzed by using the software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and PROCESS. In order to measure the addressed hypotheses several analyses were conducted. In the following section the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variables will be separately examined.

4.1 Main effects

A multivariate tests (MANOVA) was performed in order to test the main effect of the influencer's age and gender. Credibility and purchase intention were included as the dependent variables. In addition, to test between-subjects, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) has been carried out. According to the Wilks' Lambda value, significant effects of the independent factors on the dependent variables were found. The test showed significant main effects of influencer's age ($p < .001$), interaction effect of gender and age ($p = 0.03$) on credibility and purchase intention. An overview of the results can be found in Table 4.1 and 4.2.

Table 4.1 *Multivariate test (Wilks' Lambda)*

Variable	Wilks' Lambda	F	df	P
Gender	.97	2.11	4	0.08
Age	.88	8.08	4	0.00**
Product type	.99	0.64	4	0.63
Gender*age	.96	2.80	4	0.03
Gender*product type	.99	0.75	4	0.56
Age*product type	.97	2.03	4	0.09
Gender*age*product type	1.00	0.26	4	0.90

**P<.01

Table 4.2 Main effects independent variables (between-subject effects)

Independent variables		df	F	P
Gender	Attractiveness	1,258	6,89	0.01
	Trustworthiness	1,258	3,59	0.06
	Expertise	1,258	1,00	0.32
	Purchase intention	1,258	,44	0.52
Age	Attractiveness	1,258	28,08	0.00
	Trustworthiness	1,258	2,32	0.13
	Expertise	1,258	1,18	0.28
	Purchase intention	1,258	4,12	0.04
Product	Attractiveness	1,258	,26	0.61
	Trustworthiness	1,258	1,09	0.30
	Expertise	1,258	,04	0.85
	Purchase intention	1,258	,19	0.67
Gender*Age	Attractiveness	1,258	8,45	0.00
	Trustworthiness	1,258	,00	0.96
	Expertise	1,258	1,43	0.23
	Purchase intention	1,258	,08	0.78
Gender*Product	Attractiveness	1,258	,05	0.83
	Trustworthiness	1,258	1,37	0.24
	Expertise	1,258	1,13	0.29
	Purchase intention	1,258	,96	0.33
Age*Product	Attractiveness	1,258	2,43	0.12
	Trustworthiness	1,258	3,27	0.07
	Expertise	1,258	8,05	0.00
	Purchase intention	1,258	,64	0.43
Gender*Age*Product	Attractiveness	1,258	,14	0.71
	Trustworthiness	1,258	,47	0.50
	Expertise	1,258	,07	0.80
	Purchase intention	1,258	,13	0.72

**p<0.01

4.1.1 The influencer's gender

A significant main effect of the impact of the influencer's gender on credibility was found. According to these results, a significant main effect of influencer's gender on perceived attractiveness was detected $F(1, 258) = 6.890, p = .009$. A female social media influence was perceived more attractive ($M = 3.17, SD = 1.39$) than a male social media influencer ($M = 2.82, SD = 1.28$). However, no further significant effects of social media influencer's gender on trustworthiness and expertise could be detected. Meaning that hypotheses 1a and 1b are rejected while hypothesis 1c is confirmed. Also, a direct effect of the influencer's gender on purchase intention was not found. An overview of the mean scores and the standard deviations is given in table 4.3.

Table 4.3.

Sample analysis MANOVA (N=258)

Item	Gender	N	M	SD
Attractiveness	Male	145	2.82	1.28
	Female	113	3.17	1.38
Trustworthiness	Male	145	3.20	1.42
	Female	113	3.53	1.42
Expertise	Male	145	3.08	1.43
	Female	113	3.23	1.54
Purchase	Male	145	2.20	1.48
	Female	113	2.29	1.42

4.1.2 The influencer's age

In line with expectations, the results significantly indicated a main effect of the impact of the influencer's age on credibility. A significant main effect of influencer's age on perceived attractiveness was found ($F(1, 258) = 28.09, p < .001$). These results pointed out that a younger influencer was perceived more attractive ($M = 3.39, SD = 1.31$) than an older social media influencer ($M = 2.60, SD = 1.25$). However, no further significant effects of social media influencer's age on perceiving trustworthiness and expertise could be found. Meaning that hypotheses 3a and 3b are rejected, and hypothesis 3c is confirmed. Also, a direct effect of influencer's age on purchase intention was detected ($F(1, 258) = 4.12, p = .043$). According to this, younger social media influencers ($M = 2.42, SD = 1.57$) lead to higher purchase intention than older influencers do ($M = 2.07, SD = 1.31$). An overview of mean scores and the standard deviation is given in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Sample analysis MANOVA (N=258)

Item	Age	N	M	SD
Attractiveness	Young	123	3.39	1.31
	Old	135	2.60	1.25
Trustworthiness	Young	123	3.48	1.40
	Old	135	3.23	1.46
Expertise	Young	123	3.24	1.42
	Old	135	3.06	1.52
Purchase	Young	123	2.42	1.57
	Old	135	2.07	1.31

4.2 Product type

Contrary to expectations, a significant difference between a smart watch and an analog watch was not found. According to the test results, the moderator effect of product type on perceived credibility and purchase intention was not detected ($F(4, 247) = .64, p = .63$). An overview of the sample analysis is provided in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5.

Sample analysis MANOVA (N=258)

Item	Product type	N	M	SD
Attractiveness	Smart watch	124	3.07	1.29
	Analog watch	134	2.89	1.38
Trustworthiness	Smart watch	124	3.29	1.38
	Analog watch	134	3.41	1.48
Expertise	Smart watch	124	3.17	1.43
	Analog watch	134	3.13	1.51
Purchase	Smart watch	124	2.23	1.48
	Analog watch	134	2.24	1.42

4.3 Product type- age and gender

To test the interaction effects between the variables, tests of between-subject effects were performed. The results are provided within this section.

4.3.1 Two-way interaction effect between influencer's gender and age

An interaction effect between the influencer's gender and age on perceived attractiveness was found ($F(1, 258) = 8.45, p = .004$). This result was additional to the addressed hypothesis.

A female young influencer ($M= 3.89, SD= 1.24$) was perceived to be more attractive than a male young social media influencer ($M= 3.02, SD= 1.25$) (see Appendix 3, table 7.3.4). Figure 4.1 gives an overview of the interaction effect between influencer’s gender and age on perceived credibility.



Figure 4.1 Interaction effect on perceived attractiveness

4.3.2 Age and product type

A two-way interaction effect between influencer’s age and product type was performed. An interaction effect between influencer’s age and product on expertise was found $F(1, 258) = 8.05, p = .005$. Contrary to predictions, an older social media influencer ($M= 3.35, SD = 1.59$) was perceived to have more expertise than a young social media influencer when promoting a technical product (smart watch) ($M= 3.00, SD= 1.26$). However, no further interaction effects on trustworthiness and attractiveness was found (see Appendix 3, table 7.3.5). This led to reject hypothesis 5(a, b, c). Figure 4.2 gives an overview of the interaction effect between influencer’s age and product type on expertise.

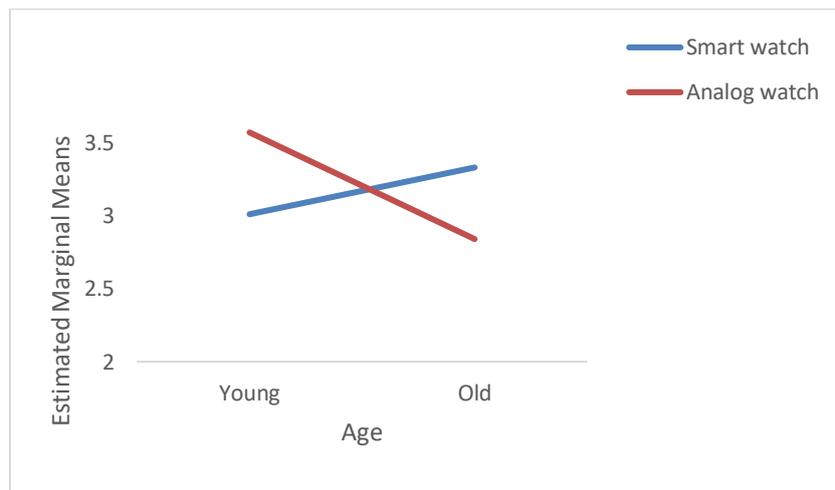


Figure 4.2. Interaction effect on perceived expertise

4.3.3 Gender and product type

A two-way interaction between the influencer’s gender and product type was conducted. Contrary to predictions, an interaction between gender and product was not found on the dependent variables credibility and purchase intention ($F(4, 247) = 0.75, p= .56$) (see Appendix 3, table 7.3.6). Meaning that hypothesis 6 (a, b, c) is rejected.

4.3.4 Three-way interaction effect between gender, age and product type

A three-way interaction effect between gender, age, and product type on the dependent variables credibility and purchase intention was not found ($F(4, 247) = 0.26, p = .90$). (see Appendix 3, table 7.3.7).

4.4 Mediation effect

To test the mediation effect of credibility between influencer's age and purchase intention, as well as the effect of credibility between influencer's gender and purchase intention, a mediation analysis by means of PROCESS- macro for SPSS developed by Hayes (n.d.) was conducted. The method of Preacher and Hayes (2004) was adopted. However, except for the attractiveness, the mediating effect of trustworthiness and expertise on age as well as on gender to purchase intention was not found. As there were no effects on trustworthiness and expertise, a mediation test was not conducted.

4.4.1 The mediating effect of attractiveness on gender to purchase intention

The influencer's gender was hypothesized to have a positive impact on purchase intention through perceived credibility. The results showed that the path (direct effect) from influencer's gender to attractiveness was significant ($b = .35, SE = .167, p = .038$). In addition, 1.7% of variability in attractiveness is explained by the gender of the influencer. Also a direct effect of attractiveness on purchase intention was found ($b = .40, p < .001$). However, the mediation analysis did not show a significant main effect of gender on purchase intention ($b = .094, p = .608$). Since the effect of gender on purchase intention by itself is not significant, a mediation effect of gender on purchase intention through attractiveness could not be indicated. Meaning that hypotheses 2 (a, b, c) are rejected. Figure 4.3 shows the mediation effects.

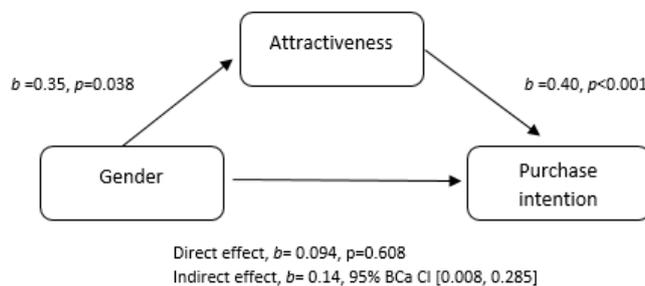


Figure 4.3. Mediation effect of attractiveness on gender to purchase intention

4.4.2 The mediating effect of attractiveness on age to purchase intention

Influencer's age was hypothesized to have a positive impact on purchase intention through perceived attractiveness. Results indicated that the path (direct effect) from influencer's age to attractiveness is negative and significant ($b = -.78, SE=.16, p < .001$). These results pointed out that higher age is correlated with lower attractiveness. The older the age of the social media influencer, the less they are perceived as attractive. In addition, 8,6% of the variability in attractiveness is explained by the influencer's age. Also, a direct effect of attractiveness on purchase intention was indicated ($b = .39, p < .001$). However, the mediation analysis showed not a significant main effect of age on purchase intention ($b = .35, p = .052$). As the effect of age on purchase intention by itself is not significant, a mediation effect of age on purchase intention through attractiveness could not be found. This lead to reject hypothesis H4 (a, b, c). Figure 4.4 shows the mediation effects.

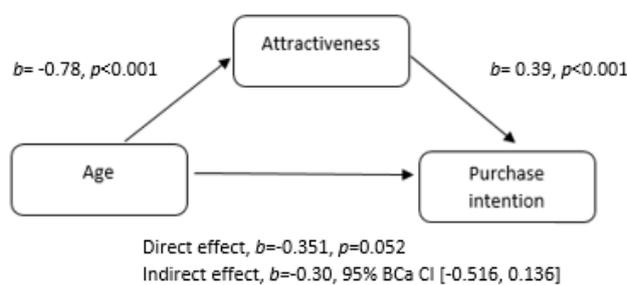


Figure 4.4. Mediation effect of attractiveness on age to purchase intention

4.5 Regression analysis

A simple linear regression was conducted in order to examine the impact of the three dimension of credibility namely, Attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise on purchase intention. Purchase intention can be predicted for 22% ($R^2 = .221$) by credibility ($F(3, 254) = 25.25, p < .001$). Results indicated that these three dimensions of credibility have a significant impact on the dependent variable purchase intention. An overview of the overall results can be found in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Linear regression results of the impact of mediators on purchase intention

Independent variables	β	T	p
Purchase intention			
Attractiveness	.17	2.41	.02
Trustworthiness	.24	3.15	.00*
Expertise	.16	2.13	.03

* $p < .01$

4.6 Overview of results of the tested hypotheses

An overview of the confirmation and rejections of the hypothesis can be found in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7.

an overview of the hypothesis and results

Hypothesis	Content	Results
H1a	A male social media influencer is perceived more trustworthy than a female social media influencer	Rejected
H1b	A male social media influencer is perceived to have more expertise than a female social media influencer	Rejected
H1c	A female social media influencer is perceived more attractive than a male social media influencer	Confirmed
H2a	The effect of influencer gender on purchase intention is mediated by trustworthiness	Rejected
H2b	The effect of influencer gender on purchase intention is mediated by expertise	Rejected
H2c	The effect of influencer gender on purchase intention is mediated by attractiveness	Rejected
H3a	An older social media influencer is perceived as more trustworthy than a younger social media influencer	Rejected
H3b	An older social media influencer is perceived to have more expertise than a younger social media influencer	Rejected
H3c	A younger social media influencer is perceived more attractive than an older social media influencer	Confirmed
H4a	The effect of influencer age on purchase intention is mediated by trustworthiness	Rejected
H4b	The effect of influencer age on purchase intention is mediated by expertise	Rejected
H4c	The effect of influencer age on purchase intention is mediated by attractiveness	Rejected
H5a	A younger social media influencer is perceived more trustworthy than an older social media influencer when promoting a technical product compared to a non-technical product	Rejected
H5b	A younger social media influencer is perceived to have more expertise than an older social media influencer when promoting a technical product compared to a non-technical product.	Rejected
H5c	A younger social media influencer is perceived more attractive than an older social media influencer when promoting a technical product compared to a non-technical product.	Rejected
H6a	A male social media influencer is perceived more trustworthy than a female social media influencer when promoting a technical product compared to a non-technical product.	Rejected
H6b	A male social media influencer will be perceived to have more expertise than a female social media influencer when promoting a technical product compared to a non-technical product	Rejected
H6c	A male social media influencer will be perceived more attractive than a female social media influencer when promoting a technical product compared to a non-technical product.	Rejected

5. General discussion

This part of the paper is divided into three sections. In the first section the discussion of the main results will be reviewed. In the first instance, by taking the findings of the research as well as previously conducted literature into account conclusions regarding the hypotheses are made and discussed. This section is then followed by the clarification on the limitations of this study and practical applications. Then the recommendations for future research will be discussed. In the final section a conclusion will be provided.

Nowadays, more and more brands try to reach their target group through social media platforms such as Instagram. There are several studies that focused on this fast-growing field of influencer marketing. However, these results are limited and need more clarity especially in the context of Instagram. In order to understand this ever-increasing strategy and how to apply it to the marketing plan, it is very crucial to understand customer behavior and what triggered consumers' purchase intention. In this regard, the aim of this study was to shed light on this particular research gap. Taking the notable popularity of influencer marketing and limited research in this area, the aim of this study was to examine the impact of influencers on social network platform Instagram. To be more specific, the current study sought to investigate *"To what extent do influencer's gender and age has an impact on credibility and purchase intention"* by taking the moderating effect of product type namely a technical watch and an analog watch in consideration. In addition, this study also focused on *"To what extent are the effects of the influencer's age and gender on credibility and purchase intention dependent on the product type?"*. To evaluate these research questions, six hypotheses with each having three sub hypotheses were formulated. The confirmations and rejections will be discussed in the following paragraphs per hypothesis.

5.1 Discussion of results

This experimental study gave evidence that a female social media influencer is perceived as more attractive than a male social media influencer (See H1c). The underlying reason for this could be that compared to men, women trigger more positive behavior among participants because they are likely subject to the concept of homophily and therefore tend to associate and bond with similar others (Szell & Thurner, 2013). Also, a negative path from the influencer's age to attractiveness was found which is very interesting. These results pointed out that higher age is associated with lower attractiveness. Further, hypothesis 1a and 1b argued that a male social media influencer will be perceived to have more expertise and trustworthy than a female social media influencer. One explanation for this is given by Boftski (2020), who argues that men are less active on Instagram and therefore any activity is deemed eye-catching, which generally creates more interest than female activity and may lead to credibility. Contrary to predictions, a female social media influencer was perceived more trustworthy than a male social media influencer. This could be due to a high number of Instagram use among females (Statista, 2019). Also in the context of influencer marketing, a higher number of female influencers can be seen. Approximately, 84% of sponsored posts were shared by female influencers in 2019 (Guttmann, 2020). Thus, the level of engagement regarding Instagram may differ in terms of influencer gender, possibly in favor of females.

One other reason could be due to the widely known belief that people have about gender stereotypes. According to the social role theory, men and women are stereotyped in terms of communal and agentic qualities. While women are associated with concerns and nurturance, men are associated with confidence and determination (Ealy, 1987). In this context, extrinsic and intrinsic credibility could also play a role, meaning that people may evaluate a person's credibility regarding the features of that person. Other than only gender, features such as personality or previous prestige may also help shape an influencer's credibility (Pearson, 1982), although no elaboration was given to the participants on the character or career of the presented (fictive) influencers.

Further, no support could be found for the mediation effect of credibility. The effect of influence's gender on purchase intention was not mediated by attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise (see hypotheses 2 (a, b, c).

This study showed that people perceive a younger social media influencer more attractive (credible) than an older social media influencer (see H3c). One underlying reason for this could be that physical features such as wrinkling and hair greying are perceived less attractive (Hummert et. al 1994; Muscarella and Cunningham, 1996). The appearance of the older social media influencers in this study included some marks of ageing such as wrinkles and grey hair, while the appearance of the younger social media influencers included a more youthful face without wrinkles. Additionally, millennials seem to trust social media influencers with whom they can associate with, seeing them as a resemblance of themselves as being at the same age. Thus, age can have a significant effect on perceived credibility (Chatzigeorgiou, 2017). Additionally, this study involved participants that were older than 18 years. As such, most participants were between the 20 and 35 years old. This stimulates the participants to perceive the younger social media influencer, as used in the experiments, as more attractive, and thus more credible, due to similarity in age and look(s).

Furthermore, the results showed no support for the hypotheses that an older social media influencer will be perceived as more trustworthy and expertise (see H3a, H3). The outcomes are contrary to the expectations and previous literature, claiming that older people are perceived to have more expertise than younger people due to lifelong experiences and knowledge (Carpenter & Yoon, 2011). Also Bristol (1996) argued that experience and knowledge are related to age, meaning that the older a person is, the more they are seen as having more knowledge and experience. For the mediation effect, the impact of the influencer's age on purchase intention was not mediated by trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness (see H4 (a, b, c).

The results of this study pointed out that an older social media influencer was perceived to have more expertise than a younger social media influencer, when promoting a technical product. This result was in contrast to predictions (see H5b) and literature. According to Czaja & Sharit (1993), due to that old adults have limited experience with smartphones and IT tasks, and have also limited skills in the context of technical products, people have some prejudgments about old adults, arguing that old people are less efficient than younger adults. The results found are however not in line with the study from Czaja & Sharit (1993). This could be due to the fact that the participants may possibly not have been aware that the product, as presented in the experiment was in fact a smart device, rather than a regular one. No further information or instructions have been given with regard the type of device seen. Additionally, no pre-test had been done in order to verify whether the participants did acknowledge the watch to be a smart or analog device.

In conclusion, based on the results of this study, the influencer's gender and age are found to have an impact on the aspect of attractiveness, which in turn affects the perceived credibility. As such, a younger social media influencer was perceived to be more attractive than an older social media influencer. Additionally, when considering the effect of gender, a female social media influencer was perceived to be more attractive than a male social media influencer. However, a mediating effect of age or gender on the purchase intention by means of credibility was not found. Besides that, this study also examined the impact of the three dimensions of credibility on the purchase intention. It was found that the purchase intention is predictable by the level of perceived attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise.

5.2 Limitation and recommendations for future research

The experiment has been subject to certain limitations which could have led to an impact on the results. This section will discuss the limitations of the experimental study and will provide recommendation for future research.

First of all, in the context the presented materials, fake Instagram posts were created by utilizing Adobe Photoshop to make the materials as accurate and reliable as possible. These materials were created by analyzing several Influencer accounts as well as Instagram posts. However, as these Instagram posts were created by the researcher with no relevant design-related skills, there is a chance that it may have affected the results of the experimental study as participants could have been able to distinguish the presented material from a real post. This could lead to a perception of the illustrated materials, and therefore experiment, as being unrealistic. Therefore, future research could make use of professional social media influencers rather than creating a digital representation of it. The utilization of existing influencers could contribute to the sense of realism experienced by the participant(s).

In order to test the impact of influencer's age and gender on credibility, fake Instagram influencers were created and used in this study. Furthermore, the researcher did not provide (additional) information about the influencer. The underlying reason for this was to prevent bias and distractions. This could lead the participants to judge the influencer less credible as respondents were not familiar with the influencer. Future research may use real Instagram influencers. Another bias could be that respondents were only exposed to one picture, and did not have additional information. This could have a negative effect on perceived credibility. In real life, people can go through the page of the influencer and review several pictures and may build up their perceived credibility. Thus, future research should focus on creating real settings, such as explained in the paragraph above, and provide more information about the influencers to participants. It is also important to test if this leads to different outcomes. For example, this could be tested by exposing potential participants to several pictures of the existing influencer and screenshots of their Instagram page in order to verify whether a difference in perceived credibility can be identified.

The selection of candidates for this study may be biased in result. More specifically, participants taking place in this experimental study were Dutch speaking people and were older than 18 years old. Although the research focused on a wide range of age in the group, respondents were mostly selected from the direct social environment of the researcher which may have limited the variation in age groups and even gender. As a result, this may limit the representativeness of the findings. Golesorkhi (2006), argues that cultural differences may lead to bias in trustworthiness due to misinterpretation of cues. Taking this into account, suggestions for future research could be to make use of a larger number of participants from different background as culture differences may play a decisive role. In addition, Female and male are stereotyped in terms of communal and agentic qualities (Eagly, 1987). In this context, social role theory and stereotyping is a crucial aspect to take into account. Males in eastern cultures could be perceived as being more dominant, confident, self-assured (Dainton & Zelle, 2008), and therefore trustworthy, whereas women may be deemed to be more care-giving (Dainton & Zelle, 2008) and may be expected to take the role of house-wives upon themselves. In that specific case, if the product would be a kitchen appliance, this could lead to the perception of a woman having more expertise and therefore being more trustworthy in her promotional activities rather than a male influencer.

Although manipulations check regarding influencer's age and gender was implemented, a manipulation check regarding the product was not conducted which may on its turn bias the results. This raises the question as to how aware the participants were of the difference(s) between the products, and whether any differences were observed at all. If it could be ensured that participants recognize the digital device as being 'smart', then maybe a preference for a younger influencer could be observed as they are deemed to have more experience with smart digital devices (Czaja & Sharit, 1993).

A watch is a widely known and used product, by both elderly and younger people. The variety of functions offered by smart-watches was thought to be appealing to mostly younger and male persons, whereas younger influencers were thought to be deemed more experienced and therefore more credible in terms of product-knowledge. A watch is therefore deemed to be an interesting moderator of the relation between age and gender on credibility.

However, using a single product category may limit the representativeness of the experiment and additionally the ability to make a generalization. Although the focus of this study has been only on watches, it could be interesting to broaden the spectrum of products used in the experiment to investigate how this may affect the results.

5.3 Practical application(s)

This section provides recommendations regarding practical and/or academic use for brands, companies and social media influencers. Especially in the context of (influencer) marketing as its popularity is ever-increasing, this experimental study provides multiple valuable findings.

Beside the abovementioned limitations, the findings of this experimental research can also be implemented as guidance for the future. Especially in the context of marketing. By taking the ever-increasing popularity of influencer marketing and the limited research on this fairly new strategy, this research opens new doors for researchers, brands, companies and scholars to expand on their marketing plans by incorporating the findings on how influencers may affect consumer behavior. For instance, companies can use these innovative ways to promote their products aiming to draw attention of the consumers and build up brand preference. The next section will provide an overview of the practical applications.

Overall, 77% of the buyers make their purchase based on recommendations from their environment such as influencers, family and friends (Nielsen, 2013). Findings show that age and gender of the influencer have an effect on the perceived attractiveness and therefore the credibility of the influencer. This provides evidence of the importance of source credibility for marketing purposes. Hikmawati (2019), highlighted the importance of influencers credibility on the purchase intention of consumers which was in line with the outcomes of this study. Moreover, the aspects of credibility play a crucial role in predicting purchase intention. This being the case, it is very crucial for marketers to select proper influencers by taking credibility aspects (attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise) into account.

This study hypothesized that younger influencers will be perceived more attractive than older influencers which was also confirmed. In addition, female social media influencers were perceived more attractive than male social media influencers. This should guide marketers towards the use of younger and female influencers that are attractive when endorsing their product. However, it was expected that younger influencers would be perceived to have more expertise when promoting a technical product as they are familiar with technical products, however, this hypothesis was rejected. According to the results, older social media influencers were perceived to have more expertise when endorsing a technical watch. Therefore, this may encourage companies and or practitioners to work more with older social media influencers when promoting a technical watch instead of younger ones.

5.4 Conclusion

Influencer marketing is a fresh concept and therefore information gaps can still be found. Especially in the area of academic research into the role of social media influencers on marketing via the Instagram platform (Braatz, 2017). More specifically, limitations regarding empirical research into the impacts of age and gender can be found. There is research on the impact of gender and age on source credibility, however, the mixed results of these studies suggest that further research is needed in this area (Bigam, Meyers, Li & Irlbeck, 2019).

The results of this experimental study provide more insight in this ever-increasing field of influencer marketing strategy and aimed to fulfill the gaps regarding the conflicting and controversial results of literature. This study could act as a guideline for marketers to shape their marketing plan especially in the context of selling products via online platforms such as Instagram. Marketers deem to take age and gender of the influencers into account when choosing the proper influencer to endorse the product with.

Based on the results of this study, the influencer's gender and age are found to have an impact on the aspect of attractiveness, which in turn affects the perceived credibility. However, a mediating effect of age or gender on the purchase intention by means of credibility was not found. It was found that the purchase intention is predictable by the level of perceived attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise.

The study is subject to various limitations. Future research could make use of professional social media influencers rather than creating a digital representation of it. Also, a focus should lay on integrating real influencers in the experiments and provide more information about the influencers to participants. Furthermore, a larger number of participants from different backgrounds could be used as culture differences may play a decisive role in the outcomes. As last, the spectrum of products used in the experiment could be broadened in order to investigate how this may affect the results.

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7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1: Pre-test stimulus materials and questionnaire



Figure 7.1. *Manipulation for the pre-test*

How old do you think the illustrated Instagram influencer is? (Dropdown ranging from 1 to 99 years old)

How would you perceive the gender of the illustrated Instagram influencer? (Dropdown male-female)

7.2 Appendix 2: Main study stimulus materials and questionnaire

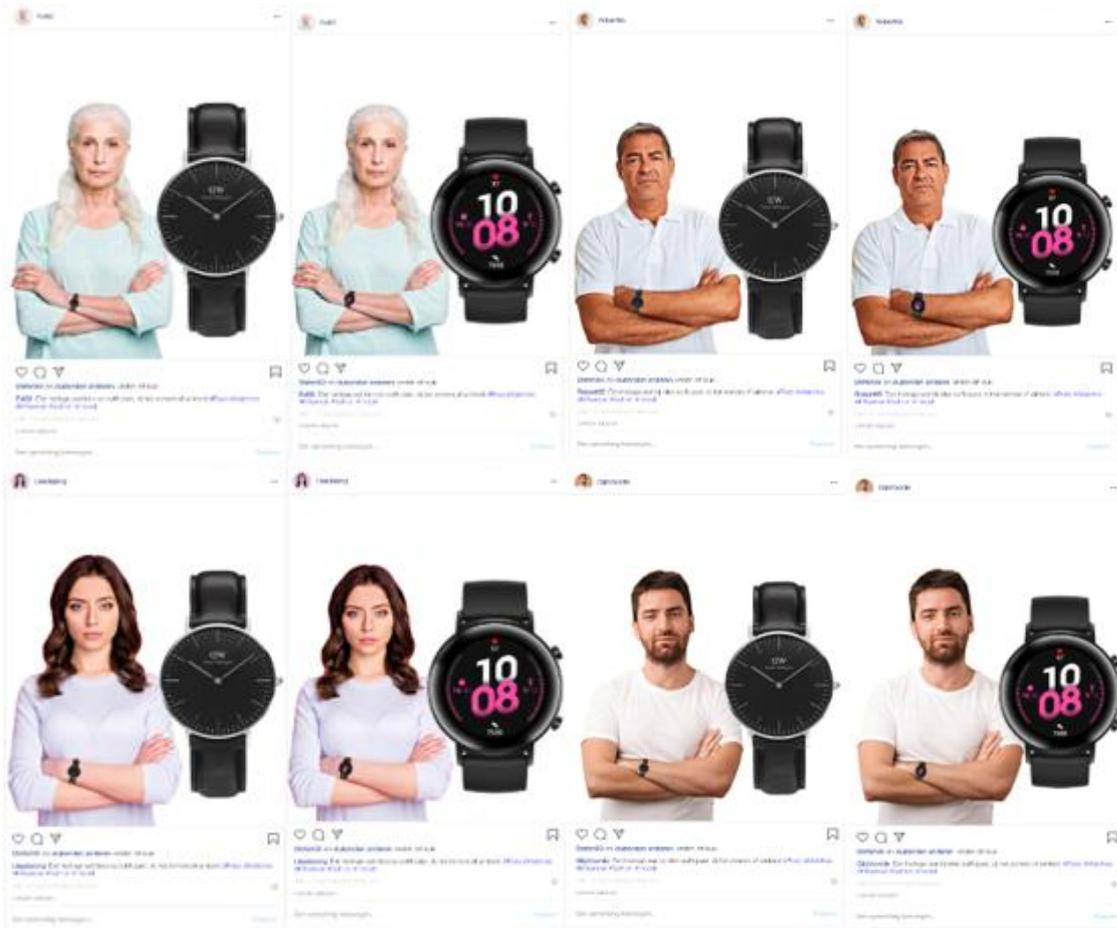


Figure 7.2. *stimulus materials for the main study*

Beste respondent,

Graag nodig ik u uit om deel te nemen aan een enquête. Dit onderzoek voer ik uit voor mijn Master Thesis voor de opleiding Communication Studies van de Faculteit Gedrags-, Management- en Sociale Wetenschappen aan de Universiteit Twente. De enquête zal ongeveer 5 tot 10 minuten duren. Uw deelname is vrijwillig en zal volledig anoniem zijn.

Het onderzoek is gebaseerd op Influencer marketing op Instagram. Op de volgende pagina's wordt er een Instagram post weergegeven van een Instagram influencer. Het is belangrijk dat u de foto aandachtig analyseert, want er volgen hier namelijk vragen over.

Het onderzoek wordt uitgevoerd onder toezicht van Universiteit Twente. Hierdoor heeft u de garantie dat aan dit onderzoek geen risico's zijn verbonden. U kunt zich op elk moment terugtrekken. Uw data worden opgeslagen in een online beveiligde database. In het geval van vragen, kunt u contact opnemen via het volgende e-mailadres c.ermis@student.utwente.nl

Alvast hartelijk dank voor uw medewerking.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Cansel Ermiş
Master Student Communication Studies

Ik heb de bovenstaande voorwaarden gelezen en ga hiermee akkoord, begin de enquête.

Ik wil niet deelnemen

Filter questions

Do you speak Dutch? (Yes/No)

Are you above 18 years? (Yes/No)

Description of Instagram and Influencers

Op deze pagina volgt een korte definitie van "Instagram" en "Influencers". Klik op de knop onderaan de pagina om verder te gaan met de enquête.

Instagram is een sociaal media platform waar je digitale foto's en video's kan uit wisselen. Daarnaast kan je ook "stories" maken. Dit zijn verhalen die 24 uur zichtbaar blijven op je profiel. Wanneer je een foto of video hebt gedeeld met je volgers, kunnen zij deze "leuk vinden". Ook kunnen je volgers op de foto's, video's en stories reageren.



Een **influencer** is iemand met een grote aanwezigheid op sociaal media met heel veel volgers. Hij of zij is in staat om specifieke doelgroepen te bereiken en te beïnvloeden.

Questions regarding Instagram & Influencers

I am familiar with social media platform Instagram (Yes/No)

I am familiar with social media influencers (Yes/No)

Do you have in Instagram account (yes/No)

How often do you make use of Instagram?

- Never
- A few times a year
- A few times a week
- Daily

Op deze pagina wordt er een instagram influencer weergegeven. Neem de tijd om de pagina aandachtig te bestuderen. Klik daarna op de knop onderaan de pagina om verder te gaan met de enquête

I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
unattractive	<input type="radio"/>	Attractive						
Not classy	<input type="radio"/>	Classy						
Ugly	<input type="radio"/>	Beautiful						
Plain	<input type="radio"/>	Elegant						
Not sexy	<input type="radio"/>	sexy						

I perceive the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Undependable	<input type="radio"/>	Dependable						
Dishonest	<input type="radio"/>	Honest						
Unreliable	<input type="radio"/>	Reliable						
Insincere	<input type="radio"/>	Sincere						
Untrustworthy	<input type="radio"/>	Trustworthy						

How old do you think the displayed social media influencer is?

- 25-35 year
- 50-65 year

What is the gender of the displayed social media influencer?

- Male
- Female

I perceived the displayed Instagram influencer on the photo

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not expert Expert

Inexperienced Experienced

Unknowledgeable Knowledgeable

Unqualified Qualified

Unskilled Skilled

Purchase intention

I pretend to buy the promoted watch

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly disagree strongly agree

It is likely that I will buy the promoted watch

Strongly disagree strongly agree

I am willing to buy the promoted watch

Strongly disagree strongly agree

Sociodemographic questions

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Refuse to answer

How old are you?

Dropdown list (1-99 years)

What is the highest level of education you have achieved?

- None
- High school
- MBO
- HBO
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- University specialized diploma (Doctorate)

Do you have any questions or comments regarding the survey? If not please, press the button at the bottom of the page to register your answer.

7.3 appendix 3: Relevant results of the experimental study

Table 7.3.1.

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances for Gender

	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal Variances Assumed	.010	.92	-46.27	256	.001	-.95	.02	-.94	-.91
Equal variances Not Assumed			-46.32	242,770	.001	-.95	.02	-.94	-.91

Table 7.3.2.

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances for Age

	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence interval of the difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal Variances Assumed	17.694	.001	-43.69	256	.001	-.94	.02	-.98	-.90
Equal variances Not Assumed			-45.18	180,207	.001	-.94	.02	-.98	-.90

Table 7.3.3.

KMO and Barlett's Test results

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling adequacy	.92
Barlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	4239,441
	df
	153
	P
	.00

Table 7.3.4.

MANOVA results of interaction between gender and age

Source	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.
Gender*Age	Attractiveness	8.447	.004

Table 7.3.5.

MANOVA results of interaction between age and product type

Source	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.
Age*product type	Expertise	8.447	.005

Table 7.3.6.

MANOVA results of two-way interaction between gender and product type

Source	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.
Gender*Product type	Attractiveness	.045	.83
	Trustworthiness	1.373	.24
	Expertise	1.128	.29
	Purchase intention	.963	.33

Table 7.3.7.

MANOVA results of three-way interaction between gender, age and product type

Source	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.
Gender*Age*Product type	Attractiveness	.139	.71
	Trustworthiness	.469	.49
	Expertise	.068	.79
	Purchase intention	.130	.72