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Influence of Food Influencers on Consumption of Healthy Food

Romy Hulsmeijer

Master of Communication Science

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First Supervisor: M. Galetzka

Second Supervisor: J. van Hoof

Department Communication Science

Faculty of Behavioural, Management, and Social Sciences

University of Twente

P.O. Box 217 7500 AE Enschede

The Netherlands

Abstract

Influencer marketing is the process of promoting products and services through individuals with clout among potential buyers. The concept of influencer marketing is based on people's faith in the individual who is disseminating the information. The findings of this study might advance research into source credibility, homophily, commercial disclosure, persuasion knowledge, and parasocial interaction theory. This research examines whether the homophily (similarity between the influencer and the follower) has an effect on the followers when a sponsorship is added. To test the hypotheses, this study uses an online experiment with a 2 (disclosure: no disclosure vs. the standardized disclosure) x 2 (type of influencer: no similarity vs. similarity) between-subjects design. The experiment tested whether influencer homophily and commercial disclosure have an effect on persuasion knowledge, perceived parasocial interaction, credibility, and healthy food choices and whether influencer's homophily has an effect on the public when honoring a sponsorship. The impacts of the independent variables on the dependent variables were measured using a quantitative online survey. In total, 201 individuals participated in this study. The results of this research provide some practical guidelines for marketers interested in working with food influencers. When choosing an influencer to collaborate with, marketers should consider the influencer's credibility. However, no significant main effect of disclosure has been found in the research. Although the results were not significant, it is suggested that the most effective method to activate persuasion knowledge is to combine an expert with disclosure. Furthermore, there has not been found significant interaction between homophily and disclosure. Follow-up studies might research this further and test other influencers with other advertisements. This study provides evidence that collaboration with a similar influencer in the target group can make viewers experience high homophily and can therefore have an effect on credibility, persuasion knowledge, parasocial interaction and change in eating habits. This might encourage marketers to collaborate with regular influencers. Future studies could use a different method which offers the possibility to systematically analyze data or food blog posts and focus on the symbolic meanings of the material

Keywords: influencer marketing, source credibility, homophily, commercial disclosure, persuasion knowledge, parasocial interaction, change in eating habits.

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1. Introduction

The internet has turned into a strong advertising platform for companies. Consumers are increasingly turning to social media for advice from friends, family, specialists, and the public (Wong, 2014). Marketers have lately shown a keen interest in influencer marketing.

Influencer marketing is the practice of promoting products and services through persons who have sway over potential customers. The idea of influencer marketing is built on the trust that people have in the person passing on the information. People will be more influenced into buying a specific product if it is introduced in a manner that makes it relatable to the target audience (Mammadli, 2021). The idea of influencer marketing is therefore based on the trust and the relationship that influencers create with their audience (Turner, 1993). Although Turner's study was about 'television performers', the same processes play a role in influencer marketing. The information presented by the influencer must be credible and relevant to the audience in order to be trusted. According to Diffley, Kearns, Bennet, & Kawalek (2011), consumers tend to think that influencers are more trustworthy and credible than traditional media. As a form of virtual friend, they frequently target a more segmented audience with similar interests. Influencers appear more trustworthy since they appear closer to their target audiences (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Additionally, influencers must present their profile in a manner that allows them to connect with the audience. The positive connection enhances the relationship that they establish with the viewers and the level of influence they have on them. This connection is also called homophily.

The findings of this study might advance research into source credibility, homophily, commercial disclosure, persuasion knowledge, and parasocial interaction theory. The credibility of the source is important because blogs are written by fellow consumers. If the reader thinks the influencer is not credible, the post is rejected. The persuasiveness of blog ads depends on the credibility and legality of the source, determined by his or her knowledge and reliability (Colliander & Dahlen, 2011). The viewer is the beneficiary of a resource with the appropriate knowledge, experience, and capabilities. When a source proves to be credible, the message will be believed (Kareklas et al., 2015). Nowadays, influencers create a lot of advertisements. Influencers who use their blogs as a marketing tool must disclose their sponsors, also known as a sponsorship statement. The purpose of disclosures is to help consumers recognize ads and, as a result, activate persuasive knowledge. In this research, it is important to examine whether the persuasiveness of advertising via blogs influences credibility. The effects of disclosure can be influenced by how recipients feel about the source

of the disclosure or, in this case, how followers feel about the influencer. Similarly, homophily is the antecedent of trust in a relationship. Homophily is the tendency of similar people to socialize more often than others. People tend to form psychological bonds with each other related to friendship. In this research, homophily is also referred to as similarity. Similarity occurs when followers can compare themselves with the influencer on various aspects, such as demographic characteristics. The parasocial interaction theory (PSI) provides a plausible explanation for the observed relationship between influencers and their followers. Followers who form a parasocial contact with influencers by consistently reading their content and checking their photographs, believe they have a personal relationship with them. Because of their long-standing 'friendship', they regard the influencer as a dependable source of information (Thorson & Rodgers, 2006; Lee & Watkins, 2016).

In the field of marketing, influencer marketing is a phenomenon that has been around for a while. While companies have recently discovered its effectiveness as a tool for social media marketing (Wong, 2014), influencers in their capacity as endorsers are still little studied. Individuals, especially young people, use the internet to gather information and share their experiences, and they get information from social media, such as Instagram, to help them make buying decisions (Hu, Manikonda, & Kambhampati, 2014). Other industries than marketing are picking up the pace. For example, the food industry has joined in on the use of influencer marketing. Food influencer's opinions on a specific dish or cuisine have proven to be a lucrative marketing opportunity (Khamis et al., 2016).

These influencers have the potential of influencing the public's consumption of healthy foods positively and negatively. Influencers influence people's attitudes and behavioral intentions. Many influencers use social media as a platform to share knowledge on healthy eating, diet, nutrition, detox, and weight loss (Lynn et al., 2020). These topics have become important in today's world in which people are more conscious about their wellbeing (Arnold, 2019). People do not always have time or money to visit their nutritionists for dietary advice and hence put their trust in social media influencers, especially those who are known to be an expert in the field.

The level of influence is determined by several factors, ranging from the influencers' credibility, their knowledge of the field, the parasocial interaction and the concept of homophily. The level of interaction with the audience builds trust and hence boosts the ability

to influence them into using products (Ki et al., 2020). An influencer with relevant knowledge is more likely to be trusted. For instance, a nutritionist is more likely to influence consumers to buy healthy foods, compared to any random influencer with a large social media following. A good example is Ashley Alexander, popularly known as @gatherandfeast on Instagram, who has gathered a huge social media following through her food blogging. She uses her knowledge of cuisines and food nutrients to enlighten her followers and sell her skills to the market. Through her blogging, she has partnerships with different companies selling different products, ranging from food products to utensils and cutlery (Baker, 2020).

1.1 Research problem

There is still little empirical evidence on the effects of influencer marketing with regard to food blogs. Therefore, the aim of this research is to examine the activities of different types of social media influencers. How do they influence consumers through the content they post on their social media platforms? It is important to consider whether homophily with the influencer has an effect on perceived parasocial interaction, credibility, and healthy food choices.

Research by Roy (2015) shows that identifying the right influencers, is a major challenge for marketers when developing an influencer strategy. It is important for marketers to look at the engagement rate of influencer, determined by several factors. Two constructs that play an important role in creating engagement are credibility and identification (Chapple & Cownie, 2017). For example, when an influencer has millions of followers, it does not mean that the influencer has a major influence on his followers. Multiple studies have shown that influence is determined by multiple factors, such as credibility of the source, reliability, expertise and the relationship between the influencer and the followers (Kapitan & Silvera, 2015; Wong, 2014; Chapple & Cownie, 2017). These are some of the factors that influence the selection process of companies when choosing influencers to work with. A good selection process is likely to have a positive impact on the consumers of the products being marketed, while a poor choice of influencers is likely to have a negative impact on the consumers.

1.2 Research gap

Some research has already been done on the various mechanisms through which influencers shape the actions and behaviors of their followers. According to Ki and Kim (2019), how influencers work is underlain by factors like personal attributes and the quality of information they rely on. Essentially, Ki and Kim (2019) note that influencers succeed in impacting engagement marketing as credible sources of reliable, and attractive information. Belanche et

al. (2021) state that the influencers can persuade their followers to adopt their recommendations when there is congruence between influencers, products, and consumers. Basically, Belanche et al. (2021) have found that followers tend to mimic influencers who they trust and with whom they feel connected. When the consumer is alerted to the persuasive content and the purpose of a message through sponsorship disclosures, this has an effect on the credibility of the messenger. Disclosure can lead to source bias and negatively impact consumer confidence (Kareklas, Muehling & Weber, 2015). These scholars have also found that the brand in question also mediates how influencers engage their followers. In general, consumers develop greater purchase intention for products toward which they hold favorable views. In summary, it appears that the mechanisms that allow influencers to convince followers are comprised of individual influencer factors, product considerations, as well as follower attributes. However, there are limited studies that have researched the influence of food influencers on the public's consumption. Admittedly, a lot of research has been done on the influence of the media on healthy lifestyles (Grabe, Ward, & Hyde, 2008; Lee, 2009; López-Guimerà, Levine, Sánchez-Carracedo, & Fauquet, 2010; Thompson, & Heinberg, 1999), but not on the effect of homophily with influencers on healthy food choices in relation to the change in eating habits.

The aim of this research is to fill these gaps in the existing literature by investigating the possible influence of nutrition blogs. A lot of research has already been done into the effect of sources within health communication, but this mainly focused on the question whether exposure to a message - in which a famous person was used – leads to changes in the knowledge, attitude, and behavior of the users. However, little research has been done into the effects of a regular food influencer who represents a person more similar to us. Therefore, this study of the influence of different types of food influencers on the consumption of healthy food will clarify whether homophily with the influencer affects parasocial interaction, credibility of the influencer, and healthy dietary choices.

1.3 Academic relevance

This research topic is strongly related to the Marketing Science Institute's research priorities for 2020-2022. It falls under the second main goal, 'The dynamic landscape of marketing and advertising,' which covers subjects such as new marketing channels and how to capture client value in this ever-changing environment (MSI, 2020-2022). In this new climate, influencer marketing might be regarded a valuable instrument.

The results of this research could significantly help in the development of nutritional studies. The nutrition curriculum could include modes of providing nutritional advice based on current social media. Food influencers can either influence the public positively or negatively on consuming food. Nutritionists and dietitians can be trained to help the public live healthy despite the current influential trends. Iheme (2019) argues that registered nutritionists should develop effective strategies to prevent consumers from dangerous information for their health passed to them by unauthorized people and quacks. Through this study, the health and education ministry can identify the influence food influencers have on food consumption. By doing this, they can incorporate topics to help future nutritionists and dietitians to save the public. Moreover, this research could drive other researchers to study the influence of social media on other products than food. Influencers also impact consumers' attitudes and decisions on products such as cosmetic products, electronic gadgets, and clothes. These various studies would help individuals and multiple investors understand the importance and disadvantages of social media influencers. This research examines whether the homophily (similarity between the influencer and the follower) is affected when a sponsorship is added. Does this make the influencer less credible, and does it affect the followers' food choices?

1.4 Practical relevance

This study aims to determine how food influencers influence the consumption of healthy food. The study relates to the current trend of making nutritional decisions based on influencers' content on social media platforms. This is relevant for viewers as they will be interested in getting informed on the influence of social media, including food influencers, on their choice of food. Besides, this study can spread awareness on (un)healthy eating. Most people will be more cautious about what they pick from food influencers and other social media platforms. They can better evaluate whether the food the influencer is promoting is healthy or not. Through this evaluation, they might choose more suitable and healthy food to consume. This makes it possible to establish a positive attitude towards healthy eating behavior. This can lead to a decrease in overweight, which leads to fewer diseases and a lower risk of obesity (Brown, Basil & Bocarnea, 2003).

1.5 Research question

Finally, study focuses on the following variables: credibility, homophily, commercial disclosure and para-social interactions. In the experimental study, homophily is shown as similarity. A match in demographic factors, for example, in which age, race, class, gender and

education level determine the extent to which similarity is experienced between people. When the public is comparable with the food influencer, there is similarity. The research intends to answer the research issue of how food influencers positively and negatively affect public consumption of healthy food through experimental research and a 2 (type of influencer: similar vs dissimilar) x2 (disclosure: present vs non present) experimental design. The following research question is addressed in this study:

To what extent do influencer homophily and commercial disclosure have an effect on parasocial interaction, persuasion knowledge, source credibility, and changing their audience's eating habits?

2. Theoretical framework

The literature relevant to the various constructs will be discussed in more detail in this chapter. First, the dimension of credibility is discussed. Second, the role of homophily and subsequent commercial disclosure will be addressed. Third, the theory of parasocial interaction will be discussed and, finally, the proposed relationship between credibility, homophily, commercial disclosure and para-social interactions. In addition, this theoretical framework includes hypotheses concerning the variables' relationships. These relationships are described in the last paragraph.

To understand the influence of food influencers on healthy food consumption, one needs to consider the existing relationship between influencers and followers, and the factors that initiate the adoption of specific behaviors or tendencies amongst their followers (Razak & Zulkifly, 2020). In that regard, four key concepts come into the picture: the theory of parasocial interaction, homophily, commercial disclosure and credibility. Influencers on social media, such as Instagram, have an impact on their followers, which can lead to a relationship (ibid.). The relationship determines how followers perceive the message that the individual provides about a specific product or brand. In addition, the perceived credibility of the message stems from the attitude of the followers toward the food influencer, which also shapes the decisions that will follow after interacting with a specific influencer (ibid.). Most followers trust influencers that they love.

2.1 The source credibility

The persuasiveness of advertising through blogs is explained by the credibility provided by digital influencers. The reader's willingness to act on the influencers' words, actions, and choices is determined by the reader's perception of the blog's credibility (Chu & Kamal, 2008). For instance, an influencer who has a good background in healthy living and nutrition is more likely to influence consumers to buy healthy food and products. The source's credibility is transferred to the manufacturer of a given brand of product, as followers believe that the influencer advertises products based on his/her knowledge of the quality of the products. Moreover, the knowledge and trustworthiness of the source determine the source's credibility (Kareklas et al., 2015). The recipient's perception of the source as someone with appropriate knowledge, experience, and abilities is referred to as expertise. In addition, the degree to which the recipient trusts the source as someone who offers unbiased, impartial, and honest information is referred to as trustworthiness. When a source appears trustworthy, his or her message will be believed (ibid.). Therefore, because influencers publish blogs and readers believe there is no commercial objective behind the blog, the credibility of blogs is one of the essential variables in persuading consumers (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011). When a reader believes the influencer is untrustworthy, they are less likely to trust the message and are less likely to embrace it (Chu & Kamal, 2008). It is reasonable to expect that exposing the blog's persuasive intent through a sponsorship disclosure will impact its trustworthiness. Consumers may recognize that the blog is a paid blog written on behalf of a commercial entity, reducing the persuasive power of blogs. Nevertheless, credible influencers will still gain the trust of the audience.

2.2 The role of homophily

Homophily refers to the tendency of people who are similar to associate with each other more frequently than others (Turner, 1993). It is the tendency of people to establish psychological affiliations that are associated with friendship. Scholars have shown a close relationship between homophily and attitude (ibid.). Attitude is a feeling or thought that a person develops regarding a phenomenon or someone. For example, it is common for individuals to prefer knowing someone better when they realize or perceive they have something in common (Razak & Zulkifly, 2020). A similar tendency also determines the impression that people develop about a person's thoughts and opinions (Ahlf et al., 2018). Because of the significance social networks play in the digital age, scholarly interest in homophily has resurfaced (Etter et al., 2014). Social media influencers, including Instagrammers, influence

people to adopt or prefer a specific idea by showing how they endorse the same mindset. Thus, influencers create an attachment and specific tendencies that attract followers who develop the perception that they have something in common with the influencer (Razak & Zulkifly, 2020).

Similarly, homophily is the antecedent of trust in a relationship. Once the influencer has established the perception of similarity with followers, they are likely to persuade a significant percentage of their fans to embrace their recommendations (Lee & Watkins, 2016). As seen in Ahlf and colleagues' (2018) study, homophily improves the communication between individuals and shapes the ability of influencers to promote specific aspects or behaviors across social platforms. Another homophily aspect stems from demographic factors where age, race, class, gender, and education level define how people relate. For this reason, the demographics of the influencers also determine the kind of people who will embrace the message they tend to communicate across social media platforms such as Instagram. Barzily and Ackerman (2015) have proved that people with similar demographic characteristics, such as height, school grades, IQ, and physical education, tend to build trust and relationships faster and easier than those with different attributes. Influencers must create precision in their content creation to guarantee that the material they pass along is relevant to their audience if they want to have a flawless impact on their followers. Companies that want to advertise a product will focus on the target market and choose influencers accordingly in these circumstances. Companies might, for example, use certain shared characteristics between two or more people to develop a successful product-selling strategy (ibid.).

H1 A high level of homophily with the influencer (i.e., high similarity between influencer and follower) has a more positive effect on perceived credibility than a low level of homophily (i.e., low similarity between influencer and follower).

2.3 Commercial disclosure

Disclosures are intended to assist consumers in recognizing advertisements and, as a result, activating persuasive knowledge. Influencers that use their blogs as marketing tools must disclose their sponsorships, which is also known as a sponsorship notice. A sponsorship notice informs viewers of the video's commercial content, which is "marketer-influenced" (Cain, 2011; Wood & Quinn, 2003). The impact of sponsorship disclosure and other forms of persuasive intent warnings has been studied extensively over the years.

The hashtags #sponsored and #paidad have been found to effectively enhance ad recognition in influencer marketing on Instagram, according to research (De Veirman & Hudders, 2019; Evans et al., 2017). The impact of a revelation, on the other hand, is determined by its location, visual prominence, and language (e.g., Wojdyski et al., 2017; Wojdyski & Evans, 2016). When compared to disclosures at the top of an article, disclosures in the middle of an article are more likely to be noticed and boost ad recognition (Krouwer et al., 2017; Wojdyski & Evans, 2016). A disclosure's visual prominence (which is determined by its size, typeface, and contrast between text and background) also influences ad recognition (Amazeen & Wojdyski, 2018; Wojdyski et al., 2017). The standardized Instagram declaration ('Sponsored partnership with [brand]') is very clear and clearly communicates the influencer's paid affiliation with the company. Consumers respond negatively to warnings about sponsorship disclosure, according to research in traditional media. When a customer is made aware of a communication's persuasive content and intent through sponsorship mentions, it reduces the messenger's perceived credibility and leads to a more negative attitude toward the message (Colliander & Erlandsson, 2015; Jacks & Devine 2000; Wood & Quinn, 2003). Sponsorship disclosure reduces readers/viewers' intentions to use electronic word of mouth, according to other studies (Liljander, Gummerus, & Söderland, 2015). Disclosure of sponsorship affects ad recognition, causing source bias and negatively impacting the credibility of the source. This causes the trust of the message to be lowered (Kareklas, Muehling & Weber, 2015).

Based on the literature mentioned above, commercial disclosure is expected to have an effect on the perceived credibility of the influencer, homophily and PSI. The following hypothesis has been formulated for this purpose:

H2 Commercial disclosure activates the persuasive knowledge and negatively impacts the influencer's credibility and the influencer's perceived PSI (as opposed to no commercial disclosure and not activated persuasive knowledge).

2.4 Persuasion knowledge

Persuasive knowledge refers to the reader's understanding of a message's source, the source's motives for influencing the reader, and the persuasive strategies the receiver employs (Campbell & Kirmani, 2000). Companies and/or brands can reach their consumers through sponsored content on social media in a less obtrusive way than conventional media (Minton, Lee, Orth, Kim, & Kahle, 2012). So, persuasive posts can also be found on a blog. In this

situation, the influencer is attempting to persuade the reader to purchase a specific product or brand. Because social media gives people access into the influencers' personal lives, the material, and thus sponsored content, becomes more believable. After all, it's assumed that the influencer is a genuine user of the product or service being promoted and that they genuinely enjoy it (Lueck, 2015). More than half of customers are unaware that the celebrities and influencers they follow on social media are endorsing certain items or companies, according to a Harris Interactive survey (Langford & Baldwin, 2013). Consumers employ their persuasive knowledge when they detect that someone is attempting to persuade them, according to the Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad & Wright, 1995). Research into effects of sponsorship disclosure in traditional media (television, radio, and film) has shown that persuasion knowledge is activated by content-sponsored disclosures (Van Reijmersdal, Lammers, Rozendaal, & Buijzen, 2015). According to Friestad & Wright (1995), people who know that there is an ad, can be persuaded or resist the ad. On the other hand, people want the freedom to make their own decisions and do not want to be influenced or convinced, according to Reactance Theory (Brehm & Brehm, 1981). People's freedom to make their own decisions is threatened by advertising, and as a result they acquire negative attitudes towards the message and the sender (ie, the brand). Reaction, or resistance, is the result of this. There are cognitive resistance methods in addition to emotional resistance tactics. Counter-argumentation is a type of cognitive resistance technique. People then respond with counterarguments to the message. They don't believe what's being said, don't trust the source, or don't agree with the message (Fransen, Verlegh, Kirmani & Smit, 2015). Avoidance (for example, zapping when there is a commercial on TV) and empowerment (when people believe they are correct) are two more types of cognitive resistance methods (Fransen et al., 2015). Resistance emerges as a result of these cognitive resistance techniques as well as the affective resistance methods. Because resistance is a response to persuasion, advertising's effectiveness decreases once people recognize it is advertising. According to Friestad & Wright (1995), consumers realize that the people behind the persuasive message are trying to influence them through the sponsorship disclosure. Other studies show that activation of persuasion knowledge leads to a more negative attitude towards the brand and purchase intention than when persuasive knowledge is not activated (Carr & Hayes, 2014 & Van Reijmersdal et al., 2015). A brand tries to persuade an influencer to deliver a specific message through blog sponsorship. When the reader's persuasive knowledge is triggered, the follower is distrustful of the blog's advertised brand. When persuasive knowledge is not activated, this results in a more favorable attitude toward credibility (Carr & Hayes, 2014).

2.5 The theory of parasocial interaction

Parasocial interaction is a psychological relationship between specific audiences and influencers. The parasocial interaction theory (PSI) offers a logical explanation for the influencer-follower relationship. Followers who develop a parasocial relationship with influencers by reading their content and viewing their images regularly, believe they have a personal connection with them. They regard the influencer as a reliable source of information because of their friendly relationship over time (Thorson & Rodgers, 2006; Lee & Watkins, 2016). Followers also take over the good attitude of an influencer toward a brand. As a result, influencers, in their capacity as brand ambassadors, help to raise brand value, character, and loyalty. A clear understanding of the influencer-follower relationship is essential in determining how social media influencers shape the behavior of their followers. Many ordinary people have obtained many followers on Instagram, particularly through sharing photographs or videos with their audience. Because of their knowledge and competence, they have a strong effect on their followers and are seen as trustworthy sources of information. They gain fans by giving them a glimpse into their personal lives, giving their audience the impression that it knows them well (Colliander & Dahlén, 2011).

Following the literature mentioned above, the following hypothesis supposes an interaction. The degree of similarity between the food influencer and the follower and whether or not disclosure has been added, has an effect on parasocial interaction, credibility, and healthy food choices. It is expected that when an influencer mentions a disclosure, this has a negative effect on the parasocial interaction, credibility, and healthy food choices and there is dissimilarity. It is also expected that when an influencer does not mention sponsorship, this has a positive effect on parasocial interaction, credibility, and healthy food choices and there is similarity.

H3 High homophily (similarity with the food influencer) has a more positive effect on perceived parasocial interaction, credibility, and healthy food choices when no sponsorship is mentioned and low homophily (dissimilarity with the food influencer) has a more negative effect on perceived parasocial interaction, credibility, and healthy food choices when sponsorship is mentioned.

2.6 Proposed relationship between credibility, homophily, commercial disclosure, persuasion knowledge and parasocial interactions

As seen from the discussion above, individuals develop a positive attitude towards another person when they perceive similarity in terms of characteristics, values, behavior, or beliefs. Therefore, followers on platforms such as Instagram will maintain continuous interaction when demographic homophily exists. To this end, this study proposes that homophily creates the perceived credibility of information shared by influencers. At the same time, it is important to note that social media followers appreciate credible information from influencers. Therefore, there is a high tendency of continuous interaction between the followers and influencers when the former considers the messages shared to be credible. Regular interactions build the foundation needed to develop a relationship of trust between the influencer and the followers. Therefore, the study also proposes that real or perceived credibility leads to parasocial interactions. According to Brown and Fraser (2003), the extent to which a follower identifies with a social media influencer determines the influencer's influence. This means that people recognize themselves in a social media influencer and can put themselves in their shoes. This increases the similarity and credibility of the influencer.

The theoretical framework posits that there is a direct and positive relationship between homophily and credibility. As stated above, with homophily in place, influencers are uniquely positioned to establish credibility. There is a need to determine the specific mechanisms through which homophily enables influencers to present themselves as credible to their followers. According to Sokolova and Kefi (2019), homophilic attitudes among followers give rise to feelings of familiarity which help them to develop trust-based relationships with influencers. Ultimately, the above discussion leads to the conceptual framework visualized in Figure 1.

2.7 Conceptual research model

The conceptual research model (Figure 1) gives a visual overview of this study and table 1 gives an overview of all the hypotheses in this study.

Figure 1. Research model

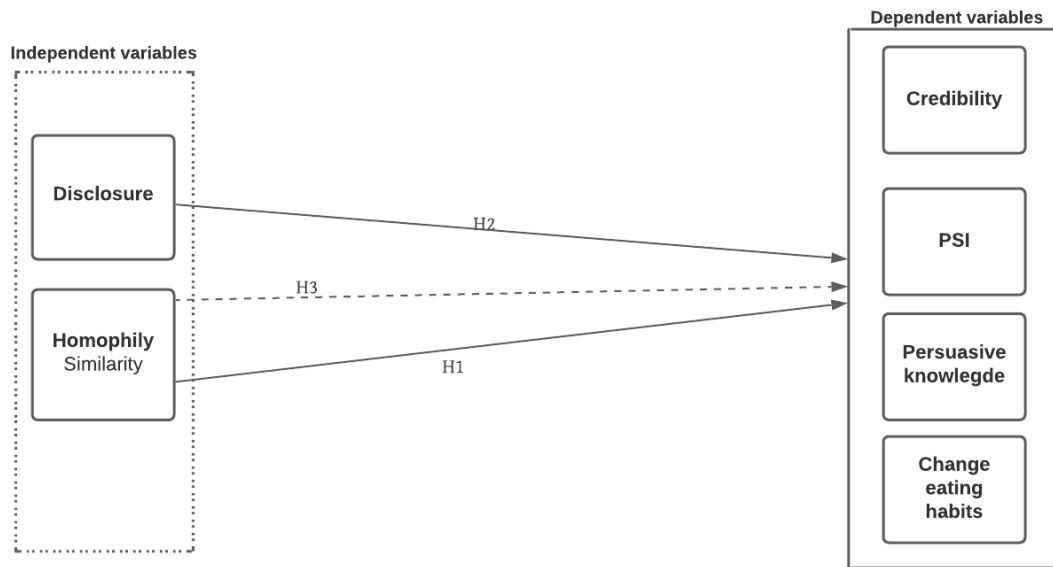


Table 1. Hypotheses overview

Hypotheses	
H1	A high level of homophily with the influencer (i.e., high similarity between influencer and follower) has a more positive effect on perceived credibility than a low level of homophily (i.e., low similarity between influencer and follower).
H2	Commercial disclosure activates the persuasive knowledge and negatively impacts the influencers' credibility and the influencer's perceived PSI (as opposed to no commercial disclosure and not activated persuasive knowledge).
H3	High homophily (similarity with the food influencer) has a more positive effect on perceived parasocial interaction, credibility, and healthy food choices when no sponsorship is mentioned and low homophily (dissimilarity with the food influencer) has a more negative effect on perceived parasocial interaction, credibility, and healthy food choices when sponsorship is mentioned.

3. Method

This chapter discusses the research approach used to test the research hypotheses. The hypotheses which were stated in the theoretical framework, will be tested by conducting an experiment in which the similarity of the food influencer and disclosure will be manipulated. An online survey will be used to collect the data.

3.1 Experimental design

To test the hypotheses this study has performed an online experiment with a 2 (disclosure: no disclosure vs. the standardized disclosure 'Paid collaboration with [brand]') x 2 (type of

influencer: no similarity vs. similarity) between-subjects design. The experiment tested whether influencer homophily and commercial disclosure have an effect on persuasion knowledge, perceived parasocial interaction, credibility, and healthy food choices and whether influencer's homophily has an effect on the public when honoring a sponsorship. Only women are examined for this study since the food influencers which were examined in this experiment are female.

3.2 Stimuli

A pre-test questionnaire was developed to determine the content characteristics of the stimuli. For the main study, materials have been developed to validate whether the materials differ in homophily and sponsorship. For this research, it was deliberately chosen not to research Dutch food influencers, because they may be known to the participants, which is why the researcher chose food influencers from Sweden. From these, four food influencers were selected for this research and four different photos of food influencers were shown. The four food influencers are shown in Figure 2. These photos have been shown to see which food influencer could best be used for the main research. In addition, four different conditions of food influencer profiles were shown showing different lifestyles. The four food influencer profiles are shown in Figure 3. Different lifestyles were chosen to investigate whether or not there was a connection between the influencer and follower. For example, lifestyles were chosen such as, an influencer who not only focused on food blogging but also on women's empowerment, a food influencer who traveled a lot for vegan recipes, a food influencer who is publicly involved in her life and is a family person and a food influencer who was the winner of the program "MasterChef" and travels the world. It was expected that there would be similarity between the food influencer and the follower who does not focus on a category of food, such as only vegan, but shares recipes for everyone's wishes and also lives a life like the majority. In addition, it was expected that there would be no similarity between the food influencer, who was the winner of the "MasterChef" program, and follower because this food influencer is more seen as an expert. This food influencer probably shares more difficult recipes, which are not for everyone. Also, this food influencer travels the world for recipes and not everyone has the opportunity to travel a lot, so a follower would be less likely to compare themselves with this food influencer. Also, three Instagram posts with products are shown. The three Instagram posts are shown in Figure 4. This post had a caption describing the item and the product. Here, a sponsorship mention via hashtags, such as #ad or #partner or

#discount code was displayed in a post. The expectation was that the post where the sponsorship mention was not shown would be more credible, attractive, and realistic

Figure 2. Pre-test stimuli food influencers



Figure 3. Pre-test stimuli food influencers

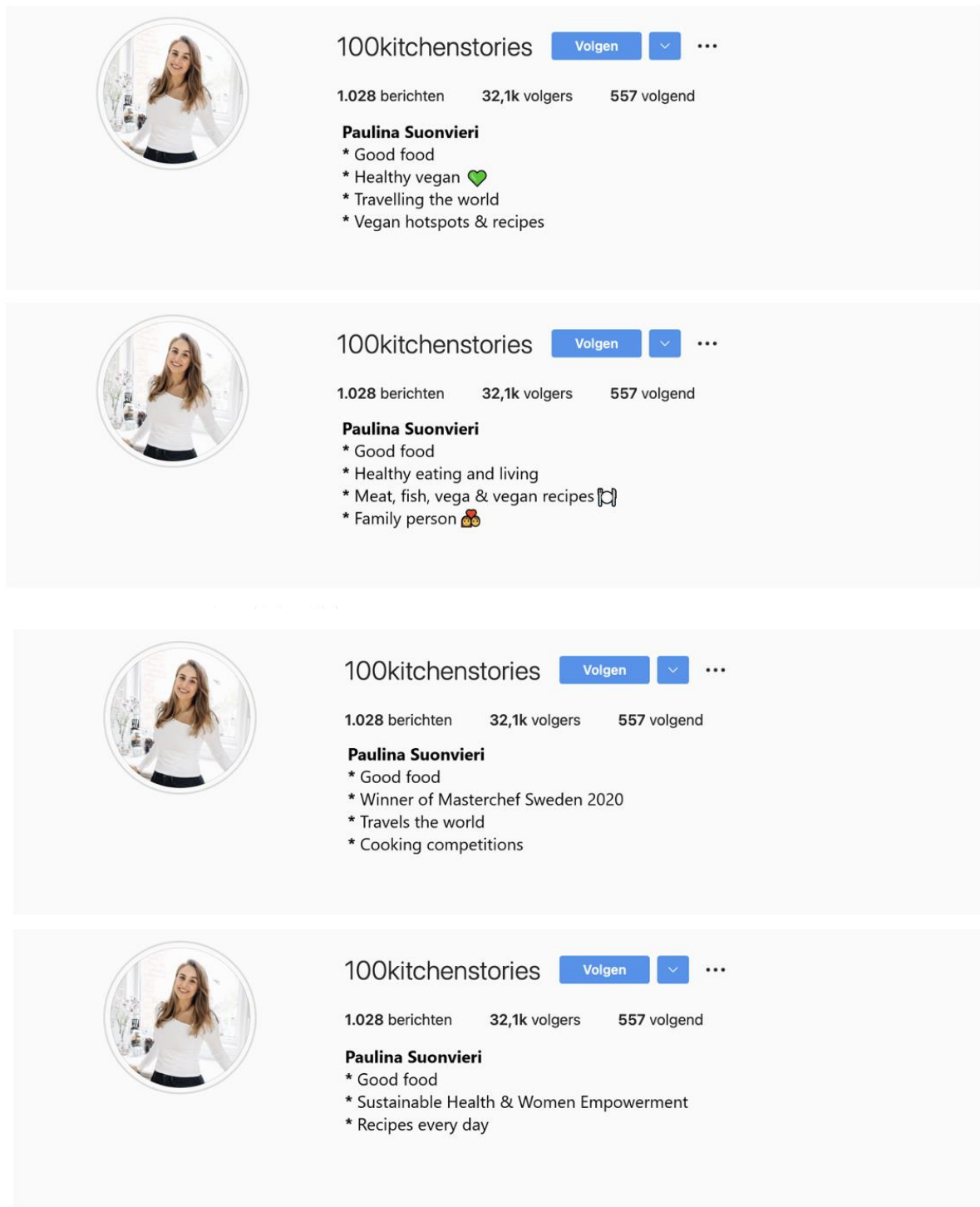
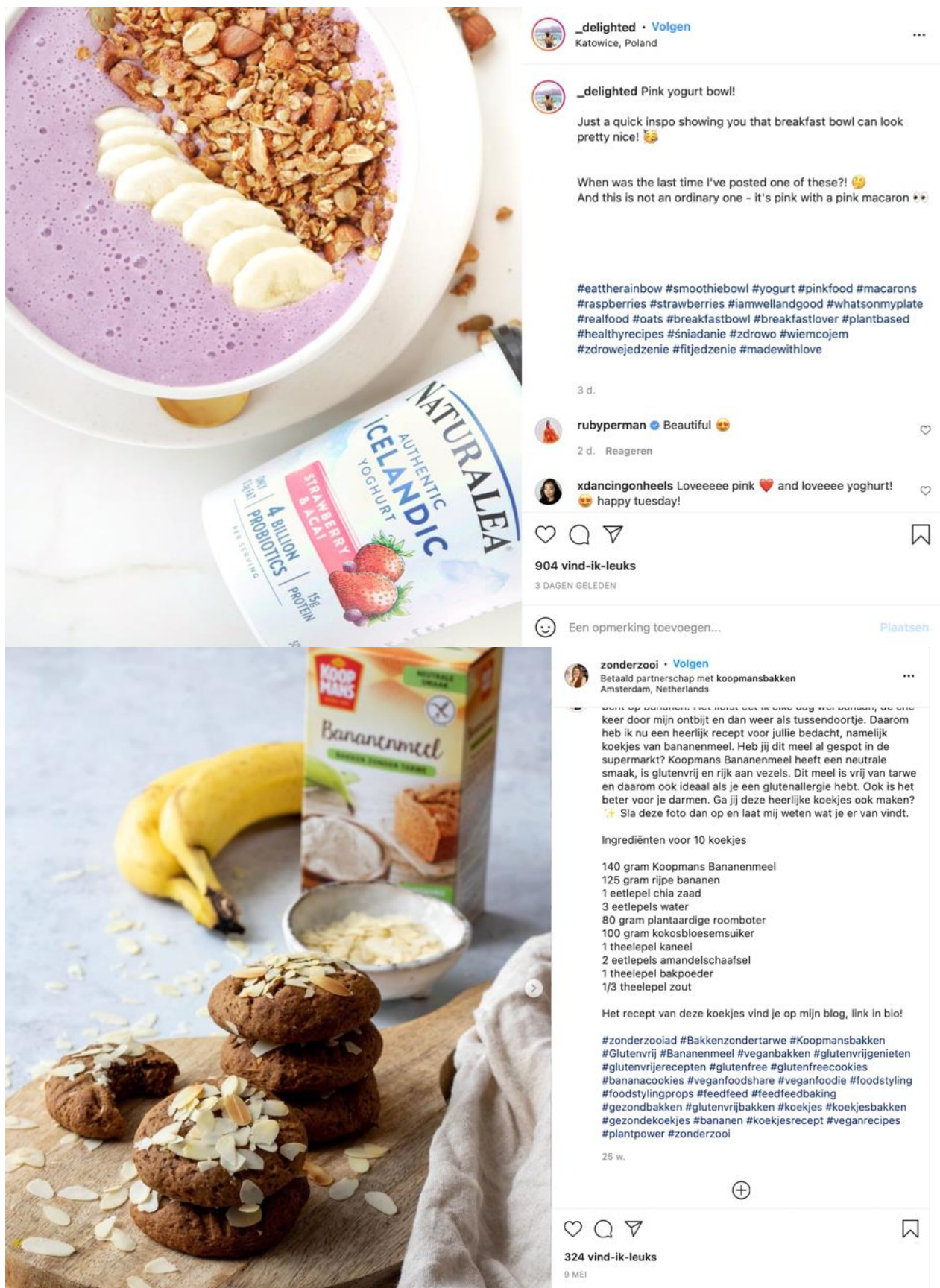


Figure. 4 Pre-test stimuli disclosure





3.3 Pre-test of stimuli design

Two pre-tests were performed to determine the stimuli. The independent variables homophily and disclosure were tested to ensure that the manipulations were clear and valid. The online survey tool Qualtrics was used to create the questionnaire and to collect data. Friends and colleagues of the author of this study received a URL via WhatsApp that led them to the questionnaire. A total of 31 participants took part in the first pretest. 1 participant did not use Instagram, so this participant was not included. Therefore, a convenience sample of 30 participants participated in the pretest. The questions concerned whether participants were familiar with Instagram, how often they use Instagram, the influencers, and the products. Participants were exposed to the influencers after the introduction page and were then asked to complete a series of questions about the food influencers' similarity and degree of identification with the food influencer. A 5-point scale was used for the questions. In addition, a total of 34 participants took part in the second pre-test. The participants were exposed to three products: smoothie bowl, banana flour and a pumpkin smoothie. The participants were asked whether they found the content of the message attractive, whether it was realistic and whether the post was credible. In addition, participants were asked to what extent they agreed with the fact that the post was sponsored or that it involved advertising.

3.3.1 Manipulation similarity food influencer

The independent variable similarity of the food influencer was tested to ensure that a food influencer that did not match with the follower and a food influencer that matched with the follower was found. First, four photos of food influencers were collected to see which influencer is most suitable for the main study, which are shown in Figure 2. The participants were asked to what extent they found the food influencer credible, to what extent similarity was applicable, and which food influencer made them feel the most enjoyable. After that, four different conditions of profiles of food influencers were shown. The food influencers' photos were the same under all circumstances, so the food influencers are similar. But the information in the biography and the piece of text about the food influencer was different. The profiles were photoshopped to see to what extent the participant could measure up to the food influencer. The biography showed what the food influencer thinks is important in life and what her life looks like. The four profiles that have been created are shown in Figure 3. The text about the food influencer that was shown with each profile is included in Appendix A. In the pretest, the participants were shown all profiles of the food influencers. Statements about similarity were made and participants were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with this. The following statements were used: "I think the influencer thinks like me", "I think the influencer is like me", "I think the influencer is similar to me" and "I think the influencer thoughts and ideas have similarities to mine". This was measured with a five-point Likert scale.

3.3.2 Results similarity food influencer

The similarity stimuli were performed to see which influencer looked the most credible, attractive, and enjoyable. This influencer was used for the photo of the food influencer in the Instagram profile for the main research. The manipulation of the similarity stimuli for choosing the right food influencer was successful in the pre-test. The results showed that food influencer 3 scored the highest (credibility: $M = 3.52$, similarity: $M = 3.58$ and enjoyable: $M = 4.03$). An overview of the mean and standard deviations of all tested stimuli is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations of the food influencer stimuli $N = 30$

	I think the food influencer is credible (credibility) M (SD)	I think the food influencer is similar to me (similarity) M (SD)	The food influencer gives me a pleasant feeling (enjoyable) M (SD)
--	--	--	--

Food influencer 1	3.15 (0.81)	2.65 (0.68)	3.09 (0.74)
Food influencer 2	3.12 (0.93)	2.76 (0.73)	3.24 (0.81)
Food influencer 3	3.52 (1.08)	3.58 (0.92)	4.03 (0.90)
Food influencer 4	3.09 (0.93)	2.73 (0.79)	3.06 (0.95)

Secondly, different profiles of food influencers were tested. A dissimilar and similar food influencer was selected by means of the manipulated profile. Table 3 shows an overview of the means and standard deviations of all tested stimuli.

Table 3. Means and standard deviations of the similarity stimuli N=30

	I think the food influencer thinks like me M (SD)	I think the food influencer is like me M (SD)	I think the food influencer is similar to me M (SD)	I think the food influencer has the same thoughts and ideas M (SD)
Food influencer 1	3.61 (0.74)	3.24 (0.78)	3.50 (0.83)	3.58 (0.58)
Food influencer 2	2.22 (0.89)	2.28 (0.94)	2.16 (1.09)	2.16 (1.09)
Food influencer 3	3.74 (1.11)	3.74 (1.19)	3.71 (1.20)	3.94 (1.27)
Food influencer 4	2.16 (1.19)	2.16 (1.11)	2.16 (1.14)	2.26 (1.22)

For the food influencers' similarity, the stimulus with the highest score is chosen. For the non-similarity of the food influencer, the stimulus with the lowest score is chosen. In a paired t-test, this difference was significant; $t(30) = 4.48$, $p < .001$. The stimulus material is shown below.

The pre-test showed that the profile of food influencer 3 scored the highest on similarity between the influencer and the follower and the profile of food influencer 4 the lowest on similarity between the influencer and the follower, as a result food influencer 3 is chosen for the similarity influencer and food influencer 4 for the dissimilarity influencer. In addition, a focus group was asked to review the profiles to get more information and to be sure of the results of the pre-test. For example, the participants were asked to look closely at the profile of the influencers and to read the biography carefully. It was stated that they were attracted to the profile of food influencer 3 because she focuses on what your body needs, rather than just creating a nice picture or dish, so that she focuses on healthy eating and living. Someone from the focus group stated the following: "She appeals to me because she is family oriented, and I also like to cook with my brothers and sisters. So, she may have tasty recipes for this. My brother is also vegan, and I am a vegetarian myself, but the rest of my family and friends do eat meat. Because food influencer 3 has this in her bio, I hope she has good ideas for all

parties." In addition, the focus group indicated that food influencer 4 appealed to them the least, because she is the Winner of MasterChef. Someone stated the following: "I immediately think of difficult Michelin Star meals. I like easy and tasty recipes, and enough to eat with my family and friends. I am also not competitive, and she does competitive cooking. In addition, I don't think it's realistic that you travel the world every month to try out or share a new recipe." Figure 4 shows the stimuli that will be used in the main research.

3.3.3 Manipulation disclosure

The independent variable disclosure was tested to ensure the focus of the message is clear. Three messages from products are shown. Here, a sponsorship mention via hashtags, such as #ad or #partner or #discount code was displayed in a post. To ensure that the focus of the message is explicit, participants were presented with the following statements: "I think the content of this post is attractive", "I think the content of this post is realistic" and "I think the content of this post is credible". The statements were answered on a five-point Likert scale.

3.3.4 Results disclosure

The manipulation of the disclosure of the independent variable for choosing the right Instagram post was successful in the pre-test because the post that didn't show a sponsorship mention had the highest credibility. For the disclosure condition, the stimuli with the highest credibility score were selected for the pivotal study ($M = 2.80$, $SD = .83$). The results of disclosure revealed a significant effect; $(34) = 9.97$, $p = <0.001$, so this item is chosen for the main study. Table 4 shows an overview of the means and standard deviations of all tested stimuli.

Table 4. Means and standard deviations of the disclosure stimuli N = 34

	Appeal <i>M (SD)</i>	Realistic <i>M (SD)</i>	Credibility <i>M (SD)</i>
Product post 1 (smoothie bowl)	1.86 (0.94)	3.20 (0.86)	2.80 (0.83)
Product post 2 (banana flour)	2.27 (0.96)	1.93 (0.68)	1.93 (0.68)
Product post 3 (pumpkin smoothie)	2.13 (0.96)	2.37 (0.87)	2.20 (0.83)

Table 5. Means and standard deviations of the disclosure stimuli N = 34

The Instagram post showed it was a sponsored product/ad <i>M (SD)</i>
--

Product post 1 (smoothie bowl)	2.06 (1.2)
Product post 2 (banana flour)	3.71 (1.94)
Product post 3 (pumpkin smoothie)	2.26 (0.83)

3.3.5 Stimuli main research

The pre-test conducted before the main study will be discussed in this section. Based on the results of the pretest, the final stimulus was generated and designed using the pretest Instagram posts and Adobe Photoshop. Therefore, it was decided to include the food influencer who best matched the participants in the food influencer profiles that were shown in the main study. Figure 5 shows the stimuli of the food influencer profiles which will be used in the main research.

To manipulate sponsorship disclosure, two versions of the blog posts were used for this study. One of the blog posts is a sponsored blog post and the other is a non-sponsored blog post. The content of both blog posts is completely the same, the only difference is that the sponsored blog post has an addition stating that it is a sponsored blog post by hashtags, such as #ad and #sponsored. The pre-test showed that the product "smoothie bowl" scored the highest on credibility, which is why it was chosen for the main study.

Four conditions are attached to the main study: a post of the similar influencer with sponsorship, a post of the similar without sponsorship, a post of the dissimilar influencer with sponsorship and a post of the dissimilar influencer without sponsorship. It is important that the same design and fonts are used for the manipulations, in order to make the ads as similar as possible. The same image of the food influencer has also been used in the post of the profiles, so that this cannot cause distraction. The stimuli of the disclosure which will be used in the main research are shown in Figure 5 and the piece of text about the food influencer that was shown with both profiles is attached in appendix B. The manipulation is shown in the piece in the text in the appendix. The similarity of the food influencers has been manipulated because a piece of text, a biography, has been written for both profiles. This includes what the influencer does, who she is and what she is involved in. The comparable influencer is an ordinary influencer who takes the followers into her daily life. The disparate influencer is the winner of MasterChef Sweden 2020, travels a lot and loves cooking competitions.

Figure. 5 Main stimuli food influencer

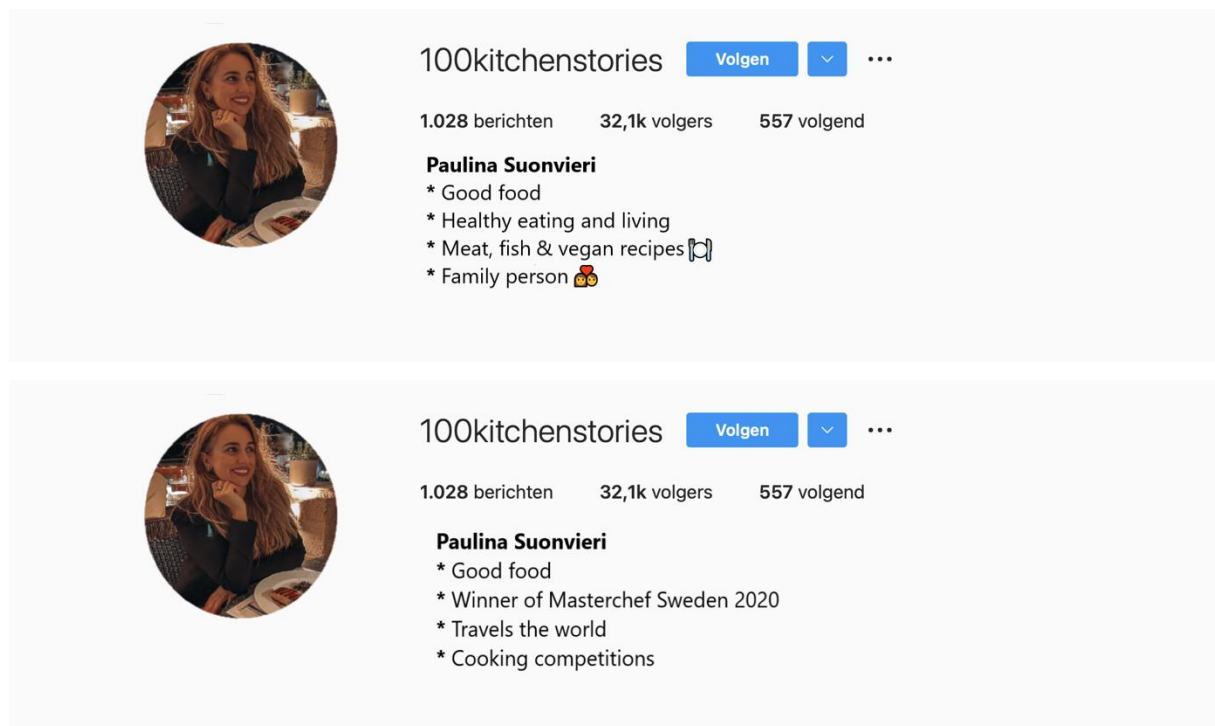
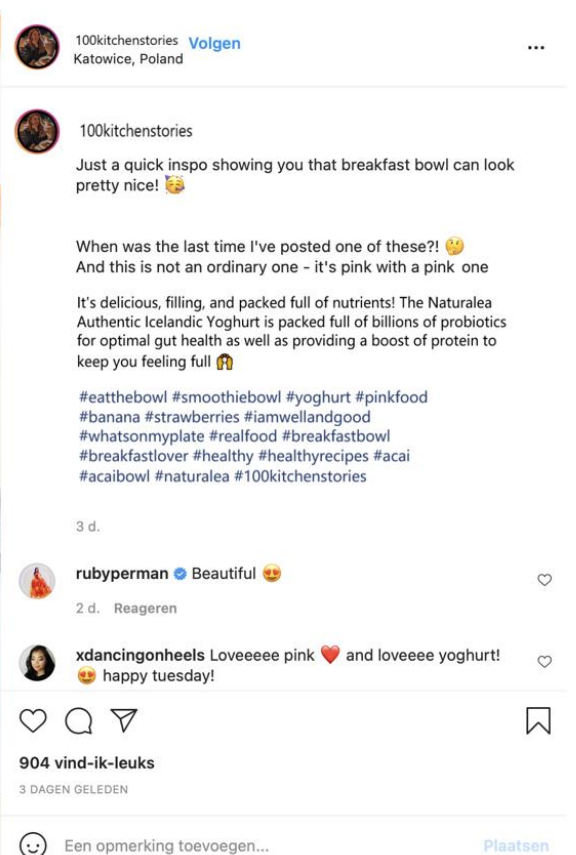
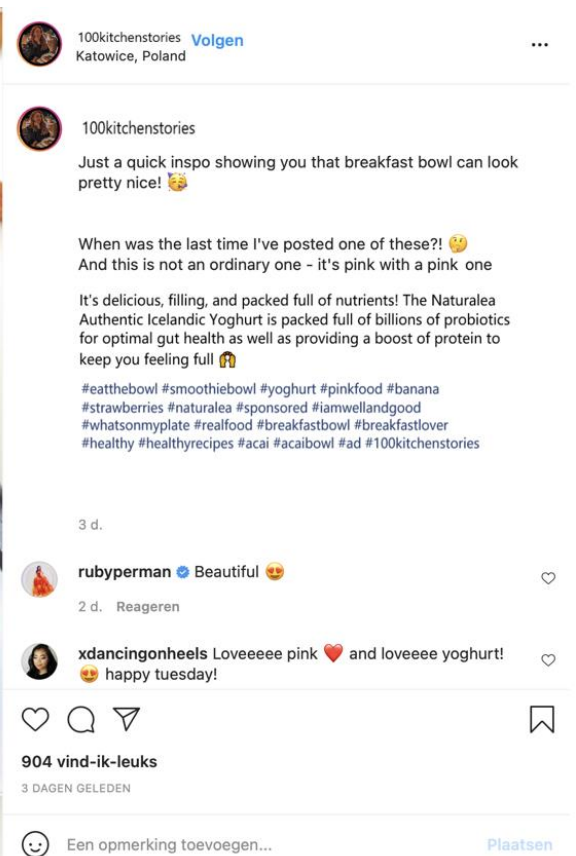


Figure. 6 Main stimuli disclosure



3.4 Participants

Data was collected in 2021, between December 23, 2021, and January 11, 2022, and a total of 239 responses were received. However, 38 participants failed to complete the questionnaire and were excluded from the analysis. As a result, 201 participants remained for analysis. Invitations were sent via social media (Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp) and personal communication was collected via Qualtrics. Participants between the ages of 18 and 25 were asked for the survey. When participants are < 18 and > 25 years old, they have been removed from the dataset. The distribution of demographic characteristics is shown in Table 6.

With regard to the participants' distribution on the stimuli, a one-way analysis of variance revealed no relation between age and the conditions ($F(3, 200) = 0.82, p = .483$). Furthermore, a chi-square test showed that there was a significant difference between the conditions and the difference in education level ($\chi^2(5) = 219.925, p = <.001$). Furthermore, the majority of the participants were highly educated. Additionally, there was a significant difference between the conditions and the Instagram use between the conditions ($\chi^2(64) = 122.458, p = <0.001$). A large proportion of the participants uses Instagram two hours or more daily. Table 6 shows an extended overview of the Instagram usage of the participants.

Table. 6 Demographics overview (age, education, and Instagram usage)

	Condition 1 Similar influencer + no disclosure N = 51	Condition 2 Similar influencer + disclosure N = 51	Condition 3 Dissimilar influencer + no disclosure N = 52	Condition 4 Dissimilar influencer + disclosure N = 47
Age	$M = 23.67$ $SD = 1.57$	$M = 23.45$ $SD = 1.59$	$M = 22.94$ $SD = 1.86$	$M = 23.15$ $SD = 1.81$
Education				
Lagere school/ basisonderwijs	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
VMBO	2.0%	2.0%	3.8%	2.0%
MBO	19.6%	23.5%	19.2%	20.4%
HAVO, VWO, gymnasium	7.8%	5.9%	15.4%	8.5%
HBO	60.8%	49.0%	46.2%	52.2%
WO	9.8%	19.6%	15.4%	16.4%
Instagram usage				
Minder dan een uur	0.0%	7.8%	9.6%	4.3%
Een uur	25.5%	15.7%	25.0%	17.0%
Twee uur	23.5%	37.3%	32.7%	27.7%
Meer dan twee uur	49.0%	39.2%	32.7%	51.1%
Anders, namelijk	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

3.5 Manipulation check

A manipulation check was conducted in order to ensure that the independent variables homophily (similarity) and disclosure were effectively manipulated. To investigate the effectiveness of the manipulations in the main study, a between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) and two independent sample t-tests were performed.

The manipulation of the independent variable homophily (similarity) was correctly perceived. The ANOVA revealed a significant effect for the perception of homophily $F(200) = 32.097, p = .001$. The results showed that the similar influencer has a higher score ($M = 3.33, SD = 0.99$) than the dissimilar influencer ($M = 1.99, SD = 0.95$). When it comes to looking at the difference between the similar and dissimilar influencer, an independent sample t-test showed that the difference in means is marginally significant, $t(200) = 9.815, p = .001$.

The manipulation of the independent variable disclosure was correctly perceived. The ANOVA revealed a significant effect for the perception of homophily $F(200) = 56.499, p = .001$. The results showed that the post with disclosure ($M = 3.56, SD = 0.89$) has a higher score than the post with no disclosure ($M = 3.01, SD = 0.65$). When specifically looking at the difference between similar and dissimilar influencer, an independent sample t-test showed that the difference in means is marginally significant, $t(200) = -5.008, p = .001$. Based on the results of the manipulation check tests, it can be concluded that the manipulation checks in the main study were successful.

3.6 Procedure

The survey was constructed with Qualtrics. Participants were asked to sign an informed consent form before participating in the experiment. After this, participants were informed about the course of the study: they were told that they would first see a blog post and would then be asked questions about the material. Before continuing with the questionnaire, participants were free to look at the materials for as long as they wanted. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. The questionnaire started with demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, and education). Afterwards, the participant was asked whether the participant uses Instagram and how often she uses it. Subsequently, questions were asked about credibility, homophily, PSI and the manipulation check. The sequencing of the questions guaranteed that reactions to the influencer and post were not influenced by the ad recognition question or manipulation checks, which disclose the Instagram post's commercial nature. Control questions were asked at the end of the survey. At the end, participants were thanked and debriefed.

3.7 Measurements

The following constructs were measured in this study: perceived credibility, persuasion knowledge, parasocial interaction, change in eating habits and the manipulation checks. Also, the demographic variables of the participants were asked like age, gender and education and there were questions included about the use of Instagram. Most of the items in the questionnaire were adopted from previous studies. Furthermore, all constructs were measured on a 5-point scale.

3.7.1 *Perceived credibility (17 items)*

Source credibility was measured in three dimensions as proposed: attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness. Expertise indicates to what extent a influencer is seen as a source that knows what he is talking about and refers to the knowledge, experience, or skills of this influencer (Erdogan, 1999). The items were based on literature by Erdogan (1999). This scale has proven to be reliable with a coefficient higher than 0.7 for all subsets. The scale consists of 17 semantic differential items to measure perceived attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness, and has four items for attractiveness, five for expertise and eight for trustworthiness. An example of a question measuring attractiveness could be: "What do you think of the author of the blog?" on four 5-point semantic differential scales: (unappealing/attractive, unreliable/trustworthy, insincere/sincere, unfriendly/friendly) (based on Ham, Nelson & Das, 2015). These questions are based on Ohanian's (1990) research. Two questions about trustworthiness have been asked, which is why they are called trustworthiness 1 and trustworthiness 2. Cronbach's alpha of the 17 items was high ($\alpha = .83$). The value of coefficient alpha was also calculated for the three sub dimensions. Attractiveness ($\alpha = .85$), expertise ($\alpha = .84$), trustworthiness 1 ($\alpha = .76$) and trustworthiness 2 ($\alpha = .84$) all scored very good.

3.7.2 *Persuasion Knowledge (8 items)*

The dependent variable persuasion knowledge was measured to check the activate of the persuasion knowledge of the participants (based on Ham, Nelson & Das, 2015). An example of a question measuring persuasion knowledge is: 'The influencer's naming of the brand was with the intention of getting people to buy the product'. Persuasion knowledge was measured on a 5-point Likert scale differential from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The reliability for persuasion knowledge was high ($\alpha = .92$). The value of coefficient alpha was also calculated for the two sub dimensions. Cognitive resistance ($\alpha = .91$) and Affective resistance ($\alpha = .92$) scored both very good.

3.7.3 Parasocial interaction (6 items)

The dependent variable parasocial interaction was measured with six statements on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 – Strongly disagree to 5 – Strongly agree. The statements were taken from the Parasocial Interaction scale of Rubin et al. (1985). However, ‘newsreader’ was changed to ‘influencer’. One of the items on that scale, “If my favorite newscaster appeared on another television program, I would watch that program” was adapted to “I would like to watch another post from this influencer”. The reliability of the perceived parasocial interaction was high ($\alpha = .94$).

3.7.4 Change in eating habits (4 items)

To measure the dependent variable, change in eating habits, four statements are shown that were measured with a 5-point Likert scale. The items are derived from Sparks & Guthrie (1998) but have been slightly modified. Here the following statements were shown: "After seeing the food influencer and the Instagram post, I plan to eat (even) healthier in the future", "After seeing the food influencer and the Instagram post, I want to eat (even) healthier in the future", "After seeing the food influencer and the Instagram post, I expect to eat (even) healthier in the future" and "After seeing the food influencer and the Instagram post, I am motivated to eat (even) healthier in the future". The reliability of the 4 items was very high ($\alpha = .94$).

3.7.5 Manipulation checks

At the end of the questionnaire, manipulation checks were added to validate if the stimuli were perceived by the participants as expected. To check the manipulated factor "similarity" four statements were measured with a 5-point Liker scale. The statements are as follows: “I think the influencer thinks like me”, “I think the influencer is like me”, “I think the influencer is like me” and “I think the influencer has thoughts and ideas similar to mine.” These statements are based on a study by McCroskey, et al. (2006). In addition, the manipulated disclosure factor was measured by asking whether the participant saw a notification under the post. Also, several statements were measured with a 5-point Liker scale to find out whether they thought the Instagram post was an advertisement, and which notification the participant had seen. The reliability of the 4 items measuring homophily was high ($\alpha = .97$) and the reliability of the 4 items measuring disclosure was accepted ($\alpha = .74$).

3.7.6 Control variable

At the start of the questionnaire, the participants were asked whether they used Instagram (0 = yes, 1 = no). The Instagram usage is measured by asking the question "How many hours a day do you use Instagram in total". The answer options were more than 1 hour; 1 hour; 2 hours;

more than 2 hours or others. Based on the article by Critchclow et al. (2019), this scale was chosen.

3.8 Validity and reliability

The survey included different constructs based on the research topic and hypotheses.

Cronbach's α scores were calculated to determine the reliability of the constructs of the total sample (N= 201). The constructs have all alpha scores above .70, which indicates an acceptable level of reliability. Table 7 shows the reliability scores of the constructs included in this research.

Table 7. Overview of items and reliabilities of scales used for dependent variables

Scale	No. of items	Cronbach's α
Source credibility	17	.83
- <i>Attractiveness</i>	4	.85
- <i>Expertise</i>	5	.84
- <i>Trustworthiness 1</i>	4	.76
- <i>Trustworthiness 2</i>	4	.84
Persuasion Knowledge	8	.92
- <i>Cognitive resistance</i>	4	.91
- <i>Affective resistance</i>	4	.92
PSI	6	.94
Change in eating habits	4	.94
Manipulation similarity	4	.97
Manipulation disclosure	4	.74

4. Results

The results of the online experiment are presented in this chapter. To test the hypotheses, the results provided by participants in the survey and the effect of the independent variables on the three dependent variables have been analysed. Therefore, the statistics program SPSS was used. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted for PSI, persuasive knowledge and change in eating habits to determine significance, presented by a p-value, of existing differences between groups. This significance score for alpha was set to .001 for all tests. Therewith, if the p-value was smaller than .001, the hypothesis was significant.

4.1 Main effects and interaction effects independent variables

To analyse the overall effect of the two independent disclosure homophily (type influencer) and (type disclosure) on the combined dependent variables: credibility, persuasion knowledge, PSI and change eating habits, a Wilks' Lambda (Λ) test was conducted. Table 8 presents the descriptive statistics. For homophily (type influencer), a significant main effect

can be detected $\Lambda = .60$, $F(4,194) = 32.54$, $p = .001$. Furthermore, the second independent variable disclosure (type disclosure) reaches no significant main effect, with $\Lambda = .97$, $F(4,194) = 1.31$, $p = .343$. Lastly, analysing the interaction of homophily and disclosure, again, no significant interaction effect of the two variables can be depicted, with $\Lambda = .99$, $F(4,194) = 0.64$, $p = .635$.

Table 8. Multivariate tests

Effect		Value	F	Sig.
Homophily (type influencer)	Wilks' Lambda	.60	32.54	.001
Disclosure (type disclosure)	Wilks' Lambda	.97	1.31	.343
Homophily*Disclosure	Wilks' Lambda	.99	.64	.635

4.2 Main effects of homophily

Table 9 shows that there was a significant main effect of homophily on the dependent variables: credibility, persuasion knowledge, PSI and change eating habits. Table 10 shows a summary of the means and standard deviations of the dependent variables.

Table 9. Test of between subject design effect

Independent variable	Dependent variable	F-value	Sig.
Type influencer: Dissimilar / Similar	Credibility	27.47	<.001
	- Attractiveness	32.89	<.001
	- Expertise	11.60	<.001
	- Trustworthiness 1	41.71	<.001
	- Trustworthiness 2	48.79	<.001
	Persuasion Knowledge	50.99	<.001
	- Cognitive resistance	22.99	<.001
	- Affective resistance	60.59	<.001
	PSI	102.47	<.001
	Change eating habits	16.97	<.001

The Between-Subjects-Effects-Test of MANOVA showed that the main effect of homophily on credibility was significant ($F(4,194) = 27.47$, $p < .001$). The similar influencer ($M = 2.64$, $SD = .38$) led to a higher effect on credibility than the dissimilar influencer ($M = 2.33$, $SD = .48$). In this study, source credibility was measured by means of three constructs: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise. Therefore, it is interesting to see which construct has a leading role in the results. An univariate analysis of variance was used to look at each of the three constructs separately (ANOVA). The ANOVA results show that the two constructs, attractiveness, and trustworthiness, received higher scores in the similar influencer conditions. In addition, the results show that the construct expertise received a higher score in

the dissimilar influencer condition. The similar influencer ($M = 2.45$, $SD = .50$) was perceived as more attractive than the dissimilar influencer ($M = 2.01$, $SD = .59$). When examining the significance of the differences, it can be concluded that the means of attractiveness ($F(1,199) = 32.89$, $p = .001$) are significantly different from each other. The dissimilar influencer ($M = 2.54$, $SD = .55$) perceived a higher score of expertise than the similar influencer ($M = 2.34$, $SD = .39$). The means of expertise ($F(1,119) = 11.60$, $p = .001$) are significantly different from each other. In addition, the similar influencer ($M = 3.42$, $SD = .64$) led to a higher score for trustworthiness 1 than the dissimilar influencer ($M = 2.77$, $SD = .81$). The means of trustworthiness 1 ($F(1,199) = 41.71$, $p = .001$) are significantly different from each other. Finally, the similar influencer ($M = 2.46$, $SD = .47$) led to a higher score for trustworthiness 2 than the dissimilar influencer ($M = 1.93$, $SD = .60$). The means of trustworthiness 2 ($F(1,199) = 48.79$, $p = .001$) are significantly different from each other.

The main effect of homophily on persuasion knowledge was significant ($F(4,194) = 50.99$, $p < .001$). The dissimilar influencer ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.74$) led to a higher persuasion knowledge than the similar influencer ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.54$). An univariate analysis of variance was used to look at each of the two constructs separately. (ANOVA). The ANOVA results show that the two constructs, received higher scores in the dissimilar influencer conditions. The dissimilar influencer ($M = 4.21$, $SD = .77$) led to a higher score of cognitive resistance than the similar influencer ($M = 3.72$, $SD = .66$). When examining the significance of the differences, it can be concluded that the means of cognitive resistance ($F(1,199) = 22.99$, $p = .001$) are significantly different from each other. Also, the dissimilar influencer ($M = 4.20$, $SD = .82$) led to a higher score of affective resistance than the similar influencer ($M = 3.39$, $SD = .65$). The means of affective resistance ($F(1,199) = 60.59$, $p = .001$) are significantly different from each other.

A significant main effect of homophily was found on PSI ($F(4,194) = 102.47$, $p < .001$). The similar influencer ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.87$) led to a more positive PSI than a dissimilar influencer ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 0.87$).

Lastly, the main effect of homophily on the change of eating habits was significant: $F(4,194) = 16.97$, $p < .001$. The similar influencer ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.70$) is more likely to change eating habits than an expert influencer ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 0.93$). As a result of the findings, hypotheses H1 is supported.

Table 10. Summary homophily means (M) and standard deviations (SD)

	Dissimilar		Similar	
	N = 99		N = 102	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Credibility	2.33	0.48	2.64	0.38
- <i>Attractiveness</i>	2.01	0.59	2.45	0.50
- <i>Expertise</i>	2.56	0.55	2.32	0.39
- <i>Trustworthiness 1</i>	2.77	0.81	3.42	0.64
- <i>Trustworthiness 2</i>	1.93	0.60	2.46	0.47
Persuasion Knowledge	4.21	0.74	3.56	0.54
- <i>Cognitive resistance</i>	4.21	0.77	3.72	0.66
- <i>Affective resistance</i>	4.20	0.82	3.39	0.65
PSI	2.21	0.87	3.45	0.87
Change eating habits	2.78	0.93	3.25	0.70

4.3 Main effects of disclosure

Additionally, Table 11 shows there was no main effect found for disclosure on either dependent variable. In line with the multivariate analysis, the main effects of disclosure and the interaction effects were not significant. A summary of the means and standard deviations of the dependent variables can be found in Table 12. The results of this analysis indicate that there were no differences in credibility, persuasion knowledge, PSI and change in eating habits between the groups who were exposed to an advertisement with a disclosure and the groups who were not exposed to a disclosure. As a result of the findings hypothesis H2 needs to be rejected.

Table 11. Test of between subject design effect

Independent variable	Dependent variable	F-value	Sig.
<i>Type disclosure:</i> Disclosure / No-disclosure	Credibility	.020	.886
	- <i>Attractiveness</i>	.079	.779
	- <i>Expertise</i>	.369	.544
	- <i>Trustworthiness 1</i>	.082	.775
	- <i>Trustworthiness 2</i>	.170	.680
	Persuasion Knowledge	2.273	.133
	- <i>Cognitive resistance</i>	.401	.527
	- <i>Affective resistance</i>	4.055	.045
	PSI	.342	.559
	Change eating habits	.214	.644

Table 12. Summary disclosure means (M) and standard deviations (SD)

	Disclosure		No-disclosure	
	N = 99		N = 102	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Credibility	2.48	0.46	2.49	0.46
- <i>Attractiveness</i>	2.22	0.58	2.24	0.59
- <i>Expertise</i>	2.46	0.48	2.42	0.49
- <i>Trustworthiness 1</i>	3.08	0.78	3.11	0.83
- <i>Trustworthiness 2</i>	2.18	0.63	2.21	0.57

Persuasion Knowledge	3.95	0.71	3.80	0.73
- <i>Cognitive resistance</i>	4.00	0.79	3.93	0.73
- <i>Affective resistance</i>	3.91	0.74	3.67	0.92
PSI	2.88	1.07	2.80	1.06
Change eating habits	3.05	0.87	2.99	0.84

4.4 Interaction effects homophily x disclosure

There was no evidence of an interaction effect between the independent variables homophily and disclosure on the dependent variables, which is shown in Table 13. A summary of the means and standard deviations of the dependent variables can be found in Table 14.

Hypothesis H3 needs to be rejected as a result of these findings.

Table 13. Summary homophily*disclosure means and standard deviations

Independent variable	Dependent variable	F-value	Sig.
<i>Homophily*Disclosure</i> (interaction)	Credibility	1.70	.194
	- <i>Attractiveness</i>	1.68	.196
	- <i>Expertise</i>	0.28	.600
	- <i>Trustworthiness 1</i>	0.76	.386
	- <i>Trustworthiness 2</i>	1.87	.173
	Persuasion Knowledge	0.05	.822
	- <i>Cognitive resistance</i>	2.38	.125
	- <i>Affective resistance</i>	1.68	.196
	PSI	0.05	.944
	Change eating habits	0.15	.698

Table 14. Test of between subject design effect

		Disclosure		No-disclosure	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Dissimilar	Credibility	2.28	.44	2.37	.51
	- <i>Attractiveness</i>	1.93	.56	2.01	.61
	- <i>Expertise</i>	2.56	.56	2.55	.55
	- <i>Trustworthiness 1</i>	2.69	.74	2.82	.87
	- <i>Trustworthiness 2</i>	1.85	.58	2.00	.62
	Persuasion Knowledge	4.31	.67	4.11	.79
	- <i>Cognitive resistance</i>	4.34	.67	4.10	.85
	- <i>Affective resistance</i>	4.28	.73	4.13	.90
	PSI	2.23	.85	2.19	.90
	Change eating habits	2.78	.85	2.78	1.00
Similar	Credibility	2.68	.39	2.62	.37
	- <i>Attractiveness</i>	2.48	.47	2.41	.53
	- <i>Expertise</i>	2.37	.39	2.28	.39
	- <i>Trustworthiness 1</i>	3.45	.63	3.41	.66
	- <i>Trustworthiness 2</i>	2.49	.52	2.43	.42
	Persuasion Knowledge	3.62	.59	3.48	.48
	- <i>Cognitive resistance</i>	3.69	.77	3.76	.54
	- <i>Affective resistance</i>	3.57	.58	3.20	.68
	PSI	3.48	.90	3.42	.84
	Change eating habits	3.30	.81	3.21	.58

4.3 Overview of hypotheses

Table 15 provides an overview of the hypotheses of the study and indicates whether they are supported or can be rejected by the findings of the statistical analyses.

Table 15. Overview of results of hypotheses testing

	Hypotheses	Results
H1	A high level of homophily with the influencer (i.e., high similarity between influencer and follower) has a more positive effect on perceived credibility than a low level of homophily (i.e., low similarity between influencer and follower).	Supported
H2	Commercial disclosure activates the persuasive knowledge and negatively impacts the influencers' credibility and the influencer's perceived PSI (as opposed to no commercial disclosure and not activated persuasive knowledge).	Rejected
H3	High homophily (similarity with the food influencer) has a more positive effect on perceived parasocial interaction, credibility, and healthy food choices when no sponsorship is mentioned and low homophily (dissimilarity with the food influencer) has a more negative effect on perceived parasocial interaction, credibility, and healthy food choices when sponsorship is mentioned.	Rejected

5. Discussion and conclusion

First, this chapter discusses the main findings of this study. Second, academic, and practical implications will be discussed. Thereafter, the limitations of the study and suggestions for follow-up research are investigated.

5.1 Main findings

The key findings of the study are discussed in this paragraph. The purpose was to look into how influencers affect people, using Instagram as a research framework, impact the consumption of healthy food in relation to the credibility of the influencer, the role of homophily, disclosure, persuasion knowledge and the parasocial interaction.

First of all, homophily was found to impact credibility, persuasion knowledge, PSI and change in eating habits. The similar influencer led to more positive consumer responses than the dissimilar influencer with regard to credibility, persuasion knowledge, PSI and change in eating habits than the dissimilar influencer. This result was in accordance with predictions and was supported by earlier studies, which already showed that homophily refers to the tendency of people who are similar to each other to form psychological bonds related to friendship (Turner, 1993). This research examines whether homophily (agreement between the food influencer and follower) has an effect on the followers and their eating habits when a

sponsorship is added. This is relevant, because food influencers can be seen as social influencers, because they appeal to a large group of people (Remie & Vasterman, 2016; Sahadat, 2016). For example, it can be checked whether collaborations can take place between scientific bodies such as the Nutrition Center and food influencers. This can be done, for example, by means of disclosures. This could be interesting for marketing purposes, and the findings should help food influencers include healthy food choices into their advertising and marketing campaigns.

In addition, a similar tendency also determines the impression people develop about someone's thoughts and opinions and homophily improves communication between individuals and shapes influencers' ability to promote specific aspects or behaviors on social platforms (Ahlf et al., 2018). Furthermore, the trustworthiness of the source is seen as the extent to which the influencer is perceived as unbiased, impartial and provides honest information and expertise. According to hypothesis 1, a high level of homophily with the influencer was expected to have a more positive effect on perceived credibility than a low level of homophily. Based on the results, this is supported. Also, the results showed that persuasion knowledge is greater when a dissimilar influencer posts an Instagram post. The results show that when the post shows a disclosure, the affective resistance is activated even more. According to the Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad & Wright, 1995), consumers employ their persuasive knowledge when they detect that someone is attempting to persuade them and are trying to influence them through the sponsorship disclosure. According to Lee & Watkins (2016), a psychological relationship between specific target groups and influencers is called parasocial interaction. When a friendly relationship develops over time, the influencer is seen as a reliable source of information (Thorson & Rodgers, 2006). The results showed that high homophily with the influencer has a more positive effect on perceived parasocial interaction, on credibility and on healthy food choices than low homophily with the influencer. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is supported.

However, no significant main effect was found for disclosure and no significant interaction effect between the independent variables homophily and disclosure. These results contradict what was expected. It was expected that commercial disclosure would activate the persuasive knowledge and that disclosure would have a negative effect on the influencers' credibility and perceived PSI. Also, the homophily between the influencer and the followers was expected to have a positive effect on the public when no disclosure is added. However, it really made no difference whether a post with or without disclosure was added. Based on the first finding by Reijmersal, Lammer, Rozendaal & Buijzen (2015), research into the effects of

sponsorship disclosure has shown that persuasion knowledge is activated by content-sponsored disclosures. However, in the current study, this was only triggered by a dissimilar food influencer. Influencers often receive free products in the hope they will promote this product on their blog. As a result, protective mechanisms are activated in the followers, as a result of which the influencer and the product are negatively assessed (De Veirman & Hudders, 2019). Other studies show that activation of persuasive knowledge leads to a more negative attitude towards the brand and purchase intention than when persuasive knowledge is not activated (Carr & Hayes, 2014 & Van Reijmersdal et al., 2015). This research therefore offers new insights into the role of persuasion knowledge in the relationship between food influencer type and purchase intention. A brand tries to convince a influencer to convey a specific message through blog sponsorship. Sponsorship disclosure influences ad recognition, causing source bias and jeopardizing the source's trustworthiness. As a result, the message's credibility suffers (Kareklas, Muehling & Weber, 2015). In this case, this clearly did not happen. Contrary to expectations, viewing a disclosure post did not lead to a more negative attitude towards credibility, and PSI. This also applied to a post without disclosure. An explanation for this could be that the disclosure under the post was not noticed well enough by the participants or that consumers were not familiar with the applied symbolic disclosures (#ad #sponsored), so they did not know that this was a disclosure. The results show that there is a small difference between the post with disclosure and a post without disclosure. Disclosures are intended to assist consumers in recognizing advertisements and, as a result, activate persuasive knowledge. Previous studies have shown that the impact of disclosure is determined by visual familiarity and language (e.g., Wojdyski et al., 2017; Wojdyski & Evans, 2016). Based on the results, hypothesis 2 can be rejected.

5.2 Academic and practical implications

Previously, limited studies focused on the influence of food influencers on the public's consumption. This study, on the other hand, focuses on the influence of food influencers on the consumption of healthy food. This research reveals a link between the influencer homophily and the dependent variables credibility, persuasion knowledge, PSI and change in eating habits. This study investigates whether homophily (similarity between the influencer and the follower) has an influence on the followers when a sponsorship is added, whether it makes the influencer less credible, and whether it affects healthy eating choices. This is important to see whether an influencer can ensure that the population develops a more positive attitude towards healthy eating behavior (Brown, Basil & Bocarnea, 2003). A more

positive attitude can lead to a decrease in overweight. As a positive consequence fewer disease will occur leading to a healthier society. In addition to the possible reduction of overweight, this study is also socially relevant for the government and health institutions. This study intended to research how food influencers affect healthy food consumption, and how this is related to the current trend of basing nutritional decisions on social media influencers. The findings on the role food influencers play in people's attitudes can be used in campaigning against obesity. This will lead to a social development in the field of health and hopefully an increase in knowledge about health. Companies that buy healthy food products can also use these results. When food influencers are effective, companies may consider adopting this marketing strategy. This makes it important research for companies, as they like to learn more about the impact of social media, especially food influencers, on the eating choices of consumers.

Furthermore, marketers can apply the conclusions of the current study into practice. When choosing an influencer to collaborate with, marketers should consider the influencer's credibility. Researchers show that trustworthy sources are more compelling than low-credibility sources. Therefore, marketers looking to incorporate influencers into their marketing strategy consider if buyers believe the influencer is credible (Erdogan, 1999; Ohanian, 1990). This study provides evidence that collaboration with a regular influencer to the target group can make viewers experience high homophily and can therefore have an effect on credibility, persuasion knowledge, PSI and change in eating habits. This might encourage marketers to collaborate with regular influencers. Whether or not marketers choose to work with a regular influencer may be dependent by their objectives. As a result, it's critical to determine what fits the brand in order to determine which marketing campaign goals can be defined. Therefore, follow-up research into the influence of homophily on consumers and their opinions about influencers is necessary.

However, the results of this study have shown that using a disclosure caption or no disclosure caption makes no difference in consumer responses. The study included a product post with a disclosure and a product post with no disclosure in the post caption. The results can be used to lay a foundation for more research about showing disclosure on Instagram. As a result, this research also increases knowledge about the use of disclosure strategies in advertising.

5.3 Limitations

This study provides some useful information about social media influencers, but it also has several limitations. First and foremost, the data presented is limited to influencers that use Instagram exclusively as a social media platform. It would be interesting to investigate the effects of influencers on other social media channels in the future to see if other results come out. Because each social media platform has a unique audience using it for different objectives, this causes a misunderstanding about disclosures on social media (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). TikTok, for example, is a social media channel that is becoming increasingly popular among young people. Nowadays, many healthy recipes are posted via TikTok. It is possible that food influencers have more influence on the followers via TikTok than via Instagram. In addition, Pinterest is now widely used by food influencers, so it would also be an option to research this channel. This gives a more comprehensive picture of different types of social media and the impact of influencer type and disclosure on consumer eating habits.

Second, the findings of the study are limited to one product, namely "yoghurt". Despite the fact that a wide variety of products is used in Instagram recommendations, it is possible that one product is better suited than another. In follow-up research, it would be essential to look at other products and see if these have a different effect. Nowadays, many blogs about nutrition are about a healthy lifestyle, namely the 'fitgirl' blogs. For example, one can look at nutritional supplements, such as protein shakes, vitamins, nutrition bars, which are suitable for girls. This is relevant, because it can be examined whether the fit girls have a positive effect on a healthy lifestyle.

Furthermore, this study did not include a realistic Instagram scenario in which consumers might learn more about the influencer and the product. The participants were presented with an influencer's Instagram profile as well as a self-designed Instagram post that may have provided insufficient information. Furthermore, because a fictitious influencer was utilized, there was no existing link between the participant and the influencer, making it impossible for participants to evaluate the product that the influencer promotes. Follow-up research can make use of an observation method, namely a qualitative content analysis. It can target the Instagrammer's real followers, as they are the target audience of the ad, to quantify the influencer's true effects.

In addition, it is also unclear to what degree participants have seen the captions because no difference between a message with or without disclosure was discovered. Maybe the disclosures were not salient enough. It could also be that consumers were not familiar with the applied symbolic disclosures (#ad #sponsored). According to Tessitore and Geuens

(2013), a symbolic revelation only works if one knows what it means. The participants were not told what the symbolic disclosures entailed, so the participants may not have been aware of this. As a result, the caption is thought to be more important than the visual image. The study by Tessitore and Geuens (2013) examined a combination of symbolic disclosures and textual disclosures, and the participants were shown both symbolic and textual disclosures. In follow-up research, a combination of disclosures could be used to see whether the participants were really interested and paid attention to this. Also, an eye-tracking study could be used to check whether the participants paid attention to the disclosure.

Finally, participants were recruited through the researcher's network. This results in the fact that the majority of the participants, 68.6%, have at least higher education. This percentage is considerably higher than the general percentage of Instagram users with a higher education, which is 43% (Dean, 2022). As a result, persuasion knowledge in this study could differ from knowledge of general Instagram users. Research shows that the higher the educational level, the more negative the attitudes towards products are (Nandamuri & Gowthami, 2012). This could influence the results of the study. In order to draw better conclusions in the future, it is advisable to use a broader sample.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

Because the findings of disclosure were not statistically significant, there is potential for more investigation into this. Only one Instagram post was used in this study, which can cause a somewhat unnatural setting. It is possible that participants may focus more on the post than they would in daily life. This may have caused participants to observe the subtle sponsorship mention better than they normally would when scrolling cursorily through their timeline. As a result, no differences may have been found between a disclosure post and a post without disclosure. In a more natural setting, it is expected that a post with disclosure will lead to more persuasive knowledge than a post without disclosure, because it is less obvious. In follow-up research, a series of Instagram posts could therefore be shown to research how people use Instagram in their daily lives. In follow-up research, another method could be used, namely a qualitative content analysis. The qualitative method offers the possibility to systematically analyze the data, or posts from the food blogs, and to focus on the symbolic meanings of the material (Boeije, 2009). Implicit and explicit meanings can be categorized, so that the food blogs can be compared in terms of text and image (Schreier, 2013).

The research shows that the increase in the level of attention to the change in eating habits is confirmed by the homophily between the influencer and the influencer. However, it

may happen that this does not show a good representation of reality, because a regular profile and an expert profile are shown with a product post. In future research, the 'fitgirl' blogs could be included in the sample to see what effects they have on the change in eating habits.

Another interesting angle for follow-up research could be to explore sports blogs. Sports blogs often not only focus on sports, but also on a healthy lifestyle in which both men and women are inspired and encouraged. Perhaps the sports blogs would have an effect on the change in eating habits. It is interesting for future research to look at the direct influence of blogs on the eating habits of the readers of the blogs.

Finally, there are not only female food influencers, but also male ones. This study has only looked at female food influencers and only female participants were included. Follow-up studies could investigate the impact male food influencers have on followers and also ask male participants to share their experiences.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine whether food influencers influence the consumption of healthy food in relation to the credibility of the influencer, the role of homophily, disclosure, persuasion knowledge and the parasocial interaction. This study offers a theoretical discussion of homophily and the use of disclosure in a food-related Instagram post, as well as an look at how it affects female consumers' responses. The experimental study has shown that non-expert influencers are more positively evaluated on credibility, the role of homophily, disclosure, persuasion knowledge and the parasocial interaction compared to expert influencers. The research, however, showed no substantial main effect of disclosure. Although the results were not significant, it is suggested that the most effective method to activate persuasion knowledge is to combine an expert with disclosure. Furthermore, there was no significant interaction effect between homophily and disclosure. Follow-up studies might research this further and test other influencers with other advertisements.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Pre-test food influencers profile caption

Food influencer 1:

Deze influencer is een bekende food influencer. Door de verschillende recepten die zij dagelijks post, is ze een inspiratiebron voor bijna iedereen. Deze food influencer houdt zich bewust bezig met duurzame gezondheid. Zij vindt niet alleen gezonde voeding belangrijk, maar houdt zich ook bezig met de empowerment van vrouwen. Ze wil hiermee laten zien dat

er juist veel mogelijkheden zijn in deze levensstijl, in plaats van wat er allemaal niet meer kan.

Food influencer 2:

Deze influencer is een bekende food influencer. Deze food influencer houdt zich bezig met gezonde veganistische voeding en plaatst dagelijks nieuwe recepten. Zij is begonnen toen ze haar reis naar een veganistische levenswijze op sociale media ging delen. Echter reist deze food influencer regelmatig om nieuwe vegan hotspots en nieuwe vegan recepten over de hele wereld te ontdekken. Met haar blog wil zij anderen inspireren om hetzelfde te doen en deelt ze haar liefde voor vegan.

Food influencer 3:

Deze influencer is een bekende food influencer en heeft een online platform voor gezond eten en leven. Zij deelt recepten met vlees en vis, maar schrijft ook over vega en vegan recepten, maar ook over een groene en fitte lifestyle. Op deze manier helpt ze je een weg te vinden in wat je lichaam nodig heeft, omdat het soms lastig kan zijn in deze tijd waarin iedere health goeroe een ander advies geeft. Ook neemt zij je mee in haar leven en wordt haar familie overal bij betrokken en zie je hoe zij zich voelt.

Food influencer 4:

Deze influencer is een bekende food influencer. Zij is de winnaar van het Zweedse programma “Masterchef 2020”. Deze food influencer plaatst dagelijks nieuwe recepten om haar passie met anderen te delen. Zij reist maandelijks de wereld over om nieuwe recepten te ontdekken en doet regelmatig mee aan kookwedstrijden.

Appendix B. Stimulus materials food influencer caption

Regulair food influencer:

Deze influencer is een bekende food influencer en heeft een online platform voor gezond eten en leven. Zij deelt recepten met vlees en vis, maar schrijft ook over vegan recepten en over een groene en een fitte lifestyle. Op deze manier helpt ze je een weg te vinden in wat je lichaam nodig heeft, omdat het soms lastig kan zijn in deze tijd waarin iedere health goeroe een ander advies geeft. Ook neemt zij je mee in haar leven en wordt haar familie overal bij betrokken en zie je hoe zij zich voelt.

Expert food influencer:

Deze influencer is een bekende food influencer en heeft een online platform voor gezond eten en leven. Zij is de winnaar van het Zweedse programma "MasterChef 2020". Deze food influencer plaatst dagelijks nieuwe recepten om haar passie met anderen te delen. Zij reist maandelijks de wereld over om nieuwe recepten te ontdekken en doet regelmatig mee aan kookwedstrijden. Zij neemt je mee in haar leven door dit met haar volgers te delen.

Appendix C. Questionnaire experiment

Start of Block:

Q28 Beste heer/mevrouw,

Ter afronding van mijn Master Communication Science (Universiteit Twente) ben ik verantwoordelijk voor dit onderzoek. Uw deelname aan deze vragenlijst is vrijwillig en u kunt op elk moment stoppen. De antwoorden op de vragen zijn geheel anoniem en uw gegevens zullen niet worden gedeeld. Uw antwoorden worden alleen gebruikt voor doeleinden van dit onderzoek. Met dit onderzoek wil ik verschillende food influencers evalueren. Uw deelname aan deze vragenlijst wordt enorm gewaardeerd.

Dit onderzoek begint u met een aantal demografische vragen. Daarna krijgt u een food influencers te zien en een Instagram post. Ik zou u willen vragen om het profiel van de food influencer aandachtig te bekijken en de post te bekijken alsof deze in uw eigen tijdlijn voorbij zou komen. Daarna wordt gevraagd om enkele vragen over de post te beantwoorden. Bovenaan de pagina vindt u een voortgangsbalk - op deze manier kunt u zien hoever u al bent in het onderzoek. Deelname aan dit onderzoek is geheel vrijwillig en duurt ongeveer 5 minuten. Er zijn geen risico's verbonden aan uw deelname aan dit onderzoek. U kunt uw deelname te allen tijde en zonder opgaaf van reden stoppen.

Als u vragen heeft over de vragenlijst, kunt u deze mailen naar r.hulsmeyer@student.utwente.nl

Hartelijk bedankt voor uw tijd.

Door verder te gaan naar de volgende pagina kunt u beginnen met het invullen van de vragenlijst.

R. Hulsmeyer

End of Block:

Start of Block: Block 1

Q4 Bevestiging van uw deelname aan deze vragenlijst en daarmee dit onderzoek:

- ☐ Hiermee bevestig ik bovenstaande gelezen te hebben en akkoord te gaan met deelname aan dit onderzoek. (1)
- ☐ Hiermee bevestig ik bovenstaande gelezen te hebben en wens ik niet deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek. (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Bevestiging van uw deelname aan deze vragenlijst en daarmee dit onderzoek: = Hiermee bevestig ik bovenstaande gelezen te hebben en wens ik niet deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek.

End of Block: Block 1

Start of Block: Block 2

Q5 Maakt u gebruik van Instagram?

- ☐ Ja (1)
- ☐ Nee (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Maakt u gebruik van Instagram? = Nee

End of Block: Block 2

Start of Block: Hoeveel uur maakt u per dag gebruik van Instagram?

Q6 Hoeveel uur maakt u in totaal gebruik van Instagram?

- ☐ Minder dan een uur (1)
- ☐ Een uur (2)
- ☐ Twee uur (3)
- ☐ Meer dan twee uur (4)
- ☐ Anders, namelijk (5) _____

End of Block: Hoeveel uur maakt u per dag gebruik van Instagram?

Start of Block: Block 4

Q7 Wat is uw leeftijd?

End of Block: Block 4

Start of Block: Block 5

Q8 Wat is uw geslacht?

- ☐ Man (1)
- ☐ Vrouw (2)
- ☐ Anders, namelijk (3) _____
- ☐ Wil ik niet zeggen (4)

End of Block: Block 5

Start of Block: Block 6

Q9 Wat is uw hoogst behaalde opleiding?

- ☐ Geen opleiding (1)
- ☐ Lagere school/ basisonderwijs (2)
- ☐ VMBO (3)
- ☐ MBO (4)
- ☐ HAVO, VWO, gymnasium (5)
- ☐ HBO (6)
- ☐ WO (7)

End of Block: Block 6

Start of Block: Block 7

Q12 Wat is uw mening over food influencers in het algemeen?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
Onbelangrijk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Belangrijk
Oninteressant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Interessant
Saai	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Opwindend

End of Block: Block 7

Start of Block: Block 13

Q11 Op de volgende pagina krijgt u een Instagram food influencer te zien en een post van een product. Voor deelname aan deze vragen zou ik u willen vragen om de food influencer en de post te bekijken alsof deze in uw eigen tijdlijn voorbij zou komen.

End of Block: Block 13

Start of Block: Conditie 1

Q12 Deze influencer is een bekende food influencer en heeft een online platform voor gezond eten en leven. Zij deelt recepten met vlees en vis, maar schrijft ook over vegan recepten en over een groene en een fitte lifestyle. Op deze manier helpt ze je een weg te vinden in wat je lichaam nodig heeft, omdat het soms lastig kan zijn in deze tijd waarin iedere health goeroe een ander advies geeft. Ook neemt zij je mee in haar leven en wordt haar familie overal bij betrokken en zie je hoe zij zich voelt.

End of Block: Conditie 1

Start of Block: Conditie 2

Q13 Deze influencer is een bekende food influencer en heeft een online platform voor gezond eten en leven. Zij deelt recepten met vlees en vis, maar schrijft ook over vegan recepten en over een groene en een fitte lifestyle. Op deze manier helpt ze je een weg te vinden in wat je lichaam nodig heeft, omdat het soms lastig kan zijn in deze tijd waarin iedere health goeroe een ander advies geeft. Ook neemt zij je mee in haar leven en wordt haar familie overal bij betrokken en zie je hoe zij zich voelt.

End of Block: Conditie 2

Start of Block: Conditie 3

Q14 Deze influencer is een bekende food influencer en heeft een online platform voor gezond eten en leven. Zij is de winnaar van het Zweedse programma "MasterChef 2020". Deze food influencer plaatst dagelijks nieuwe recepten om haar passie met anderen te delen. Zij reist maandelijks de wereld over om nieuwe recepten te ontdekken en doet regelmatig mee aan kookwedstrijden. Zij neemt je mee in haar leven door dit met haar volgers te delen.

End of Block: Conditie 3

Start of Block: Conditie 4

Q15

Deze influencer is een bekende food influencer en heeft een online platform voor gezond eten en leven. Zij is de winnaar van het Zweedse programma "MasterChef 2020". Deze food influencer plaatst dagelijks nieuwe recepten om haar passie met anderen te delen. Zij reist maandelijks de wereld over om nieuwe recepten te ontdekken en doet regelmatig mee aan kookwedstrijden. Zij neemt je mee in haar leven door dit met haar volgers te delen.

End of Block: Conditie 4

Start of Block: Block 14

Q23 Wat vindt u van de influencer?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
Ongeloofwaardig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Geloofwaardig
Onaantrekkelijk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Aantrekkelijk
Onbetrouwbaar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Betrouwbaar
Onoprecht	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Oprecht

End of Block: Block 14

Start of Block: Block 15

Q24 Geef aan wat u van de influencer vindt.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
.Geen expert	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Expert
Onervaren	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ervaren
Onbekwaam	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Bekwaam
Ongekwalficeerd	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Gekwalficeerd
Onvakkundig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Vakkundig

End of Block: Block 15

Start of Block: Block 16

Q25 Geef naar aanleiding van het zien van de Instagrampost aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen:

	Helemaal mee oneens (1)	Mee oneens (2)	Niet mee oneens en niet mee eens (3)	Mee eens (4)	Helemaal mee eens (5)
De afzender van de Instagrampost vind ik eerlijk. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De afzender van het Instagrampost vind ik een geloofwaardige bron van informatie. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De afzender van het Instagrampost is overtuigend. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De afzender van het Instagrampost is bevooroordeeld. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 16

Start of Block: Block 17

Q32 Geef naar aanleiding van het zien van de Instagrampost aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen:

	Helemaal mee oneens (1)	Mee oneens (2)	Niet mee oneens en niet mee eens (3)	Mee eens (4)	Helemaal mee eens (5)
Ik zou deze influencer persoonlijk willen ontmoeten. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Deze influencer zorgde ervoor dat ik mij op mijn gemak voelde, alsof ik onder vrienden was. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zou nog wel een post van deze influencer willen bekijken. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik kijk ernaar uit om berichten van deze influencer te bekijken. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Als ik berichten van deze influencer bekijk, heb ik het gevoel dat ik deel uitmaak van haar groep. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Als de influencer mij laat zien hoe zij denkt over bepaalde onderwerpen, helpt mij dat om er zelf een mening over te vormen. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 17

Start of Block: Block 18

Q27 Wat vindt u van de Instagrampost?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	
Ongeloofwaardig	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Geloofwaardig
Onaantrekkelijk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Aantrekkelijk
Onbetrouwbaar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Betrouwbaar
Onoprecht	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Oprecht

End of Block: Block 18

Start of Block: Block 19

Q28 Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen:

	Helemaal mee oneens (1)	Mee oneens (2)	Niet mee oneens en niet mee eens (3)	Mee eens (4)	Helemaal mee eens (5)
Ik zou de Instagrampost liken. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zou de Instagrampost delen. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zou op de Instagrampost reageren. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 19

Start of Block: Block 21

Q36 Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen: *Het benoemen van het merk door de influencer was met de intentie om...*

	Helemaal mee oneens (1)	Mee oneens (2)	Niet mee oneens en niet mee eens (3)	Mee eens (4)	Helemaal mee eens (5)
... mensen zo ver te krijgen dat zij het product zouden willen aanschaffen. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... mensen het product daadwerkelijk te laten kopen. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... mensen te beïnvloeden. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... mensen het merkt leuk te laten vinden. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 21

Start of Block: Block 22

Q37 Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen:

	Helemaal mee oneens (1)	Mee oneens (2)	Niet mee oneens en niet mee eens (3)	Mee eens (4)	Helemaal mee eens (5)
In de getoonde Instagrampost werd door de influencer reclame gemaakt. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De getoonde Instagrampost is reclame. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De getoonde Instagrampost bevatte reclame. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De getoonde Instagrampost is een gesponsorde post. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 22

Start of Block: Block 23

Q38 Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen: *Na het zien van de food influencer en de Instagrampost...*

	Helemaal mee oneens (1)	Mee oneens (2)	Niet mee oneens en niet mee eens (3)	Mee eens (4)	Helemaal mee eens (5)
... ben ik van plan in de toekomst (nog) gezonder te gaan eten. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... wil ik in de toekomst (nog) gezonder eten. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... verwacht ik in de toekomst (nog) gezonder te gaan eten. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... ben ik gemotiveerd om in de toekomst (nog) gezonder te gaan eten. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 23

Start of Block: Block 24

Q39 Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen:

	Helemaal mee oneens (1)	Mee oneens (2)	Niet mee oneens en niet mee eens (3)	Mee eens (4)	Helemaal mee eens (5)
Ik denk dat de influencer denkt zoals ik. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik denk dat de influencer is zoals ik. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik denk dat de influencer vergelijkbaar is met mij. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik denk dat de influencer gedachten en ideeën heeft die vergelijkbaar zijn met de mijne. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 24

Start of Block: Block 24

Q42 Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de volgende stellingen:

	Helemaal mee oneens (1)	Mee oneens (2)	Niet mee oneens en niet mee eens (3)	Mee eens (4)	Helemaal mee eens (5)
De Instagram post vermeldde dat het een advertentie was (#ad) (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De Instagram post vermeldde dat het gesponsord was (#sponsored) (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De Instagrampost was gelabeld als advertentie. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De Instagrampost bevatte geen advertentie en was niet gesponsord. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Block 24