

Seeing Double

The effects of YouTubers and TikTokers transferring sponsored content across social media platforms

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ABSTRACT

Over the years, traditional marketing strategies have become less effective, giving rise to newer and more effective marketing strategies, including influencer marketing. Letting an external party – influencers – communicate a brand’s marketing messages for them has proven to have positive effects on consumer responses such as brand attitude and purchase intention. Many influencers start out on one social media platform – their platform of origin – only to extend their social presence to other platforms as well in order to stay relevant to their (potential) audience. This can lead to content transference, meaning that influencers can post their original content from their platform of origin on their other platforms as well. The aim of this study is to examine whether this content transference from the platform of origin, being either TikTok or YouTube, to Instagram will lead to changes in consumer responses. The specific consumer responses that are studied are content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention as they have been proven to be the most interesting and important in the field of influencer marketing. Based on previous research, predictions were made on the effects of this content transference, which were translated into seven hypotheses. In order to examine the effects of content transference on these consumer responses, an experiment was conducted. A total of 200 valid responses were collected, having a perfect distribution of respondents among the five conditions. In the four experimental conditions, respondents were shown certain stimulus material with conditions 1 and 2 being shown either sponsored content on or transferred from YouTube, and conditions 3 and 4 being shown either sponsored content on or transferred from TikTok. In the control condition, no sponsored content was shown to the respondents. Overall, no significant differences were found in all three consumer responses across the conditions, meaning that YouTubers, as well as TikTokers, are successful when it comes to transferring their sponsored content to another platform like Instagram. However, it was also found that all experimental conditions showed a decrease in brand attitude and purchase intention in comparison to the control condition. This is in contrast with previous studies in the field of influencer marketing which found that this marketing strategy will have positive effects on these consumer responses. Due to the findings being either the opposite of what was anticipated or not significant, limitations for this study were found with the relatively small sample size of the experiment being the main determinant. Based on these limitations combined with this study’s strengths, recommendations for future research were developed.

KEYWORDS: *Influencer marketing, platform of origin, content transference, consumer responses*

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1. Introduction

Recently, traditional marketing has proven to become less effective since individuals have become more aware of the manipulative and sometimes even misleading character of marketing messages (Heath, Cluley, & O'Malley, 2017). As a result of this, they are building up resistance towards these persuasion attempts (Dey, Yen, & Samuel, 2020). For this particular form of resistance, there are multiple reasons. First of all, according to the reactance theory, individuals like to be autonomous and independent (Miron & Brehm, 2006). This means that they would rather make their own decisions instead of being persuaded into making these decisions. Besides that, they dislike deception, which is often incorporated into traditional marketing advertisements as the promoted product or service is frequently getting sugarcoated (De Bakker, 2017). This resistance can present itself in multiple ways, which is why the ACE typology was formulated, distinguishing three types of resistance strategies: Avoidance, Contesting, and Empowerment (Fransen et al., 2015). These three strategies can be seen as levels related to the amount of effort put into the resistance towards an advertisement. Because of this, there was a need for an innovative, more effective marketing approach.

The digital age has provided newer and more effective marketing strategies, one of which is influencer marketing. With this type of strategy, companies use influential individuals as independent third-party endorsers by letting them communicate certain marketing messages for them (Freberg et al., 2011; Gross & Wangenheim, 2018; Woods, 2016). These influential individuals are best known by the term 'influencers', characterized by their large following and documentation of their life (Abidin & Ots, 2016). As a result of this large following, companies can reach newer audiences and thus increase their extended reach (Childers, Lemon, & Hoy, 2019). The reason why influencer marketing works so well is the fact that these influencers have built a relationship with their audience that is based on trust, reliability, and (wishful) identification (Schouten, Janssen, & Verspaget, 2020). Due to this, it is more likely that a company's message will be perceived as trustworthy and credible when it is communicated by an influencer (Lou & Yuan, 2019). This has proven to have positive effects on consumer responses like brand attitude and purchase intention (Müller, Mattke, & Maier, 2018; Tafesse & Wood, 2021).

For the most part, influencers rise to fame on one specific social media platform, which will be referred to as their 'platform of origin' in this thesis. However, over time, many influencers have started expanding to other platforms by uploading content on these platforms as well. So, they cannot be pinned down to just one platform anymore. This mainly has to do with the fact that their (potential) audience is active on more platforms than just the influencer's platform of origin (Hamdan & Lee, 2021). Previous studies found that the average consumer is active on at least eight social media platforms, with Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp being the most used, and use platforms in a complementary manner (DataReportal, 2021; (Verbeij et al., 2021). So, for influencers to proceed in growing their audience and thus to stay relevant, they need to be present on more platforms than just their platform of origin.

Despite being used by the same influencers, different social media platforms contain different types of content. Two major platforms where influencers get discovered are YouTube and TikTok (Anderson, 2020; Xiao, Wang, & Chan-Olmsted, 2018). Even though they are both video-sharing platforms, there is still a difference in content originating from these platforms. On YouTube, the most popular trends are vlogs (i.e., short for video blog and can be seen as a diary in the form of a video), gaming videos, sketches, tutorials, and challenges (Ferchaud et al., 2018). On TikTok, however, you mostly find lip-syncing and dancing videos, memes, and challenges (Mackenzie & Nichols, 2020). This difference is mainly caused by the length of the content as TikTok videos are usually much shorter than YouTube videos due to format restrictions (Cheng, Dale, & Liu, 2007; Zhou, 2019). Instagram is also a popular platform for influencer marketing, however, on this platform, most content is posted in the form of a photo (Manovich, 2016). Many influencers that started on YouTube (from now on referred to as YouTubers) or TikTok (from now on referred to as TikTokers) do not only use their platform of origin for their partnerships with brands but also extend these partnerships to Instagram. However due to the nature of Instagram, in most cases, content related to the original content will be posted in the form of a photo. Here, the loss in information richness might potentially deteriorate the effectiveness of the original message. Information richness is an important factor when it comes to the power of sponsored content as both the quality and quantity of the information about the promoted brand or product can lead to higher levels of trust and credibility (Chesney et al., 2017; Stubb, Nyström, & Colliander, 2019). These two factors were found to be important mediators for consumer responses such as content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention (Tafesse & Wood, 2021). So, a loss in this area might negatively affect consumer responses.

1.1 Research question

To investigate whether messages are equally effective when being transferred from the platform of origin – either YouTube or TikTok – to Instagram, this thesis will focus on the following research question: “To what extent are YouTubers and TikTokers achieving similar levels of content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention when transferring their sponsored content to Instagram?”. YouTubers and TikTokers are deemed successful in transferring content when achieving similar or higher levels of content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention for the sponsored content transferred *from* their platform of origin compared to the sponsored content *on* their platform of origin. The reason why these three consumer responses are the most interesting to study is the fact that most studies regarding influencer marketing focus on how consumers react to the content and how this affects their decision-making process regarding a product or brand (Bakker, 2018; Stubb, 2019). This makes the concepts of content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention the most compelling to measure the effectiveness of the sponsored content across social media platforms. As mentioned in the last section, the platforms Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are all very popular, yet different, platforms where influencer marketing takes place, making them the most relevant for this study.

Since this thesis studies causal relationships between variables, an experiment was conducted to find the answer to this research question (Neuman, 2014). Within this experiment, participants were randomly divided into one out of five conditions (i.e., four experimental conditions and one control condition). In the four experimental conditions, respondents were exposed to certain stimulus material. Out of these four conditions, in two of them, respondents were shown sponsored content from the platform of origin being either YouTube and TikTok, while in the other two, respondents were shown a sponsored post on Instagram related to the original content from either YouTube or TikTok. The experiment continued by asking the same validated questions regarding consumer responses across all conditions. This made it possible to look for differences in the attained levels of content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention between the control condition and experimental conditions.

1.2 Scientific and societal relevance

This research holds great scientific and societal relevance. The scientific relevance stems from the fact that even though previous research has examined the effectiveness of influencer marketing on different platforms and the influencers' origin of fame (Haenlein et al., 2020; Sinning, 2019), little is known about the difference in the effectiveness of content transference by influencers originating from different platforms. First of all, Haenlein et al. (2020) provide advice for brands who are interested in engaging in influencer marketing, of which studying platform-specific culture is one of them. They go into detail about how influencer marketing and social media platforms are closely connected, mainly focusing on user motives, platform popularity, and the format of the content per platform. Based on this, they stated that the platforms Instagram and TikTok scored the highest and thus could be the most effective for influencer marketing. However, these assumptions are not backed up by either qualitative or quantitative research – for example, interviews or surveys – examining consumers' responses to sponsored content originating from different social media platforms. Adding to this, they introduce the idea that brands should focus on one social media platform specifically, instead of exploring the idea of using multiple social media platforms and transferring the sponsored content. Besides this, in her book, Sinning (2019) divides influencers into two categories: those who found their fame online due to the display of their personality and/or lifestyle (online fame-origin) and those who found their fame due to outstanding performances and/or achievements (analog fame-origin). Between these two groups, differences were found in the level of identification, expertise, and trustworthiness, all affecting consumer responses. However, since there are multiple different social media platforms where an influencer can find its 'online fame', this category might be too broad to draw one overall conclusion. That is why this study will dive deeper into the category of influencers with an online fame-origin, by separating them based on their platform of origin. Also, it will focus more on the sponsored content as a whole, determining how this content and its effects on consumer responses differ on and across social media platforms, for example, due to the information richness or accessibility of the content, which will be supported by an experiment. This way the effects of content

transference on consumer responses are studied, by comparing the effectiveness of sponsored content on Instagram that was transferred by YouTubers and TikTokers with the original content. By studying the content transference across social media platforms in this manner, this research will tap into the gaps of previous research (Sandberg & Alvesson, 2011).

The findings of this study can also impact stakeholders, resulting in societal relevance (Lindgreen et al., 2020). Since consumer responses are studied, this can be of value for both influencers and brands (Braatz, 2017; Segova, 2020). For influencers, the effects of content transference on content liking might be the most interesting (Ishani, 2019). As was established, the effectiveness of using influencers for marketing purposes depends mainly on the relationship they have with their audience. A variable like content liking is very interesting for influencers to see what content does well with their (potential) audience and what does not so that they can play into this. This might be even more so the case for larger influencers; macro-influencers, with a following between 100K and 1M, and mega-influencers, with a following over 1M (Gómez, 2019). For them, it might be harder to ask and receive feedback from their entire audience to get insight into this (Duffy, 2020). Especially compared to smaller influencers; micro-influencers with a following up to 100K, who can more easily get an overview of this (Kay, Mulcahy, & Parkinson, 2020). However, they can also benefit from knowing the effects of content transference on brand attitude and purchase intention as they will get an idea of how influential their content can be regarding consumer responses. Through the findings of this study, influencers can not only ensure that they will be able to create content that will most likely be in line with the preferences of their (potential) audience, but they can also validly increase their price for spreading the same sponsored content across social media platforms. Brands will mainly benefit from information about the effects of content transference on brand attitude and purchase intention (Patel, Gadhavi, & Shukla, 2017). For them, it would be interesting to find out what the effectiveness of content transference might be since they are paying more money for this additional exposure on a second platform.

1.3 Thesis structure

In the following chapter, a theoretical framework is created by discussing previous academic literature on the concepts of influencer marketing, content liking, brand attitude, purchase intention, and the social media platforms Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. This literature will assist in anticipating the findings of this study, resulting in multiple hypotheses to test. The method chapter will delve deeper into how the experiment was structured, materials were chosen, and the sampling plan was constructed. In the following chapter, the experiment's results will be discussed. Finally, the findings will be transformed into a conclusion that answers the research question, which can be found in the fifth chapter. In addition, any limitations of this study and future recommendations will be introduced. At the end of this thesis, a reference list and three appendices containing details and findings regarding the experiment can be found.

2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter serves as a discussion of previous academic literature on the concepts of influencer marketing, the consumer responses content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention, and the social media platforms Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, so that a theoretical framework is created.

2.1 Influencer marketing

2.1.1 The foundation of influencer marketing

To get a better understanding of the concept of influencer marketing, it is important to go back to the basics and look at its foundation. At the core lies the two-step flow theory of communication from Lazarsfeld, Bernard, and Gaudet (1944). Their theory describes the indirect communication between news media and the public, which goes through opinion leaders – that is individuals with a remarkable amount of influence within their network through which they can impact the opinions of individuals within this network, thus making them powerful distributors of information (Chaney, 2001; Parau et al., 2017). So, this implies two steps of communication: the first step being the influence from news media onto opinion leaders, and the second step from the opinion leaders onto the public. This same interpersonal communication flow can also be found within influencer marketing. Here, the news media is replaced by brand X who wants to convey a certain message. For this, they can use influencers, influential individuals with a significant amount of power within their network, who will communicate this message to their audience (Childers, Lemon, & Hoy, 2019).

This means that influencer marketing heavily relies on electronic word of mouth [eWOM], that is all statements made by consumers about products, services, and/or companies that are visible to others through the Internet (Cheung, Lee, & Rabjohn, 2008). Research shows that eWOM is perceived more positively by consumers when the message is communicated by someone that they trust (Woods, 2016). This can be linked to influencers as they have a relationship with their followers that is mainly built on trust (Reinikainen et al., 2020). Influencers post user-generated content – that is content that they have initiated and created themselves – which is thus perceived as credible (Luca, 2015). This content can also be brand-related, for example, gaming influencers posting reviews about new games. Due to the influencers still being the ‘masterminds’ behind their posts, these posts will be seen as more authentic (Montecchi & Nobbs, 2018). As a result, it has been proven to be very beneficial for brands to ask influencers to promote messages for them since these will most likely be valued more positively due to their credibility and authenticity (Martínez-López et al., 2020).

2.1.2 What is influencer marketing?

A key component for understanding influencer marketing is to formulate a clear definition of this concept since there exist a lot of diverging definitions. When looking at older definitions of the

concept, when influencer marketing was still a relatively new marketing approach, most studies described it very broadly. Brown and Hayes (2008), for example, referred to influencer marketing as the act of external individuals advising and influencing the decision-making process of the consumer. Comparing this definition to some definitions used in newer studies in this field, the term is now often described a lot more specifically. Chopra, Avhad, and Jaju (2020) describe it as the following: “influencer marketing focuses on influencers who command a mass following on digital media to reach the intended target audience to promote a brand’s message.” Studies from Campbell and Farrell (2020) and Stubb, Nyström, and Colliander (2019) take a similar approach but stress the compensation the influencers receive in return for the sponsored content. Other studies, focus more on the effects of the marketing technique, like Martínez-López et al. (2020) who define influencer marketing as “the use of influential opinion leaders (influencers), celebrity or non-celebrity, with many followers on social platforms, to foster positive attitudinal and behavioral responses in their followers (consumers) regarding the brand’s interests by using posts shared on such platforms, and which also allows influencers and followers to participate in the co-creation of the brand image on social media.” Overall, the various definitions do have three aspects in common, which are (1) the brand that has a certain message it wants to promote, (2) the influencer who functions as an external party through which the message will be promoted, and (3) the influencer’s audience that is the target audience that will receive the promotional message. That is why these three aspects all constitute the understanding of influencer marketing that will be used throughout this thesis.

In each definition, the main focus lies on the external party, as this is the influencer. This term in itself also consists of a wide variety of definitions. The most common definition is describing influencers as influential individuals with a large following who can affect the decision process of their audience through communicating with them (Darner & Arvidsson, 2019; Gräve, 2017). In addition to this, they are often seen as experts on a certain topic which is the reason for their large following (Ferreira, 2017). For influencers to gain and communicate with this large following, using social media is an effective tool as these platforms provide the opportunity for them to easily distribute messages to their (potential) audience in the form of content (Chae, 2018; De Veirman et al., 2020). As a result, these influencers are usually referred to as social media influencers, which is, in general, the group of influencers that comes to mind when individuals hear the term influencer (Cuevas, Chong, & Lim, 2020; Glucksman, 2017). That is why in this thesis the term influencer will be defined as ‘an influential individual with a large social media following who has found their fame online and as a result, can affect their audience’s decision processes’. By adding the ‘online fame-origin’, celebrity endorsements are excluded from the definition used in this thesis. This has to do with the fact that research found that individuals can more easily relate to and identify with influencers than celebrities, leading to higher levels of trust and thus consumer responses for influencers compared to celebrities (Schouten, Janssen, & Verspaget, 2020; Sinning, 2019).

2.1.3 The success of influencer marketing

As mentioned, influencer marketing was introduced as a newer and more effective marketing approach. The reason why it is more effective than traditional marketing approaches can best be explained through the Persuasion Knowledge Model from Friestad and Wright (1994). This model discusses how individuals cope with persuasion attempts, which is done by dividing the model into two steps: (1) conceptual persuasion knowledge and (2) attitudinal persuasion knowledge (Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2012; Rozendaal et al., 2011). The first step refers to recognizing and understanding the advertisement and its persuasion attempt, while the second step refers to developing a critical attitude towards the advertisement based on its credibility and trustworthiness. Influencer marketing plays into this model nicely, which is why the Persuasion Knowledge Model is often introduced in studies that examine the effects of influencer marketing (Coates et al., 2019; Kim & Kim, 2020; Xin, 2019). By making the influencer the source of the message instead of the brand, it can ‘camouflage’ the persuasion attempt (Serazio, 2018). This way, individuals are less likely to realize that they are looking at sponsored content than if the content had been posted by the brand itself, through which it can be expected that they will be less critical towards this content. In addition to this, it has been established that influencer marketing is evaluated more positively since the relationship between an influencer and its audience is mainly built on trust (Uribe, Buzeta, & Velásquez, 2016). As a result, this content will most definitely score higher on its credibility and trustworthiness. This way influencer marketing pushes past the main resistance techniques that individuals have built up when it comes to traditional marketing approaches.

This success mainly depends on which influencer(s) brands choose to collaborate with. Since they are going to be the external party that is communicating the message, they are the ones who influence the intensity and emotional valence of the consumers’ responses. That is why it is important to find the right fit between the brand, its target audience, and the influencer. First of all, the link between the brand and the influencer. Research shows that if there is a (perceived) fit between a brand and an influencer, this will radiate expertise and authenticity, making the sponsored content more credible (Breves et al., 2019). Secondly, the link between the target audience and the influencer as individuals are more likely to accept a message from someone who they like and/or identify with (Cialdini, 1987). This can increase the (perceived) usefulness of the sponsored content, again having a positive effect on consumer responses (Hjortaa & Øverås, 2018). When these two links are in place, the persuasive attempt will be the most effective according to the balance theory (Heider, 1958). This theory has been linked to influencer marketing in previous studies, stating that when an influencer is spreading positive eWOM about brand X and an individual has a positive attitude toward this influencer, this individual would then also form a positive towards brand X (Ágústsson, 2019; Jin, Ryu, & Muqaddam, 2021). This is the main reason why it is important for brands to consider which influencer(s) they will collaborate with.

2.2 Influencer marketing on different social media platforms

2.2.1 Social media usage in the Netherlands

The social media landscape has changed tremendously over the last couple of years. Not only has the number of social media users increased exponentially but there was also an emergence of new social media platforms, like TikTok and Clubhouse (Radcliffe, 2021; Shaw, 2021). Globally, there are around 4.2 billion social media users, with more than 1.3 million individuals joining social media every day (DataReportal, 2021). In addition to this, the business model of social media platforms has also developed quite rapidly as the free content that is distributed on these platforms is monetized more and more by displaying advertisements and introducing marketing opportunities on the platform (Aydin, 2016; Farman, Comello, & Edwards, 2020).

Reports such as ‘The National Social Media Research 2021’ and ‘Digital 2021: The Netherlands’ have provided elaborate insights into the current social media statistics of the Netherlands (Kemp, 2021; Newcom, 2021). At the start of this year, it was measured that there are currently 15.1 million social media users in the Netherlands which is equal to around 88% of the entire population. On average, they spend 97 minutes per day on social media. The group 15-19 years spends the most time on social media (namely 3 hours), followed by the age group 20-39 who spend almost 2 hours on social media each day. The platforms with the most users are WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube, while the platforms TikTok, Tumblr, and Instagram are most rapidly rising. Furthermore, it was found that in the Netherlands, the average number of platforms used is equal to 3.9 platforms. The age groups 15-19 and 20-39 even use 5.1 platforms on average.

From this, it can be stated that individuals feel the need to use more than one social media platform. This is because different social media platforms cater to different consumer needs. With the help of the Uses and Gratifications Theory, for each platform, an understanding can be created of why and how individuals use this certain platform (Madan & Kapoor, 2021). For example, YouTube and TikTok are mainly used for entertainment purposes as influencers can broadcast their content in the form of videos to a wide audience through these platforms (Riggio, 2021). Instagram, on the other hand, can provide a deeper insight into an influencer’s daily life since they can share all of their activities through the timeline and/or Stories functionality (Van Driel & Dumitrica, 2020). Now, these three social media platforms will be analyzed more in-depth based on the uses and gratifications of each platform and its (influencer) marketing opportunities.

2.2.2 YouTube

YouTube was launched in 2005 serving as a platform where its users could upload and view content in the form of videos (Burgess, 2011). In the Netherlands, YouTube has around 9.1 million users. 3.1 million of them use the platform daily during which they watch over 40 minutes of content (eMarketer, 2020; Newcom, 2021). Here they can find a huge variety of content. On the one hand,

there is professional content like music videos from artists and movie trailers by film companies. On the other hand, there is user-generated content like do-it-yourself tutorials, product reviews, and vlogs (Andrejevic, 2009).

As a result, the most common motives for individuals to use YouTube are its entertaining and educative components (Klobas et al., 2018; Moghavvemi et al., 2018). The most common trends on YouTube for influencers to participate in are challenges, skits, and pranks, which all rely on its entertainment purposes (Jaakkola, 2018). However, some YouTubers have also gone beyond this, such as the Merrell Twins who have produced and acted in multiple miniseries for their channel and produced a reality dating show called 'Twin My Heart' that is already on its third season (Spangler, 2021). When it comes to the educative purposes of YouTube, there has been a rise in influencers that base their channel on showing off their expertise, for example, Doctor Mike and LegalEagle. Both have gained an audience by posting reaction videos to, respectively, medical and legal TV shows. This provided a way for them to teach their audience about terms in their field of work and the accuracy of the shows (Stokel-Walker, 2020a). With these types of infotainment videos, YouTubers can play nicely into the needs and desires of their (potential) audience (Imaniah, Dewi, & Zakky, 2020). However, there are also some interpersonal motives as co-viewing and social interaction why individuals use this platform (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Khan, 2017). Through its newer function YouTube premiere, YouTubers can choose to release their video at a certain time so that it creates an event where they can watch their new video together with an audience in real-time whilst communicating with them through a live chat (YouTube Help, 2021). Another option is to do a live stream to stimulate interaction between influencers and their audience, with some YouTubers even creating a separate live stream channel for this (Horsman, 2018; Hsu, Lin, & Miao, 2020).

Over the years, YouTube has developed into a platform where more professionally generated content can be found as advertisements became more prominent on the platform (Kim, 2012). First of all, there is the option for content creators to monetize their content by placing pre-, mid-, and/or post-roll advertisements in their videos based on a Cost per Click or Cost per View model (Guzman, 2020). The second option is to collaborate with a brand by promoting them or their products in the video, thus making the advertisement part of the content (Schwemmer & Ziewiecki, 2018). The latter is how influencer marketing takes place on this platform. Many researchers have studied the effectiveness of influencer marketing on YouTube specifically. Reijonen (2019) conducted interviews with YouTube users to gain a more in-depth understanding of how they perceived advertisements and sponsored content on YouTube. While overall, the participants showed a negative attitude towards pre-, mid-, and post-roll advertisements, their attitude towards YouTubers making the advertisement part of the content – that is sponsored content – was neutral. The reason for this was that they believed sponsored content can be just as entertaining and useful as regular content. However, they did mention that if the disclosure of the sponsorship was missing or ambiguous, this made the YouTuber come across as dishonest. Posting too many sponsored posts and collaborating with brands that were not perceived as

a credible fit could also have this same effect. So, it was found that trust is the most important mediator for the sponsored content to be effective. Trust can be achieved through individuals being given the chance to turn uploading videos on the platform into a career and create an image for themselves (Holland, 2016; Khamis, Ang, & Welling, 2017). As a result of this, it was found that if the image of the YouTuber is in line with the ideal self-image of their audience, this would lead to a higher level of trust, reasoning, and social influence of their content (Shan, Chen, & Lin, 2020). This can positively affect the influencer's credibility and thus have positive effects on content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention (Rahman & Astuti, 2020; Xiao, Wang, & Chan-Olmsted, 2018).

2.2.3 TikTok

Next up is TikTok, which is another video-sharing platform. In 2016, the platform was introduced as a lip-syncing video application, and a year later it merged with a similar platform called Musical.ly (Anderson, 2020). Even though the platform is still fairly new, it has already gained lots of popularity (Bossen & Kottasz, 2020). There are 1.7 million users in the Netherlands, of which 0.8 million use it daily (Newcom, 2021). On average, users spend more than 50 minutes per day on the platform (Wallaroo, 2021). Now, there is much more content than just lip-syncing videos on TikTok, like challenges, memes, and storytelling (Vizcaíno-Verdú, Aguaded, & Contreras-Pulido, 2021).

Bresnick (2019) has described the app as a 'virtual playground' due to its creative nature. For this platform, it is useful to divide the audience into two segments when analyzing their usage motives. First of all, there is the active audience which refers to the users that create content themselves and/or actively interact with influencers and other users. Their main motives to use the platform would be creativity, social interaction, and self-expression (Ahlse, Nilsson, & Sandström, 2020). Influencers can play into this by creating content and promoting their audience to duet with them, or choosing to use the 'duet' and/or 'stitch' features themselves. These are both functionalities that can be applied by users to create new content by using their own clips and combining them with an existing post from another creator (Hautea et al., 2021; Medina Serrano, Papakyriakopoulos, & Hegelich, 2020). Another option for the influencers would be to create content that is based on reactions that they have received to their content. Through the 'react' function that TikTok offers, influencers can react to a comment in the form of a video while the comment is placed in the top left corner of the video (Qiyang & Jung, 2019). The second segment of the audience can be referred to as the passive audience, which are the users that mainly use the platform to watch and like content made by others. For them, motives like escapism and entertainment are most likely to come into play (Montag, Yang, & Elhai, 2021; Omar & Dequan, 2020). Like YouTube content, most videos on TikTok are created for entertainment purposes, which is why influencers rely heavily on popular trends. There is also a specific trend on TikTok that plays into the escapism desire. In this trend, a caption is used that starts with 'POV:' and then describes a situation that the viewer can imagine from their own perspective (Arzyaeva & Boiko, 2021). The creator of the content also shows their way of coping with that type of situation. These

situations could take place in a relatable setting as well as in a fictional setting like a scene from a movie or TV show.

Due to the increase in popularity of the platform, TikTok became more interesting regarding advertising purposes (Choudhary, Gautam, & Arya, 2020). Advertisements can be found between content on the main feed or included in the content itself – making it sponsored content – as it is not possible to add pre-, mid-, or post-roll advertisements like on YouTube. (Zhang et al., 2020). As a result of this, the platform gave rise to influencer marketing opportunities for brands by collaborating with the biggest creators on the platform (Kennedy, 2020; Stokel-Walker, 2020b). Since the platform is still relatively new, there does not exist as much research on it as on other social media platforms. Recently, a report was launched that was based on interviews with TikTok users to gain more insight into how they perceived sponsored content on TikTok (TikTok for Business, 2021). It was found that due to their usage motives for the platform, users were more receptive to sponsored content that was new, trend-setting, and entertaining. For this, TikTokers need to consider how to effectively make use of the short duration of the content as the maximum length of a video is only one minute (Hayes et al., 2020). Other research found that TikTokers are found to score higher on relatability as they often wear casual outfits and film in front of simple backgrounds (Wang, 2020). This tends to increase the authenticity of the influencer, which helps in building a trustworthy relationship with the audience and can optimize product and brand awareness (Mou, 2020; Su et al., 2020).

2.2.4 Instagram

Lastly, Instagram, which was created in 2010 as a photo-sharing platform (Lee et al., 2015). This platform has 5.9 million users in the Netherlands, of which 3.7 million use it daily with a usage average of 30 minutes per day (Hootsuite, 2021; Newcom, 2021). Since its launch, this social media platform has extended its features massively as it can now also be used for posting videos, live streaming, shopping, and communicating with others (Musonera, 2018).

This has led to a variety of usage motives, although most of them have to do with some sort of self-indulgence motive as the platform revolves around individuals sharing what they are up to (Sheldon et al., 2017; Ting et al., 2015). The degree of this self-indulgence does vary between different users. Again, we can make the distinction between active users and passive users, of which the former will most likely use the platform for documentation, expression, or social interaction – that is through the comment section or by sending direct messages – while the latter mostly use it for entertainment, escapism, or due to the fear of missing out (Balta et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2015; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). However, the most extreme form of self-indulgence is associated with the influencers on this platform as they use Instagram mainly for self-presentation and self-promotion (Duffy & Pooley, 2019). Creating an Instagram profile can help them create an online, authentic self that is a reflection of their everyday life (Audrezet, De Kerviler, & Moulard, 2018; Dou, 2021). This is not only the case for influencers that have Instagram as their platform of origin but also for influencers

that found their fame on other platforms. YouTubers and TikTokers are often seen using Instagram to increase the value and strength relationship they have with their audience (Bellavista, Foschini, & Ghiselli, 2019; Rebelo, 2017). This way, their audience's needs will be fulfilled as they get more entertaining content and can gain a more in-depth look into an influencer's life to learn more about them (Boerman, 2020).

Having not only influencers who have Instagram as their platform of origin but also influencers from other platforms being active on this platform, a lot of influencer marketing takes place on Instagram (Jin, Muqaddam, & Ryu, 2019). Studies have shown that sponsorship disclosure is very important on Instagram as this will mean that consumers will perceive the content as fair, but it does have the risk to be perceived as too commercial (Ewers, 2017; Korotina & Jargalsaikhan, 2016). There exists a similar paradox for the number of followers an influencer has. It was found that influencers with a relatively high number of followers are considered more likable due to their popularity (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). But, when their follower count gets too high, it is harder for their audience to identify themselves with the influencer (Tafesse & Wood, 2021). So, as Van Driel and Dumitrica (2020) stated, influencers should try to find the right balance between appearing authentic and still tactically approaching their audience. This can be achieved by creating the online, authentic self they strive for (Newlands & Fieseler, 2020). If done correctly, the sponsored content is expected to be perceived as credible, having positive effects on content liking, eWOM intention, and consumers' purchase intentions (Ki & Kim, 2019; Lee & Kim, 2020; Rebelo, 2017).

2.3 Effectiveness of influencer marketing

Like other marketing techniques, the effectiveness of influencer marketing is often measured based on how consumers react to it (Eelen et al., 2016; Pauwels, 2004). For brands, the goal of promotional content is to get consumers to like their brand, thus having them form a positive brand attitude, and to make the consumers enthusiastic about buying the product that is being promoted, thus increasing their purchase intentions (Balakrishnan, Dahnil, & Yi, 2014; Grafström, Jakobsson, & Wiede, 2018). In influencer marketing, this can be achieved when consumers like the sponsored content created by the influencers. That is why most studies in this field focus on how consumers react to the content and how this affects their decision-making process regarding a product or brand (Bakker, 2018; Stubb, 2019). This makes the concepts of content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention the most interesting to study when it comes to the effectiveness of influencer marketing, which is why these are the three consumer responses that will be discussed in this section.

The first concept, that is the attitude that consumers form about the content, is often referred to in several ways such as advertising likeability or attitude towards ad (Riedl & Von Luckwald, 2019; Smit, Van Meurs, & Neijens, 2006). However, it is important to note that sponsored content consists of more than just its advertising component as it can also have entertaining and aesthetically pleasing characteristics (Cuevas, Chong, & Lim, 2020; Lehto, 2015). That is why, in this thesis, the term

content liking is used which refers to how the consumers view and evaluate content as a whole (Lowe-Calverley & Grieve, 2018). The evaluation of content is based on cognitive and emotional responses that consumers develop whilst viewing or examining content such as whether they believe the content is valuable, relevant, exciting, etcetera (Dolan et al., 2019). Based on the collection of these responses, an attitude – that is an overall evaluation of how much an individual (dis)likes a certain object – will be formed about the content (Argyriou & Melewar, 2011). Research has found that attitudes can influence thoughts and behavior, which means that content liking can play an important role in influencing brand attitudes and purchase intentions (Park, MacInnis, & Priester, 2006).

The extent of the influence content liking can have, depends on the level of involvement consumers feel towards the content which is determined by an individual's motivation, opportunity, and ability – that is often collectively referred to as MOA (Gruen, Osmonbekov, & Czapslewski, 2005). This is described in the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion, which is a popular framework for understanding how persuasion can lead to a change in consumer attitudes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Teeny, Briñol, & Petty, 2017). The theory states that there are two ways to process a persuasive message, either through the central route or the peripheral route. When an individual possesses a significant amount of MOA, they will choose the former, meaning they will look at the informative aspect of the content critically. If this is not the case, and their MOA is therefore fairly low, they will choose the latter and focus more on the aesthetics as heuristic cues to evaluate the content. This theory is therefore often used in the field of influencer marketing to examine the effectiveness of sponsored content through quantitative research (Lee & Kim, 2020; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Ong & Ito, 2019). It was found that in the end, individuals will come to a conclusion regardless of the processing route that they took. However, processing sponsored content through the central route will generally lead to stronger attitudes which will make them more persistent, influential, and resistant (Petty & Cacioppo, 2012).

So, what influences the level of MOA? In their book 'Consumer Behavior', Hoyer, MacInnis, and Pieters (2018) go over these three concepts one by one and study their determinants. First of all, motivation which they define as an inner state that can move individuals towards a certain goal. They argue that motivation is mainly influenced by personal relevance – that is whether the content is in line with an individual's self-concept, values, needs, goals, and self-control – but also its consequences and if the new information is in line with previous thoughts and attitudes. Next up is the opportunity, which refers to situational factors that will determine if individuals can reach their goal, such as time and the information that needs to be processed. Finally, ability, which is determined by the financial, cognitive, physical, and social resources an individual possesses to be able to achieve a certain goal. Overall, the levels of these three factors will determine the processing route and thus the strength and emotional valence of their attitude, in which a positive attitude towards the content can be seen as a high level of content liking. So, by looking at the levels of MOA that can be expected from each social media platform and its content, the differences in processing routes and thus levels of content liking across the platforms can be anticipated which will be discussed further in the next section.

Now that a solid understanding of content liking has been developed, the focus will be on the additional two consumer responses: brand attitude – that is the overall evaluation of a certain brand – and purchase intention – that is the likelihood a consumer will purchase a certain product (Sallam & Algamash, 2016). Many studies have introduced brand attitude as the biggest determinant of purchase intention which is why they are discussed simultaneously (Abzari, Ghassemi, & Vosta, 2014; Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017). As mentioned before, attitudes can shape individuals' thoughts and behaviors, and thus have the power to affect brand attitudes and purchase intentions. The Dual-Mediation Hypothesis Model can help in creating an understanding of the relations between these three consumer responses (see Figure 1) (MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986; Yoon et al., 1995). That is why in previous quantitative studies regarding influencer marketing, this model has been introduced multiple times (Bakar & Musa, 2020; Wärme & Olsson, 2020). As a result, it can be stated that there is a positive direct relationship between content liking and brand attitude, and a positive indirect relationship between content liking and purchase intention. This means that once consumers have formed an attitude towards the sponsored content, this will influence their brand beliefs and attitude towards the brand, which will, in turn, affect their purchase intentions. (Johansen & Guldvik, 2017).

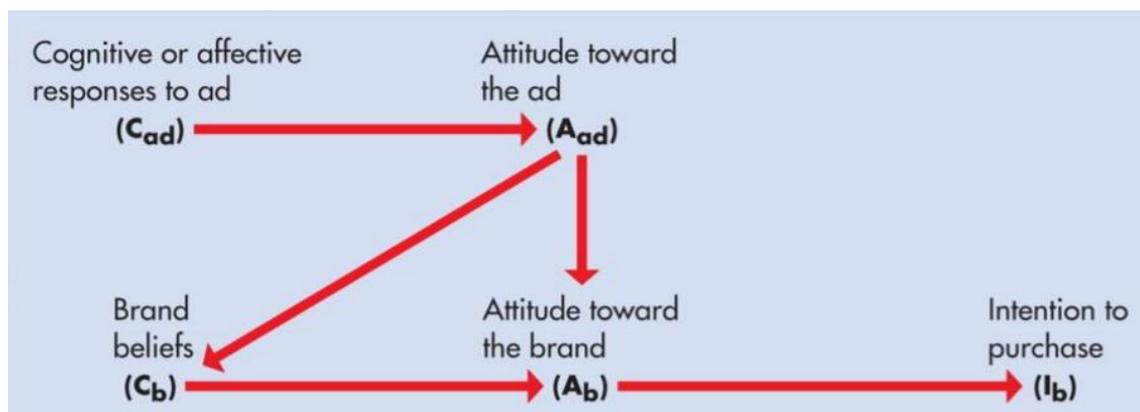


Figure 1. The Dual-Mediation Hypothesis Model (copied from Hoyer, MacInnis, & Pieters, 2012, pp. 167)

2.4 Differences in influencer marketing effectiveness between social media platforms

2.4.1 Effectiveness of sponsored content per platform

Combining the characteristics, usage motives, and marketing possibilities of the platforms that were found in section 2.2 with the effects of influencer marketing on consumer responses as discussed in section 2.3, it can be expected that sponsored content will have a positive effect on consumer responses on all social media platforms. This is supported by previous studies which found influencer marketing to have positive effects on brand attitude and purchase intention to a certain extent (Saima & Khan, 2020; Xiao, Wang, & Wang, 2019; Weismueller et al., 2020). As a result, the following

hypotheses regarding brand attitude and purchase intention were formulated. The reason why there are no hypotheses regarding content liking is that this variable was not measured in the control condition of the experiment as these respondents were not shown any sponsored content.

H1a. Compared to respondents in the control condition, respondents who have been exposed to sponsored content on YouTube have a more favorable brand attitude.

H1b. Compared to respondents in the control condition, respondents who have been exposed to sponsored content on YouTube have a more favorable purchase intention.

H2a. Compared to respondents in the control condition, respondents who have been exposed to sponsored content on TikTok have a more favorable brand attitude.

H2b. Compared to respondents in the control condition, respondents who have been exposed to sponsored content on TikTok have a more favorable purchase intention.

H3a. Compared to respondents in the control condition, respondents who have been exposed to sponsored content on Instagram have a more favorable brand attitude.

H3b. Compared to respondents in the control condition, respondents who have been exposed to sponsored content on Instagram have a more favorable purchase intention.

2.4.2 Sponsored content on YouTube versus TikTok

Even though influencer marketing has proven to be successful on all social media platforms, research has found that there are differences in the effectiveness of influencer marketing between social media platforms since each platform has its strengths (Haenlein et al., 2020; Mallipeddi et al., 2020). When it comes to YouTube and TikTok, these platforms are in some ways very similar as they are both created as video-sharing platforms. However, the nature of the platform and the video format differ quite a lot between the two platforms. When individuals go to YouTube, the first thing they will see is the home page containing videos that are recommended to them based on their watch history (Covington, Adams, & Sargin, 2016; Davidson et al., 2010). This means that individuals have to select a video themselves before it starts playing. Opening TikTok, on the other hand, a video starts playing straight away which is again selected through a recommendation algorithm (Liu et al., 2019). This video is then played on a loop until deciding to swipe to the next video. So, individuals will stumble across content more easily on TikTok than on YouTube, which means that the threshold to watching videos lies lower for TikTok. This is important because we are living in an attention economy – that is the continuous activity of paying, getting, or seeking attention (Warzel, 2021). As a result, on YouTube individuals actively have to make a choice by having to select a video that is recommended to them, while on TikTok this is not the case as they do not know what video they will scroll to next. Due to this, individuals might be more motivated to pay attention to the YouTube content as they chose to watch this content, meaning they are more likely to process the information from the video through the central route (Le, Robinson, & Dobeles, 2020). On the other hand, when individuals do not

feel the need to watch a certain video on YouTube, there is no opportunity at all to process the information. Comparing this to TikTok, where individuals do not necessarily have to be motivated to pay attention as they only have to scroll through the platform, it is more likely that TikTok content is processed via the peripheral route (Santoso et al., 2020). However, even if individuals do not feel the need to watch certain content on TikTok, they might still be exposed to it which provides an opportunity to process (some of) the information.

Related to this, is the difference in length of the content. YouTube videos have an average length of 11.7 minutes, even though it was found that a length of 6 to 8 minutes is ideal, and can go up to 12 hours (Tankovska, 2021). This is a lot longer than TikTok videos, which have an average length of 16 seconds and a maximum length of 1 minute (Slee, 2020). This makes it easier for YouTubers to provide a lot more information about the product or brand that is being promoted, which can again go one of two ways. On the one hand, YouTubers have more time to create an authentic narrative and raise the credibility of their sponsored content compared to TikTokers. Adding to this, the length of the content is more visible on YouTube than on TikTok, so users know better what to expect concerning the amount of time they will spend watching the content and be prepared for this. On the other hand, the amount of information and length of the content can also be perceived as overwhelming, which could interfere with the individual's choice to watch and/or actively process a certain video on YouTube. Whereas on TikTok, the length of the content is much shorter, so users are less likely to get overwhelmed on this platform.

Taking all of this into consideration, there are differences to be expected in content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention when it comes to sponsored content on YouTube and sponsored content on TikTok. However, since both platforms have their advantages and disadvantages, it is difficult to settle on a direction of this difference. This led to the following hypotheses.

H4a. Content liking differs between the YouTube condition and the TikTok condition.

H4b. Brand attitude differs between the YouTube condition and the TikTok condition.

H4c. Purchase intention differs between the YouTube condition and the TikTok condition.

2.4.3 Transferring sponsored content to Instagram

Since there are already so many differences between YouTube and TikTok, even though the platforms are fairly similar at first sight, this could mean that an even bigger difference can be expected when content from YouTube or TikTok is transferred to Instagram. Compared to YouTube and TikTok, Instagram started as a photo-sharing platform but has extended to being compatible for uploading video content as well. Still, most sponsored content is uploaded in the form of photos (Feng, Chen, & Kong, 2020; Glucksman, 2017; Veissi, 2017). So what could be the effects of this?

The nature of the platform has some similarities to TikTok as well as YouTube. When opening Instagram, individuals are immediately shown content on their timeline which is shown to them until they decide to scroll to the next post. However, whereas on TikTok this is the case for both the feed that includes content from people that individuals follow and the feed that consists of content that is recommended to them, on Instagram this is only the case for the feed containing people that they follow (Simpson & Semaan, 2021; Weimann & Masri, 2020). Recommended content on Instagram can be found on the explore page, which has similarities with YouTube's recommendation page as content has to be selected to take a closer look at it (Agung & Darma, 2019). On the other hand, since most content on Instagram is posted in the form of a photo, individuals can still see the content to a certain extent even when not choosing to click on it. This would mean that due to the accessibility of content on Instagram, the threshold to watching content would lie lower than on YouTube but slightly higher than on TikTok.

Another important factor to take into consideration when transferring content to Instagram would be the change in information richness. On Instagram, all of the information has to be provided through text form in the caption, instead of in speaking form through a video which is possible on YouTube and TikTok (Zhan, Tu, & Yu, 2018). For this, it is thus important to know whether or not Instagram users are likely to read the entire caption of every post they come across. What was found was that the congruence between photo and caption is the most important determinant for this, meaning that if the photo catches an individual's attention they are more likely to check out the caption to see if they find it interesting as well (Bashari & Fazl-Ersi, 2020; Kruk et al., 2019). Since Instagram captions can only take up to 2200 characters, it does put a limit on the inclusion of all necessary information in the caption whilst still creating an authentic narrative (Brown & Tiggeman, 2020). This can be compared to how the length of the content on TikTok puts a limit on the amount of information that will be provided. In addition to this, if a caption is longer than 12 words, it would require individuals to scroll down and/or having to click 'read more' to be able to read the entire caption (Tiggeman, Anderberg, & Brown, 2020). This could result in not everyone reading the entire caption and thus not receiving all of the information through the sponsored content. Furthermore, studies have shown that for some individuals reading is more beneficial for the comprehension and retention of information compared to listening (Brown, 2006). However, this does depend on the individual, as contradictory results also have been found (Suggate et al., 2013). Taking everything into account, it is to be expected that transferring sponsored content from either YouTube or TikTok to Instagram will thus result in a change in the amount of the information richness of the content. Combining this with the platforms' threshold of watching and thus the level of processing the sponsored content, changes in consumer responses are to be expected when transferring sponsored content originating from YouTube and TikTok to Instagram. Again, it is difficult to settle on a direction of these effects, which is how the following hypotheses were formulated.

H5a. Content liking differs between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content *on* YouTube and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* YouTube.

H5b. Brand attitude differs between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content *on* YouTube and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* YouTube.

H5c. Purchase intention differs between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content *on* YouTube and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* YouTube.

H6a. Content liking differs between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content *on* TikTok and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* TikTok.

H6b. Brand attitude differs between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content *on* TikTok and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* TikTok.

H6c. Purchase intention differs between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content *on* TikTok and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* TikTok.

In the end, once the original content has been transferred to Instagram, the only difference would be whether this sponsored content was created by YouTubers or TikTokers. So far, no distinct differences have been found between the effectiveness of YouTubers compared to TikTokers. Since the sponsored content in both cases has been transferred and thus adapted to the same platform – that is Instagram – the sponsored posts will most likely have the same effects on consumer responses, resulting in the following final hypotheses.

H7a. Content liking does not differ between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from YouTube and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from TikTok.

H7b. Brand attitude does not differ between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from YouTube and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from TikTok.

H7c. Purchase intention does not differ between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from YouTube and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from TikTok.

3. Method

This chapter describes the research design of this quantitative study, explaining the different conditions and how the stimuli were chosen for these different conditions. This is followed by a description of this study's procedure, sampling plan, and operationalization. Lastly, the analysis of the data is explained which will be executed in the following chapter.

3.1 Research design

To answer the research question "To what extent are YouTubers and TikTokers achieving similar levels of content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention when transferring their sponsored content to Instagram?", an experiment was conducted consisting of a 2x2 factorial design (see Table 1). Since this research question studies causal relationships between variables, experimental research would be the most effective to compare differences between the conditions (Neuman, 2014). Experiments make it possible to collect data through which the hypotheses that were formulated can be tested, thus making this approach more insightful to form an initial overview of the relationship compared to a qualitative method such as in-depth interviews which could later provide a way to explore the ideas and reasonings behind these outcomes (Johnson, 2011). The dependent variables that were tested were the three consumer responses: content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention. The influence of two independent variables on them needed to be tested, namely the platform of origin (YouTube vs. TikTok) and content transference (original content vs. transferred content).

This resulted in four experimental conditions, with each experimental condition consisting of a form of sponsored content as a stimulus. The respondents in condition 1 were shown a YouTube video, while the respondents in condition 2 were shown an Instagram photo related to this YouTube video. The same goes for conditions 3 and 4, but here the platform of origin was TikTok. So, the respondents in condition 3 were shown a TikTok video, while the respondents in condition 4 were shown an Instagram photo related to this TikTok video. In addition to this, there was a control condition in which no sponsored content was shown. This made it possible to check whether or not the differences in consumer responses between the conditions were caused by the platform of origin and/or the transference of content. Respondents were randomly assigned to one out of these five conditions. The content of the experiment will be discussed further in the following section.

Table 1. 2x2 factorial design and shown stimuli

	Original content	Transferred content	
YouTubers	Condition 1: YouTube video	Condition 2: Instagram photo related to YouTube video	Control condition: No content
TikTokers	Condition 3: TikTok video	Condition 4: Instagram photo related to TikTok video	

3.2 Procedure

3.2.1 Experiment outline

The experiment was completely constructed in English – that is the questions as well as the materials – and was created in Qualtrics (see Appendix B) so that it could be easily distributed online. Even though there are limitations when it comes to Internet-based experiments – for example, respondents not being able to directly ask questions, the limited length of the experiment, and lower response rates – it would still make sense to do it this way as online content is being studied. By doing so, the sponsored content is shown in such a way that it mirrors how the content is shown on the social media platform it originates from. The only difference was that the surroundings that the content was placed in in the experiment were not identical to where individuals would find the content in an everyday browsing situation. However, as a result, no other content from the platform was shown or could be accessed, meaning that this could not distract from the sponsored content that respondents had to focus on. So, this way the setting was more representative and it increased the external validity (Rice et al., 2017). Before the actual experiment started, all respondents were shown an introductory text through which they were informed about the topic of the experiment – that is their opinion regarding the Nintendo Switch – but were not told the actual purpose of the experiment to guarantee valid results. Also, a consent form was included, emphasizing that their participation would be anonymous and voluntary, meaning that they could drop out at any time during the experiment. Once they agreed to participate in the experiment, the target audience checks were shown to them. This way, the respondents that did not meet the requirements, were filtered out immediately. The respondents that did fit the target audience, were then shown two questions regarding their demographics. After this, the respondents were randomly divided into one of the five conditions.

The respondents in conditions 1 to 4 were first shown the sponsored content that belonged to their condition. Here, the continue button did not appear immediately so that the respondents could not continue until they had had the opportunity to carefully examine the content. To improve the validity further, two checks were introduced. An attention check, which made sure that the respondents paid attention to the sponsored content by asking what game was included in the content. This was followed by a manipulation check which was there to be sure that the respondents noticed the manipulation, asking them if the content that they had seen originated from the platform Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube. After this, their levels of content liking, brand and product attitude, and purchase intention were measured. Lastly, some control variables were included that could potentially influence the dependent variables as well. These were questions about whether the respondents were familiar with the product, owned the product or any close substitutes, were familiar with the influencer or content, and if they followed any influencers.

The control condition, on the other hand, did not include any content. That is why the respondents were first asked if they were familiar with the product and if so, how they knew about the product. Then, their levels of brand and product attitude, and purchase intention were measured with the same scales as in the experimental conditions. Since they were not shown any sponsored content, their levels of content liking could not be measured in this condition. Finally, an open question was used to gain more insight into why they did or did not have any interest in the product. In the end, all respondents were shown the same ending screen, where there was room to leave a comment.

3.2.2 Materials

As mentioned, in all four experimental conditions, the respondents were asked to answer some questions based on sponsored content that was shown to them. Since experimental research is all about control, the aim was for the chosen stimuli to be as similar as possible. First of all, this meant that the influencers needed to have as much in common as possible. As a result, for both platforms of origin, twin influencers were chosen: the Merrell Twins who have almost 6 million subscribers on YouTube, and the Caleon Twins who have 3.5 followers on TikTok. Not only do they have very similar appearances – both of them being identical twins, being the same age, and having similar features like hair and eye color – but they are also very similar based on their content and statistics regarding their platforms of origin. Both the Merrell Twins and the Caleon Twins have a following of over 1 million which makes them mega-influencers (Gómez, 2019). Also, both have received an overall grade of B+ on Social Blade (n.d.), an online tool that tracks statistics surrounding social media presence. This grade is based on, among other things, average view counts and engagement levels. On their accounts, they mainly focus on producing entertaining and relatable content. This is also their main influence for the sponsored content that they post, with the Merrell Twins having collaborated with brands like Disney and Nordstrom, and the Caleon Twins with Samsung and L'Oréal Paris (Barnett, n.d.).

The second requirement, was for the content itself to be as similar as possible. To achieve this, it was important to find sponsored content that was created by these influencers in partnership with the same brand. This brand became Nintendo – a video game company – with the Nintendo Switch being the promoted product (Van den Berg & Lagerholm, 2020). What was more challenging, was to find sponsored content of these influencers that was comparable in length as it was established that this is the main difference between the platforms YouTube and TikTok. With regard to the sponsored content that was found, the Merrell Twins' video was 27 minutes long, while the Caleon Twins' video was only 12 seconds long. To ensure the stimulus material was more similar in length, the YouTube video was cut to a certain extent. Since it was found that the ideal length of a YouTube video is around 6 to 8 minutes, but can also be less if all information can be included in a smaller time-space, the aim for the length of the content that was going to be used in the experiment became 3 to 5 minutes (O'Neill, 2020). However, it was important that the video still contained the main essence of the original content. Since the concept of the original video was for it to show Nintendo's new game, Animal

Crossing, not only through the Nintendo Switch but also in a real-life setting, the parts that were used were: the introduction of the video, the sponsorship disclosure, the influencers' personal experience with Nintendo, a creation in the game followed by this creation in real life, and finally a quick summary and the influencers' outro to wrap up the shortened stimulus.

In addition to this, Instagram posts were found that were related to the original content, thus having been transferred to another platform. This way, all necessary stimuli was found, with original YouTube and TikTok videos for conditions 1 (see Appendix A – Condition 1: YouTube video from the Merrell Twins) and 3 (see Appendix A – Condition 3: TikTok video from the Caleon Twins), and content related to this original content on Instagram for conditions 2 (see Appendix A – Condition 2: Instagram post related to the YouTube video) and 4 (see Appendix A – Condition 4: Instagram post related to the TikTok video). Like mentioned before, in the control condition, no content was shown so that the consumer responses could be measured without the interference of these manipulations.

3.2.3 Pretesting phase

Before the experiment was distributed, a pretesting phase was introduced. This is an important trial and error stage before the experiment is distributed to a larger audience (Smyth, 2016). Since the experiment was conducted online, these pretests were conducted over video calls. This way, the setting during the pretesting phase was similar to what the official experiment's setting would be. Not only could the respondents directly ask questions they had about the experiment but their non-verbal cues could also be observed, resulting in a complete picture of how the respondents went through the experiment.

The pretests were conducted on April 1st. Based on four pretests, of which two were conducted on a desktop and two on a mobile phone, four main struggles were found. First of all, not all questions – especially the matrices – were shown optimally in phone view. That is why a message was added to the introduction stating that the respondents could best fill in the survey on a desktop or tablet and when using a mobile phone, they could best turn the phone sideways. Secondly, for the Instagram posts, it occurred to me that the respondents mainly focused on the photo itself and not on the caption as the continue button already appeared after five seconds. Since the entire post needed to be examined, as the majority of the information on Instagram is communicated through the caption, the timers for these two conditions were extended to fifteen seconds. Related to this were some difficulties regarding the answer options from question six, asking which game was featured. Some of the respondents interpreted the option 'none of the above' as that there was a game involved in the post, but none of the games that were mentioned in the other answer options. As a result, they went for the option 'I don't know'. That is why, this answer option was replaced by 'no game, just the Nintendo Switch'.

3.2.4 Recruitment phase and final sample

After these changes were made, the official recruitment process started on April 6th which lasted for two weeks until April 20th. A recruitment message combined with the link to the experiment was distributed through my personal accounts on the social media platforms Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Additionally, the experiment was posted with the same recruitment message on three Facebook groups: Respondenten gezocht (onderzoek, enquête, vragenlijst, scriptie, afstudeer), Vragenlijst/Enquête RESPONDENTEN GEZOCHT/ruilen HBO/WO Studenten, and Respondenten gezocht!, specifically created for the distribution of surveys. In this recruitment message, the requirements for the target sample and the length of the experiment were mentioned.

In total, 200 valid responses were collected, of which the respondents were perfectly distributed over the five conditions, resulting in 40 respondents for every condition. Of these respondents, the percentage of women was equal to 87.0%, and the other 13.0% consisted of men. The respondents' age varied from 18 to 34, with an average age of 23.04 ($SD = 2.41$). The most named highest educational level was a Bachelor's degree (57.0%), followed by a Master's degree (32,5%), and secondary school or high school (5.0%). A similar analysis was conducted for each condition. It was found that there were very similar distributions among the conditions (see Table 2). The biggest outlier that was found was the distribution in educational levels in experimental condition 4, where more respondents stated they had a Bachelor's degree.

Table 2. Sample statistics per condition

	Age		Gender		Most-named educational levels		
	M	SD	Female	Male	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Secondary / high school
Condition 1	23.85	2.71	33 (82.5%)	7 (17.5%)	21 (52.5%)	15 (37.5%)	3 (7.5%)
Condition 2	22.87	2.46	37 (92.5%)	3 (7.5%)	21 (52.5%)	14 (35.0%)	2 (5.0%)
Condition 3	22.93	2.19	34 (85.0%)	6 (15.0%)	20 (50.0%)	15 (37.5%)	2 (5.0%)
Condition 4	22.50	2.10	36 (90.0%)	4 (10.0%)	29 (72.5%)	6 (15.0%)	2 (5.0%)
Control condition	23.05	2.44	34 (85.0%)	6 (15.0%)	23 (57.5%)	15 (37.5%)	1 (2.5%)

3.3 Sampling

Furthermore, the formulation of a sampling plan is also critical to minimize the occurrence of a bias within an experiment. For this, the target audience had to be defined more precisely. Since social media has especially become a common aspect of everyday life for Generation Y and Z, they are most likely to be targeted and affected by influencer marketing, thus making them a popular target audience for studies regarding influencer marketing (Kadekova & Holienčinova, 2018; Lou & Yuan, 2019). However, since this thesis only focuses on the platforms of Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, it was found that this target audience might be too broad (Viswanathan & Jain, 2013). For all three platforms, the vast majority of the users belong either to the younger half of Generation Y or the older half of Generation Z (An, Kwak, & Jansen, 2017; Jang et al., 2015; Omar & Dequan, 2020). Adapting to this, the age of the target audience for this study should vary between 18 and 34 years old. Within this age group, this study focused on individuals who are currently located in the Netherlands. Adding to this, it would also be important for the respondents to be familiar with at least one out of the three platforms to be able to participate in the experiment. So, to check whether or not the respondents fit this target audience, an age, location, and platform familiarity check were included.

To find a sufficient number of respondents to gather a representative of the entire population that was studied, the respondents were targeted through the following sampling methods (Sarstedt et al., 2018). The first step was to distribute the experiment through my own social network asking my following not only to participate in the experiment but also share the experiment amongst their social networks, resulting in snowball sampling; a non-probability sampling method. The remaining required responses were collected by sending out recruitment messages on the Facebook groups that were mentioned before. This indicates purposive sampling as the people who follow these groups are more likely to end up in the sample than those who do not.

3.4 Operationalization

The operationalization process in which concepts are transformed into measurable variables is important in experimental research to assure validity and reliability (Sarstedt et al., 2018). That is why scales were found for all consumer responses so that these concepts could be measured optimally.

For content liking, the scale was taken from Chang (2005). Here, respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (= strongly disagree) to 5 (= strongly agree) to what extent they considered the sponsored content to be ‘interesting’, ‘good’, ‘likable’, ‘favorable’, and ‘pleasant’. A factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with Varimax rotation based on Eigenvalues (>1.00), $KMO = 0.85$, $\chi^2 (N = 160, 10) = 391.52$, $p < .001$ found that the resultant model explained 67.2% of the variance in content liking. The factor loadings of the individual items onto this variable are presented in Table 3. Additionally, through a reliability analysis, it was found that no items had to be deleted to improve the reliability of the scale (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.88$). Overall, the mean score of this scale was equal to 2.99 ($SD = 0.88$).

Table 3. Factor and reliability analyses for content liking

Item	Content Liking
Interesting	0.79
Good	0.79
Likable	0.86
Favorable	0.84
Pleasant	0.81
<i>R</i> ²	0.67
<i>Cronbach's α</i>	0.88

Secondly, for brand attitude, the scale was taken from Spears and Singh (2004). Respondents were asked to indicate on a seven-point semantic scale to what extent they considered the brand Nintendo to be ‘appealing’, ‘good’, ‘pleasant’, ‘favorable’, and ‘likable’ in which a higher score would reflect a more favorable attitude. A factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with Varimax rotation based on Eigenvalues (>1.00), KMO = 0.89, $\chi^2 (N = 200, 10) = 929.99, p < .001$ found that the resultant model explained 81.8% of the variance in brand attitude. The factor loadings of the individual items onto this variable are presented in Table 4. Additionally, through a reliability analysis, it was found that no items had to be deleted to improve the reliability of the scale (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.94$). Overall, the mean score of this scale was equal to 5.17 ($SD = 1.12$). Since it was also interesting to gather data on the attitude towards the product that was promoted in the sponsored content, this same scale was used to measure product attitude. Again, a factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with Varimax rotation based on Eigenvalues (>1.00), KMO = 0.92, $\chi^2 (N = 200, 10) = 11178.18, p < .001$ was conducted and it was found that the resultant model explained 87.5% of the variance in brand attitude. These factor loadings are presented together with the factor loadings of the variable brand attitude in Table 4. Again, the reliability analysis proved that no items had to be deleted to improve the reliability of the scale (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.96$). Overall, the mean score of this scale was equal to 5.15 ($SD = 1.16$).

Table 4. Factor and reliability analyses for brand and product attitude

Item	Brand attitude	Product attitude
Appealing	0.87	0.92
Good	0.90	0.94
Pleasant	0.92	0.95
Favorable	0.92	0.93
Likable	0.92	0.94
<i>R</i> ²	0.82	0.87
<i>Cronbach's α</i>	0.94	0.96

Furthermore, for purchase intention, the scale was taken from Lee, Yun, and Lee (2005). Here, respondents were asked to indicate on a seven-point semantic scale to what extent they considered purchasing a Nintendo Switch to be ‘likely’, ‘possible’, and ‘probable’ with a higher score meaning a more favorable attitude. A factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with Varimax rotation based on Eigenvalues (>1.00), $KMO = 0.77$, $\chi^2 (N = 200, 3) = 654.06$, $p < .001$ found that the resultant model explained 92.2% of the variance in purchase intention. The factor loadings of the individual items onto this variable are presented in Table 5. Additionally, through a reliability analysis, it was found that no items had to be deleted to improve the reliability of the scale (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.96$). Overall, the mean score of this scale was equal to 3.20 ($SD = 1.79$).

Table 5. Factor and reliability analyses for purchase intention

Item	Purchase Intention
Likely	0.96
Possibly	0.96
Probably	0.97
R^2	0.92
Cronbach’s α	0.96

Finally, there were eight control variables in total: product familiarity, purchase consideration, owning the product, owning close substitutes, influencer familiarity, content familiarity, following influencers, and passing the attention check. The first four were measured for all conditions, while the other four were only measured in the experimental conditions as the control condition was not shown sponsored content from influencers. All of these variables were categorical and contained three answer options, with ‘1’ indicating yes, ‘2’ indicating no, and ‘3’ indicating uncertain.

3.5 Analysis

Once all of the data was collected through Qualtrics, the analysis could be carried out with SPSS (version 27). The data resulting from all five conditions were presented in one overall dataset. The first step was to clean the data by removing incomplete responses and respondents that did not fit the target sample or did not pass the manipulation check. The total sample consisted of 223 responses. All incomplete responses were left ‘in progress’ in Qualtrics, however, to be sure, it was checked manually that no responses in the dataset had any missing values. Based on this first check, no responses had to be deleted from the dataset. When it came to the target sample check, it was found that 3 respondents did not meet the age requirements, 12 respondents were not living in the Netherlands, and 2 respondents were not familiar with any of the three platforms. Finally, it was found that 6 respondents did not pass the manipulation check which meant they did not notice or remember what platform the stimulus they were shown originated from, resulting in 200 valid responses.

After this, the respondents were classified based on the condition they were randomly assigned to. To test all of the hypotheses, per dependent variable – that is content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention – an ANOVA test was conducted to study the differences between the conditions based on its levels of consumer responses. For this, these three variables, which were originally multi-item scales, were each computed into a new overall variable. In addition to this, for every variable ANCOVA tests were conducted with the control variables mentioned in the previous section. This way, the tests can be compared to see what effects the control variables can have but also if the findings that were found with the ANOVA test were stable even when adding control variables. The results from these analyses can be found in the subsequent chapter.

4. Results

This chapter provides an overview of the results that followed from the experiment. First of all, the descriptives of the background variables and consumer responses are provided. Then, the differences in consumer responses between the conditions were found through three ANOVA tests based on which the hypotheses formulated in the theoretical framework can be accepted or rejected.

4.1 Descriptives of background variables and consumer responses

The experiment revolved around the brand Nintendo and its product, the Switch. It was found that 91.0% of all respondents were familiar with the Nintendo Switch to a certain extent. The most common source for learning about this product was television commercials (62.5%), which was closely followed by social media content (52.5%). In 85.7% of the cases, this was achieved through content on Instagram, followed by content originating from YouTube (52.4%) and TikTok (19.0%). Besides this, family (42.5%) and friends (30%) were common distributors of knowledge about the Switch. Furthermore, 46.0% of all respondents stated that they had considered buying a Nintendo Switch, while 22.5% owned a Nintendo Switch. Some motivations from individuals who bought or considered buying the product included interest in the product (42.1%), the assortment of games suitable for the product (31.6%), and killing time (21.1%). On the other hand, individuals who had not bought the product named the product not being a good fit for them (47.4%), the fact that they probably would not use it (36.8%), and the product being too expensive (15.8%) as the most common reasons for this. Additionally, 40.0% of the respondents claimed they owned at least one other gaming console, the most popular consoles being a PlayStation (67.5%), a Wii (26.3%), and an Xbox (23.8%).

The percentage of respondents that were familiar with all three platforms was equal to 68.5%, with 98.5% of the respondents being familiar with Instagram, 68.5% with TikTok, and 94.0% with YouTube. These three platforms also turned out to be very popular for following influencers. Overall, 85.6% of the respondents stated they followed influencers on social media, of which 96.4% followed influencers on Instagram, 24.8% on TikTok, and 67.9% on YouTube. When it came to the influencers that were introduced in the experiment, 22.5% of the respondents in experimental conditions 1 and 2 were familiar with the YouTubers, compared to 3.8% of the respondents in experimental conditions 3 and 4 who were familiar with the TikTokers. However, the number of respondents being familiar with the content was almost equal for conditions 1 and 2 (8.8%) and conditions 3 and 4 (10.0%).

Furthermore, there was an attention check included in the experiment (see Table 6), which tested if the respondents paid attention to the sponsored content by asking them which game was included in the content they had seen. Since only the respondents in experimental conditions 1 to 4 were shown sponsored content, there is no data on this for the control condition. Overall, it was found that respondents scored better on this question when they were shown a video – which was in conditions 1 (95.0%) and 3 (90.0%) – compared to when they were shown a photo on Instagram – which was in conditions 2 (70.0%) and 4 (57.5%).

Table 6. Results of the attention check ($N = 160$)

	<u>Condition</u> ¹			
	1	2	3	4
1. Just Dance	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
2. Animal Crossing: New Horizons	38 (95.0%)	28 (70.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.5%)
3. Super Smash Bros. Ultimate	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	23 (57.5%)
4. No game, just the Nintendo Switch	2 (5.0%)	7 (17.5%)	36 (90.0%)	13 (32.5%)
5. I do not know	0 (0.0%)	3 (7.5%)	4 (10.0%)	3 (7.5%)

¹ The correct answer for each condition is indicated in bold.

Finally, the descriptives of the three dependent variables which were content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention. For each variable, a separate ANOVA analysis was conducted to examine whether differences were observed in the consumer responses between the different conditions (see Table 7). In the first ANOVA analysis that tested the concept of content liking, the four experimental conditions were compared to one another since this concept could not be measured in the control condition due to the lack of sponsored content. The results showed a significant main effect for the conditions on content liking, $F(3, 156) = 4.10, p = 0.008$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.07$. The other two ANOVA analyses that tested the concepts of brand attitude and purchase intention, did include the control condition as these concepts were measured across all conditions. The results showed a significant main effect for the conditions on brand attitude, $F(4, 195) = 4.17, p = 0.003$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.08$, as well as a significant main effect for the conditions on purchase intention, $F(4, 195) = 6.61, p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.12$. Now that it has been found that there are group differences, it would be interesting to check which group differences are significant and which ones are not. This was achieved through post-hoc comparison tests, which are presented in the following section.

Table 7. Overview descriptive statistics of content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention

	Condition 1	Condition 2	Condition 3	Condition 4	Control condition
	M (SD)				
Content liking	2.97 (1.03)	3.27 (0.69)	2.63 (0.83)	3.09 (0.81)	-
Brand attitude	5.02 (1.46)	5.18 (0.89)	4.77 (1.08)	5.18 (0.95)	5.72 (0.95)
Purchase intention	2.96 (1.80)	3.07 (1.57)	2.71 (1.51)	2.84 (1.89)	4.41 (1.89)

4.2 Hypothesis testing

4.2.1 Effectiveness of sponsored content per platform

In subsection 2.4.1, three hypotheses were formulated regarding the effectiveness of sponsored content for each platform – that is YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram. In the first part of these three hypotheses (part a) it was tested whether compared to respondents in the control condition, respondents who had been exposed to sponsored content on, respectively YouTube (H1a), TikTok (H2a), and Instagram (H3a) have a more favorable brand attitude. A Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons showed that the mean value of brand attitude was significantly higher in the control condition ($M = 5.72$, $SD = 0.95$) compared to not only the YouTube condition ($M = 5.02$, $SD = 1.46$, $p = 0.041$), but also the TikTok condition ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 1.08$, $p = 0.001$). This led to both H1a and H2a being rejected since the opposite of what was stated was found. Since the respondents in both experimental conditions 2 and 4 were exposed to sponsored content on Instagram, these conditions were not only compared separately to the control condition but also in combination. For this, a new categorical variable was created, in which value ‘1’ indicated that the respondents were shown sponsored content from YouTube, ‘2’ indicated that the respondents were shown sponsored content from TikTok, ‘3’ indicated that the respondents were shown sponsored content from Instagram, and ‘4’ indicated that the respondents were not shown any sponsored content. First of all, a Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons showed that there was no significant difference in brand attitudes between the control condition ($M = 5.72$, $SD = 0.95$) and the condition in which YouTube content was transferred to Instagram ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 0.89$, $p = 0.272$), as well as the condition in which TikTok content was transferred to Instagram ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 0.95$, $p = 0.258$). This was followed by an independent samples t-test which was conducted with this new condition variable, through which it was found that the mean value of brand attitude was significantly higher in the control condition ($M = 5.72$, $SD = 0.95$) compared to the Instagram conditions ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 0.91$), $t(118) = 3.02$, $p = 0.003$. This meant that H3a was also rejected since the opposite of what was anticipated was found.

The second part of these three hypotheses, denoted as the b-hypotheses, focused on whether compared to respondents in the control condition, respondents who had been exposed to sponsored content on, respectively, YouTube (H1b), TikTok (H2b), and Instagram (H3b) have a more favorable purchase intention. A Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons showed that the mean value of purchase intention was significantly higher in the control condition ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.89$) compared to not only the YouTube condition ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 1.80$, $p = 0.002$), but also the TikTok condition ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.51$, $p < 0.001$). This led to H1b and H2b both being rejected as again, the opposite of what was stated was found. The second half of the third hypothesis was tested similarly to the first half by comparing experimental conditions 2 and 4 to the control condition separately as well as by combining them. A Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons showed that the mean value of purchase intention was significantly higher in the control condition ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.89$) compared to the condition in which

YouTube content was transferred to Instagram ($M = 3.07, SD = 1.57, p = 0.005$), and the condition in which TikTok content was transferred to Instagram ($M = 2.84, SD = 1.69, p = 0.001$). This was confirmed through an independent samples t-test which was again conducted with the new condition variable. Here, it was found that the mean value of purchase intention was significantly higher in the control condition ($M = 5.72, SD = 0.95$) compared to the Instagram conditions ($M = 5.19, SD = 0.91$), $t(118) = 3.02, p = 0.003$. So, again, this meant that H3b was rejected based on the fact that the opposite of what was stated was found.

4.2.2 Sponsored content on YouTube versus TikTok

In the following subsection of the theoretical framework, the differences between sponsored content on YouTube and TikTok were discussed. Based on this, one hypothesis that consisted of three components was formulated. The first part of this hypothesis tested whether content liking differed between the YouTube and the TikTok condition (H4a). A Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons showed that there the mean value of content liking was higher in the YouTube condition ($M = 2.97, SD = 1.03$) compared to the TikTok condition ($M = 2.63, SD = 0.83, p = 0.455$). However, this difference was found not to be significant which led to H4a being rejected.

This was followed by the hypothesis' second component which studied whether brand attitude differed between the YouTube and the TikTok condition (H4b). Through a Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons it was observed that the mean value of brand attitude was higher in the YouTube condition ($M = 5.02, SD = 1.46$) than the TikTok condition ($M = 4.77, SD = 1.08, p = 1.000$). Again, this difference was not significant. So, as a result, H4b was rejected as well.

Finally, the last part of the hypothesis examined whether purchase intention differed between the YouTube and the TikTok condition (H4c). Here, a Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons showed that there also the mean value of purchase intention was higher for the YouTube condition ($M = 2.96, SD = 1.80$) than for the TikTok condition ($M = 2.71, SD = 1.51, p = 1.000$). Like the other parts of hypothesis 4, the difference was found not to be significant. This meant that H4c was rejected too.

4.2.3 Transferring sponsored content to Instagram

After the differences between sponsored content on YouTube and TikTok had been discussed, the theoretical framework was extended by examining the potential effects of transferring this content to Instagram. Based on this three final hypotheses were formulated, of which the first one focused on the effects of transferring YouTube content to Instagram. This was done by dividing the hypothesis into three components, each component focusing on one consumer response. The first component of this hypothesis tested whether content liking differs between the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content *on* YouTube and the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* YouTube (H5a). For this, a Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons was used through which it was found the mean value of content liking in the condition in

which respondents were exposed to sponsored content *on* YouTube ($M = 2.97, SD = 1.03$) was lower than in the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* YouTube ($M = 3.27, SD = 0.69, p = 0.665$). However, it was found that this difference was not significant which meant that H5a was rejected.

The second component of the hypothesis tested the difference in brand attitude across the two conditions to find out whether brand attitude differs between the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content *on* YouTube and the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* YouTube (H5b). Again, a Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons showed that there was no significant difference, even though the mean value of brand attitude in the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content *on* YouTube ($M = 5.02, SD = 1.46$) was lower than in the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* YouTube ($M = 5.18, SD = 0.89, p = 1.000$). So, H5b was also rejected.

In the final component of this hypothesis, it was tested whether purchase intention differs between the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content *on* YouTube and the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* YouTube (H5c). Through a Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons it was found that even though the mean value of purchase intention in the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content *on* YouTube ($M = 2.96, SD = 1.80$) was lower than the mean value of purchase intention in the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* YouTube ($M = 3.07, SD = 1.57, p = 1.000$), this difference was not significant. This led to H5c being rejected as well.

The sixth hypothesis that was formulated is almost identical to the previous one as it consists of the same three components, but instead of examining sponsored content on and from YouTube, the focus was now on TikTok. This means that the first component tested whether content liking differs between the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content *on* TikTok and the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* TikTok (H6a). A Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons showed that the mean value of content liking in the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content *on* TikTok ($M = 2.63, SD = 0.83$) was lower than the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* TikTok ($M = 3.09, SD = 0.81, p = 0.094$), but this difference was not significant. This meant that H6a was rejected.

The following component tested whether brand attitude differs between the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content *on* TikTok and the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* TikTok (H6b). Again, a Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons showed that even though the mean value of brand attitude in the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content *on* TikTok ($M = 4.77, SD = 1.08$) was lower than in the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from*

TikTok ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 0.95$, $p = 0.927$), this difference was not significant. So, this led to H6b being rejected as well.

Through the final component of this hypothesis, it was tested whether purchase intention differs between the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content *on* TikTok and the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* TikTok (H6c). Here, a Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons showed that the mean value of purchase intention was lower for the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content *on* TikTok ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.51$) than for the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred *from* TikTok ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 1.69$, $p = 1.000$). However, this difference was found not to be significant which meant that H6c was also rejected.

The seventh, and final, hypothesis that was formulated focused on the two Instagram conditions to find out if there was a difference in consumer responses for sponsored content that was transferred from YouTube and sponsored content that was transferred from TikTok. To test this, again the hypothesis was split up into three components. The first component tested whether content liking did not differ for the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from YouTube and the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from TikTok (H7a). A Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons showed that even though the mean value of content liking in the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from YouTube ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.69$) was higher than in the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from TikTok ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.81$, $p = 1.000$), this difference was not significant which resulted in H7a being accepted.

Next, the second component tested whether brand attitude did not differ for the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from YouTube and the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from TikTok (H7b). Here, a Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons showed that there was no significant difference between the mean value of brand attitude in the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from YouTube ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 0.89$) and the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from TikTok ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 0.95$, $p = 1.000$). This led to H7b being accepted as well.

Finally, the last component of this seventh hypothesis tested whether purchase intention did not differ for the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from YouTube and the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from TikTok (H7c). Here, a Bonferroni post-hoc comparisons showed that the mean value of purchase intention for the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from YouTube ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.57$) was higher than for the condition in which respondents were exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from TikTok ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 1.69$, $p = 1.000$). Since this difference was not significant, this resulted in H7c being accepted.

4.2.4 Adding control variables

After all tests were conducted, for all three dependent variables (content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention) several ANCOVA tests were conducted through which it could be examined whether or not the findings were stable even when adding these control variables. In the method section, eight control variables were introduced, which were product familiarity, purchase consideration, owning the product, owning close substitutes, influencer familiarity, content familiarity, following influencers, and passing the attention check. For this last control variable, a new dummy variable was created named 'attention check', with value '0' indicating that the respondent had not passed the attention check and '1' indicating that they had passed the attention check. Since all of the control variables are categorical variables, they were included as random factors. Each ANCOVA test was run by only adding one control variable. However, as the four control variables influencer familiarity, content familiarity, following influencers, and passing the attention check were not measured in the control condition as these respondents were not shown any sponsored content, these could not be used as control variables for the concepts of brand attitude and purchase intention.

For content liking it was found that there was only a significant main effect of owning close substitutes ($F(1, 3.09) = 17.89, p = 0.023, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.85$). For brand attitude, significant main effects were found of product familiarity ($F(1, 5.86) = 10.58, p = 0.018, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.64$) and purchase consideration ($F(1, 4.00) = 7.77, p = 0.049, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.66$). Finally, there were significant main effects found for purchase consideration ($F(1, 4.00) = 15.12, p = 0.018, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.79$) and owning the product ($F(1, 4.01) = 6.78, p = 0.060, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.63$) on purchase intention. However, all of these effects did not lead to any changes regarding the hypothesis being rejected or accepted.

4.3 Summary of results

To conclude, not all of the hypotheses that were formulated in the theoretical framework were accepted. All of hypotheses 1 to 3 were rejected, even though a significant difference was found. This is because this significant difference was the exact opposite of what was anticipated. Instead of an increase in consumer responses compared to the control condition, all experimental conditions showed a decrease in brand attitude and purchase intention. Regarding hypotheses 4 to 6, there were indeed some differences between the experimental conditions which included sponsored content on different platforms. However, due to these differences not being significant, all of these hypotheses had to be rejected as well. Finally, for hypothesis 7, which compared the two experimental conditions which included the sponsored content that was transferred from the platforms of origin, again no significant differences were found. Since this was anticipated, this led to this hypothesis being the only one that got accepted in its entirety. An overview of this summary can be found in Table C1 (see Appendix C).

5. Conclusion and Discussion

This chapter starts by summarizing the findings of the experiment to formulate an answer to the research question. This is followed by discussing these findings. In addition, this study's relevance, limitations, strengths, and recommendations for future research will be elaborated upon.

5.1 Conclusion

In the introduction chapter of this thesis the following research question was formulated to investigate the effectiveness of sponsored content being transferred from the platform of origin to Instagram: "To what extent are YouTubers and TikTokers achieving similar levels of content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention when transferring their sponsored content to Instagram?". It was stated that YouTubers and TikTokers would be deemed successful in transferring content when achieving similar or higher levels of content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention for the transferred sponsored content compared to the sponsored content on the platform of origin. Overall, there were no differences found in any of the consumer responses between the conditions, which means that YouTubers and TikTokers are successful in transferring their sponsored content to Instagram. So, when these influencers would post sponsored content on either their platform of origin (either YouTube or TikTok) they can anticipate similar levels of content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention as if they post sponsored content on another platform like Instagram. However, it was also found that instead of a rise in consumer responses compared to the control condition in which no sponsored content was shown, all experimental conditions showed a decrease in brand attitude and purchase intention. This means that influencer marketing negatively affects content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention, which is in contrast with previous studies concerning influencer marketing that have found that it should have positive effects on these consumer responses (Müller, Matke, & Maier, 2018; Tafesse & Wood, 2021). In the subsequent section, possible explanations for these findings and insignificant differences can be found.

5.2 Discussion of findings

Overall, the majority of the hypotheses were rejected based on the fact that no significant differences were found. The main reason for this might be the sample size of the experiment as it is easier to find significant results with larger samples (VanVoorhis & Morgan, 2007). In the end, 200 valid responses were collected in total. This number can be seen as relatively small compared to the actual size of Nintendo's (potential) target audience. As a reference, the average global number of gamers in 2020 was equal to around 2.7 billion (Clement, 2021). Furthermore, there could be some other factors that might have influenced the outcomes. In the following subsections, the hypotheses will be discussed more in-depth by grouping them based on the consumer response that they tested. First off, the hypotheses regarding content liking will be discussed (H4-7a), which will be followed by the hypotheses regarding brand attitude (H1-3a and H4-7b) and purchase intention (H1-3b and H4-7c).

5.2.1 Content liking

Four hypotheses regarding content liking across the four experimental conditions have been introduced (H4a, H5a, H6a, and H7a). When testing these hypotheses it was found that compared to TikTokers, YouTubers scored higher on content liking not only through sponsored content on their platform of origin but also on Instagram. In addition to this, it was found that when transferring sponsored content from the platform of origin to Instagram, this resulted in higher levels of content liking for the YouTubers as well as the TikTokers. However, none of these findings turned out to be significant. This meant that the findings were not in line with what was anticipated as in the theoretical framework it was stated that differences in information richness of sponsored content from different platforms would lead to changes in content liking. This could be explained by the multi-item scale that was used to measure content liking. Four out of the five items from this scale focused on the aesthetical and entertaining purpose of the content ('good', 'likable', 'favorable', and 'pleasant') while only one of them focused on the informational aspect of the content ('interesting'). This does not mean that an inadequate scale was chosen, as the purpose of the scale was to measure the attitude towards the sponsored content as a whole, thus including its aesthetic and entertaining aspects. However, since the anticipation of differences in the level of content liking was solely based on the information richness of the content, it would make sense that only measuring this with one item would not result in significant differences. So, it might have been better to use a larger scale consisting of more items so that multiple factors within the scale could be detected. This way the distribution of items evaluating the form of the content and the message of the content will be more even. Combining these factors would then give a solid overview of content liking as a whole, but could also be analyzed separately.

In addition to this, in the theoretical framework, factors like the length of the content and threshold of watching were discussed which are harder to measure in an experimental setting. This meant that respondents did not have to choose what content they deemed interesting enough to watch out of a selection of content. However, it can be stated that the respondents were still motivated enough to watch the content as they chose to click the continue button instead of dropping out of the experiment. Related to this was the fact that it was established that the differences between the platforms based on these factors – that is length, accessibility, and information richness of the content – could all lead to positive as well as negative results. As stated in the theoretical framework, this is what made it hard to predict the directions of these hypotheses. This could then mean that each factor did lead to differences in content liking across the platforms, but since these effects were in opposite directions, they canceled each other out leading to there being no significant differences between the levels of content liking across the different conditions.

5.2.2 Brand attitude and purchase intention

As mentioned before, brand attitude and purchase intention are closely related, which is confirmed through the findings of this experiment as similar trends have been found for these two variables. That is why the hypotheses regarding these variables will be discussed simultaneously.

First of all, hypotheses 1 to 3 studied the effects of being shown sponsored content on a social media platform, that being either YouTube, TikTok, or Instagram, compared to having seen no sponsored content on the levels of brand attitude and purchase intention. Here, significant results were found, however, the hypotheses were still rejected as the opposite of what was anticipated was found. This means that the levels of brand attitude and purchase intention were significantly lower when having been exposed to sponsored content than having seen no content. As stated earlier, this is in contradiction with findings from previous studies (Müller, Mattke, & Maier, 2018; Tafesse & Wood, 2021). Throughout this thesis, it was established that influencer marketing relies heavily on trust and the relationship between an influencer and their audience. This level of trust might not have been present in this experiment. From the results, it can be stated that the majority of the respondents were not familiar with the influencers. So, the missing relationship between the influencer and the respondents could have negatively affected the effectiveness of the sponsored content. For example, research has found that individuals are more likely to accept a message from an influencer when they believe that the influencer is someone who shows expertise or is someone that they like (Hjortaa & Øverås, 2018). This means that if an individual does not feel a connection with an influencer, this can lead to them not accepting the influencer's message which thus negatively affects their levels of brand attitude and purchase intention. Apart from this, not being familiar with an influencer could also affect the perceived fit between an influencer and a brand. When an individual does not know if the influencer is actually a fan of the brand they are promoting, as this is the first time they are seeing content from them, this might make the content come across as less authentic. Comparing this to if they were to be familiar with the influencer, chances are that they often see content – sponsored and non-sponsored – from this influencer about the brand which would make the fit between the influencer and brand more credible. This high level of congruence and involvement with the brand will help the influencer create an authentic narrative, which has a positive effect on brand attitude as well as purchase intentions (Feng, Chen, & Kong, 2020; Torres, Augusto, & Matos, 2019; Von Mettenheim & Wiedmann, 2021).

Furthermore, parts b and c of hypotheses 4 to 7 also tested the concepts of brand attitude and purchase intention. Since these concepts are influenced by content liking, it would make sense that the factors described in subsection 5.2.1 also explain the insignificant findings regarding these hypotheses. However, not having significant differences could have also been caused by other factors that were not measured as it is important to note that brand attitude, and thus purchase intention, can be affected by more than just content liking. Research shows that the effects of sponsorship disclosure language can have on brand attitude (Evans et al., 2017; Lee & Kim, 2020). Overall, it was found that individuals

perceive sponsored posts containing clear disclosures as more honest due to their transparency compared to ambiguous disclosures which might raise a dubious feeling (Lou, Tan, & Chen, 2019). In turn, this transparency results in a stronger relationship between influencers and their audience, having positive effects on brand attitude (Dhanesh & Duthler, 2019). The disclosure of sponsored content can be thus be seen as a way to boost source credibility (Lim et al., 2017). The sponsorship disclosures of the sponsored content used in the experiment did vary across the experimental conditions. The YouTube video started with the message ‘This video is sponsored and approved by Nintendo’. This was supported by the YouTubers thanking Nintendo for sponsoring their video in the in- and outro of their video. The TikTok video, on the other hand, did not include a sponsorship disclosure, which might have led to this sponsored content scoring the lowest on brand attitude and purchase intention. Finally, both the YouTubers and TikTokers started the caption of their sponsored content on Instagram with #ad and ended with #nintendoswitch. This could be seen as a less extreme disclosure compared to the one from the YouTube video, without it becoming ambiguous since this is a common way for influencers to indicate that their Instagram post is sponsored (Boerman, 2020; Nordmann, 2019).

5.3 Implications

In the introduction, it was stated that this research would hold great scientific and societal relevance and this has proven to be the case. First of all, like mentioned in the last section, this study focused on sponsored content as a whole instead of just the message or advertising aspect of the content as is commonly done in similar studies (Haenlein et al., 2020; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Additionally, the idea was introduced that brands can use multiple social media platforms at the same time for collaborations with influencers, thus not having to look for and choose the most effective platform. The effects of the sponsored content – either original or transferred – on the three consumer responses were measured through an experiment so that the differences in consumer responses could be compared easily. Through this, it was found that sponsored content can be as effective on the platform of origin as on another platform like Instagram. Also, dividing influencers based on their platform of origin did not result in any significant differences either which is in contrast with what was found in previous studies (Haenlein et al., 2020; Sinning, 2019). As mentioned in section 1.2 of the introduction, these assumptions resulted from qualitative studies and were not yet backed up with quantitative research such as an experiment. Now, this thesis shows that even though it is rational to expect differences in consumer responses between the social media platforms Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, these differences are not (yet) present in a real-life setting. All of this taps into the gaps of previous research in this field.

Even more so, this study is very interesting for societal stakeholders, of which the implications can be divided into two categories of stakeholders. First, for influencers, the effects of content transference on content liking are the most interesting. No significant differences were found between the levels of content liking for content on the platform of origin and the content that was transferred to

Instagram. There was a slight increase in content liking when the sponsored was transferred, even though it was not deemed as significant. From this, influencers learn that when they adapt their content well to this other platform, they can expect similar or even greater levels of content liking. With this information, they know how influential their content can be in regards to consumer responses that are beneficial to brands. Something else influencers can take away from this study is related to their audience. Over the years, they have gained a lot of knowledge about growing their audience on their platform of origin, but they have to figure this out again when using other platforms like Instagram. It is possible, and might be more interesting, to attract a different audience on this other platform than on their platform of origin. This way, when promoting a certain product or brand on both platforms, they can reach different people, resulting in a bigger organic reach. However, a different audience does require gaining knowledge on how to make content interesting for this specific audience, which will potentially differ from what the influencer has learned from their platform of origin.

Next up are brands, who will mainly benefit from the findings regarding the effects of content transference on brand attitude and purchase intention. It is interesting for them to learn that the sponsored content of influencers is just as effective on their platform of origin as on another platform the influencer is active on, like Instagram. This way, they know that it is beneficial to pay more money for additional exposure on a second platform as this content will be evaluated just as effectively and can thus lead to a bigger organic reach. For them, it is also interesting to know whether an influencer has an overlap in audience across the platforms. Having the same audience on both platforms or having two different audiences both have their advantages. For example, having two (partially) different audiences will result in a bigger reach as the combined audience is larger (Campbell & Farrell, 2020). However, having the same audience will result in this audience being targeted twice as they are shown the sponsored content on both platforms. According to the mere exposure effect, being exposed to sponsored content more than once can have positive effects on consumer responses (Montoya et al., 2017; Yagi & Inoue, 2018).

5.4 Limitations, strengths, and directions for future research

The main limitations of this study result from section 5.2. First of all, the scale of content liking, which did not measure the informational component of the sponsored content optimally. It would have been interesting to use a larger scale for content liking consisting of multiple factors, for example, multiple items measuring the entertaining value of the sponsored content, the attitude towards the aesthetics, the uniqueness of the post, and how informative the message was. This can be achieved by adding additional items to the scale that was used in this experiment which mainly focused on its entertainment value. Sheinin, Varki, and Ashley (2011) introduced scales for the novelty (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$) and usefulness (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.78$) of advertisements which can be applied to sponsored content as well. The scale of novelty includes items as 'original', 'memorable', and 'visually interesting', while the usefulness consists of the items 'believable', 'relevant', and

'practical'. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (= strongly disagree) to 7 (= strongly agree), but this can be turned into a 5-point Likert scale to match the scale that was used for content liking in this thesis. Doing so would make it possible to draw conclusions about content liking as a whole, but also about how these different aspects were valued separately. Furthermore, in the results section, it was found that not a lot of respondents were familiar with the influencers. As influencer marketing relies heavily on trust, it would have been more compelling to have an even distribution among the experimental conditions of individuals who were not familiar with the influencers and those who were. This could have been achieved by spreading the experiment across the influencers' followers in addition to my network and/or the Facebook groups. As a result, within the experimental conditions, it would be possible to compare the consumer responses of the influencers' followers to those of the 'non-followers'. Also, it would have been useful to include questions regarding the influencer's familiarity, trust, expertise, similarity, perceived transparency, and honesty, since these factors can heavily influence the effectiveness of influencer marketing as stated in subsection 5.2.2. A final limitation would be that there was no data collected on the sponsorship disclosures which would have been a nice additional control variable. A check for noticing the disclosure could have been introduced similarly to the attention and manipulation checks.

In addition to the scientific and societal relevance this paper holds, some other strengths are the fact that valid scales were chosen as their Cronbach's alphas all varied between 0.88 and 0.96 which indicates that the scales scored relatively high on the internal consistency of its items (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Also, the materials that had been chosen were proven to be very well-founded. First of all, the sponsored content was actual content that was created by influencers in collaboration with a brand, so not just for research purposes. Additionally, the manipulation in the content was very noticeable as everyone had passed the manipulation check. Finally, from the results section, it became clear the chosen stimuli from the YouTubers and TikTokers were very similar in regards to their levels of content liking. Since there were no significant differences between experimental conditions 1 and 2, which included sponsored content created by YouTubers, and experimental conditions 3 and 4, which included sponsored content created by TikTokers, it can be stated that the influencers are indeed very similar in the content that they produce. So, this means that these two sets of twins are very relevant for studies that investigate the differences between YouTube and TikTok as platforms of origin. Another strength would be the inclusion of the attention and manipulation checks, both providing information on how well the respondents paid attention to the content that was shown to them. As mentioned, everyone passed the manipulation check which meant that they did recognize the platforms even in an experimental setting. What was noticeable, however, was that the attention check had relatively high passing rates for experimental conditions 1 and 3 which were both videos that incorporated the product. Experimental conditions 2 and 4 on the other hand, which contained the Instagram posts, had much lower passing rates which could indicate that not all individuals are likely to read captions on Instagram.

Future research on this topic can take several directions. Building further on this study's limitations and their solutions, the final conclusion of this thesis can be checked and defined more precisely. It is also interesting to run a similar experiment for another industry than the gaming industry, as influencer marketing might be more or less effective for different industries. According to SocialBook (2019), tech is included in the top 5 industries that can benefit from influencer marketing, but the most suitable industries were found to be fashion, beauty, and travel. A potential difference between these industries is that for gaming products individuals are most likely interested in product specifications and quality, while for products related to fashion, beauty, and travel it is more about the visualizations. Since individuals are looking for a different type of information in these other industries, this could result in the emergence of differences in consumer responses across social media platforms as content in the form of a video can show more of a product than a photo on Instagram can for example. Of course, this topic can also be broadened in multiple ways. This study just focused on Instagram content in the form of a photo. However, due to its newer functions (IGTV, Reels, and Stories), sponsored content in the form of a video is now also possible on Instagram. It would be interesting to see what kinds of results this could have for transferring content. The IGTV function on Instagram, namely, is suitable for longer videos similar to YouTube while using Reels is applicable for shorter content which makes this function almost identical to TikTok. So, does this mean that YouTubers can best transfer their entire video to Instagram using IGTV, or should they upload a highlight video of this video and post it as a Reel? Also, since Stories are disappearing after 24 hours, how useful is this function to transfer content to the platform? The content transference can also be taken further by including additional platforms like Twitter, or even by examining YouTubers' content on TikTok and the other way around. The options are endless and thus worth exploring in the future. However, for now, a solid understanding of content transference has been formed which will act as a firm foundation for future research on the effectiveness of influencer marketing. It can be stated that 'seeing double' will in fact lead to levels of content liking, brand attitude, and purchase intention that are just as effective across different social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

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Appendix A. Stimuli: Social media posts in partnership with the brand Nintendo

Condition 1: YouTube video from the Merrell Twins

Link to YouTube video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xqb_-F03hHM

The original video is 27 minutes long, of which the following fragments were used which resulted in a length of 4 minutes.

- Introduction: [0:00-00:47] + [00:55-01:17] + [01:50-02:07]
 - Crafting something in the game: [06:54-07:00] + [14:34-14:54]
 - Crafting something in real life: [14:54-15:46]
 - Outro: [25:42-26:59]
-

Condition 2: Instagram post related to the YouTube video from the Merrell Twins

Link to Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B9-SdcdBdUg/>



101.906 vind-ik-leuks

merrelltwins #ad See you guys later! We're camping out on our new island paradise in #animalcrossing New Horizons! We can customize our own characters, homes, and decorate the landscape to our own style. We're so excited it's finally here! What kind of island paradise will you be creating? @nintendo #nintendoswitch #acnh

Alle 414 opmerkingen bekijken

Condition 3: TikTok video from the Caleon Twins

Link to TikTok video: <https://www.tiktok.com/@caleontwins/video/6719087053138562309>

Condition 4: Instagram post related to the TikTok video from the Caleon Twins

Link to Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B00JWWyDWFn/>

 caleontwins  • Volgen 



2.151 vind-ik-leuks

caleontwins #ad Wherever life may take you, whether it be in the car, at home, or at a PICNIC, Nintendo Switch can add fun to any occasion! We love taking Super Smash Bros. Ultimate on the go! Where do you like to play your Nintendo Switch?

#MyWaytoPlay #NintendoSwitch

Alle 34 opmerkingen bekijken

Appendix B. Experiment

BLOCK 1

Screen 1

Dear participant,

Thank you very much for participating in this research. This research is conducted by a student of the master's program Media Studies of the Erasmus University Rotterdam. It consists of a survey, asking you for your opinion about Nintendo's newest product, the Nintendo Switch. The Switch was introduced as a game console that can be used at home but also on the go.

Please be aware that your participation is completely voluntary, meaning that you can quit at any time during your participation. Furthermore, your personal information will be kept strictly confidential and the findings of this survey will be used solely for thesis purposes. Hence, your anonymity is guaranteed at all times. Completing the survey takes approximately 5-10 minutes. If you have any questions during or after your participation, please feel free to contact me, Celine Martens (574298cm@eur.nl).

Be aware that you can best fill in this survey on a desktop or tablet. When filling in this survey on your mobile phone, I would recommend turning your phone sideways.

I understand the above and agree on participating in this research.

Screen 2

Before entering the main survey, I would like to ask you to complete three questions to determine whether you are eligible for participation.

(Q1) What is your age?

< Dropdown menu with the following options >

- 17 or below
- 18
- 19
- ...
- 33
- 34
- 35 or above

(Q2) Are you currently living in the Netherlands?

- Yes
- No

(Q3) Which of the following platforms are you familiar with? *For instance because you have seen posts on this platform, downloaded the app of this platform, or you have an account for this platform.*

[multiple answers possible]

- Instagram
- TikTok
- YouTube
- None of the above

Respondents who are 17 years or younger, 35 years or older, not located in the Netherlands and not familiar with any of these platforms before will be forwarded to an automated message saying “Thank you for your interest in my study. Regrettably, you do not fit the target group of interest.”

Screen 3

Thank you for your answers. You fit the target group of interest. Before continuing with this survey, please answer the following two questions about your demographic background.

(Q4) What gender do you identify with?

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

(Q5) What is the highest educational level that you have followed?

- Primary school
- Secondary school / high school
- Vocational degree after high school
- Bachelor degree
- Master degree
- PhD, MBA, or other equivalent
- Other, namely....

Now, the respondents will be randomly assigned to a condition.

- *Condition one will be forwarded to block 2*
- *Condition two will be forwarded to block 3*
- *Condition three will be forwarded to block 4*
- *Condition four will be forwarded to block 5*
- *The control condition will be forwarded to block 7*

BLOCK 2

Screen 4

Next, you will be shown a video by the Merrell Twins about the Nintendo Switch. Please start the video yourself, watch it until the end, and then continue with the survey.

In order to see the content, you need to have a working video and sound system. Please check if the volume of your sound system is on, and/or grab a set of headphones if you wish to complete this survey in a public space.

Screen 5

[Include video and timer]: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xqb_-F03hHM

Please mind that the continue button will appear after 4 minutes.

After pressing the continue button, respondents will be forwarded to block 6 containing the questions.

BLOCK 3

Screen 6

Next, you will be shown a post by the Merrell Twins about the Nintendo Switch. Please look at the post carefully, read the caption, and then continue with the survey.

Screen 7

[Include photo and timer]: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B9-SdcdBdUg/>

Please mind that the continue button will appear after 15 seconds.

After pressing the continue button, respondents will be forwarded to block 6 containing the questions.

BLOCK 4

Screen 8

Next, you will be shown a video by the Caleon Twins about the Nintendo Switch. Please start the video yourself, watch it as many times you would like, and then continue with the survey.

In order to see the content, you need to have a working video and sound system. Please check if the volume of your sound system is on, and/or grab a set of headphones if you wish to complete this survey in a public space.

Screen 5

[Include video and timer]: <https://www.tiktok.com/@caleontwins/video/6719087053138562309>

Please mind that the continue button will appear after 15 seconds.

After pressing the continue button, respondents will be forwarded to block 6 containing the questions.

BLOCK 5**Screen 10**

Next, you will be shown a post by the Caleon Twins about the Nintendo Switch. Please look at the post carefully, read the caption, and then continue with the survey.

Screen 11

[Include photo and timer]: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B00JWWyDWFn/>

Please mind that the continue button will appear after 15 seconds.

After pressing the continue button, respondents will be forwarded to block 6 containing the questions.

BLOCK 6**Screen 12**

(Q6) Which game was featured in the content you just watched?

- Just Dance
- Animal Crossing: New Horizons
- Minecraft
- Super Smash Bros. Ultimate
- No game, just the Nintendo Switch
- I do not know

(Q7) What is the platform on which you can find the content you just watched?

- Instagram
- TikTok
- YouTube
- I do not know

Screen 13

I would like to ask you about your opinion on the content you watched.

To what extent do you agree that this content was...

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
(Q8_1) Interesting	1	2	3	4	5
(Q8_2) Good	1	2	3	4	5
(Q8_3) Likable	1	2	3	4	5
(Q8_4) Favorable	1	2	3	4	5
(Q8_5) Pleasant	1	2	3	4	5

Screen 14

After having watched this content, please describe your overall feelings about the brand Nintendo.

(Q9_1) Unappealing	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Appealing
(Q9_2) Bad	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Good
(Q9_3) Unpleasant	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Pleasant
(Q9_4) Unfavorable	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Favorable
(Q9_5) Unlikable	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Likable

* Using a Bipolar Matrix in Qualtrics

Screen 15

After having watched this content, please describe your overall feelings about the Nintendo Switch.

(Q10_1) Unappealing	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Appealing
(Q10_2) Bad	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Good
(Q10_3) Unpleasant	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Pleasant
(Q10_4) Unfavorable	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Favorable
(Q10_5) Unlikable	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Likable

* Using a Bipolar Matrix in Qualtrics

Screen 16

How would you rate the following statement:

“I would purchase a Nintendo Switch after having watched this content.”

(Q11_1) Unlikely	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Likely
(Q11_2) Impossibly	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Possibly
(Q11_3) Improbably	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Probably

* Using a Bipolar Matrix in Qualtrics

Screen 17

(Q12) Prior to watching this content, were you already familiar with the Nintendo Switch? *For instance because you have seen commercials for or tried out the Nintendo Switch.*

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

(Q13) Have you ever considered purchasing a Nintendo Switch in the past?

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

(Q14) Do you own a Nintendo Switch?

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

Screen 18

(Q15) Do you own any other gaming consoles? *For instance an Xbox or PlayStation.*

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

(Q16) If so, which gaming consoles do you own?

[Add text box]

Screen 19

(Q17) Prior to watching the content, were you already familiar with the influencer who created this content? *For instance because you have seen some of their content or you follow them.*

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

(Q18) Had you seen this content before?

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

Screen 20

(Q19) Do follow any influencers in general?

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

(Q20) If so, on which platforms do you follow influencers? [multiple answers possible]

- Instagram
- TikTok
- YouTube
- Other, namely ____

After having answered this question, respondents will be forwarded to block 8 indicating that the survey has been completed.

BLOCK 7
Screen 20

Now, I would like to ask you some questions about the Nintendo Switch.

(Q6) Are you familiar with the Nintendo Switch? *For instance because you have seen commercials for or tried out the Nintendo Switch.*

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

(Q7) Please select what is applicable to your situation. [multiple answers possible]

- I have seen a television commercial about the Nintendo Switch
- I have seen a post on Instagram about the Nintendo Switch
- I have seen a video on TikTok about the Nintendo Switch
- I have seen a video on YouTube about the Nintendo Switch
- I have seen a Nintendo Switch in a store
- Someone in my family owns a Nintendo Switch
- Some of my friends own a Nintendo Switch
- I own a Nintendo Switch
- None of the above
- Other, please elaborate ____

When the respondent has not chosen 'I own a Nintendo Switch' they will later be shown screen 24, if they have they will be shown screen 25. Both will be shown screen 26 after that.

Screen 21

Please describe your overall feelings about the brand Nintendo.

(Q8_1) Unappealing	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Appealing
(Q8_2) Bad	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Good
(Q8_3) Unpleasant	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Pleasant
(Q8_4) Unfavorable	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Favorable
(Q8_5) Unlikable	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Likeable

Screen 22

Please describe your overall feelings about the Nintendo Switch.

(Q9_1) Unappealing	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Appealing
(Q9_2) Bad	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Good
(Q9_3) Unpleasant	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Pleasant
(Q9_4) Unfavorable	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Favorable
(Q9_5) Unlikable	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Likeable

Screen 23

How would you rate the following statement:

“I would purchase a Nintendo Switch.”

(Q10_1) Unlikely	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Likely
(Q10_2) Impossibly	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Possibly
(Q10_3) Improbably	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Probably

Screen 24

(Q11) Have you ever considered purchasing a Nintendo Switch in the past?

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

(Q12) Why (not)?

[Add text box]

Screen 25

(Q11) When did you purchase your Nintendo Switch?

- 2017
- 2018
- 2019
- 2020
- 2021
- I do not remember

(Q12) Why did you choose to purchase a Nintendo Switch?

[Add text box]

Screen 26

(Q13) Do you own any other gaming consoles? *For instance an Xbox or PlayStation.*

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

(Q14) If so, which gaming consoles do you own?

[Add text box]

After having answered this question, respondents will be forwarded to block 8 indicating that the survey has been completed.

BLOCK 8
Screen 27

You have now reached the end of the questionnaire. Thank you for your time and effort. Your help is highly appreciated! If you have questions or comments about this questionnaire, please list them below.

[Add text box]

PLEASE PRESS THE NEXT BUTTON TO STORE ALL YOUR ANSWERS.

Appendix C. Summary of results

Table C1. Overview hypotheses

Main test results		
Hypothesis	Result	Note
H1a. Compared to respondents in the control condition, respondents who have been exposed to sponsored content on YouTube have a more favorable brand attitude.	Rejected	A significant difference in means was observed, but in the opposite direction than was anticipated.
H1b. Compared to respondents in the control condition, respondents who have been exposed to sponsored content on YouTube have a more favorable purchase intention.	Rejected	A significant difference in means was observed, but in the opposite direction than was anticipated.
H2a. Compared to respondents in the control condition, respondents who have been exposed to sponsored content on TikTok have a more favorable brand attitude.	Rejected	A significant difference in means was observed, but in the opposite direction than was anticipated.
H2b. Compared to respondents in the control condition, respondents who have been exposed to sponsored content on TikTok have a more favorable purchase intention.	Rejected	A significant difference in means was observed, but in the opposite direction than was anticipated.
H3a. Compared to respondents in the control condition, respondents who have been exposed to sponsored content on Instagram have a more favorable brand attitude.	Rejected	A significant difference in means was observed, but in the opposite direction than was anticipated.
H3b. Compared to respondents in the control condition, respondents who have been exposed to sponsored content on Instagram have a more favorable purchase intention.	Rejected	A significant difference in means was observed, but in the opposite direction than was anticipated.
H4a. Content liking differs between the YouTube condition and the TikTok condition.	Rejected	A difference in means was observed, yet it was not significant.
H4b. Brand attitude differs between the YouTube condition and the TikTok condition.	Rejected	A difference in means was observed, yet it was not significant.
H4c. Purchase intention differs between the YouTube condition and the TikTok condition.	Rejected	A difference in means was observed, yet it was not significant.

<p>H5a. Content liking differs between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content <i>on</i> YouTube and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred <i>from</i> YouTube.</p>	Rejected	A difference in means was observed, yet it was not significant.
<p>H5b. Brand attitude differs between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content <i>on</i> YouTube and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred <i>from</i> YouTube.</p>	Rejected	A difference in means was observed, yet it was not significant.
<p>H5c. Purchase intention differs between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content <i>on</i> YouTube and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred <i>from</i> YouTube.</p>	Rejected	A difference in means was observed, yet it was not significant.
<p>H6a. Content liking differs between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content <i>on</i> TikTok and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred <i>from</i> TikTok.</p>	Rejected	A difference in means was observed, yet it was not significant.
<p>H6b. Brand attitude differs between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content <i>on</i> TikTok and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred <i>from</i> TikTok.</p>	Rejected	A difference in means was observed, yet it was not significant.
<p>H6c. Purchase intention differs between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content <i>on</i> TikTok and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred <i>from</i> TikTok.</p>	Rejected	A difference in means was observed, yet it was not significant.
<p>H7a. Content liking does not differ between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from YouTube and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from TikTok.</p>	Accepted	

H7b. Brand attitude does not differ between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from YouTube and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from TikTok. Accepted

H7c. Purchase intention does not differ between the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from YouTube and the condition in which respondents are exposed to sponsored content that was transferred from TikTok. Accepted
