

#Sponsored, #Advertisement, or nothing?

An experimental study comparing Instagram and TikTok and the impact of sponsored content disclosures on PKM

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this thesis was to answer the following research question: To what extent does the wording of sponsored content disclosures have an impact on consumers' ad recognition and their attitudinal persuasion knowledge towards an advertisement on Instagram compared to TikTok? These two platforms are popular among users and marketers, and generate a great deal of sponsored content. This type of content has a commercial intent that consumers may not always be aware of, which has raised concerns among the European Parliament regarding consumer protection. By using disclosures, such as #advertisement, legislators have tried to make it easier for consumers to recognize the commercial intent behind the content, and act upon it, which are the two pillars of the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM). This model is concerned with consumers ability to recognize an advertisement and act upon it, which is a skill that consumers learn over time by being exposed to other advertisements. This thesis used an experimental design to measure the ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge of participants after being shown a short video that was either presented on the interface of TikTok or Instagram, and that included either one of the following three disclosure options: #advertisement, #sponsored, or no disclosure. Participants were also asked for their motives to use a platform. These results were used to understand the impact of Instagram and TikTok on PKM. Besides measuring the relation between disclosures and PKM, the study also tested the impact of endorser attitude and brand attitude on PKM, as previous research found both attitudes to be related to PKM. The key finding of this study is that PKM on these platforms may be developing. This can be ascribed to the fact that the ad recognition of participants was found to be impacted more by seeing a brand displayed in the video than by seeing a disclosure. However, no difference between Instagram and TikTok was found, as both platforms were used with the same motive, meaning that consumers respond similarity to brand related content on both TikTok and Instagram.

KEYWORDS: *Sponsored Content, Disclosures, Platforms, Instagram, TikTok, Persuasion Knowledge Model, Brand Attitude, Endorser Attitude*

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	2
1. Introduction.....	5
1.1 Research scope	6
1.2 Chapters outline.....	7
2. Theoretical framework.....	8
2.1 Sponsored content	8
2.1.1 <i>Influencer marketing</i>	8
2.1.2 <i>Sponsored content</i>	8
2.2 <i>Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM)</i>	9
2.3 Sponsored content disclosures.....	11
2.3.1 <i>Sponsored content disclosures and ad recognition</i>	11
2.3.2 <i>Sponsored content disclosures and attitudinal persuasion knowledge</i>	12
2.4 Platforms	12
2.4.1 <i>Uses and gratifications approach and PKM</i>	12
2.4.2 <i>TikTok versus Instagram</i>	13
2.5 Influences on PKM.....	15
2.5.2 <i>Brand attitude and PKM</i>	16
3. Methodology	18
3.1 Research design	18
3.2 Stimuli.....	18
3.2.1 <i>Research design of the pre-test</i>	19
3.2.2 <i>Pre-test Sampling</i>	19
3.2.3 <i>Operationalization of the pre-test</i>	21
3.2.4 <i>Procedure of the pre-test</i>	21
3.2.5 <i>Data analysis of the pre-test</i>	22
3.2.6 <i>Results of the pre-test</i>	24
3.3 Sampling.....	25
3.3.1 <i>Sample</i>	25
3.4 Operationalization	27
3.5 Procedure	34

3.6 Validity and reliability	36
3.7 Data processing and analysis.....	37
3.7.1 <i>Data preparation</i>	37
3.7.2 <i>Data analysis</i>	37
4. Results	39
5. Discussion	47
5.1 Managerial implications	50
5.2 Limitations and future suggestions	51
6. Conclusion	53
References	55
Appendix A: Survey pre-test	61
Appendix B: Survey experiment	66

1. Introduction

With the advent of social media platforms, advertisers have started to look for ways to employ these platforms to reach customers online (Evans et al., 2017). They can go about this in different ways, such as paying for advertisements or starting a social media page for their brand (Evans et al., 2017). Another option, which is central to this thesis, is to use influencers to create electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Evans et al., 2017). Companies have started paying people with a social media audience, also referred to as influencers, to promote their products online. This is often done in the form of sponsored content, which are posts that are paid for by a brand to promote a product or the brand (Evans et al., 2017). Sponsored content is made in such a way that it seems to blend in with other content that consumers come across (Boerman, Willemsen, & Van der Aa, 2017). They are made to seem less like advertisements and more like authentic posts, which makes it harder to distinguish sponsored content from authentic content (Boerman, Willemsen, & Van der Aa, 2017). Influencers have built a relationship with their audience and to consumers these influencers can feel like their peers, a person with similar interests (Audrezet, De Kerviler, & Moulard, 2020). It is this similarity element that makes that influencer marketing creates results, as the sponsored content that is created by influencers may be perceived as advice from a peer, which consumers are more likely to accept than when it feels like an advertisement (Coco & Eckert, 2020; Audrezet, De Kerviler, & Moulard, 2020). In this case, they may thus not be aware of the commercial intent behind it (Boerman, Willemsen, & Van der Aa, 2017). Because of this, it has become harder for consumers to recognize content as being an advertisement.

Recognizing sponsored content is not only about knowing when something is an advertisement, recognition also means being aware of the tactics and intentions behind the advertisement, and how to respond to it. This draws upon the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM), which discusses the relationship between consumers and advertisements (Friestad & Wright, 1994). It states that it is the consumers' responsibility to learn to recognize persuasive attempts such as advertisements and act upon this recognition (Friestad & Wright, 1994). This acting upon the advertisement is often termed as attitudinal persuasion knowledge or coping behavior and can be both positive and negative responses. Over time consumers will develop their persuasion knowledge by being exposed to other persuasive attempts and will thus create better mechanisms to recognize and act upon advertisements (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Because of this persuasion knowledge, marketers have felt the need over time to keep developing their persuasive tactics to challenge consumers' persuasion knowledge (Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2012). One such way is influencer marketing and sponsored content. This type of marketing blurs the line between commercial and non-commercial content, which makes it more difficult for consumers to recognize the content they are faced with as being an advertisement (Boerman et al., 2018).

These blurred lines have raised concerns within the European Parliament, which is now wondering how consumers can be protected against hidden forms of advertising. The Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee (IMCO) have requested the Policy Department for Economic, Scientific, and Quality of Life Policies in 2022 to study influencer-centered advertising and how consumers can be protected within the EU. The resulting report identified what practices of this marketing tactic are especially harmful to consumers: a lack of transparency about the commercial nature, misleading messages, and targeting an audience that is considered vulnerable such as children (Policy Department for Economic, Scientific, and Quality of Life Policies, 2022). Each of these practices is rooted in a lack of recognizing the persuasive attempts, such as advertisement, or sponsored content. The report also advises legislators to create guidelines on how to disclose the sponsored nature of online content, as there is currently no legislation in most member states that are specifically focused on this type of marketing (Policy Department for Economic, Scientific, and Quality of Life Policies, 2022).

1.1 Research scope

Sponsored content and how to disclose its commercial nature have received a considerable amount of attention within the academic world. Previous studies found that disclosures help consumers recognize the commercial nature of sponsored content (e.g., Boerman, Willemsen, & Van der Aa, 2017; Evans et al., 2017; Karagür et al., 2022; Eisend et al., 2017). Disclosures can include different things, but their general goal is to make consumers aware of the commercial nature of the content and the commercial relationship between the endorser and the brand (Boerman, Willemsen, & Van der Aa, 2017). Disclosures can explicitly inform consumers about the compensation that an endorser receives (Xie and Feng, 2022) or can function to inform consumers only of the commercial nature (Evans et al., 2017). For the latter, there are some contradicting findings regarding the level of explicitness of the disclosure needed for consumers to recognize the content as an advertisement. Some studies found that an explicit disclosure, such as 'advertisement' or 'paid ad', are needed to create ad recognition (e.g., Eisend et al., 202), while others found that inexplicit disclosures, such as 'sponsored', have the same effect (e.g., Jung and Heo, 2019). This is part of the research gap that this thesis aims to address by creating an experimental design that tests and compares the impact of three in-text disclosures underneath a post on PKM.

As far as the researcher knows, studies regarding sponsored content disclosures have focused solely on researching one platform at a time. While platforms go in and out of trend, comparisons between the platforms may still be useful. Consumers often gravitate to platforms for different reasons, they are looking for different needs to be satisfied by different platforms (Cheung, Chiu & Lee, 2011). Instagram and TikTok are two platforms that are popular among marketers for influencer marketing (Haenlein et al., 2020), yet previous studies found that consumers use both platforms for

different reasons (Masciantonio et al., 2021). TikTok is generally used for entertainment (Falgoust, 2022), while Instagram is used primarily for social interaction (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). A study by Buzeta, De Pelsmacker, and Dens (2020) also found that consumers interact differently with sponsored content depending on the motive they have to use a certain platform. This is another research gap that will be addressed in this thesis.

This leads to the formulation of the following research question:

To what extent does the wording of sponsored content disclosures have an impact on consumers' ad recognition and their attitudinal persuasion knowledge towards an advertisement on Instagram compared to TikTok?

1.2 Chapters outline

This thesis is made up of six chapters. The first chapter, the introduction, provides a general overview of the thesis and explains the academic and societal relevance of the research. This is followed by a theoretical framework, in which the relevant theories, concepts, and related research are presented alongside the hypothesis. Following this chapter is a methodological chapter, in which all decisions and steps regarding the chosen method, a quantitative experiment, are explained. These results of the analyses will be explained in the fourth chapter, followed by a discussion that relates the results to previous studies. The thesis will end with a concluding chapter that highlights the key findings of this study.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Sponsored content

2.1.1 Influencer marketing

Marketers operating in a business-to-consumer environment have started using more influencer marketing to reach their audience (Haenlein et al., 2020). When using this marketing strategy, brands will pay influencers to mention their name or product in their social media posts, or even just show it clearly through brand placement. Messages generated by the brand itself are perceived as being biased and activate consumers' persuasion knowledge (De Veirman & Hudders, 2020). Influencer marketing, on the other hand, uses electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) to its advantage. Consumers follow influencers because they find them relatable, or they feel like they have similar interests or styles as the consumer, meaning that influencers are perceived as the consumer's peers (Coco & Eckert, 2020). The content posted by these influencers is then considered to be useful for the consumer's own life, and consumers trust the opinions and recommendations of the influencers about brands and products, meaning that through eWOM consumers are influenced by the posts of influencers (Coco & Eckert, 2020; De Veirman & Hudders, 2020).

While some of the messages generated by influencers may indeed be authentic opinions, others have a commercial intent (Boerman, Willemsen & Van der Aa, 2017). These commercial influencer messages can vary from sharing brand-generated content, posting content for which they are paid by brands, showcasing videos on their accounts of sponsored events they attend, or showing up to these events to make an appearance (Evans et al., 2017). In the case of commercial content, there are different scenarios in which the consumer will become more skeptical of the content they come across. One of these is when the influencer promotes a product that is out of character for them, as consumers will notice this because they follow influencers for their similar interests and lives (Audrezet, De Kerviler, & Moulard, 2020). Research also found that being transparent about a post's sponsored nature is appreciated by consumers (Coco & Eckert, 2020). In general, the strength of influencer marketing was found to lie in the similarity element. When consumers perceive the influencer they follow as peers, they are more likely to accept the sponsored content that these influencers create (Coco & Eckert, 2020; Audrezet, De Kerviler, & Moulard, 2020).

2.1.2 Sponsored content

Sponsored content is often found in influencer marketing. This is content with a branded persuasive message, for which the creator receives compensation from the brand (Eisend et al., 2020). In other words, it is content that is created by influencers for which brands pay them. Sponsored content is often hard to distinguish when it is not explicitly stated, as it seems like natural content that consumers consume and is often included in contexts that are not traditionally made for

advertising, such as games, television programs, or blogs (Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2012). Sponsored content can be created through multiple techniques, such as highlighting the brand or the product, which is defined as brand placement, or by integrating the brand within the story that is told in a social media post, which is also known as brand integration (Eisend et al., 2020). These advertisement tactics hide the persuasive intent of the content (Eisend et al., 2020). It is especially hard to distinguish the persuasive intent when celebrities and influencers are used within the content, as they can be perceived as authentic customers who genuinely like the product or brand that is advertised (Boerman, Willemsen & Van der Aa, 2017). Sponsored content is also often referred to as native advertisements or covert advertisements, paid advertisements that appear as if they belong on the platform and not to the advertiser (Evans et al., 2017; Pierre, 2023). The embedded nature of these advertisements may not activate the consumer's persuasion knowledge, making them less critical of the content they face (Boerman, Willemsen, and Van der Aa, 2017). As previously explained, this has caused concerns within the European Union about the protection of consumers.

2.2 Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM)

Research on sponsored content often employs the persuasion knowledge model (PKM), which is concerned with consumers' ability to recognize the persuasive message that they are presented with and act upon it (Friestad & Wright, 1994). These persuasive attempts can also include advertisements (Friestad & Wright, 1994), and thus also sponsored content. According to PKM, consumers over time learn to recognize the persuasive attempts that advertisers aim at them, and learn how to cope with them (Friestad & Wright, 1994). They develop this knowledge through previous persuasive attempts that they have faced, through cultural knowledge of these attempts, and through the experiences of those around them (Friestad & Wright, 1994). This knowledge is also often referred to as advertising literacy, the ability to read and understand the advertisements' commercial intent (Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2012).

PKM comprises two layers: a conceptual layer and an attitudinal layer (Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2012; Boerman et al., 2018). The conceptual layer is concerned with recognizing the persuasive attempt and the source and tactics behind the persuasive message (Boerman et al., 2018). This layer is also often referred to as the understanding of the selling intent or, as it will be called in this thesis, ad recognition (Boerman, Willemsen, & Van der Aa, 2017). It is the capability to differentiate between commercial and non-commercial content (Boerman, Willemsen, & Van der Aa, 2017), or the competence to recognize the persuasive aim of a piece of content (Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2012).

Ad recognition can be linked to influencer marketing, as influencer marketing employs tactics to make advertisements less visible for consumers to recognize (Boerman, Willemsen, & Van

der Aa, 2017). Marketers do this by paying endorsers to post content about their brand or products, making it seem as if these are the authentic opinions of these endorsers instead of commercial content by the brand itself (Boerman, Willemsen, & Van der Aa, 2017). This makes it harder for consumers to recognize sponsored content as being an advertisement, which lowers their ad recognition (De Veirman & Hudders, 2020).

The second layer of PKM, the attitudinal layer, discusses the attitude the consumer takes toward the advertisement (Friestad & Wright, 1994), which in this thesis is defined as the attitudinal persuasion knowledge. This layer discusses how the consumer will process the persuasive message that they are faced with and helps them decide on how they will respond (Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2012; Boerman, Willemsen & Van der Aa, 2017; Evans et al., 2017). Friestad and Wright (1994) coined this as coping behavior, which can be both a positive and a negative response to the advertisement. This is linked to the goal of persuasive messages, which is not for a consumer to reject the message and the brand they are faced with, but to be influenced by it (De Keyzer, Dens, & De Pelsmacker, 2021).

In other words, this means that consumers need to be able to recognize the advertisement before they can activate their attitudinal persuasion knowledge and respond to the advertisement (Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2012). PKM, however, is also closely linked with a consumer's knowledge of the brand and the product, respectively referred to as agent knowledge and topic knowledge (Friestad & Wright, 1994). This is a two-way relationship. On the one hand, persuasion knowledge can impact a consumer's attitudinal persuasion knowledge toward the advertisement, the brand, and the product. At the same time, persuasion knowledge combined with agent and topic knowledge also impacts attitudinal persuasion knowledge (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Previous studies on ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge have therefore also considered the attitude that consumers take toward a particular brand or endorser (e.g., Boerman, Willemsen, & Van der Aa, 2017; De Veirman & Hudders, 2020; Evans et al., 2017).

Because of persuasion knowledge, advertisers feel the need to keep finding new ways to put out persuasive attempts that are not yet recognized by consumers and thus do not activate their persuasion knowledge (Friestad & Wright, 1994). In the current age, advertisers are challenging consumers' persuasion knowledge by employing sponsored content, as this is a more hidden way of advertising a brand or product to consumers (Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2012). This blurs the lines between commercial and non-commercial content, which makes it more difficult for consumers to recognize the persuasive attempts they are faced with (Boerman et al., 2018).

2.3 Sponsored content disclosures

2.3.1 Sponsored content disclosures and ad recognition

Previous studies have found that disclosures help consumers to recognize the commercial nature of sponsored content (e.g., Boerman, Willemsen & Van der Aa, 2017; De Veirman & Hudders, 2020; Eisend et al., 2020; Evans et al., 2017). The goal of these disclosures is to make consumers aware of the commercial intent behind the content they come across (De Veirman & Hudders, 2020). These disclosures can then help activate consumers' PKM (De Veirman & Hudders, 2020). Some of these studies looked at specific wordings for disclosures, as they expect to find a difference in ad recognition based on the explicitness of the disclosure (Jung & Heo, 2019). Evans et al. (2017) compared four disclosures to test which would lead to the most ad recognition. These were #SP, #Sponsored, #PaidAd, or no disclosure. The study found that #PaidAd in the caption of an Instagram post was the most effective in increasing ad recognition. Evans et al. (2017) ascribe this to the fact that this most explicitly highlights the commercial nature of the content. This finding is supported by a meta-analysis by Eisend et al. (2020), who found that using the word 'advertising', an explicit disclosure, in the caption is enough to create awareness of the advertising nature of a post. However, a study by Jung and Heo (2019) came with different results than the ones found by Evans et al. (2017) and Eisend et al. (2020). When researching what wording would be most effective in ad recognition, Jung and Heo (2019) expected to find that implicit disclosures such as sponsored, promoted, presented, and recommended, would create a limited impact on ad recognition compared to explicit disclosures. Their findings showcase, however, that the explicitness of the disclosure does not have a significant impact on ad recognition. Thus, Jung and Heo (2019) found that it does not matter what wording is used for disclosure, the simple presence of a disclosure heightens ad recognition.

Due to these contradicting findings, the proposed thesis will employ both an explicit disclosure, #advertisement, and an implicit disclosure, #sponsored, as disclosures to measure the ad recognition resulting from a sponsored content post. Using both allows for testing whether there indeed is a significant difference between the impact of these disclosures on the recognition of the advertisement, or that the explicitness of a disclosure does not create a different impact as suggested by Jung and Heo (2019).

H1: Disclosing sponsored content using #advertisement in a post's caption will lead to higher ad recognition compared to a) #sponsored or b) no disclosure.

2.3.2 Sponsored content disclosures and attitudinal persuasion knowledge

Studies by Jung and Heo (2019) and Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, and Neijens (2012), have found that disclosures do not necessarily have a direct impact on attitudinal persuasion knowledge. Jung and Heo (2019) also wrote that the difference in disclosures used did not have an impact on the attitudinal persuasion knowledge in their studies. This however is contradicted by Eisend et al. (2020). In their meta-analysis of 61 studies, they found that disclosures increase resistance towards sponsored content, which would suggest that disclosures can lead to a more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge. Due to this contradiction, this thesis will test whether there is a difference between the presence of disclosure, either #advertisement or #sponsored, or not. As #advertisement is previously hypothesized to lead to more ad recognition than #sponsored or no disclosure, a similar hypothesis is created regarding attitudinal persuasion knowledge.

H2: Disclosing sponsored content using #advertisement in a post's caption will lead to a more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge compared to a) #sponsored or b) no disclosure.

2.4 Platforms

2.4.1 Uses and gratifications approach and PKM

Brands have started using social media to increase engagement with their consumer base and influence their behavior to increase sales. To do so, they must understand how consumers use social media and how they can use this to their advantage (Buzeta, De Pelsmacker & Dens, 2020; Pelletier et al., 2020). Often this is done through the uses and gratifications (U&G) approach (Buzeta, De Pelsmacker & Dens, 2020), which is a framework used to understand consumer's motivations to use a platform (Cheung, Chiu & Lee, 2011). Different platforms are thus used with different intentions, consumers look for the platform that best gratifies their needs (Falgoust et al., 2022). For this reason, platforms should be studied separately to understand what motives and platforms work are the most fruitful for brands to use (Falgoust et al., 2022; Haenlein et al., 2020). For example, Twitter is often used for microblogging, while YouTube is used for video sharing, and LinkedIn for maintaining business relations (Cheung, Chiu & Lee, 2011). The Uses and Gratifications approach distinguishes between multiple reasons to use a platform, which are generally categorized as social interaction, information sharing, and gathering, entertainment, or convenience (Whiting & Williams, 2013; Pelletier et al., 2020). These motives influence the content consumers consume (Zhu & Chen, 2015), and the way that consumers will interact with the content they come across (Buzeta, De Pelsmacker, & Dens, 2020).

To understand what motives are contributed to what platforms, Zhu and Chen (2015) divide platforms into categories based on four characteristics: whether they are profile-based or content-based, and whether they have customized or broadcast messages. For platform-based platforms, the focal point lies upon the individual member, the person whose profile it is. The content surrounds their being (Zhu & Chen, 2015). Content-based platforms focus on the content that is posted (Zhu & Chen, 2015). Building upon this using a U&G approach, Buzeta, De Pelsmacker, and Dens (2020) have found that for profile-based platforms the main motive for consumers to use them is entertainment, while content-based platforms are used for gathering and sharing information. Haenlein et al. (2020) support this again by stating that profile-based platforms, such as Instagram, are used by consumers for entertainment and a wish to kill time, while content-based platforms, such as LinkedIn, Twitter, or Facebook, are more centered around social interactions and information gathering (Haenlein et al., 2020).

Zhu and Chen (2015) also distinguished between platforms that have customized messages versus broadcast messages. The first type refers to messages aimed at a small audience, with a message that is exclusively available to the receivers. Broadcast messages, on the other hand, are made for a wider audience, with messages that are available to all. Examples of this are private messages on Facebook or WhatsApp as customized messages, or public comments underneath a Twitter post as broadcast messages (Zhu & Ceng, 2015). Arguably the line between the two lies in whether the messages are restricted to a small group or publicly posted, which can also be done through public and private social media pages (Toni & Mattia, 2022). A lot of current social media can thus shift between these groups, depending on the reasons for usage: personal posting or commercial posting (Toni & Mattia, 2022).

As platforms gratify different consumer needs, consumers will also interact differently with the content they come across (Buzeta, De Pelsmacker & Dens, 2020). U&G is especially useful for influencer marketing and sponsored content, as brands can use their understanding of why consumers choose to use a platform and adjust their marketing strategies accordingly (Pelletier et al., 2020). This interaction can impact a consumer's persuasion knowledge and attitude toward the brand. When researching sponsored content disclosures, it is thus important to consider consumer usage of a platform through a U&G understanding, as the motivation to use a platform will impact how consumers perceive the message they come across (Buzeta, De Pelsmacker & Dens, 2020; Haenlein et al., 2020).

2.4.2 TikTok versus Instagram

Instagram and TikTok are currently the most popular platforms for brands to do influencer marketing on (Haenlein et al., 2020). Both platforms are image-based, where Instagram was initially

for photos and TikTok for videos, but with the rise of TikTok Instagram has now introduced Reels, which are short videos just like TikTok (Masciantonio et al., 2021; Crain, 2022). Both platforms also allow users to follow another account without that account following the user back, also referred to as unidirectional (Masciantonio et al., 2021). These elements contradict other platforms, as Twitter and Facebook are both text-based, and Facebook is dyadic since users need approval from an account before content can be accessed (Masciantonio et al., 2021; Haenlein et al., 2020). While Instagram and TikTok thus have similar mechanisms, previous research found the difference between them lies in the motives of the users (Masciantonio et al., 2021).

Studies on consumers' motives to use Instagram have pointed toward three main motives: social interaction, presentation of oneself, and entertainment (Masciantonio et al., 2021; Kircaburun et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2015; Kocak, Nasir, & Turker, 2020). Presentation of oneself is generally done in a favorable manner, only showcasing the highlights of their life (Kircaburun et al., 2020; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). This motive can be traced back to the visual-oriented culture that can be found on the platform, as Instagram was made to share visual content and snippets of one's life (Lee et al., 2015). While self-presentation refers to the production of content on Instagram, social interaction and entertainment are on the consumption side of the platform. This consumption is at times based on the need to be socially connected but can also be based on the consumer's interest and thus goes beyond the content that is posted by their peers (Kocak, Nasir, & Turker, 2020). The literature would suggest that the social aspect involved in Instagram is the main motive for users to visit the platform.

Previous studies show that the motives to use TikTok differ from the motives to use Instagram (Masciantonio et al., 2021). The key driver behind the consumption of TikTok content is entertainment, alongside relaxation (Masciantonio et al., 2021; Omar & Dequan, 2020; Falgoust, 2022). This motive is specific to the consumption of TikTok, as participation on the platform through content can instead be linked to a need for self-expression (Omar & Dequan, 2020). A study by Falgoust (2022) found that contrary to Instagram, the passive usage of TikTok is not primarily driven by the need for social interactions. Instead, they found that social interaction only drives consumers when they actively participate in creating TikTok videos (Falgoust, 2022). This showcases that users turn to Instagram and TikTok with different motives to consume the content on both platforms.

The overall goal of this thesis is to research the impact of disclosures on consumers' ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge, and see whether there is a difference between Instagram and TikTok regarding this. Previous studies argue that consumers respond differently to sponsored content depending on how they use a platform (Buzeta, De Pelsmacker & Dens, 2020). The U&G approach can help understand what the motives are to use a platform, and thus research the difference in how consumers respond to disclosures on these platforms. Buzeta, De Pelsmacker, and Dens (2020) and Zhu and Chen (2015) found that consumers who use a platform for social

purposes are more likely to respond critically to sponsored content as they want to see content from their peers and not from brands. This would suggest that Instagram, a platform primarily used for social interaction, generates more negative responses towards the sponsored content that users are shown. Platforms that are used for information gathering or entertainment, such as is the case for TikTok, are more effective for sponsored content, as consumers may turn to these websites to learn about a new brand on purpose or are open to finding new brands in their free time (Buzeta, De Pelsmacker & Dens, 2020). This creates the assumption that the impact of disclosures on PKM is more positive on TikTok, while they are more negative on Instagram.

H3: The impact of sponsored content disclosures on a) ad recognition and b) attitudinal persuasion knowledge is more positive on TikTok than on Instagram.

2.5 Influences on PKM

As previously explained, PKM is made up of two layers: the conceptual and the attitudinal layer, also referred to as ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge. While attitudinal persuasion knowledge is the second layer of PKM, previous studies were conflicting on whether there is a relationship between ad recognition and critical attitudinal persuasion knowledge (De Keyzer, Dens, & De Pelsmacker, 2021; Boerman, Willemsen, & Van der Aa, 2017). Therefore, it is important to distinguish between the two layers of PKM separately when using this model, as ad recognition is often perceived as natural, and attitudinal persuasion knowledge is perceived as more negative (De Keyzer, Dens, & De Pelsmacker, 2021). While De Keyzer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker (2021) found that a higher ad recognition does not directly lead to a negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge, Boerman, Willemsen, and Van der Aa (2017) found that the recognition of sponsored content as being an advertisement did lead to more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge among consumers in the case of influencer marketing. A similar outcome was found by Jung and Heo (2019), who found that respondents with higher ad recognition were more likely to have more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge. The reason for this relationship can be found in the fact that consumers believe influencers to showcase their honest opinions, and upon becoming aware of the commercial intention the consumers will become critical of the reason why it is shared (Boerman, Willemsen, & Van der Aa, 2017). This goes against the ideas of PKM by Friestad and Wright (1994), who found that attitudinal persuasion knowledge does not always have to be negative.

H4: A higher ad recognition leads to more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge.

2.5.1 Endorser attitude and PKM

Research has shown that the attitude toward the endorser in the advertisement has an impact on consumers' PKM (Pierre, 2023; Kim, Song, & Jang, 2021). A more favorable attitude toward the endorser can impact attitudinal persuasion knowledge by increasing the likelihood of a positive coping behavior towards the advertisement (Pierre, 2023). There thus may be less critical feelings towards the sponsored content if the consumer has a positive attitude towards the endorser or if the endorser is perceived as being like the consumer (Kim, Song, & Jang, 2021). This can be ascribed to the fact that consumers will perceive influencers that are similar to them as their peers (Coco & Eckert, 2020; Audrezet, De Kerviler, & Moulard, 2020). A more positive attitude towards an endorser could therefore impact attitudinal persuasion knowledge by making it more positive. This builds upon the belief that attitudinal persuasion knowledge acts as the second layer after ad recognition (Friestad & Wright, 1994), thus assuming that endorser attitude would play a moderating role in this relationship.

H5: A positive attitude towards the endorser positively affects the impact of ad recognition on attitudinal persuasion knowledge.

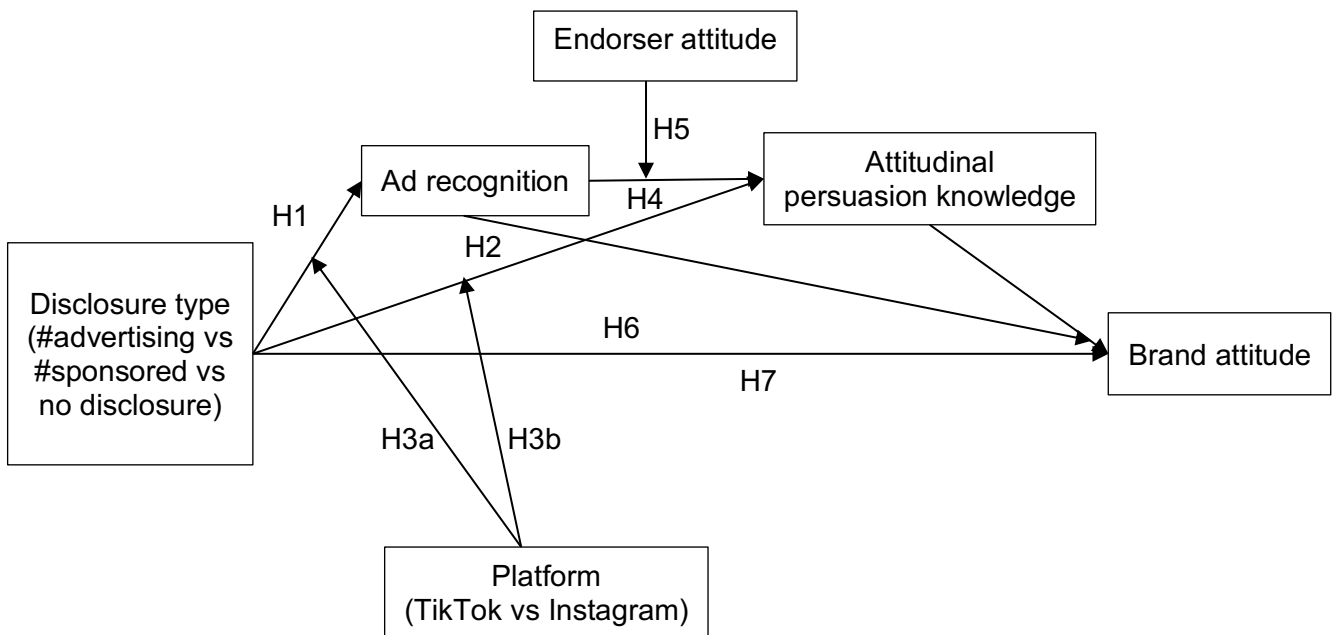
2.5.2 Brand attitude and PKM

PKM is closely linked with agent and topic knowledge (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Previous research by Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, and Neijens (2012) and Evans et al. (2017) showcased that using disclosures leads to higher brand familiarity, as it draws attention to the name of the brand rather than only the product. This higher ad recognition would also activate the attitudinal persuasion knowledge, which results in more resistance to the brand message and a more negative brand attitude (Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2012; Evans et al., 2017). A negative brand attitude as a result of attitudinal persuasion knowledge would also make the advertisement less effective (De Veirman & Hudders, 2020). However, a study by Evans et al. (2017) did showcase that there is a limited impact of disclosures on brand attitude, as this type of content is created to embed the brand and make its commercial intent less visible. Combining previous studies that found there to be an impact of disclosures on PKM (e.g., Evans et al., 2017) and other studies that found PKM to influence brand attitude (e.g., Boerman, Willemsen, & Van der Aa, 2017), would suggest that disclosures could negatively impact brand attitude. This information is especially useful for brands themselves, who are oftentimes fearful that the inclusion of disclosures in sponsored content will negatively impact the attitude that consumers take towards their brand (Chatterjee & Zhou, 2021).

H6: Including disclosures will lead to a more negative brand attitude due to higher ad recognition and more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge

Figure 1:

Visual Representation of the Proposed Model on the Impact of the Disclosure on Ad Recognition and Attitudinal Persuasion Knowledge, Moderated by Platform Usage.



3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

A quantitative experimental research design was used to answer the following research question:

To what extent does the wording of sponsored content disclosures have an impact on consumers' ad recognition and their attitudinal persuasion knowledge towards an advertisement on Instagram compared to TikTok?

A quantitative method was used as the question is concerned with the levels of PKM that result from disclosures, which is quantifiable data of which the goal is to help generate an understanding of the population, but not of the population's reasonings behind it (Sukamolson, 2007). This form of research also creates objective results, resulting in clear-cut results regarding the influence of disclosures (Sukamolson, 2007). Within quantitative research, there are still multiple research methods (Sukamolson, 2007), but the choice of method in the current thesis is an experiment. Experiments allow the researcher to test whether one variable affects another variable by creating different manipulations to see whether this creates different outcomes (Neuman, 2011). It is a popular method in advertisement research as it allows the researchers to see whether the advertisement helps increase sales or recognition (Vargas, Duff & Faber, 2017). An important element of experimental research is that the study will control for other variables that could influence the outcomes (Neuman, 2011).

The experimental research used a three (disclosure wording: #advertising vs #sponsored vs no disclosure) by two (platform: TikTok x Instagram) between-subjects experimental design. The differences in disclosure allowed the study to test whether this led to a different impact on ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge, while the difference in platforms tested whether disclosures had a different impact on PKM depending on the platform that was used. A between-subjects design was chosen for the experiment because it allowed for comparing the different manipulation groups and finding differences between them, as each participant, in this case, was shown only one manipulation (Charness, Gneezy, & Kuhn, 2012).

3.2 Stimuli

The experiment used a pre-existing sponsored content post. By doing so, the stimuli was closest to the type of content that participants would normally see in terms of professionalism and authenticity. A downside to this was that not all elements in the post could be controlled. As PKM is closely linked to brand attitude and endorser attitude, a pre-test was performed with a small part of the population to decide upon a video towards which the participants did not have an outspoken

attitude, to limit the possibility that participants' attitude towards the brand or influencer would impact their PKM in the experiment. Since the introduction of TikTok, Instagram has also introduced videos on its platform, called Reels, and is pushing these videos through its algorithm to compete with TikTok (Crain, 2022). A majority of Instagram's Reels are reposts from TikTok (Crain, 2022). For this reason, a video could be used for the current study. This is also the first criterion that had to be met by the stimuli, which was that it had to be a video that was available on TikTok. Participants would now all see the same video, the only difference being the interface surrounding the video and the manipulation regarding the disclosure. Next, the brand had to use influencer marketing on these two platforms, for which they used a specific hashtag to indicate their commercial nature. For example, #LoopPartner for Loop earplugs. This would ensure that each of the videos were sponsored content that participants could come across while on social media. The last two criteria were in line with what was found by previous studies as well, the influencer had to have a small following and the product had to be gender-neutral (Evans et al., 2017; Karagür et al., 2022; Xie & Feng, 2022).

3.2.1 Research design of the pre-test

The pre-test consisted of four different advertisements found on TikTok. These were sourced by looking for brands that met the above-mentioned criteria. To gather these videos, a probability sampling method was used. This means that videos were randomly found by using the search function on Instagram and TikTok to search for key terms such as advertisement, ad, sponsored, or partnership. All sponsored content on these platforms thus had a similar chance of being included in the sample of videos (Sarstedt et al., 2018). After finding these videos, they were tested against the criteria that were previously explained and established. The advantage of this is that the videos that were included came from the pool of sponsored content on these platforms and represent content that participants could come across themselves as well (Sarstedt et al., 2018).

The four brands that were selected were Loop earplugs, Cluse watches, Akila sunglasses, and Casetify phone cases. The pre-test aimed to select one of these sponsored videos to use in the experiment, which was the video that generated the most neutral response towards the brand and the endorser. Studies on social media videos generally use surveys to collect data on videos, such as the attitudes of users towards the video they are shown (Yang, 2021). For this reason, the pre-test used a survey to question participants about their brand and endorser attitude towards four different videos.

3.2.2 Pre-test Sampling

The goal was for the pre-test to reach a diverse audience that was unfamiliar with the researcher or the research. There were no further requirements to be part of the sample. Probability sampling was used to collect the 20 to 30 responses needed to perform the pre-test, as this allowed

for a randomly selected group of responses (Sarstedt et al., 2018). This was done through the website Surveyswap.io and through a Facebook group called Students Questionnaires Survey. Both are designed to distribute surveys to a wider audience and gather responses by responding to other people.

The final sample was made up of 30 participants, of whom 36.7% were male, 60% were female, and 3.3% preferred not to say. Within the group, there was an average age of 25.20 years (SD=4.40), with a minimum age of 19 years and a maximum of 38 years. The participants originated from 11 different countries, with the most coming from the Netherlands (30%) and the United Kingdom (16.7%). An overview of all countries of origin is presented in Table 1.

Table 1:

Country of Origin Pre-Test

Country of origin	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
The Netherlands	9	30%	30%
The United Kingdom	5	16.7%	46.7%
Germany	3	10%	56.7%
The United States of America	3	10%	66.7%
Austria	2	6.7%	73.4%
India	2	6.7%	80.1%
Spain	2	6.7%	86.8%
Greece	1	3.3%	90.1%
Poland	1	3.3%	93.4%
Sweden	1	3.3%	96.7%
Thailand	1	3.3%	100%
Total	30	100%	100%

3.2.3 Operationalization of the pre-test

Brand familiarity and attitude

Brand familiarity and the attitude toward the brand in the videos were measured using a scale by Spears and Singh (2004). Brand familiarity was included by asking the participants whether they were familiar with the brand, with the answering options that they only knew the brand by name, also knew the products, have even used the products, or had never heard about the brand before.

The brand attitude was measured by asking participants to describe their feelings towards the brand they were just shown in the video. As per Spears and Singh (2004), the answer options were unappealing/appealing, bad/good, unpleasant/pleasant, unfavorable/favorable, and unlikable/likable, which were asked on a seven-point range.

Endorser attitude

Endorser attitude was measured using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree) that measured influencer likability, perceived attractiveness, and similarity (Peetz, 2012). This scale asked participants to complete the following statement, 'When I saw the advertisement I...'. Examples included 'knew who the endorser was', 'believed the endorser was good-looking', or 'felt the endorser and I were alike'.

3.2.4 Procedure of the pre-test

The pre-test was created in mid-March 2023, during which numerous hours were spent collecting videos that met the criteria. The data from the pre-test was gathered between 30 March 2023 and 5 April 2023. After the survey received 30 responses it was taken down for analysis.

When participants opened the survey, they were first informed about the purpose of the survey and asked for their consent. They were then asked about their age, country of origin, and the gender they identify with. After this, participants were shown a video, followed by three questions that had to be answered before the next video was shown to them. A timer was used when showing participants the videos so that participants were not able to go on with the questions until after the video was done. Per advertisement, participants were asked whether they were familiar with the brand. When they stated they were familiar with it they were asked to describe their feelings towards the brand on a seven-point range (Spears & Singh, 2004). Regardless of whether they knew the brand or the influencer, they were asked ten questions on a seven-point Likert scale regarding influencer likability and perceived attractiveness (Peetz, 2012).

3.2.5 Data analysis of the pre-test

For each of the brands, participants were asked whether they were familiar with the brand. The results of this can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Percentages of Brand Familiarity per Brand

Brand	I know the brand by name	I know the brand by name and have seen their products	I know the brand by name and have bought their products	I do not know the brand	Total
Akila	3.3%	0%	0%	96.7%	100%
Casetify	16.7%	43.3%	0%	40%	100%
Cluse	10%	23.3%	3.3%	63.3%	100%
Loop	3.3%	16.7%	6.7%	73.3%	100%

Since only one participant had previously heard about Akila, the brand attitude was only measured in one participant. Because of this, it was not possible to draw a conclusion about participants' attitudes towards the brand. Akila was therefore not included in further analyses.

For each of the other three brands, a new variable was created to measure the participant's brand attitude, which was the mean of the five questions used to measure the participant's brand attitude. The means of these three new variables can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation of Brand Attitude

Brand	Mean	SD
Casetify	3.49	1.30
Cluse	2.75	1.04
Loop	3.33	1.26

The video that would be selected for the experiment had to generate the most neutral response in the pre-test. As the questions regarding brand attitude were asked on a seven-point range, the most neutral response would be closest to 4. To test this, a one-sample t-test was performed for each of the three remaining brands with a test value of 4. A response would be neutral when it would lead to an insignificant result, as this would mean that there was no difference between the response and the test value. This showcased that the brand attitude towards Cluse was significantly different from neutral, $t(10) = -3.99$, $p = .003$, and therefore does not have a neutral response. For Casetify, $t(17) = -1.67$, $p = .113$, and Loop, $t(7) = -1.51$, $p = .175$, there is no significant difference between the mean and 4, therefore both can be considered neutral responses.

Based on this, endorser attitude was only measured for Casetify and Loop. Since the sample was below 150 responses, a factor analysis could not be performed. Using the factors given by Peetz (2012), three different factors can be established. These are as follows:

Endorser familiarity discusses whether the participant recognizes the endorser and had heard of them before. For Casetify this was created with a mean of 1.74 (SD = 1.32) and for Loop with a mean of 1.58 (SD = 1.38).

Endorser attractiveness is about the participant's view of the endorser's physical appearance. It asks whether they find the endorser attractive, good-looking, and sexy. This variable was created for Casetify with a mean of 4.57 (SD = 1.36) and for Loop with a mean of 3.30 (SD=1.40).

Endorser similarity asks participants whether they feel like the endorser and they are alike and have a lot in common, essentially asking them whether they could view the endorser as their peer. For Casetify this variable was created with a mean of 2.45 (SD = 1.45) and for Loop with a mean of 2.27 (SD=1.35).

Besides a neutral brand attitude, the pre-test also researched the participant's stance towards the endorser which is shown in the video. Endorser attitude was measured through a seven-point Likert scale and on three different levels: attractiveness, familiarity, and similarity. The goal of the endorser attitude was to find the most neutral response, which would be around a 4 on a seven-point scale. This was analyzed through a one-sample t-test, with a test value of 4. The attitude would be neutral if it was not significant, as this means the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and thus there would be no difference between the mean and the test value. The results can be found in Table 4.

Table 3

One Sample T-test Results for Endorser Attitude of Loop and Casetify. Test Value = 4.

Variable	Brand	Result	Mean (SD)
Endorser similarity*	Loop	t(29) = -7.03, p < .001	2.27 (SD = 1.35)
	Casetify	t(29) = -5.85, p < .001	2.45 (SD = 1.45)
Endorser familiarity*	Loop	t(29) = -9.64, p < .001	1.58 (SD = 1.38)
	Casetify	t(29) = -9.37, p < .001	1.74 (SD = 1.32)
Endorser attractiveness*	Loop	t(29) = -2.74, p = .010	3.30 (SD = 1.40)
	Casetify	t(28) = 2.10, p = .045	4.54 (SD = 1.37)

Note. * Test Value = 4

3.2.6 Results of the pre-test

As shown in Table 3.4, the results regarding endorser attitude are all significant. In this case, it means that the mean of most of the variables is lower than the test value of 4, except for the endorser attractiveness of Casetify. For each of the three variables, however, a lower mean translates to a lower rating of the endorser's attractiveness, familiarity, and similarity, but does not translate to a negative rating. Each of these videos thus showcases endorsers that do not recall a feeling by the participants, and both can be equally qualified for the experiment.

Casetify and Loop both had neutral responses on brand attitude and endorser attitudes. One thing to consider when deciding on a video was a comment made by one of the participants at the end of the survey. This stated that because they were not part of the rave scene they did not feel connected to the Loop video to begin with. Other participants could experience this as well. Besides this, the brand attitude was measured on a bigger sample for Casetify, as 18 participants knew this brand and were thus asked about their attitude, while for Loop 8 people were questioned on their brand attitude. Considering these arguments, the video of Casetify was chosen as the stimuli for the experiment.

3.3 Sampling

According to the master thesis requirements each experiment condition requires a minimum of 30 participants (Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication, 2022-2023). Since this thesis has a three-by-two setup, there were six conditions, meaning that a minimum of 180 participants were required. There were three requirements to be part of the sample. First, the participant must be a user of either one or both platforms, besides which they had to be over 18 years old. Lastly, they must live in a member state of the European Union. There were two reasons for this. First, it was because these platforms use the geographical location of their users to present them with content, which shapes the content that users are shown (Instagram Help Center; TikTok Support). And second, the focus lied on the European Union, because even though European countries differ in terms of legal, economic, and societal operations, they all have an overarching legislative system of the European Union, which is now also interested in the disclosures of sponsored content as shown by the European report on influencers and online advertising (Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies ,2022).

The sample was distributed using multiple channels. Some of these depended upon the network of the researcher to further distribute the survey, others allowed the researcher to reach beyond her network. Within the personal sphere, a post was posted on the researcher's personal Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn pages. Here, friends, family, and professional connections were also asked to share the survey with their networks as well. Next to this, the survey was distributed in multiple WhatsApp groups through family members and friends of the researchers, which ensured that the survey would reach outside of the personal network. To reach participants who were outside of the personal network the researcher, three additional ways were employed: Facebook groups, websites created to exchange surveys, and QR codes. These websites were Surveyswap.io, Survey-circle, and Poll-pool. The QR code was printed and shared on multiple locations across the Netherlands and Belgium. These three ways would allow the survey to reach participants who are from outside of the Netherlands and outside of the personal network.

3.3.1 Sample

After analyzing the data from the pre-test, the chosen brand was inserted into the survey and published on 16 April 2023. Data collection continued until 11 May 2023, when enough valid responses had been collected to continue onwards with the analysis.

The final sample was made up of 188 respondents, of which 34% were male, 65.5% were female, and 0.5% indicated to be a third gender. Within this sample, the average age was 26.10 years old (SD = 8.35), with the youngest being 18 years old and the oldest being 61 years. Participants resided in 19 different countries within the European Union, which means that 8 member countries of the EU

were not represented within the sample. The biggest group of participants resides in the Netherlands (73.4%), followed by Germany (6.9%). A full overview of the countries of residence can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

Country of Residence of the Sample

Country of residence	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
The Netherlands	138	73.4%	73.4%
Germany	13	6.9%	80.3%
Italy	6	3.2%	83.5%
Belgium	4	2.1%	85.6%
France	3	1.6%	87.2%
Greece	3	1.6%	88.8%
Spain	3	1.6%	90.4%
Austria	2	1.1%	91.5%
Bulgaria	2	1.1%	92.6%
Czech Republic	2	1.1%	93.7%
Hungary	2	1.1%	94.8%
Romania	2	1.1%	95.9%
Sweden	2	1.1%	97%
Croatia	1	0.5%	97.5%
Finland	1	0.5%	98%
Ireland	1	0.5%	98.5%
Latvia	1	0.5%	99%
Lithuania	1	0.5%	99.5%
Poland	1	0.5%	100%
Total	188	100%	100%

Participants were also asked about their platform usage. Of the sample, 58% indicated they only use Instagram, 5.3% only uses TikTok, and 36.7% use both platforms. Each participant was shown only one of the six conditions. In total 31.4% were shown no disclosure, 34.6% were shown #advertisement, and 34% were shown #sponsored. The division between all six conditions can be found in Table 6.

Table 6

Division of Exposure per Condition

Platform	Disclosure	Percentage	Cumulative %
TikTok	No disclosure	4.8%	4.8%
	#Advertisement	9.0%	13.8%
	#Sponsored	9.6%	23.4%
Instagram	No Disclosure	26.6%	50%
	#Advertisement	25.5%	75.5%
	#Sponsored	24.5%	100%
Total		100%	100%

3.4 Operationalization

Ad recognition

To measure ad recognition, the Persuasion Knowledge Scale of Sponsored Content (PKS-SC), as created by Boerman et al. (2018), was used. This scale tests ad recognition in multiple ways. It starts with asking whether any advertisement was seen in the video, which can be answered with 'yes', 'no', or 'not sure', followed by a question about why participants believe there to be advertising. Ad recognition in this scale also exists out of understanding the selling and persuasive intent, the persuasive tactics behind sponsored content, and a self-reflective element regarding the perceived influence of sponsored content on themselves and others. This tests whether participants not only recognize the sponsored content but also the underlying mechanisms of sponsored content. The understanding of selling and persuasive intent is for example tested through statements such as "The reason brands are mentioned or shown in videos is to... sell products", while understanding of the persuasive tactics is tested through statements such as "Brands try to influence me by... making sure it does not look like advertising". The self-reflective element of ad recognition by Boerman et al. (2018) is measured by asking participants whether they agree with a statement such as "seeing a brand in a video influences me without me realizing it" or "others have bought a brand or product after seeing it in a video". Each of these statements was measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1 =

Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree).

Four different ways of ad recognition were thus measured on a continuous basis. A factor analysis was performed on these four continuous variables to see whether they can be grouped. This was done using a Principal Component Analysis for the extraction based on Eigenvalues (>1.00), KMO = .67, X² (N = 188, 6) = 123.67, p < .001. The factor loading of this analysis can be found in Table 7. 'Self-reflective awareness of the effectiveness of sponsored content on themselves' was later deleted due to its low factor loading. Deleting this item ensured that Cronbach's α became at .70. A new variable was computed for Ad Recognition that combined 'Understanding of the selling and persuasive intent of sponsored content', 'self-reflective awareness of the effectiveness of sponsored content on others', and 'understanding the persuasive tactics in sponsored content'. This variable had a mean of 5.61 (SD = 0.75).

Table 7

Factor Loading of Ad Recognition

Item	Ad Recognition
Understanding of the selling and persuasive intent of sponsored content.	.69
Self-reflective awareness of the effectiveness of sponsored content on others.	.79
Self-reflective awareness of the effectiveness of sponsored content on themselves.	.48
Understanding of persuasive tactics in sponsored content.	.82
Eigenvalue	2.02
Cronbach's α	.65

Attitudinal persuasion knowledge

To measure attitudinal persuasion knowledge, the PKS-SC scales by Boerman et al. (2018) was used again. This scale asked participants were asked about their liking and scepticism toward sponsored content. In regards to skepticism, participants were asked to complete the following statement, "I think that showing brands (for which the brand has paid) in videos is...". Participants could choose between dishonest/honest, not trustworthy/trustworthy, incredible/credible, not truthful/truthful, and insincere/sincere on a seven-point semantic differential scale. A reliability

analysis found these five items to be reliable ($\alpha = .90$), thus a new variable was computed for skepticism towards the content with a mean of 3.83 (SD = 1.20).

To measure participants about their liking of this type of sponsored content, they were asked to complete the following statement, "I think that showing brands in videos is...". Here the answer options were negative/positive, unattractive/attractive, boring/interesting, not amusing/amusing, irritating/pleasant, and obtrusive/unobtrusive, also on a seven-point semantic differential scale. These six items were also found to be reliable ($\alpha = .90$), so a new variable was computed for the liking of sponsored content with a mean of 4.00 (SD = 1.16).

A Pearson Correlation matrix was performed on 'Skepticism of sponsored content' and 'Liking of sponsored content', $r(186) = .55$, $p < .001$. This found a positive relationship between these two variables. A new variable was computed for Attitudinal Persuasion Knowledge with a mean of 3.92 (SD = 1.04).

The first hypothesis tested whether a higher ad recognition leads to a more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge. The scale for attitudinal persuasion knowledge was measured that the lower the number, the more negative the attitudinal persuasion knowledge was. To perform this analysis, the variable had to be reversed. A new variable was computed for this, with a mean of 4.08 (SD = 1.04), where a higher number indicated a more negative attitude.

Endorser attitude

Endorser attitude was measured using Peetz's (2012) scale on endorser effectiveness, which tests endorser familiarity, attractiveness, and similarity. Originally, this scale was created for athlete endorsers in advertisements. This asks participants to complete the following statement, "When I viewed the advertisement I..." with options such as "knew who the endorser was", "thought the endorser was nice-looking", and "felt I had a lot in common with the endorser". These were asked on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree).

As the scale of endorser attitude is made up of ten questions that measure three factors, a factor analysis was performed, using a Principal Component Analysis for the extraction and Oblimin rotation based on Eigenvalues (>1.00), $KMO = .78$, $X^2(N=188, 45) = 1311.70$, $p < .001$. The factor loading of this analysis can be found in Table 8.

Endorser attractiveness considers the physical appearance of the endorsers. A new variable was calculated for this with a mean of 4.38 (SD=1.13).

Endorser familiarity measured whether people recognize the endorser. A new variable was

calculated with a mean of 2.38 (SD=1.52).

Endorser similarity looks at whether people see an endorser as their peer or as a stranger. A new variable was computed for this with a mean of 2.73 (SD=1.51).

Table 8

Factor Loading for Endorser Attitude. "When I Saw the Advertisement..."

Item	Attractiveness	Familiarity	Similarity
I believed the endorser was good looking	.96		
I thought the endorser was nice-looking	.92		
I thought the endorser was attractive	.90		
I thought the endorser was sexy	.60		
I knew who the endorser was		.93	
I recognize the endorser		.92	
I was aware of who the endorser was		.90	
I was familiar with the endorser		.79	
I felt I had a lot in common with the endorser			-.94
I felt like the endorser and I were alike			-.90
Eigenvalue	3.88	2.96	1.18
Cronbach's α	.88	.90	.87

Brand attitude

To measure brand attitude, the scale created by Spears and Singh (2004) was used. This scale asked participants to describe their overall feeling toward the brand they were just exposed to. Five ranges are given, between unappealing/appealing, bad/good, unpleasant/pleasant, unfavorable/favorable, and unlikable/likable, which can be answered on a seven-point semantic differential scale. The five items included in the scale by Spears and Singh (2004) were found to be

reliable ($\alpha = .93$), so a variable was computed for brand attitude including the five items measured. This created a new variable with a mean of 4.35 (SD = 1.19).

Uses & Gratifications

To ground the difference between Instagram and TikTok, a Uses & Gratifications scale for social media platforms was used (Pelletier et al., 2020). This scale found four different motives to use social media platforms: social, convenience, information, and entertainment. Participants are shown statements that fit these four motives, such as "It's enjoyable" for entertainment, or "I want to meet people with my interests" for social, on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree). These questions were asked separately for Instagram and TikTok. As the scale included 12 questions per platform, a factor analysis was performed for each platform to reduce the data.

For Instagram, a factor analysis was performed using a Principal Component Analysis for the extraction and Oblimin rotation based on Eigenvalues (>1.00), KMO = .81, $X^2(N=188, 66) = 956.98, p < .001$. The factor loading can be found in Table 9. Three factors were found to have an Eigenvalue above 1. The scale by Pelletier et al. (2020) originally included four factors, but the fourth had an Eigenvalue below 1.

Social interactions People use the platform to interact with others, they want to meet people similar interests or hear what others have to say. This also includes easy communication with others and the ability to express themselves through these platforms. A new variable was computed for this with a mean of 4.42 (SD=1.31).

Entertainment People use the platform to entertain themselves conveniently and quickly. The platforms make it possible for them to get entertainment at any place and at any time. A new variable was computed with a mean of 5.69 (SD=0.90).

Information The platform is used to learn about new things and gather information. It helps them stay informed on the news. A new variable was computed with a mean of 4.59 (SD=1.42).

Casual usage Participants use it to simply look through their newsfeed, not with any intention of gathering information or being entertained. Instead, they look casually. A new variable was computed for this with a mean of 5.50 (SD=1.36).

Table 9*Factor Loading for Uses & Gratifications of Instagram. "I Use Instagram Because..."*

Item	Social interactions	Entertainment	Information	Casual usage
I want to meet people with my interests.	.84			
I want to express myself freely.	.77			
I wonder what other people say.	.76			
I can communicate with others for less effort.	.61			
It's entertaining.		-.91		
It's enjoyable.		-.89		
It's convenient to use.		-.66		
I can use it anytime, anywhere.		-.62		
I can learn about things I don't know.			-.93	
I can learn about useful things.			-.90	
It's a good way to catch up on news.			-.71	
I just like to look through my newsfeed.				-.83
Eigenvalue	4.68	1.84	1.38	0.76
Cronbach's α	.79	.81	.85	

For TikTok, a factor analysis was done using a Principal Component Analysis for the extraction and Oblimin rotation based on Eigenvalues (>1.00), KMO = .63, $X^2(N=188, 66) = 288.24$, $p < .001$. The factor loading can be found in Table 10. Four factors were found, which is in line with the factors in scale as it was created by Pelletier et al. (2020). However, two factors were found to have Cronbach's α below .70, so for both of them, an item was deleted to increase Cronbach's α .

Information People use the platform because it is a way for them to gather information, be it regarding things they did not previously know and are of interest to them or be it the news. A new variable was computed for this with a mean of 4.69 (SD=1.17).

Entertainment The platform is mainly used because it is an easy form of entertainment and enjoyment. The factor loading showcases "I can use it anytime, anywhere" as being part of this factor, but when deleted it improves Cronbach's α from .57 to .87, so it was removed. A new variable was computed with a mean of 5.90 (SD=0.75).

Social interaction The platform is used to communicate with others. It allows people to find what other people think, meet other people with similar interests, and express themselves to these same people. A new variable was computed with a mean of 3.51 (SD=1.46).

Convenience People use the platforms because it is easy to use. There is no effort to use it or to communicate through it. However, Cronbach's α was .12 for this, which is too low to be included in further research. This factor was thus removed.

Table 10*Factor Loading for Uses & Gratifications of TikTok. "I Use TikTok Because..."*

Item	Information	Entertainment	Social interaction	Convenience
I can learn about useful things.	.89			
I can learn about things I don't know.	.76			
It's a good way to catch up on news.	.73			
I just like to look through my newsfeed.	.60			
It's entertaining.		.85		
It's enjoyable.		.81		
I can use it anytime, anywhere.		.55		
I want to meet people with my interests.			.90	
I want to express myself freely.			.87	
I can communicate with others for less effort.				.70
I wonder what other people say.			.51	
It's convenient to use.				.41
Eigenvalue	3.40	1.95	1.22	1.12
Cronbach's α	.74	.57	.73	.12

3.5 Procedure

When participants opened the survey, they were first presented with a page informing them about the purpose of the research, contact details of the researcher in case of questions, and information about the voluntary nature of their participation and the confidentiality of their data.

Participants had to agree with these terms to continue with the survey. To ensure that participants fit the qualifications of the sample, they were asked a few demographic questions. This included asking whether they use only TikTok, Instagram, both, or neither, followed by a question regarding their current country of residence and their age. If their responses did not meet the criteria, participants were shown a message informing them they did not qualify and could not continue with the survey. As demographic questions were being asked in this section already, participants were also asked about the gender with which they identify.

When it was established that a participant fit the sample requirements, they were randomly assigned to one of the conditions. In the case of using one platform, they were randomly shown one of the three manipulations for the platform they indicated to use, or in the case of both platforms, they were randomly assigned to one of the six conditions. The video was then shown to them using a timer, to ensure that the participants had to watch the whole video before they continue onwards.

After watching the video, participants were asked several questions, with one question being visible at a time. First, they were asked whether they saw an advertisement in the video. If they did see an advertisement, they were asked to indicate why they thought they saw an advertisement. Afterward, participants were asked why they thought why brands are shown in videos on a seven-point Likert scale, which tested ad recognition. This was followed by two questions on their attitude towards the brand and the endorser, both on a seven-point scale. To test participants' attitudinal persuasion knowledge, they were next asked their opinion on brands paying to be shown in a video, on a seven-point scale. To further test ad recognition, participants were next questioned to reflect upon the influence of brands paying to be shown on social media on others and themselves, again on a seven-point Likert scale. A second question regarding attitudinal persuasion knowledge was asked, about how participants felt about brands being shown in videos in general, which was also asked on a seven-point scale. As a last part of ad recognition, participants were asked how they think brands try to influence them on a seven-point Likert scale.

After testing for PKM and brand and endorser attitude, the survey also asked a participant a question regarding their social media habits. This was grounded in U&G and asked what their reasons for using a platform were. Participants who only used one platform were shown only the U&G question regarding that respective platform, while participants who indicated they used both were shown the U&G question for both platforms.

The survey concluded by asking participants whether they had any remaining comments they wanted to make. After this, they were shown a message thanking them for their time and participation, once again providing contact details in the case of questions or comments, and providing information on how to get the credits that are needed for participants of the survey exchange websites.

3.6 Validity and reliability

The validity of a scale explains if it measures what it is supposed to measure. It is essentially the quality of the scale (Bryman, 2016). Reliability is concerned with if the scale measures the same thing when used multiple times, it is about the scale's stability (Bryman et al., 2016). A study needs to use scales that are both reliable and valid to ensure that the results are reliable and measured the right thing (Sürücü & Maslakçi, 2020). There are multiple ways to measure validity, such as internal, external, content, and construct validity.

The current study was able to achieve content and construct validity. The former is concerned if the scale measures the concept it wants to measure in full or only partly, while the latter is concerned if the right thing is measured (Sürücü & Maslakçi, 2020). Both can be achieved by using pre-existing scales that were already tested for their reliability and validity upon creation (Sürücü & Maslakçi, 2020). Each of the scales that were used in this study was pre-tested and pre-established, thus ensuring both content and construct validity.

Using these pre-existing scales also increased the reliability, as this was previously tested by the creators of the scale (Sürücü & Maslakçi, 2020). When using pre-existing scales the internal consistency within the research still has to be tested, which can be done using Cronbach's Alpha (α) in the analysis (Bryman, 2016). By ensuring that these were all above .70, internal consistency could be ensured (Sürücü & Maslakçi, 2020). When grouping ad recognition into one variable, the α initially was .65, but by deleting one item the α went up to .70. For the Uses & Gratifications of TikTok one factor needed to lose an item to move Cronbach's α from .57 to .87.

In terms of the experiment itself, steps were taken to improve internal validity. This type of validity refers to whether it is possible to assume there is a cause-and-effect between what was tested and what was measured (Vargas, Duff, & Faber, 2017). One way this was done in the current study was by ensuring that only completed questionnaires were included in the data set and that those that were not completed were deleted. This way the results that were measured were measured over the full sample instead of only a part. And second, for the experiment, almost all variables were kept the same, with the only differences being the frame depending on the platforms and the disclosure in the caption. However, the contents of the video itself could not be controlled.

External validity was partly accounted for in the current study. This type of validity is concerned with whether the study is generalizable. If one group is highly over-represented in the sample, the external validity will be lower (Vargas, Duff, & Faber, 2017). For the pre-test of the current study, there were 11 countries for 30 participants, of whom 30% were from the Netherlands. For the experiment itself, the part of Dutch people within the sample accounted for 73.4%, while the remaining 26.6% represented 18 countries. This affects the external validity of this study slightly, as the focus was on member states of the European Union. In terms of age, the external validity was

relatively stable, with an age range from 18 to 61 years old. This means that different age groups and generations were represented within the study.

Using a pre-existing video also affected validity. This was affected by the fact that using a pre-existing video does limit the number of factors that can be controlled such as the endorser, the brand, or what was seen in the video. To limit the impact this had on the validity, a pre-test was conducted to find a video towards which participants did not have a strong brand or endorser attitude, so the control of these factors could be accounted for.

3.7 Data processing and analysis

3.7.1 Data preparation

After data collection was completed, the data had to be prepared. Automatically gathered personal data, such as location and IP address, were deleted, alongside other automatically gathered data like time of completion or the language of completion. What remained were all the variables that were asked in the survey.

The next step was to clean up the data set. A total of 290 people responded to the survey. Of these respondents, one did not give consent, and thus did not continue onwards with the survey nor was counted in the final sample. 18 participants did not use either of the platforms, 31 did not reside in a member state of the European Union, and five participants were below the age of 18. They did not meet the requirements and were also removed from the dataset. 47 more participants were then found to have terminated the survey before completion. This was often done within the first three questions after being shown the video, meaning the remainder of the survey was still not finished. These 47 responses were also deleted from the dataset. In the end, 188 responses remained that fit the criteria and completed the survey.

3.7.2 Data analysis

The data analysis was performed by using the statistical software program IBM SPSS, version 28. Before analyzing the hypotheses, multiple analyses were done to reduce the data. This makes data easier to handle (Pallant, 2020). The outcomes of these can be found in the operationalization section of this methodical chapter.

When measuring whether different disclosures lead to a difference in ad recognition, three analyses were performed, as ad recognition was measured through a continuous and a categorical variable, as well as through a multiple response variable. For each of these three analyses, the dependent variable was ad recognition, and the independent variable was the disclosure type. For the

categorical variable, a Chi-square analysis was done, while the continuous variables were analyzed through an ANOVA using the Tukey post-hoc test. As a part of ad recognition, participants were also asked a multiple-response question about what made them aware of the commercial nature of the video they were shown. This was analyzed by creating a multiple-response set, through which a multiple-response crosstab could be performed.

To measure the impact of different disclosures on attitudinal persuasion knowledge, an ANOVA using a Tukey post-hoc analysis was performed. Here the dependent variable was attitudinal persuasion knowledge, and the independent variable was the disclosure.

A comparison was also made between the impact of disclosures on TikTok and Instagram. This was performed for both ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge. To analyze this, two two-way analyses were performed, one for the moderating impact on ad recognition, and another for the moderating impact on attitudinal persuasion knowledge. In both cases the independent variable was disclosure type, while the moderating variable was the platform. The dependent variable was either ad recognition or attitudinal persuasion knowledge, depending on what analysis was performed.

To measure whether ad recognition impacts attitudinal persuasion knowledge a linear regression analysis was performed. Here the dependent variable was the reversed variable for attitudinal persuasion knowledge, while the independent variable was ad recognition.

The study also tested the moderating impact of endorser attitude in the relation between ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge. As endorser attitude was previously found to be made up of perceived familiarity with, the attractiveness of, and similarity to the endorser, three separate analyses were performed. To do so, Hayes PROCESS macro model 1 was used again. Here the dependent variable was attitudinal persuasion knowledge, while the independent variable was the three factors of endorser attitude. The moderating variable was one of three parts of endorser attitude.

A last analysis was done of the impact of disclosures on brand attitude, which was mediation through ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge. This analysis was performed through Hayes PROCESS macro model 6. The dependent variable was brand attitude, the independent variable was the disclosure type, and the mediators were ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge.

4. Results

To measure the impact of different disclosures on ad recognition, three analyses were performed: an ANOVA analysis, a Chi-square analysis, and a multiple-response crosstab. The ANOVA analysis was performed to measure the impact of disclosures on ad recognition on a continuous scale. The independent variable that was used was the type of disclosure that participants were shown, while the dependent variable was ad recognition. The ANOVA did not result in a significant main effect of the disclosure on the level of ad recognition, $F(2, 185) = 0.22$, $p = .804$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$. A Tukey post-hoc comparison was also found to be insignificant, meaning that no significant difference in ad recognition could be measured depending on #advertisement ($M = 5.63$, $SD = .60$), #sponsored ($M = 5.63$, $SD = .80$), or no disclosure ($M = 5.55$, $SD = .85$). This would suggest that different wordings of a disclosure, as well as the absence of a disclosure, do not create different levels of ad recognition.

A second analysis was performed on the impact of disclosures on ad recognition, which was the Chi-square analysis. This would function to measure participants' responses to the question of whether they had seen an advertisement in the video. There was a significant association between the recognition of the sponsored post and the presence of a disclosure, $X^2(4) = 30.00$, $p < .001$. Of the participants who were shown #advertisement, 92.3% recognized it as being an advertisement, compared to 87.5% of participants who were shown #sponsored, or 78% who were not shown a disclosure, as is visible in Table 11. However, this also showcased that participants who were not shown a disclosure were certain about whether it was an advertisement or not, while for the two disclosures, more participants clicked 'not sure'.

Table 11

Outcomes of Chi-Square Test on Disclosure Type and Whether Participants Recognized the Video as Being an Advertisement.

		Did you see any advertising in the video?			Total
		Yes	No	Not sure	
Disclosure type	No disclosure	78.0%	22.0%	0.0%	100%
	#Advertisement	92.3%	4.6%	3.1%	100%
	#Sponsored	87.5%	0.0%	12.5%	100%
Total		100%	100%	100%	

As part of analyzing the impact of disclosures on ad recognition, participants were also asked what element of the video made them aware of the commercial intent. There were three suggestions and a possibility to write down another element that made them aware of this. This was analyzed by creating a multiple-response set, through which a multiple-response crosstab could be created. The outcome of this can be found in Table 12. This showcases that participants who chose “other” indicated four different answers. Either it was because of the way the product was shown in the video, or to quote one participant, “Just the way the video was made around the phone case”. Another option was that they had prior awareness of this brand and this marketing tactic, and therefore recognized the content they were consuming. A third option is that people were not sure about the sponsored nature and indicated that they did not know how they were supposed to have recognized it. And lastly, some participants who chose “other” did not write down an answer. Combining these findings with the previously performed ANOVA analysis and Chi-square test would suggest that other elements than disclosures helped participants recognize the advertisement. ($\neq H1a$, $\neq H1b$).

Table 12

Reasons Why Participants Were Aware of the Advertisement per Manipulation.

	No Disclosure		#Advertisement		#Sponsored		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
“It said so in the caption”	17	31.5%	17	27.4%	12	18.8%	46	24.5%
“A brand was tagged”	12	22.2%	18	29.0%	20	31.3%	50	26.6%
“A brand was clearly visible”	41	75.9%	40	64.5%	49	76.6%	130	69.1%
“Other...”	11	20.4%	9	14.5%	5	7.8%	25	13.3%

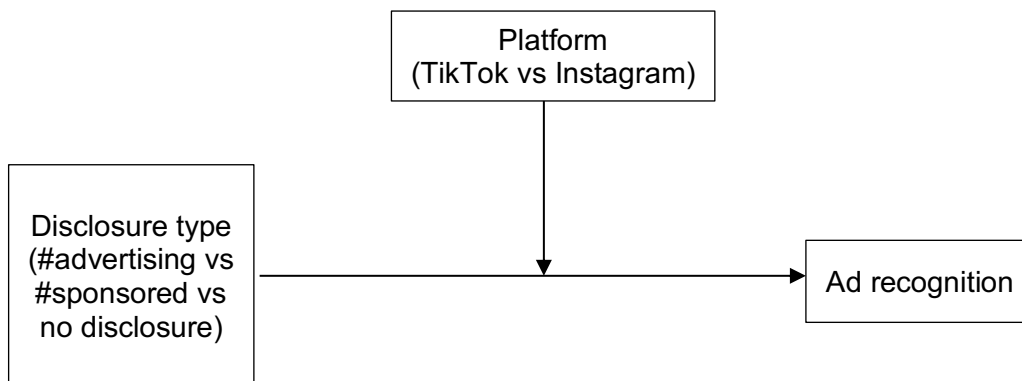
To measure the impact of disclosures on attitudinal persuasion knowledge, an ANOVA was performed. Here the independent variable was the disclosure type, and the dependent variable was the attitudinal persuasion knowledge. This ANOVA did not result in a significant main effect for the impact of disclosures on attitudinal persuasion knowledge, $F(2, 185) = 0.46$, $p = .632$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. A Tukey post-hoc comparison also found no significant differences between the different

disclosure types, meaning that #advertisement (M = 3.83, SD = 1.01), #sponsored (M = 4.01, SD = 1.08), or a lack of disclosure (M = 3.91, SD = 1.03) were not found to create different outcomes. This would suggest that different wordings of disclosures, nor the absence of a disclosure, do not have an impact on attitudinal persuasion knowledge ($\neq H2a$, $\neq H2b$).

To measure whether the platform type had a moderating impact on the relation between disclosure type and ad recognition, as shown in Figure 2, a two-way ANOVA analysis was performed. Disclosure type was the independent variable, and ad recognition and the moderating variable, disclosure type, were used as the dependent variables. An insignificant effect was found for the impact of platform type, $F(1, 182) = .08$, $p = .785$, partial $\eta^2 = .00$, and of disclosure type, $F(2,182) = .58$, $p = .560$, partial $\eta^2 = .006$, on ad recognition. Besides this, the interaction between platform type and disclosure type were also found to be insignificant, $F(2,182) = .41$, $p = .663$, partial $\eta^2 = .005$. This means that there is no difference in the ad recognition of participants who were shown a video from Instagram (M = 5.61, SD = .75) and of participants who were shown a video from TikTok (M = 5.61, SD = .76). The impact of disclosures on ad recognition are thus not moderated by the platform on which consumers view the sponsored content ($\neq H3a$).

Figure 2

The Moderating Role of Platforms on the Impact of Disclosure Type on Ad Recognition.

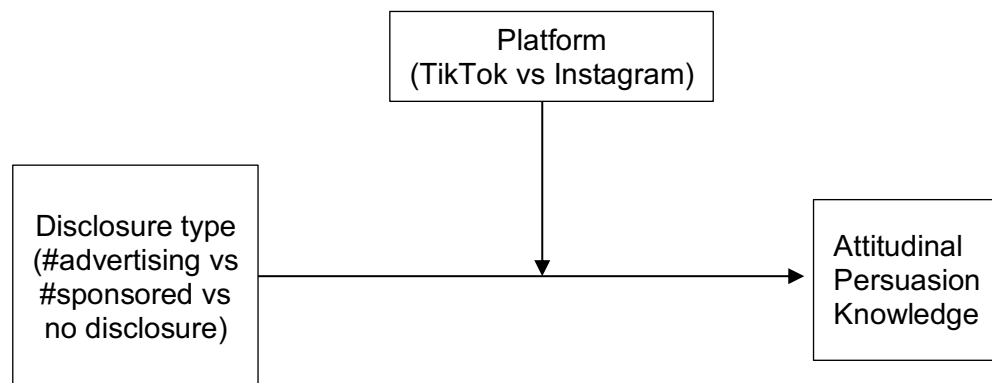


To measure whether the platform type had a moderating impact on the relation between disclosure type and attitudinal persuasion knowledge, as shown in Figure 3, another two-way ANOVA was performed. Disclosure type was again the independent variable, while attitudinal persuasion knowledge, alongside the moderating variable of platform type, were the dependent variables. An insignificant effect was found for the impact of platform type, $F(1, 182) = 1.21$, $p = .272$, partial $\eta^2 = .007$, and of disclosure type, $F(2, 182) = .44$, $p = .645$, partial $\eta^2 = .005$, on attitudinal persuasion knowledge. The interaction of platform type and disclosure type was also

found to have an insignificant effect on attitudinal persuasion knowledge, $F(2, 182) = 1.39, p = .253$, partial $\eta^2 = .015$. There was thus no difference measured in the attitudinal persuasion knowledge of participants who were shown a video from Instagram ($M = 3.98, SD = 1.06$) and who were shown a video from TikTok ($M = 3.71, SD = .93$). The impact of disclosures on attitudinal persuasion knowledge are thus also not moderated by the platform on which consumers view the sponsored content ($\neq H3b$).

Figure 3

The Moderating Role of Platforms on the Impact of Disclosure Type on Attitudinal Persuasion Knowledge.



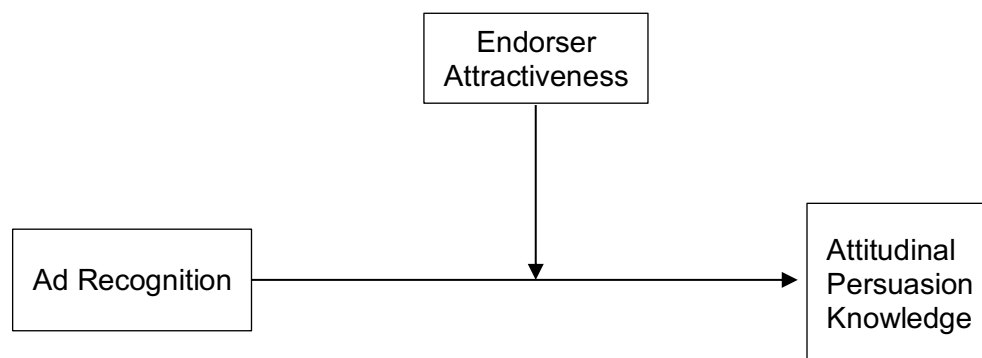
To test the impact of ad recognition on attitudinal persuasion knowledge, a linear regression analysis was performed. For this analysis, the dependent variable was the reversed variable for attitudinal persuasion knowledge, while the independent variable was ad recognition. The model was found to be insignificant, $F(1, 186) = .22, p = .642, R^2 = .001$. The impact of ad recognition on attitudinal persuasion knowledge was also insignificant and would have otherwise only accounted for a limited impact, $b = .05, t(186) = .47, p = .642$. This means that a higher ad recognition does not lead to a more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge ($\neq H4$).

To analyze the moderating role of endorser attitude on the relation between ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge, a moderation analysis using Hayes PROCESS macro Model 1 was performed. As endorser attitude is made up of three layers, which are attractiveness, similarity, and familiarity, three separate analyses were run. In all three analyses, the independent variable was ad recognition and the moderating variable, while the dependent variable was attitudinal persuasion knowledge.

When analyzing the moderating role of endorser attractiveness between ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge, endorser attractiveness was taken as the moderating variable, as shown in Figure 4. An interaction term was computed, which was made up out of Ad Recognition times Endorser Attractiveness, with a mean of 24.62 (SD = 7.56). The overall model was found to be insignificant, $F(3, 184) = 1.61, p = .189, R^2 = .03$. The model also found that attitudinal persuasion knowledge was not significantly impacted by ad recognition, $b = .57, t(184) = 1.29, p = .200$, endorser attractiveness, $b = .93, t(184) = 1.62, p = .106$, nor by the interaction between ad recognition and endorser attractiveness, $b = -.14, t(184) = -1.45, p = .149$. This means that endorser attractiveness does not moderate the relation between ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge.

Figure 4

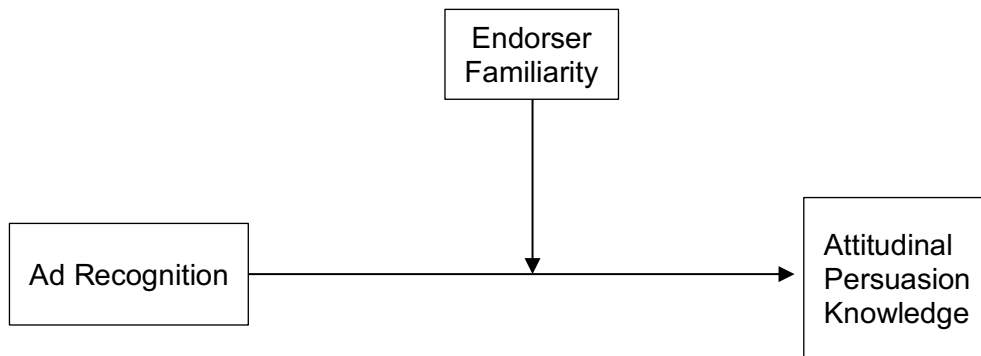
The Moderating Role of Endorser Attractiveness on the Impact of Ad Recognition on Attitudinal Persuasion Knowledge.



When analyzing the moderating role of endorser familiarity on the relation between ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge, as shown in Figure 5, endorser familiarity was used as the moderating variable. An interaction term was computed for this as well, which was Ad Recognition times Endorser Familiarity, with a mean of 13.07 (SD = 8.46). This model was also found to be insignificant, $F(3, 184) = .39, p = .764, R^2 = .01$. The model also found that attitudinal persuasion knowledge was not significantly impacted by ad recognition, $b = -.24, t(184) = -1.08, p = .284$, endorser familiarity, $b = -.38, t(184) = -.97, p = .333$, nor by the interaction between ad recognition and endorser familiarity, $b = .07, t(184) = .96, p = .337$. This showcased that endorser familiarity also does not play a moderating role on the impact of ad recognition on attitudinal persuasion knowledge.

Figure 5

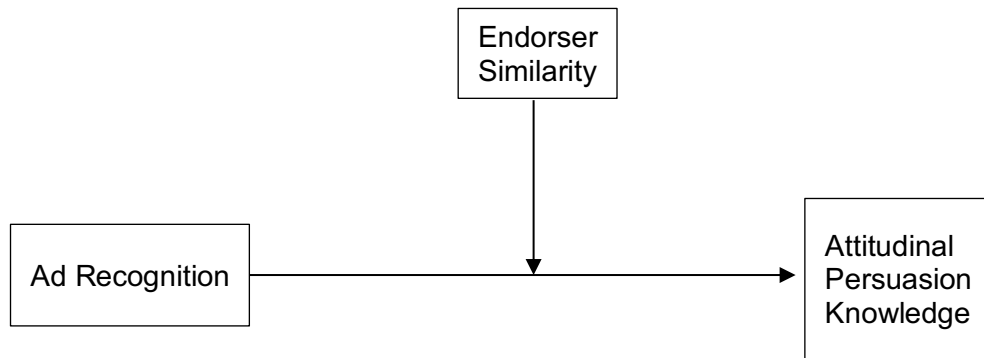
The Moderating Role of Endorser Familiarity on the Impact of Ad Recognition on Attitudinal Persuasion Knowledge.



To test the moderating role of endorser similarity on the impact of ad recognition on attitudinal persuasion knowledge, as shown in Figure 6, endorser similarity was used as the moderating variable. An interaction term was computed, which was Ad Recognition times Endorser Similarity, with a mean of 15.11 (SD = 8.45). This overall model was also found to be insignificant, $F(3, 184) = 2.49, p = .06, R^2 = .04$. The model also found that attitudinal persuasion knowledge was not significantly impacted by ad recognition, $b = .09, t(184) = .45, p = .655$, endorser similarity, $b = .31, t(184) = .89, p = .372$, nor by the interaction between ad recognition and endorser similarity, $b = -.03, t(184) = -.52, p = .605$. This means that endorser similarity also did not play a moderating role in the impact of ad recognition on attitudinal persuasion knowledge. These three moderating analyses showcase that endorser attractiveness, familiarity, and similarity, do not play a moderating role in the impact of ad recognition on attitudinal persuasion knowledge, thus endorser attitude was not found to moderate ($\neq H5$).

Figure 6

The Moderating Role of Endorser Similarity on the Impact of Ad Recognition on Attitudinal Persuasion Knowledge.

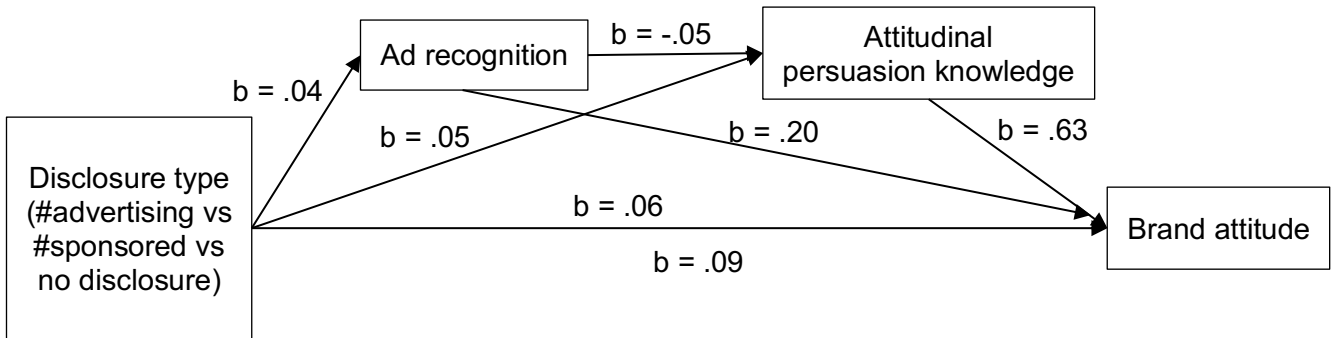


The last hypotheses measured whether ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge mediate the impact of disclosures on brand attitude. To do so a serial mediation analysis was performed using Hayes PROCESS macro Model 6. Disclosure type was the independent variable, with brand attitude as the dependent variable. For mediators, Ad Recognition and Attitudinal Persuasion Knowledge were used. The analysis revealed an insignificant indirect effect of disclosure type on brand attitude through ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge, $b = .09$, $t(186) = .87$, $p = .387$. There was thus no mediation ($\neq H6$). This can be ascribed to the fact that there was also no significant effect found between ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge, $b = -.05$, $t(185) = -.49$, $p = .627$, as well as to the fact that the impact of the disclosure type on both ad recognition, $b = .04$, $t(186) = .59$, $p = .557$, and attitudinal persuasion knowledge, $b = .05$, $t(185) = .53$, $p = .595$, were found to be insignificant. There was also no direct effect found between disclosure type and brand attitude, $b = .06$, $t(184) = .61$, $p = .541$.

While no mediation was found, the mediation analysis did showcase that brand attitude is impacted by both ad recognition, $b = .20$, $t(184) = 2.07$, $p = .040$, and attitudinal persuasion knowledge, $b = .63$, $t(184) = 8.89$, $p < .001$. Considering the beta's, attitudinal persuasion knowledge was found to have a higher impact on brand attitude ($b = .63$) than ad recognition ($b = .20$). This can also be found in Figure 7.

Figure 7

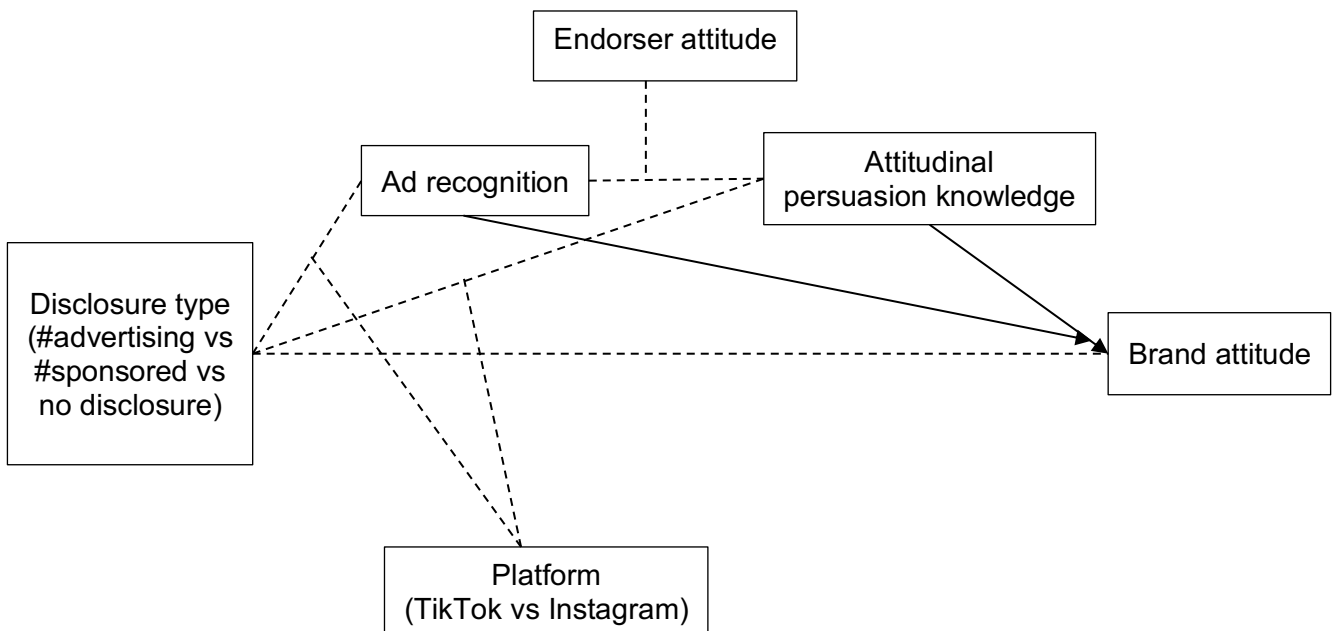
Outcomes of a Mediation Analysis Measuring the Impact of Disclosure Type on Brand Attitude Through Ad Recognition and Attitudinal Persuasion Knowledge.



The above-explained analyses showcase that all hypotheses had to be rejected. A corrected conceptual model, as visible in Figure 8, was created. This showcases that there were only two significant relationships found, which were the relationship between ad recognition and brand attitude, and attitudinal persuasion knowledge and brand attitude.

Figure 8

A Corrected Conceptual Model on the Impact of the Disclosure on Ad Recognition and Attitudinal Persuasion Knowledge, Moderated by Platform Usage.



5. Discussion

The study started with analyzing the impact of different disclosures on ad recognition. Participants were presented a manipulation with either #advertisement, #sponsored, or no disclosure. This was grounded in previous studies that found that explicit disclosures such as #advertisement created more ad recognition than inexplicit disclosures such as #sponsored (Eisend et al., 2020; Evans et al., 2017). An ANOVA found an insignificant main effect of the impact of disclosure type on ad recognition, as the impact on ad recognition was similar for #advertisement ($M = 5.63$, $SD = .60$), #sponsored ($M = 5.63$, $SD = .80$), and for the manipulation without a disclosure ($M = 5.55$, $SD = .85$). These means showcase that there was ad recognition amongst participants, but that the explicitness of disclosures did not necessarily impact the level of participants' ad recognition. Building upon this, when participants were explicitly asked whether they had seen an advertisement, participants who were shown #advertisement answered 'yes' 92.3% of the time, while this percentage was 87.5% for #sponsored, and 78% for no disclosures. This contradicts studies from, for example, Eisend et al. (2020) and Evans et al. (2017), who argued that an explicit disclosure, such as #advertisement, will lead to higher ad recognition in comparison to inexplicit disclosures, such as #sponsored. The current study, however, is in line with the findings of Jung and Heo (2019), who found that the explicitness of disclosure did not create different levels of ad recognition, as the current study also found no differentiation between explicit and inexplicit disclosures.

Jung and Heo (2019) also argued that the simple presence of a disclosure is enough to make consumers aware of the commercial intent, regardless of the explicitness of this disclosure. This statement is countered by the current study. The previously shown results not only showcase that the explicitness of disclosures does not have an impact on the level of ad recognition, but it also shows that ad recognition is similar for the manipulations with and without a disclosure, meaning that ad recognition is not dependent on the disclosures. This is in line with the finding that most of the participants in this study indicated that they recognized the commercial intent because the brand was visible (69.1%), while 24.5% indicated that it was because they read it in the caption. This would contradict previous research that indicated that disclosures are what make consumers aware of advertisements (e.g., Jung and Heo, 2019, De Veirman & Hudders, 2020; Evans et al., 2017) since instead in this study participants became aware of it because they saw a brand displayed clearly. These findings are in line with what Jung and Heo (2019) also found, which is that participants have learned to recognize sponsored content due to what they see in the advertisement. They argue that this could be because consumers have started to develop their PKM because they have previously seen similar tactics. However, the current study found a higher percentage of participants that recognized it because of the content (69.1%) than Jung and Heo (2019) found (30%). Building upon their theory, people have possibly become more aware of the commercial nature of sponsored content as they have been exposed to it more, especially since influencer marketing is increasingly

used in marketing strategies (Haenlein et al., 2020).

Since previous studies have contradicted each other on whether disclosures have an impact on attitudinal persuasion knowledge (Eisend et al., 2020) or not (Jung & Heo, 2019; Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2012), the current study analyzed whether a difference in disclosure makes a difference in attitudinal persuasion knowledge. Different disclosures were not found to lead to a difference in attitudinal persuasion knowledge, meaning that for #advertisement ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.01$), #sponsored ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 1.08$), or no disclosure ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.03$) there are similar levels of attitudinal persuasion knowledge. #Advertisement thus does not lead to a more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge than #sponsored or no disclosure. This contradicts the findings by Eisend et al. (2020), who found that disclosures lead to a more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge, which, according to them, can be ascribed to the fact that disclosures create more ad recognition which in turn creates a more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge. Using the argumentation by Eisend et al. (2020), the current study did not find an impact of disclosure type on attitudinal persuasion knowledge because it did not find an impact of disclosure type on ad recognition.

The main goal of this thesis was to find whether disclosures have a different impact on PKM between Instagram and TikTok. The platform would in this case act as a moderator between the disclosure type and either ad recognition or attitudinal persuasion knowledge. This hypothesis was grounded in previous studies that found that consumers use Instagram and TikTok for different reasons (Masciantonio et al., 2021) and that different motives for platform usage also lead consumers to respond differently to brand-related content (Buzeta, De Pelsmacker & Dens, 2020). Contrary to what was expected, there were no differences found between the platforms regarding the impact of disclosures on both ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge. This means that TikTok ($M = 5.61$, $SD = .76$) did not generate a higher ad recognition than Instagram ($M = 5.61$, $SD = .75$), neither did TikTok ($M = 3.71$, $SD = .93$) generate a more positive attitude than Instagram ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.06$). This can be explained by the findings of this study regarding participants' motives to use the platforms. It was expected that a Uses & Gratifications study on both platforms would showcase that, in line with previous research, Instagram was used mainly for social interactions (Kircaburun et al., 2020; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016) and TikTok was used for entertainment (Omar & Dequan, 2020; Falgoust, 2022). A previous study by Buzeta, De Pelsmacker, and Dens (2020) found that consumers interact more positively with brand-related content if they use a platform for entertainment purposes, compared to when they use it for social purposes. However, the study found that both platforms are used primarily for entertainment purposes, suggesting indeed that there should be no significant difference between platforms regarding the impact of disclosures.

The study also analyzed whether higher ad recognition leads to a more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge. No significant relationship between a higher ad recognition and attitudinal

persuasion knowledge was found, meaning that a higher level of ad recognition does not lead to a more negative attitude towards the advertisement. This is in line with findings presented by De Keyzer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker (2021) who also found that more ad recognition does not necessarily lead to more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge, but could also lead to a positive attitudinal persuasion knowledge. Yet the findings of this study, as well as the findings of the study by De Keyzer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker (2021), contradict other studies that did find higher ad recognition to lead to more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge (e.g., Jung & Heo, 2019; Boerman, Willemsen, and Van der Aa, 2017). This differentiation can be explained by the fact that attitudinal persuasion knowledge does not always have to be negative, even though it is often perceived to be negative. Friestad & Wright (1994), who initially wrote about PKM, coined attitudinal persuasion knowledge to be a neutral behavior that could be both positive and negative. With this finding, this study builds upon the research that showcases that consumers do not automatically have negative feelings toward an advertisement when they become aware of the commercial intent.

Sponsored content often showcases the endorser, which influences consumers' attitudinal persuasion knowledge, according to previous research (Pierre, 2023; Kim, Song, & Jang, 2021). A positive attitude towards the endorser will positively impact the attitudinal persuasion knowledge (Pierre, 2023). Endorser attitude was thus expected to have a moderating role in the impact of ad recognition on attitudinal persuasion knowledge. Endorser attitude was made up of three elements, which were all measured in relation to attitudinal persuasion knowledge. These were endorser attractiveness, endorser familiarity, and endorser similarity. Each of these elements was found to play an insignificant moderating role in the impact of ad recognition on attitudinal persuasion knowledge. Contrary to what is known about influencer marketing, which is that influencer similarity helps generate a more positive attitude towards sponsored content (Coco & Eckert, 2020; Audrezet, De Kerviler, & Moulard, 2020), the current study did not find endorser similarity to have an impact on attitudinal persuasion knowledge.

Previous studies by Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, and Neijens (2012) and Evans et al. (2017) found that disclosures indirectly impact brand attitude, as disclosures generate a higher ad recognition, which activates attitudinal persuasion knowledge, which in turn determines whether the attitude towards the brand become positive or negative. A more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge would then lead to a more negative attitude toward the brand visible in the sponsored content (Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, & Neijns, 2012; Evans et al., 2017). However, the findings of the current study contradict these previously performed studies. This study found no indirect effect between disclosure and brand attitude, meaning that ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge do not mediate this relationship. There was also no direct effect found between disclosures and brand attitude. Disclosures thus, contrary to what many brands are concerned about

(Chatterjee & Zhou, 2021), do not negatively impact brand attitude. What this analysis did showcase, however, is that there is a direct effect between ad recognition and brand attitude, and between attitudinal persuasion knowledge and brand attitude. These were both positive effects, meaning that a higher ad recognition ($b = .20$) and a more positive attitudinal persuasion knowledge ($b = .63$) can both cause a positive brand attitude.

5.1 Managerial implications

These results thus suggest that consumers have become more aware of the tactics that marketers use to reach them through social media, as regardless of whether there were disclosures present or not, participants recognized the commercial intent because they recognized that a brand was visible. This finding would suggest that consumers are becoming more aware of the commercial intent of sponsored content and that their persuasion knowledge is adjusting to this, which also comes with some managerial implications for policymakers.

This especially concerns the European Parliament, whose IMCO committee requested a report on influencer marketing and how to protect consumers from these hidden forms of advertising. In their report, they state that a lack of transparency can be dealt with through creating proper legislation on how to disclose the commercial nature of influencer posts, but that they are looking for ways in which disclosure can be best applied (Policy Department for Economic, Scientific, and Quality of Life Policies, 2022). The current study means that legislators will most likely have to consider other forms of disclosing sponsored content than in-text disclosures underneath the posts, as disclosures were found to have a limited impact on the ad recognition of participants.

The outcomes of this study also have managerial implications for brands and their marketers, as knowing what impacts ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge can impact the success of their campaigns. The current study found that positive attitudinal persuasion knowledge positively impacts brand attitude, as well as that a higher ad recognition positively influences brand attitude. Yet, contrary to what brands previously were concerned about (Chatterjee & Zhou, 2021), disclosures were not found to have a direct nor an indirect impact on brand attitude. For marketers, this can be of importance to know when embracing influencer marketing, as regulations regarding disclosures do thus not have to negatively impact consumers' attitudes towards the brand. Overall, this study's findings can help marketers understand how they can use influencer marketing to their advantage and conquer their fear regarding disclosure regulations impacting their brand.

A second implication that could be of importance to brands and marketers is that this study did not find a difference in the role that platform type plays within the relation between ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge. According to Crain (2022), marketers are shifting their strategies to comply with TikTok's mold on both platforms. As the current study found there to be no

differences between TikTok and Instagram regarding PKM, marketing strategies may indeed have to comply with both platforms, as they will yield similar results. This can also be ascribed to the finding of this study that consumers use both Instagram and TikTok for entertainment purposes, which, according to a study by Buzeta, De Pelsmacker, and Dens (2020), would yield similar consumer interactions with sponsored content. If both platforms are used for entertainment, and both platforms do not yield significant differences regarding PKM, then marketing strategies can be adjusted to these findings.

5.2 Limitations and future suggestions

The validity of this study is limited by the video that was used to test participants' responses. This video clearly showcased the brand, which participants also pointed out. Since a lot of participants indicated they recognized the commercial nature of the video due to the clear showcasing of the brand, it is possible to assume that this has impacted their ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge. Because of this, it is difficult to measure whether their ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge is a result of the disclosure that they were shown or because the brand was clearly central in the video. At the same time, this video is real content that participants could come across on their social media platforms, as the video was a pre-existing video created by a small endorser that fit the criteria that were set out. Still, this could be a stepping stone for further academic research. A content analysis can be done to help discover the tactics that are used in sponsored content, after which videos can be selected that fit with the different tactics. Participants can then be asked about the attitudinal persuasion knowledge regarding these videos, to find whether different tactics yield different responses.

Due to the sample size, the findings cannot be generalized. This research was focused on the inhabitants of the European Union, which has a total of 27 member states. The Netherlands was greatly overrepresented in the sample with 73.4%, and only 19 out of 27 member countries were present in the sample. The reason that this is important is that both platforms collect data on their users' locations to showcase posts to them that are related to their geographical location (Instagram Help Center; TikTok Support). This shapes the content that users see, meaning that citizens of different countries are thus shown different content, including sponsored content. As PKM is partly shaped by previous experiences with sponsored content (Friestad & Wright, 1994), location thus may impact participants' ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge, meaning that attitudinal persuasion knowledge may thus differ between inhabitants of different countries. This can be further tested in future studies, which could test whether the current findings regarding attitudinal persuasion knowledge are only found in the Netherlands, or that similar results can be found in other member state countries. It is important for the European Union to know whether attitudinal persuasion knowledge acts the same in each of their member states, or whether it differentiates based on the

content that consumers are shown due to their geographical location, in their IMCO report they declared that there currently is no EU legislation regarding sponsored content (Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, 2022). Knowing whether PKM differentiates between countries can help the European Parliament understand whether EU legislation will be useful or whether it should be the responsibility of individual member states.

6. Conclusion

This thesis aimed to research to what extent there is a difference between Instagram and TikTok regarding the impact of sponsored content disclosure on ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge. Through a quantitative experiment, participants' ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge were tested by being shown a video including one of three manipulations: #advertisement, #sponsored, or no disclosure. The goal was to answer the following research question:

To what extent does the wording of sponsored content disclosures have an impact on consumers' ad recognition and their attitudinal persuasion knowledge towards an advertisement on Instagram compared to TikTok?

The study first analyzed whether different disclosures have a different impact on ad recognition. The research found that this was not the case and that previous knowledge of related strategies may lead to more ad recognition than disclosures did. This can suggest that consumers' PKM has been developing and has started to recognize sponsored content more easily as a result of this. A similar analysis was done on the impact of different disclosures on attitudinal persuasion knowledge, but different disclosures were found to not have an impact on this either.

The main goal of the thesis was to make a comparison between the influence of TikTok and Instagram on PKM, under the assumption that both platforms were used by consumers with different purposes and that different motives for platform usage would lead to differences in how consumers respond to brand-related content. The current study did not find a difference between Instagram and TikTok in their moderating role, which was rooted in the fact that both platforms were used by the participants with the same motive in mind, namely entertainment.

The study also tested whether a higher ad recognition would lead to a more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge. However, no significant relationship was found between these two variables, which builds upon research that states that a higher ad recognition does not necessarily have to lead to a more negative attitudinal persuasion knowledge, but that instead, this can also create a more positive attitude. Alongside this analysis, another analysis was performed to see whether endorser attitude would play a moderating role in the impact of ad recognition on attitudinal persuasion knowledge. This analysis found that endorser attitude, split up into endorser attractiveness, endorser familiarity, and endorser similarity, did not have an impact.

Next to this, the study showcased those disclosures do not have a direct impact on brand attitude, nor do they have an indirect impact through ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge. This is especially relevant for brands and their marketers, as it showcases that disclosures do not negatively impact the attitude toward their brand. What does impact consumers' attitude towards a brand, however, was found to be both ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge, but not as a result of disclosures.

To answer the research question, the different wordings of sponsored content disclosures do not seem to make a lot of difference in terms of ad recognition and attitudinal persuasion knowledge. Alongside this, the impact of disclosures on PKM was also found to not be moderated by the platform on which content is shown. What did, however, impact ad recognition was the fact that a brand was clearly shown in the video. This created more ad recognition than the presence of disclosure. Besides the limited impact of disclosures on PKM, the study also found that contrary to what marketers are often concerned about, disclosures also do not have an impact on brand attitude.

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Appendix A: Survey pre-test

1.

a. How old are you?

...

b. What country are you from?

...

c. With what gender do you identify?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

2. Casetify phone cases

a. Please watch the video below before answering the questions

*** insert video ***

b. The video showcases Casetify phone cases. Are you familiar with this brand?

- Yes

- No

c. Please describe your overall feelings towards the brand in the advertisement you just saw.

→ Display only if 2b = yes

- Appealing/unappealing

[7 point range]

- Good/bad

- Pleasant/unpleasant

- Favorable/Unfavorable

- Likeable/Unlikeable

d. Please describe your overall feelings towards the person that is shown in the advertisement. This person is also referred to as the endorser.

When I saw the advertisement...

- I knew who the endorser was
 - I was aware of who the endorser was
 - I recognized the endorser
 - I was familiar with the endorser
 - I thought the endorser was nice-looking
 - I believed the endorser was good-looking
 - I thought the endorser was attractive
 - I thought the endorser was sexy
 - I felt like the endorser and I were alike
 - I felt I had a lot in common with the endorser
- [1-7 scale,
1: Strongly disagree,
7: Strongly agree]

3. Loop earplugs

a. Please watch the video below before answering the questions

*** insert video ***

b. The video showcases Loop earplugs. Are you familiar with this brand?

- Yes

- No

c. Please describe your overall feelings towards the brand in the advertisement you just saw.

→ Display only if 3b = yes

- Appealing/unappealing
 - Good/bad
 - Pleasant/unpleasant
 - Favorable/Unfavorable
 - Likeable/Unlikeable
- [7 point range]

d. Please describe your overall feelings towards the person that is shown in the advertisement. This person is also referred to as the endorser.

When I saw the advertisement...

- I knew who the endorser was
 - I was aware of who the endorser was
 - I recognized the endorser
 - I was familiar with the endorser
 - I thought the endorser was nice-looking
 - I believed the endorser was good-looking
 - I thought the endorser was attractive
 - I thought the endorser was sexy
 - I felt like the endorser and I were alike
 - I felt I had a lot in common with the endorser
- [1-7 scale,
1: Strongly disagree,
7: Strongly agree]

4. Akila sunglasses

a. Please watch the video below before answering the questions

*** insert video ***

b. The video showcases Akila sunglasses. Are you familiar with this brand?

- Yes

- No

c. Please describe your overall feelings towards the brand in the advertisement you just saw.

→ Display only if 4b = yes

- Appealing/unappealing
 - Good/bad
 - Pleasant/unpleasant
 - Favorable/Unfavorable
 - Likeable/Unlikeable
- [7 point range]

d. Please describe your overall feelings towards the person that is shown in the advertisement. This person is also referred to as the endorser.

When I saw the advertisement...

- I knew who the endorser was
 - I was aware of who the endorser was
 - I recognized the endorser
 - I was familiar with the endorser
 - I thought the endorser was nice-looking
 - I believed the endorser was good-looking
 - I thought the endorser was attractive
 - I thought the endorser was sexy
 - I felt like the endorser and I were alike
 - I felt I had a lot in common with the endorser
- [1-7 scale,
1: Strongly disagree,
7: Strongly agree]

5. Cluse watches

a. Please watch the video below before answering the questions

*** insert video ***

b. The video showcases Cluse watches Are you familiar with this brand?

- Yes

- No

c. Please describe your overall feelings towards the brand in the advertisement you just saw.

→Display only if 5b = yes

- Appealing/unappealing
 - Good/bad
 - Pleasant/unpleasant
 - Favorable/Unfavorable
 - Likeable/Unlikeable
- [7 point range]

d. Please describe your overall feelings towards the person that is shown in the advertisement. This person is also referred to as the endorser.

When I saw the advertisement...

- I knew who the endorser was
 - I was aware of who the endorser was
 - I recognized the endorser
 - I was familiar with the endorser
 - I thought the endorser was nice-looking
 - I believed the endorser was good-looking
 - I thought the endorser was attractive
 - I thought the endorser was sexy
 - I felt like the endorser and I were alike
 - I felt I had a lot in common with the endorser
- [1-7 scale,
1: Strongly disagree,
7: Strongly agree]

Appendix B: Survey experiment

1.

a. Which platform do you use on a regular basis?

- TikTok → Skip to 2. TikTok
- Instagram → Skip to 2. Instagram
- Both → Randomize 2. TikTok or 2. Instagram
- Neither → Skip to end of the survey

b. What is your current age? Please use numbers only.

... → Below 18, skip to end of the survey

c. What country do you currently reside in?

... → Non-Eu, skip to the end of the survey

d. With what gender do you identify?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

2. Manipulation

a. Please watch the video below before continuing onwards with the questions.

*** insert 1 of 6 manipulations***

3. PKM

a. Did you see any advertising in the video you just saw?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

b. If you did see any advertising, please describe what this advertising looked like.

...

c. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with the following statements, keeping in mind the video you saw.

The reason this brand is shown in this video is to...

- Stimulate people to want the advertised brand [1-7 scale,
- Encourage people to buy the brand 1: Strongly disagree,
- Make people think positively about the brand 7: Strongly agree]
- Attract attention to the brand
- Sell products
- Make people remember the brand

d. Please describe your overall feelings towards the brand in the video you just saw

- Unappealing/Appealing [7 point range]
- Bad/Good
- Unpleasant/Pleasant
- Unfavorable/Favorable
- Unlikeable/Likeable

e. Please describe your overall feelings towards the person that is shown in the advertisement. This person is also referred to as the endorser.

When I saw the advertisement...

- I knew who the endorser was [1-7 scale,
- I was aware of who the endorser was 1: Strongly disagree,
- I recognized the endorser 7: Strongly agree]
- I was familiar with the endorser
- I thought the endorser was nice-looking
- I believed the endorser was good-looking
- I thought the endorser was attractive
- I thought the endorser was sexy
- I felt like the endorser and I were alike
- I felt I had a lot in common with the endorser

f. Brands sometimes pay to show their brand in social media content. How do you think they are trying to influence you with this?

Please complete the following statement:

Brands try to influence me by...

- Hiding the commercial purpose of showing the brand [1-7 scale,
- Making sure it does not look like advertising 1: Strongly disagree,
- Making sure I am exposed to the brand 7: Strongly agree]
- Placing the brand in a context that I like
- Placing the brand in a context that people trust

g. The following statements will ask you to reflect on yourself.

- Seeing a brand in a video influences me [1-7 scale,
- Seeing a brand in a video influences me without 1: Strongly disagree,
- me realizing it 7: Strongly agree]
- I have bought a brand or product after I had seen it in a video
- I liked a brand more after seeing it in a video
- I know certain brands because I have seen them in a video

h. For these statements please reflect upon others.

- Seeing a brand in a video influences others [1-7 scale,
- Seeing brands in a video influences others without 1: Strongly disagree,
- them realizing it 7: Strongly agree]
- Others have bought a brand or product after seeing it in a video
- Others have started liking a brand more after seeing it in a video
- Others know certain brands because they have seen them in a video

i. Brands sometimes pay the producers of a video to show their brand within the video. What is your opinion about this?

I think that showing brands (for which the brand has paid in videos is ...

- Dishonest/honest [7 point range]
- Not trustworthy/trustworthy
- Incredible/credible
- Not truthful/truthful
- Insincere/sincere

j. Sometimes brands are shown in videos. For instance, the video you were shown earlier in this survey. What is your opinion on this?

I think that showing brands in videos is...

- Negative/positive [7 point range]
- Unattractive/attractive
- Boring/interesting
- Not amusing/amusing
- Irritating/pleasant
- Obtrusive/unobtrusive

4. Social media habits

In this last section you will be shown some statements regarding your reasons for using a platform. Please answer these as truthfully as possible and only answer for the platform that you use.

- a. I use TikTok because...
- It's enjoyable [1-7 scale,
 - It's entertaining 1: Strongly disagree,
 - I just like to look through my newsfeed 7: Strongly agree]
 - It's convenient to use
 - I can communicate with others for less effort
 - I can use it anytime, anywhere
 - It's a good way to catch up on news
 - I can learn about useful things
 - I can learn about things I don't know
 - I want to express myself freely
 - I want to meet people with my interests
 - I wonder what other people say

b. I use Instagram because...

- It's enjoyable
- It's entertaining
- I just like to look through my newsfeed
- It's convenient to use
- I can communicate with others for less effort
- I can use it anytime, anywhere
- It's a good way to catch up on news
- I can learn about useful things
- I can learn about things I don't know
- I want to express myself freely
- I want to meet people with my interests
- I wonder what other people say

[1-7 scale,

1: Strongly disagree,

7: Strongly agree]