



CHARACTERISTICS OF SPONSORED PERSONS

Which characteristics of sponsored persons are
of interest for companies to reach consumers?

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Equine Business Management

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Bachelor graduation assignment

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Preface

Since the marketing classes during my bachelor study I am very enthusiastic and interested in marketing, especially in sponsoring. Nowadays there is a lot of sponsoring and sponsored persons are often shown in social media, on tv, in published magazines and on the street. The daily confrontation with sponsoring and sponsored persons made me think more about this topic. Furthermore, I asked myself what characteristics are important for sponsored persons so that consumers feel addressed by the advertising. That is why, I choose this subject for my bachelor script. The script is a part of my bachelor study program 'Equine Business Management' at the AERES University of Applied Science.

I would like to thank my teacher Gert Wim Stoffer from the AERES University of Applied Science for his support and his feedback. Furthermore, I would like to thank all participants of the surveys and my interview partners.

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Summary

Sponsoring gets more and more important. Also, the sport sponsoring has become a marketing tool used frequently. In the course of time, social media platforms developed. In addition social media personalities got popular, as well as sponsoring in the equestrian sport. The number of influencers and with their popularity the influencer marketing is growing. People started to think about which criteria of choosing sponsored people, especially influencers, are important. In previous researches it was mentioned that there are measurable factors for choosing an influencer, such as the number of followers, or the search engine rank, and difficult-to-measure factors, such as the quality of content, or special characteristics.

This research project aim was to found characteristics for the selection of sponsored persons. The main question was: Which characteristics of sponsored persons are of interest for companies to reach consumers?

The characteristics, which were used in this study, were based on the properties mentioned in the Big Five model of Tupes and Christal.

The research was performed with four interviews with companies that already sponsored someone and three surveys, one for sponsored persons, one for consumers, and one for equestrian consumers. With 10, 84 and 57 respondents the research is limited in its validity. Yet, the research still shows characteristics which give an answer on the main question.

According to the interviews, the sponsored persons chosen by the companies should be open, not neurotic, very conscientious and extraverted.

80% of the sponsored persons described themselves as open to new experiences, and very conscientious, and were described by others as very conscientious (80%), critical (80%), and open (70%). According to consumers sponsored persons should be open (69%), not tolerant (46%), and very conscientious (42%).

Equestrian consumers want not tolerance (70%), openness (61%), and high conscientiousness (54%) among sponsored equestrian persons.

In conclusion sponsored people should be open for new experiences, and have a high conscientiousness. Further research is needed to find more reliable characteristics. Researches with a wider respondent rate are advised.

Zusammenfassung

Sponsoring wird immer wichtiger. Auch das Sportsponsoring ist zu einem häufig verwendeten Marketinginstrument geworden. Im Laufe der Zeit entwickelten sich Social-Media-Plattformen. Und Social-Media-Persönlichkeiten wurden populär. Ebenso wie das Sponsoring im Pferdesport. Die Anzahl der Influencer und mit ihnen das Influencer-Marketing wächst. Die Menschen begannen herauszufinden, welche Kriterien bei der Auswahl der gesponserten Personen, insbesondere von Influencern, wichtig sind. In früheren Studien wurde erwähnt, dass es messbare Faktoren gibt, wie zum Beispiel die Anzahl der Follower oder das Suchmaschinenranking, und schwer messbare Faktoren, wie die Qualität der Inhalte oder besondere Merkmale.

Ziel dieser Studie war es, Merkmale für die Auswahl von gesponserten Personen zu finden. Die Hauptfrage dieser Studie lautete: Welche Eigenschaften von gesponserten Personen sind für Unternehmen von Interesse, um die Konsumenten zu erreichen?

Die Charaktereigenschaften, die in dieser Studie verwendet wurden, basierten auf den Eigenschaften, die im Big Five-Modell von Tupes und Christal erwähnt wurden.

Für die Studie wurden Interviews mit vier Unternehmen durchgeführt, die bereits jemanden gesponsert haben, und drei Umfragen, eine mit gesponserten Personen, eine mit Konsumenten und eine mit Konsumenten im Pferdesektor. Mit 10, 84 und 57 Befragten sind die Befragungen in ihrer Aussagekraft begrenzt. Dennoch zeigte die Studie Charaktereigenschaften, die eine Antwort auf die Hauptfrage geben.

Unternehmen würden gerne Personen sponsern die offen, nicht neurotisch, extrovertiert und sehr gewissenhaft sind, ergaben die Interviews.

80% der gesponserten Personen bezeichneten sich selbst als offen für neue Erfahrungen und sehr gewissenhaft und werden von anderen als gewissenhaft (80%), kritisch (80%) und offen (70%) bezeichnet. Nach Ansicht der Konsumenten sollten gesponserte Personen offen (69%), nicht tolerant (46%) und sehr gewissenhaft (42%) sein.

Reitsportkonsumenten wollen keine Toleranz (70%), Offenheit (61%) und hohe Gewissenhaftigkeit (54%) bei gesponserten Reitern.

Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, dass gesponserte Personen offen für neue Erfahrungen und sehr gewissenhaft sein sollten. Weitere Studien sind notwendig, um zuverlässigere Ergebnisse zu finden. Studien mit einer höheren Befragungsrate werden empfohlen.

1 Introduction

1.1 Sponsoring

In 1960 a phase of sport, sport advertising and surreptitious advertising started. The pioneering days of sponsoring were from 1960 until 1984. From 1980 the professional sponsoring started. Companies began to plan their commitment systematically, especially in the field of sports, and selected sponsorships were integrated into corporate communications. From 1984 until 1995 sponsoring extended to the fields of culture and art, social and environmental issues. The sponsoring volumes increased rapidly, and the media and program sponsoring were established. The professionalisation of cultural, social and environmental sponsoring took place between 1995 and 2002. Sponsoring became an integral part of the companies' communication mix and companies searched for systematic funding opportunities. In 2002 the economisation and the associated orientation towards efficiency of sponsoring started. Sponsoring was used to reach economic goals such as customer loyalty, and new customer acquisition. Later the phase of media sponsoring started. Companies extended their sponsoring activities to new media (especially the internet). (Bruhn M. , 2003) (Bruhn P. D., 2008) (Hermanns & Marwitz, 2008)

Over the past several decades sport sponsoring has grown in popularity worldwide. (Henseler, Wilson, & Westberg, 2011) The whole sponsoring volume in Germany has increased grown constantly since 2011 with a yearly growth of approximately 200 million euros. In the year 2014 German companies spent 4,8 billion euros for sponsoring. (Hohenauer, 2016)

For this reason, it is important to find out what makes sponsoring more efficient.

Today, five different types of sponsoring exist: sport sponsoring, culture sponsoring, social sponsoring, environmental sponsoring and program sponsoring. (Engler & Hautmann, 2010) (Ruda & Klug, 2010) Sport sponsoring is the oldest and most important form of sponsoring. In the sport sponsoring most of the athletes, clubs, and teams are financially supported by a sponsor. In return, their athletes wear the sponsors name visible on their jerseys or use some of the sponsors sport equipment. The financial support of a sponsor of art exhibitions, concerts etc. is called cultural sponsoring. The name of the sponsor will be seen on posters, programme booklets and at the event itself. People, institutions, and events in the social sector are sponsored through social sponsoring. The aim of environmental sponsorship is to promote the ecological aspect of the environment.

Program sponsoring includes the sponsoring of TV programs and product placements. (Greyer, Ephrosi, & Magerhans, 2015) (Pepels, 2011) (Weis, 2016)

1.2 Sponsoring in the equestrian sector

On the social media 750 billion people follow the equestrian sport worldwide. The equestrian sector in Germany and the Netherlands is big. The turnover of the German horse economy is figured to be around 6,7 billion euros. In the Netherlands the turnover per year is around 1,5 and 2 billion euros in the equestrian sector. (FN...aktuell - Zahlen, Daten, Fakten 2019, 2019) (Nederland Paardenland)

Especially in the equestrian sport a lot of luxury marketing takes place. Usually in form of sponsoring from luxury manufacturers on equestrian events, advertising contracts with popular equestrian athletes, the merging of product lines and the use of horses and other typical motifs from equestrian sports. Popular examples for sponsorships in the equestrian sector are Hermes, Roeckl, Rolex, Mercedes Benz, and Gucci, Chanel, and Escada. (Hartmann & Spiller, 2015)

1.3 The development of influencers

In general, sponsored content has in contrast to user-generated content a negative brand attitude. (Müller & Christandl, 2018)

The moral appropriateness of the sponsor is important for fans who feel less connected with sponsored sport teams. (Peluso, Rizzo, & Pino, 2018) Also, the prominence of a brand has influence on the success of the sponsoring. People remember the names of sponsors better the more prominent the brand is. (Pham & Johr, 2001)

In the sponsorship of an event should be a fit between the sponsor and the event to have a stronger response and to maintain a positive self-identity. (Speed & Thompson, 2000) The fit has influence to the purchase intention and should be an important criterion when sponsorship decisions are made in companies. Fit perception is influenced by sport identification and brand cohesiveness. (Bennett, Gregg, & Gwinner, 2008)

Brands can also sponsor persons, such as vloggers or influencers. The term influencer marketing was first mentioned in a non-fiction book by Robert Cialdini published in 2001. Cialdini notes that people are finding out about fewer and fewer topics and are relying on the advice of influencers during the decision-making process. (Nirschl & Steinberg, 2018) Influencers are people who publish content in the form of text, images, audio, or

video on a topic at a high and regular frequency and initiate social interaction. Publication takes place via internet-based communication channels such as blogs and social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat or Twitter. Influencers have a high reach, a high reputation, and a strong presence in the social networks. (Deges, n.d.) They have a big impact on their followers and share their opinions about brands and products. (Clement, n.d.) Companies use influencers to achieve marketing and communication goals. (online marketing.de, n.d.)

The first blogs were created at the beginning of the internet. Initially, individuals such as Tim Berners-lee and organisations such as the National Center for Supercomputing Applications had regularly updated websites with links to other online-sources. Soon after, diary-like websites were created with a focus on personal topics. In mid-1999, service providers began automating the technical aspects of weblog design and publishing. This made blogging accessible to a wider audience. The publishing of weblogs became easier and easier and a fan community formed that still exists today.

The first video within a blog was posted by Adam Kontras on the second of January 2000 for his family and friends. In 2004 the first pure video blog was published. With the founding of the online video portal YouTube, the interest in video blogging increased. (Petr & Brithuber)

Especially today in a time where social media brand influencers are on the rise and have become one of the biggest public relations and marketing trends of 2017. (Glucksman, 2017) 39 percent of all companies in the world maintain influencer marketing. (Statista, n.d.)

Vloggers have blogs where each post is a video about products they use or for their personal life. (Conway, 2014) (Lee & Watkins, 2016) With these vlogs they have different revenue models and five of these are based on sponsoring. The first one is advertising before a vlog. Big international YouTube-Stars earn approximately seven dollars for thousand ad views. (YouTube gets 45% of the earnings.) The second one is partnerships. The vlogger gets products of a company or a percentage of the profit. Big YouTubers earn with the called product placement between 5.000 and 15.000 euros, depending on the market, the range and the target group. The third model is undertaking events. Vlogger or blogger organise an event and the visitors pay an entrance fee. The influencer gets a part of the profit. The fourth one is merchandise and the last one is guest appearances for example in a tv-show. (bright.nl, 2017) (Start Finance, n.d.)

Most of the influencers get less than 500 dollars for one campaign. A study of the 'Werbeagentur Jung von Matt' and the 'Influencer-Plattform Brandnew and Facelift' shows that 71,08% of the influencers get less than 500 dollars or even something else than money for a campaign. During this study 1.200 influencers from America and Europe were asked. Only three of them get 25.000 dollars or more. (Schwär, 2018) The person who earns the most money per post is Kylie Jeller. She earns one million dollars per post. (Stern, 2018)

Great potential of sponsoring lies in the possibility of reaching target groups of certain niches. This is due to the partly strong specialisation of some influencers. Thus, a wide variety of customer groups can be addressed individually. (Firsching, 2015) The most popular Instagram industries are food, travel, fashion and style, photography, lifestyle, design, beauty, and sport and fitness. (Forsey, 2019) Studies have shown that women between the ages of 12 and 32 are those that are mostly influenced by influencer marketing. (Benten, 2015)

1.4 Characteristics

In 1936 Allport and Odbert extracted 17954 personality relevant terms from dictionaries. Tupes and Christal found five factors for personal traits in the 1950s and 1960s. Since 1980, the Big Five model has been the most established and widely accepted model for personality description. Nowadays it even is the reference model for it. The central assumption in the Big Five model is that there are personality differences between individuals which are expressed through behavioural and experiential patterns. The five central personality dimensions to which the personality differences are attributed are neuroticism, extraversion, openness, tolerance, and conscientiousness. The personality dimensions of the Big Five are different for each person, but always present (at least for people from western cultures). The Big Five model is used to identify characteristics of persons because the model describes the most important characteristics of a person precisely and completely. The model makes it possible to characterise people according to a number of characteristics. (Bipp, 2006) (Costa Jr & McCrae, 1992) (Gerlitz & Schupp, 2005) (Rammstedt, Kemper, Klein, Beierlein, & Kovaleva, 2012)

1.5 Important characteristics of influencers

Followers trust influencers (such as Instagrammers, YouTubers, Bloggers and Vloggers) more than commercials. (Jaakonmäki, Müller, & vom Brocke, 2017) Influencers are seen as reliable in ensuring that followers are stimulated to copy their opinion and behaviour. (Benten, 2015) The followers of influencers are a big opportunity for brands to implement new marketing strategies and introduce their products. (Varga & Akos, 2018)

To have a better brand perception with a vlog, companies have to choose a vlogger who has similar beliefs like the company. (Lee & Watkins, 2016) In the blogosphere, thus all the blogs on the internet and their writers and readers, three factors are decisive on the marketing influence strength, the influential authors and the identifying potential: the network, the activeness and the content. (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.) (Li, Lai, & Chen, 2011)

The most important factors for choosing an influencer are the number of followers, the age, and the gender. Also, the user engagement is a creator related factor for choosing an influencer. (Jaakonmäki, Müller, & vom Brocke, 2017) There are two types of criteria to measure influencers. The first ones are difficult-to-measure, such as “quality of content,” and the others are highly measurable factors, which include page views and search engine rank. (Glucksman, 2017)

Influencers should be self-confident, because this shows confidence in the brand which they promote. Another important characteristic for social media influencers is authenticity. Influencers should be genuine, honest, relatable, and open with their followers. Furthermore, influencers should be interactive and get in contact with their followers to get feedback. (Glucksman, 2017) Followers admire, trust, and can relate to the influencer. Influencers remain a trusted and authentic source to their followers. (Woods, 2016)

Enthusiasm for the blog or the YouTube-, or Instagram-Profile and passion are important characteristics for influencers to be successful. Influencers have to be personal and create something like an online-friendship with their followers. Kindness and spontaneity are two other important characteristics for influencers to be successful. Influencers need to have renewal and assertiveness. They must post new content regularly and offer differing content to other influencers. (FABTASTIC Leisure-Travel-Marketing, 2017)

The perfect brand fit and the authenticity are two criteria for the selection of an influencer. This has a lot to do with his personality and two criteria, the image of the brand and the image of the opinion leader, which should match as well as possible to ensure a perfect brand fit. Influencers must be able to identify with the brand. Authenticity of an influencer is strongly related to the brand fit. In addition, the number of collaborations can affect the credibility of the opinion leader. Influencers should not cooperate with various other companies in the same industry in order to convey the brand message credibly and authentically. (Firsching, 2015) (Hellenkemper, 2018)

Media personalities have to be considered precisely, because media figures can influence consumer's opinion of brands strongly if viewers/followers find similarities with the media figures. (Lee & Watkins, 2016) A number of characteristics of sponsored persons which are of interest for consumers have already been identified, but which of these help companies best to reach their consumers and achieve their marketing and communication goals has not been found out yet. For this reason, it is important to know which characteristics of influencers there are for companies to reach consumers. It could even be possible for companies to completely rely on sponsoring on for example Instagram and not use any other marketing instruments. This means that the sponsored persons should be chosen very wisely to help address the right target group. This makes it so important to realise which characteristics companies have to look for.

1.6 Main question and sub-questions

Which characteristics of sponsored persons are of interest for companies to reach consumers?

Sub-questions:

1. Which characteristics do sponsored persons have?
2. Which characteristics of sponsored persons are of interest for companies to reach their goals of a sponsoring campaign?
3. Which characteristics of sponsored persons are of interest for consumers?
4. Which characteristics of sponsored persons in the equestrian sector are of interest for consumers?

1.7 Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to find out more detailed criteria for sponsored persons. This is going to answer the main question what the decisive characteristics of persons are which consumers appreciate in sponsored people. The answers should be easy to use for companies. The outcomes of the study should make it easier for the target group of this study, companies and marketers, to find a matching person who can be sponsored. The person should fit with the brand or company and its goals. So that companies will lose less money when using sponsoring. Especially nowadays, many internet users are able to get information on new trends through their time online. This is a big chance for companies to address their target group directly and find out more about the logic of following sponsored people.

2 Material and methods

2.1 Experimental design

The research is an explorative study. The aim has been to find characteristics of sponsored persons which are of interest for companies to reach consumers.

2.2 Material

Partly the study population was selected randomly (the participants of the surveys and the sponsored persons) and partly chosen because of their marketing with sponsored persons (the companies).

The interviews were done with companies. These companies were chosen randomly. The only criterion for participating companies was that they already sponsor people. All companies had to agree to an interview.

The survey for consumers and the equestrian consumers should be filled in by 100 people. 100 completed surveys are necessary to get a reliable result. (surveymonkey, n.d.) (surveymonkey, n.d.) There are no requirements. The region where the participants come from was not relevant.

The survey for vloggers and influencers should be made by 50 vloggers or influencers. The requirement of the vloggers and influencers is that they get sponsored. There are no other requirements.

2.3 Methods/techniques

This research has a quantitative and a qualitative character. The data from the survey are quantitative and the data from the interviews are qualitative.

To find out characteristics of sponsored persons a mix of the BFI-10 and the Itebatterie TIPI was used. The Itebatterie TIPI is based on the study of Gosling, Rentfrow and Swann Jr.. Both are surveys to measure the five main dimensions of the personality with only two items per dimension. (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann Jr., 2003) (Rammstedt, Kemper, Klein, Beierlein, & Kovaleva, 2012)

There are always two statements to find out if a person has these characteristics or not. The respondents agree with one of the two statements. One of the two statements means that the characteristics apply. The other statement means that the characteristics are not present. The two statements for extraversion are: 'I am rather reserved.', and 'I am extroverted and sociable.'. To find out if a person is tolerant those statements are asked: 'I trust others easily and compassionate and warm-hearted.', and 'I am critical.'. The statements to find out if a person has a high conscientiousness: 'I am comfortable, inclined to laziness and careless.', and 'I complete tasks thoroughly.'. The two statements for neuroticism are: 'I am relaxed and do not let stress put me off.', and 'I get a little nervous and insecure.'. To find out if a person is open these statements are set: 'I am conventional.', and 'I am open for new experiences.'. (Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann Jr., 2003) (Rammstedt, Kemper, Klein, Beierlein, & Kovaleva, 2012)

The used survey was needed to find characteristics of sponsored persons which are important for consumers. The interviews were needed to find out what is important for companies regarding sponsored persons and to find out characteristics of vloggers/influencers. The data collection took place in interviews and with surveys. The sub-questions will be answered with the following methods:

1. Which characteristics do sponsored persons have?

The chosen method to answer this sub-question was a survey with sponsored persons such as influencers. The survey was sent to influencers via mail. The sponsored persons should answer questions regarding to their characteristics, their main topic, and their previous sponsorships. The survey is attached to this document. The characteristics were asked based on the properties mentioned in the Big Five model of Tupes and Christal. (Rammstedt, Kemper, Klein, Beierlein, & Kovaleva, 2012)

2. Which characteristics of sponsored persons are of interest for companies to obtain a good result with the sponsoring campaign?

To answer this question, companies which already sponsored people, were interviewed. Companies were asked about their previous sponsorships, their marketing with social media influencers and what they want to convey to their customers. The characteristics were asked based on the properties mentioned in the Big Five model of Tupes and Christal. (Rammstedt, Kemper, Klein, Beierlein, & Kovaleva, 2012) The questions are attached to this document.

3. Which characteristics of sponsored persons are of interest for consumers?

To answer this sub-question, a survey was filled in by people on the internet, containing about the view of consumers about sponsored persons, and what they are looking for in sponsored persons. The characteristics were asked based on the properties mentioned in the Big Five model of Tupes and Christal. (Rammstedt, Kemper, Klein, Beierlein, & Kovaleva, 2012) The survey is attached to this document.

4. Which characteristics of sponsored persons in the equestrian sector are of interest for consumers?

The chosen method to answer the sub-question was a survey. The survey was published on the internet and contains questions to find out what characteristics of sponsored persons in the equestrian sector are of interest for consumers and what is important for them regarding influencers in the equestrian sport. Based on the properties mentioned in the Big Five model of Costa and McCrae the characteristics were asked. (Costa Jr & McCrae, 1992) The survey is attached to this document.

3 Planning

Week	Activity
6-14	Writing vooronderzoek
15	Sending vooronderzoek to my supervisor
16	
17	Feedback moment with my supervisor & improving vooronderzoek
19 (06.05.)	Deadline vooronderzoek
20-22	Improving vooronderzoek
22	Sending vooronderzoek to afstudeer office & looking for interview partners
23	Waiting for feedback
24	Starting survey & carry out interviews
25	Carry out interviews
26	Carry out interviews, End of survey, writing results
27	Writing the discussion and conclusion
28	Control the report
29	Submit afstudeerwerkstuk
33 (12.08.)	Deadline graduation assignment

Table 1: Planning

The interviews were done with companies. In week 24, 25, and 26 the interviews took place. There were done four interviews with companies.

The surveys for the consumers and the equestrian consumers were set out on the internet and spread via Facebook and WhatsApp. 100 people should participate on the study.

The survey for the influencers was sent to influencers via email. 50 influencers should fill in the survey.

4 Results

All sub-questions were answered with different methods and by different participants. This chapter includes the results of the sub-questions.

4.1 Characteristics of sponsored persons

The first sub-question is about the characteristics of sponsored persons. The chosen research method was a survey. The survey was sent to 80 sponsored persons of different topics like fashion and lifestyle, travelling, and horses via mail.

4.1.1 General characteristics of the respondents

There were ten participants who took part at the survey. All respondents were female and were living in Germany. Most of the respondents were 50 and older. 3 respondents were between 20 and 29. In figure 1 the age of the respondents is shown.

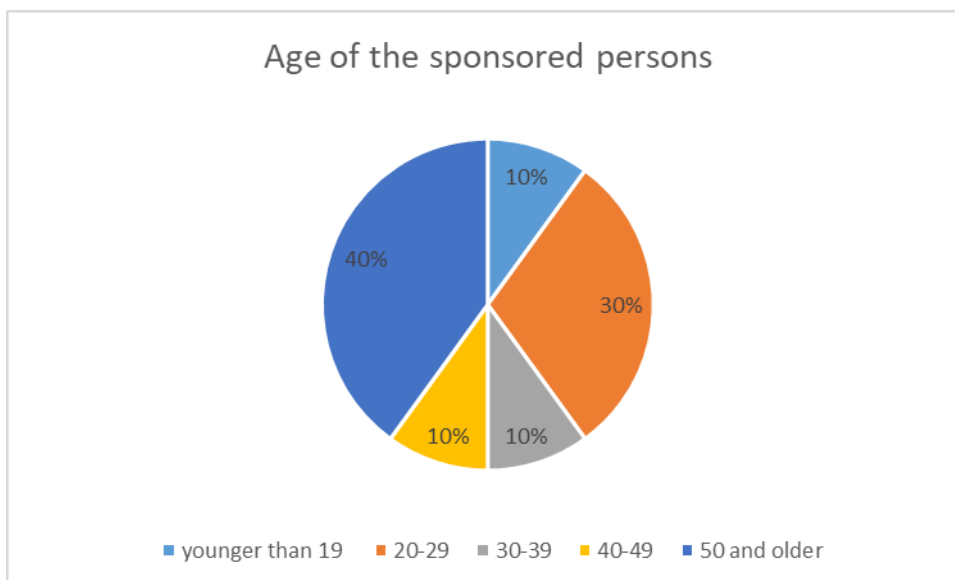


Figure 1: Age of the sponsored persons

All of the sponsored persons are using the social media platform 'Instagram'. 80% of the respondents are using 'Facebook'. Which is shown in figure 2.

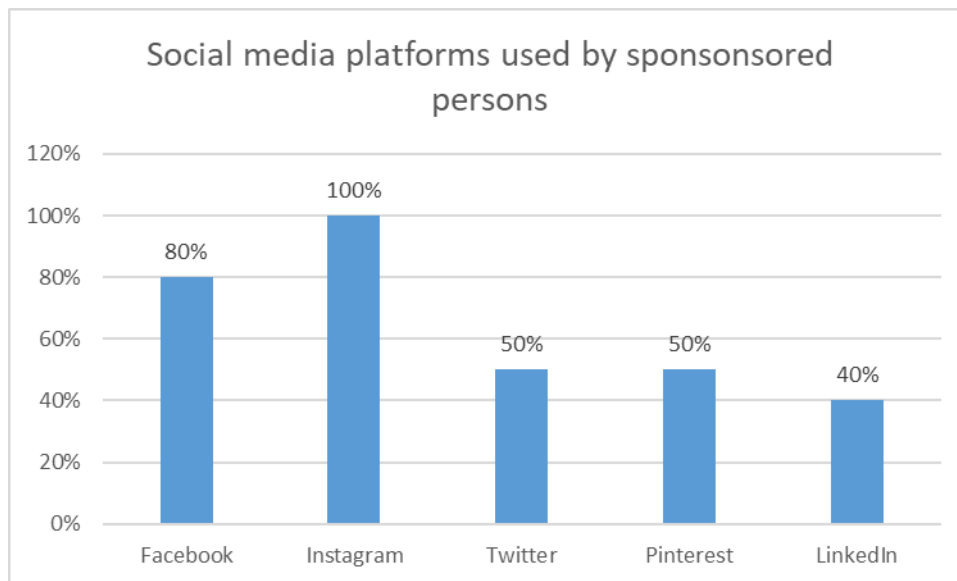


Figure 2: Social media platforms used by sponsored persons

Half of the participants have horses as main topic on their social media account. This can be seen in figure 3. 40% of the participants have travelling as their main theme and 10% lifestyle. 10% has other things as their main topic.

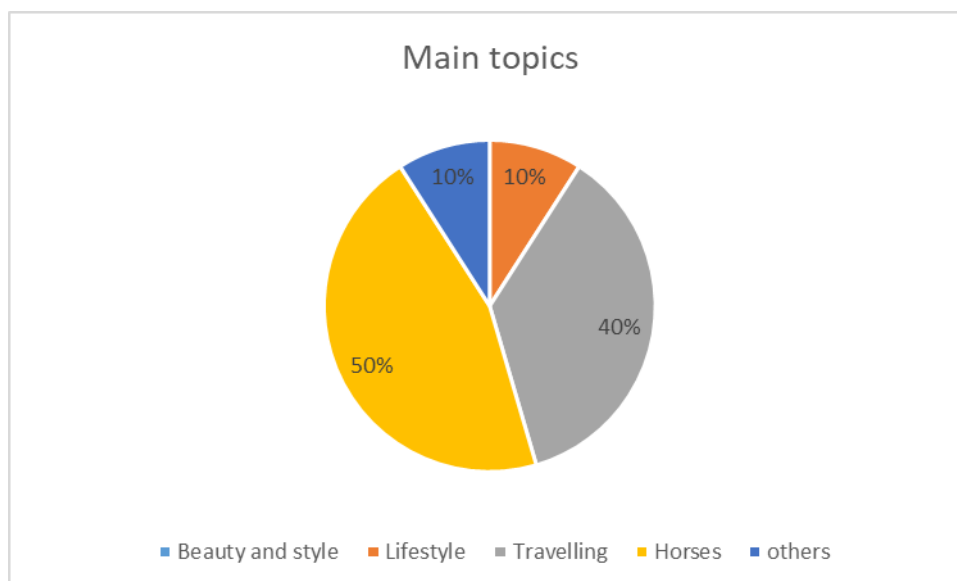


Figure 3: Main topics of sponsored persons

4.1.2 Answer on the sub-question

Most of the sponsored persons see themselves as open to new experiences and say that they complete tasks thoroughly. Furthermore, the participants would describe themselves as extroverted and sociable as well. All characteristics can be seen in figure 4.

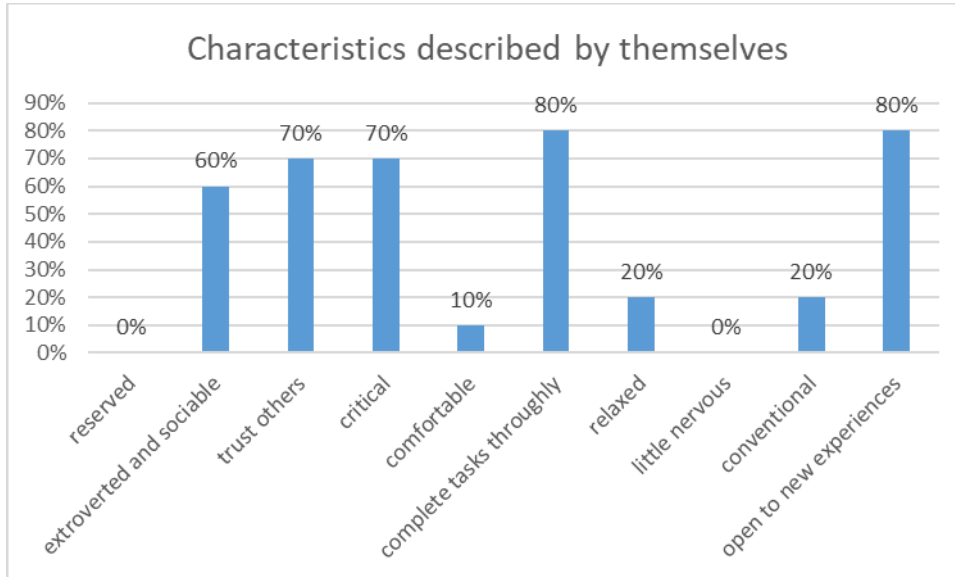


Figure 4: Characteristics of sponsored persons described by themselves

Figure 5: 'Characteristics of sponsored persons described by others' shows the characteristics of sponsored persons described by others. Most of the sponsored persons are critical and complete tasks thoroughly. Moreover, the sponsored people are described as open to new experiences.

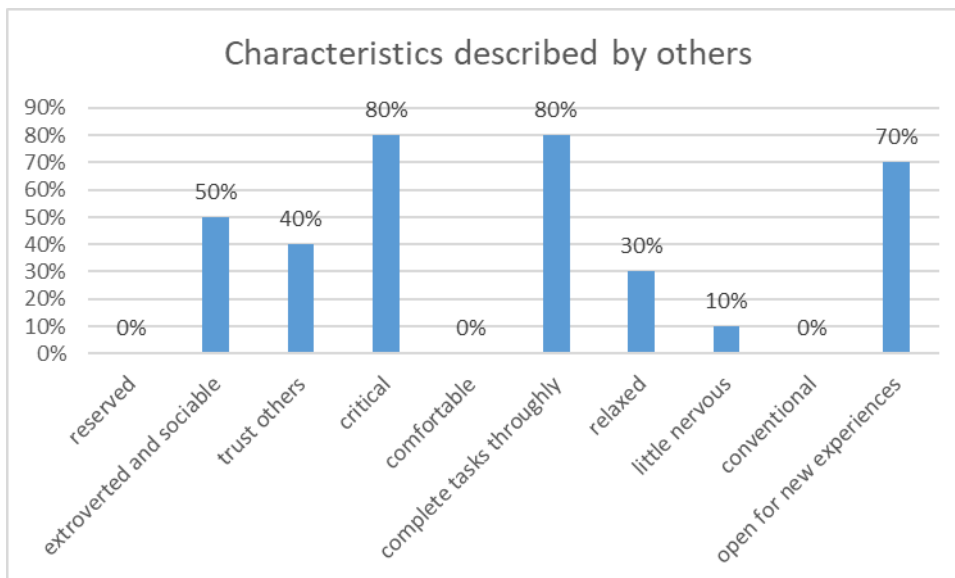


Figure 5: Characteristics of sponsored persons described by others

90% of the sponsored persons knew the reason for their sponsorship, meaning why the company chose them as their sponsored person. The person has to fit to the products which was the reason for half of the sponsors to choose this person. The authenticity of the person was important for 40% of the companies and the reason to sponsor this person. The other reasons were lifestyle, good interaction and the possibility to reach a big, new, and young target group.

4.2 Important characteristics of sponsored persons for companies

The aim of this sub-question was to find out which characteristics of sponsored persons are of interest for companies. This sub-question should be answered by interviews with four companies.

4.2.1 General characteristics of the respondents

The first company was 'Mühldorfer Pferdefutter' a German company for horse feeding. 'Mühldorfer Pferdefutter' sponsors successful equestrian athletes and influencers. Another company, which was interviewed, was 'Itzehoer Versicherung' an insurance company from Germany. 'Itzehoer Versicherung' sponsors different musicians, a triathlon-trainee-professional and two vaulting athletes. Another company was 'Finstral'. The company builds windows, front doors, and winter gardens and is placed in Italy. 'Finstral' sponsors skiers and biathletes. The last company was 'Equimunich'. 'Equimunich' is an online equestrian sport shop which is placed in Germany. The company sponsors equestrian influencers.

4.2.2 Answer on the sub-question

According to the companies there are a number of characteristics a sponsored person should have or should not have. Sponsored persons should not be comfortable, inclined to laziness and careless, and not get little nervous and insecure. Being extroverted, sociable, and open for new experiences are characteristics sponsored persons should have. The persons should complete tasks thoroughly, be relaxed, and do not let stress put them off. For all interviewed companies the properties critical and conventional are irrelevant. The characteristic reserved is for the half of the companies extraneous. Furthermore, trust in others, compassionates, and warm-heartedness are for the companies irrelevant as well.

4.3 Important characteristics of sponsored persons for consumers

The aim of this sub-question was to find out which characteristics of sponsored persons are of interest for consumers. A survey was set up on Facebook and WhatsApp to answer this sub-question. In total there were 84 persons who participated in this study.

4.3.1 General characteristics of the respondents

82% of the respondents were female and 18% male. The biggest group of participants was between 20 and 29 years old. The second biggest group was between 30 and 39 years old. In figure 6 the different age groups can be seen. Most of the respondents use Facebook as social media platform (87%). Only 1% of the respondents do not use social media platforms at all. The use of social media platform is shown in figure 7. 10% of the participants of the survey were living in the Netherlands and 89% in Germany.

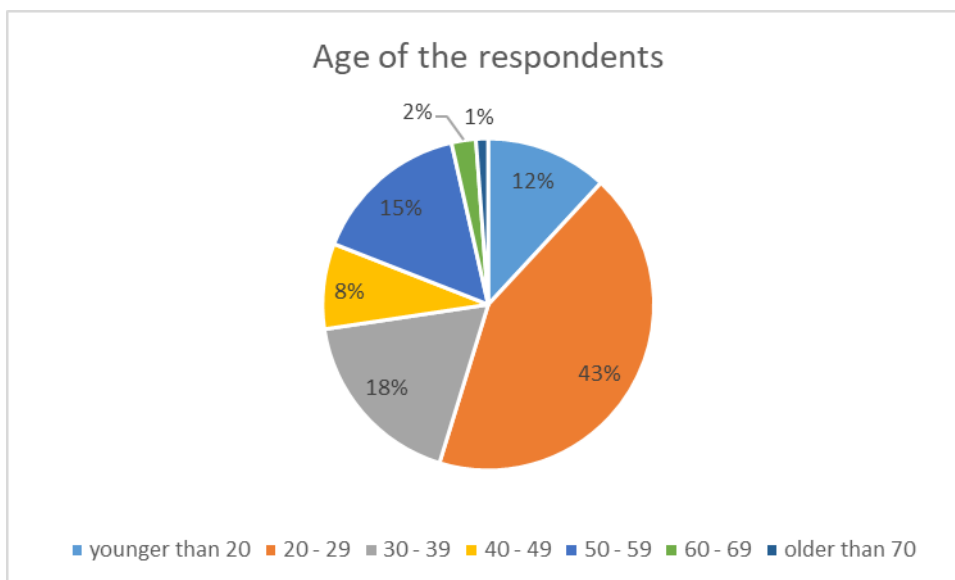


Figure 6: Age of the respondents

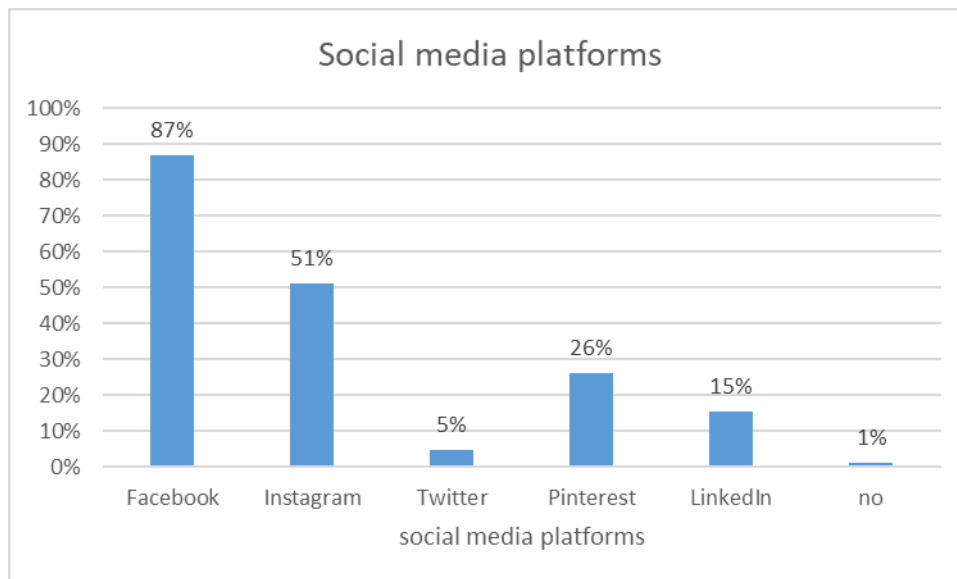


Figure 7: Social media platforms

4.3.2 Answer to the sub-question

The most important characteristic a sponsored person should have is the openness for new experiences. 46% of the respondents think that sponsored persons should be critical. Sponsored people should complete tasks thoroughly. All characteristics sponsored people should have according to the participants of the survey can be seen in figure 8.

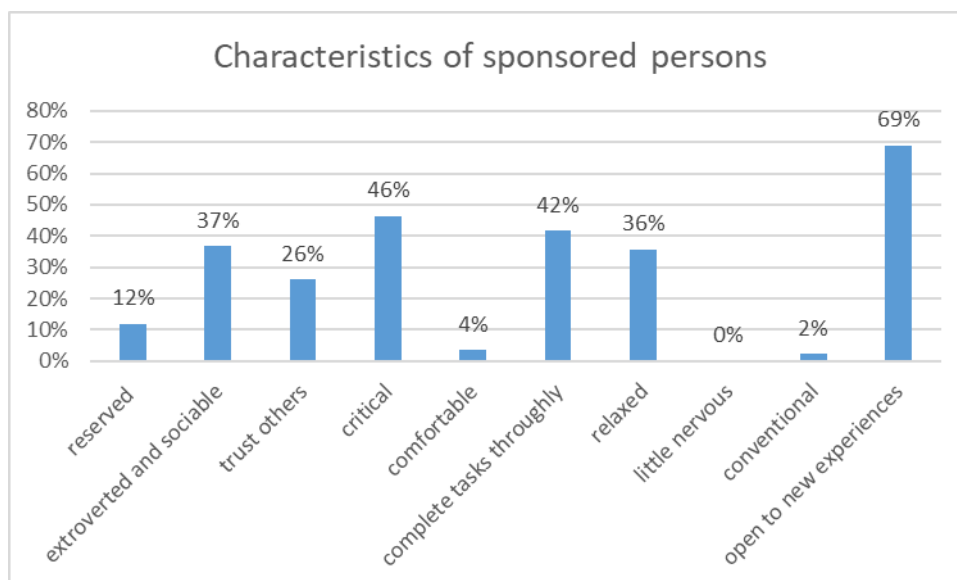


Figure 8: Characteristics of sponsored persons

4.4 Important characteristics of sponsored persons in the equestrian sector for consumers

This sub-question was important to find out which characteristics of sponsored persons in the equestrian sector are of interest for consumers. To answer this sub-question a survey was set out on Facebook and WhatsApp.

4.4.1 General characteristics of the respondents

91% of the respondents were female, only 9% were male. In figure 9 it is possible to see the age difference of the participants. Most participants were between 20 and 29. In the age group between 60 and 69 there were no participants.

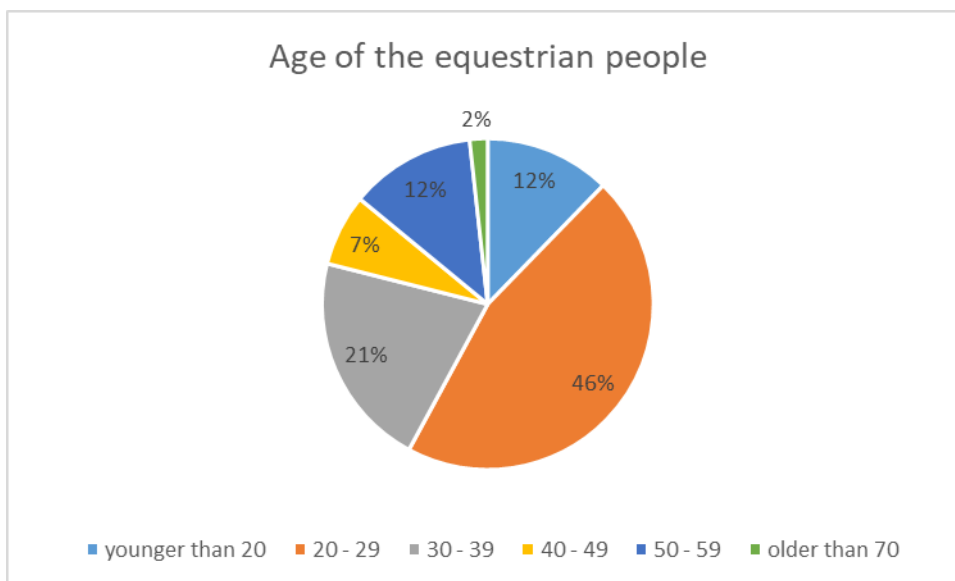


Figure 9: Age of the equestrian people

Most of the respondents use Facebook as a social media platform. The other social media platforms can be seen in figure 10.

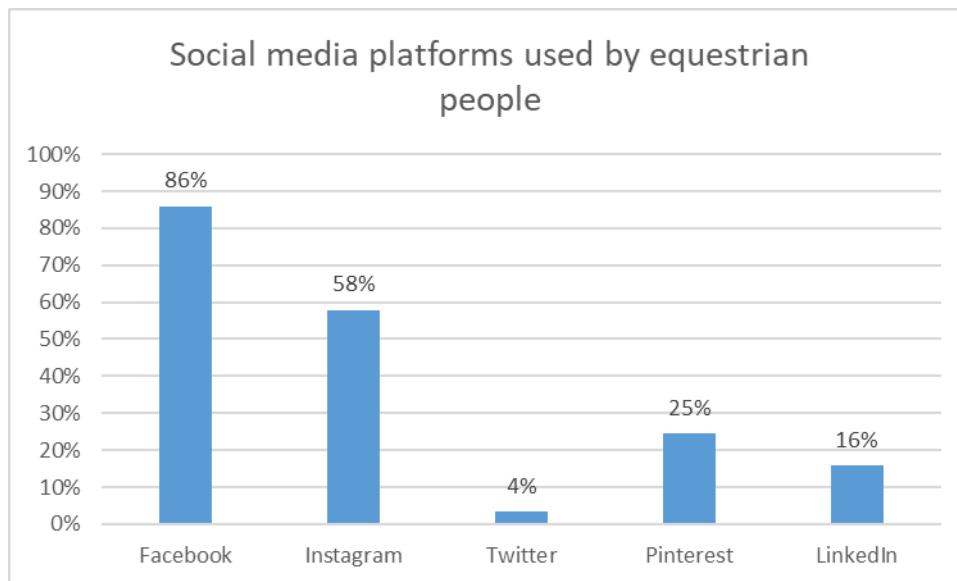


Figure 10: Social media platforms used by equestrian people

The biggest group of the respondents were living in Germany (89%). 9% of the respondents were from the Netherlands and 2% were from Austria.

4.4.2 Answer to the sub-question

Regarding to sponsored equestrian people 'critical' is the most important characteristic they should have according to the respondents. Open to new experiences is the second biggest percentage. As well as for non-equestrian sponsored people, equestrian sponsored people should complete tasks thoroughly. Which is shown in the figure 11.

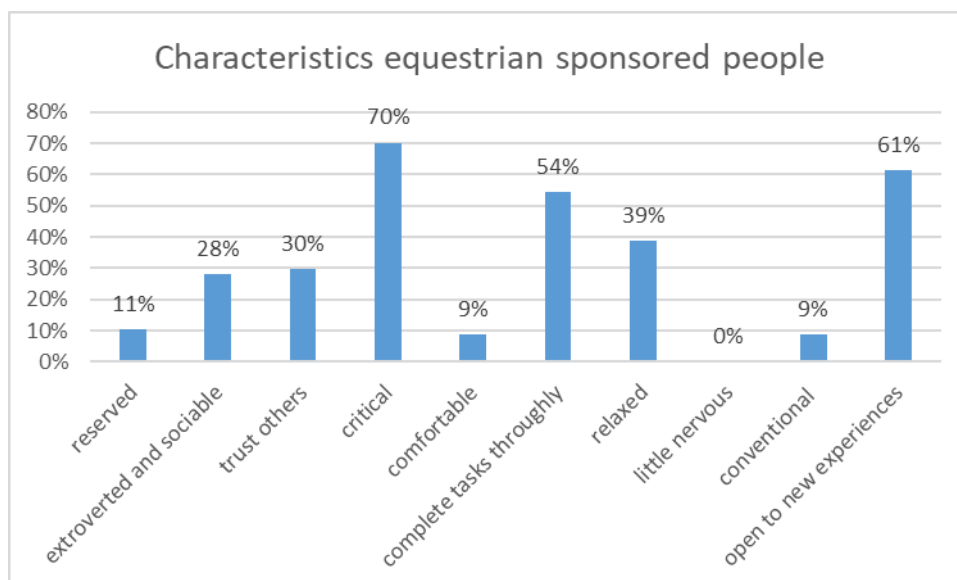


Figure 11: Characteristics equestrian sponsored people

Figure 12: 'Important points regarding to equestrian influencers' shows that handling of the horse is the most important thing regarding to equestrian influencers. It is not important for the followers whether an influencer is popular or not.

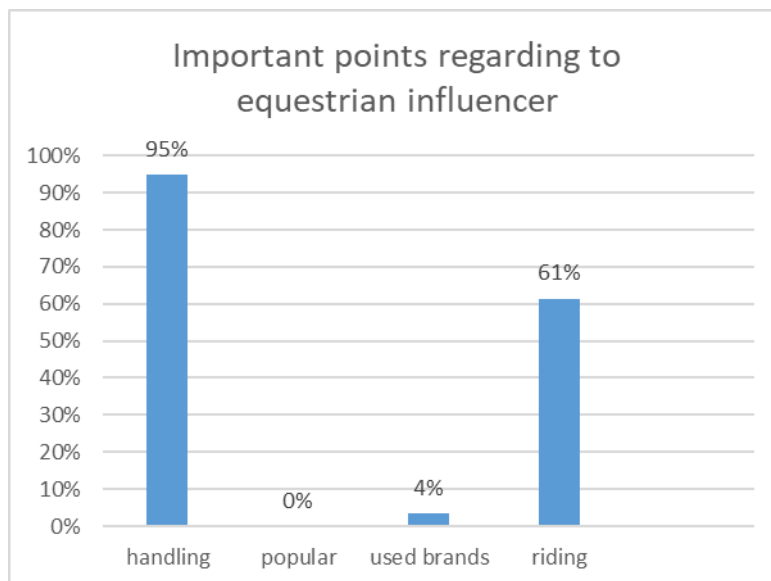


Figure 12: Important points regarding to equestrian influencer

72% of the respondents do not follow influencers. 28% follow influencers because of varied reasons.

5 Discussion

The aim of the research was to find characteristics of sponsored persons which are of interest for companies to reach consumers. The characteristics are based on the properties mentioned in the Big Five model of Tupes and Christal.

For the study, companies were asked in interviews which characteristics of sponsored persons they appreciate, and sponsored persons were asked in a survey which characteristics they have. Furthermore, consumers were asked which characteristics they appreciate in sponsored persons, and consumers of the equestrian sector were asked which characteristics they are interested in regarding to sponsored equestrian persons.

With the survey and the interviews, it would be possible to answer the research question but there were too little respondents. Thanks to the characteristics of the Big Five model of Tupes and Christal it was possible to get the same characteristics in every survey and the interviews and nevertheless get a reliable exploration. The personality dimensions of the Big Five are always present for people (at least for people from western cultures). But the surveys, and the interviews are done by people and people can always do mistakes.

The study was not sufficient because the number of respondents was too small. There were four respondents for the interview, and 10 respondents of the survey for the influencers. 84 people filled in the other survey, of which 57 people were equestrian people. All in all, there is need for more respondents. Furthermore, only two nationalities (in the interviews as well as in the surveys) took part in the research. To get an answer which is applicable for the international western market, there have to be more respondents from different western nations. Moreover, there was not the same amount of influencers represented from the different topics (only 10% of the participants were lifestyle influencers and 50% of the participants were equestrian influencers). That is why the results of the influencers do not represent the average of all influencers respectively all influencer groups.

Next time it would be possible to also create a survey for the companies. With the ulterior motive that a survey does not take that much time to fill in, so there can be a larger group of companies answering the questions.

Despite the small number of participants, there is a meaning for companies of this research. The meaning could be that it is possible to know which characteristics should be used to select a person which should be sponsored. With the background that sponsoring as a form of marketing gets more and more important. (Henseler, Wilson, & Westberg, 2011) For this reason, this research could have an impact on the decision-making progress of companies which want to use sponsoring as marketing instrument. Not only related to this discussion there were two target groups of this research. The first one is companies which want to find the perfect sponsored person. The second target group is marketers who do research in the field of sponsoring. For having a significant result for the target group the main question 'Which characteristics of sponsored persons are of interest for companies to reach consumers?' need to be evaluated. This research could bring an answer on this question because sponsored persons, companies which sponsor persons, and consumers were asked. So, all groups, which are related to the question were asked on their opinion. In addition, in the surveys, and the interviews the participants should agree to the characteristics based on the properties mentioned in the Big Five model of Tupes and Christal. That made it possible to get uniform characteristics as answer to each sub-question and not different characteristics.

The reason for the fact that the respondents had different opinions regarding to the characteristics, might be because everybody has an own meaning and comprehension. And they, especially the companies, have different goals regarding to sponsoring-campaigns.

There were just two characteristics which are of interest for consumers (also equestrian consumers), companies, and which sponsored persons have. Openness and high conscientiousness, which mean that tasks are completed thoroughly, are important.

There are not many characteristics based on the Big Five model of Tupes and Christal which are already mentioned in the literature. In the literature it is written that influencers should be self-confident. This can mean that they should not be nervous, and insecure, which leads to the characteristic, based on the properties mentioned in the Big Five model of Tupes and Christal, not neuroticism. It is possible to say that interactive is nearly the same than extroverted and sociable. (Glucksman, 2017) This would mean that in the literature it is written that influencers should be extraversion. Furthermore, influencers should be assertiveness, which could mean that they should be open for new experiences. (FABTASTIC Leisure-Travel-Marketing, 2017) That means that influencers should be open, based on the characteristics of the Big Five model.

The main question could be answered. But because of the small number of respondents it was not possible to get an answer which is imposing.

6 Conclusion

The aim of this research was to find more criteria for sponsored people, especially characteristics based on the properties mentioned in the Big Five model of Tupes and Christal, because they are of interest for companies to reach consumers.

To implement this research the chosen methods were interviews with companies and surveys with sponsored persons and consumers.

The first sub-question was about the characteristics of sponsored persons. Sponsored persons described themselves as open for new experiences, extroverted and sociable and that they complete tasks thoroughly. The characteristics they have, based on the Big Five model, are openness, extraversion, and high conscientiousness. Other people would describe the sponsored persons as critical, open for new experiences and that they complete tasks thoroughly. Based on the characteristics of the Big Five model it means that they are not tolerant, but open, and very conscientious. All in all, it means that sponsored persons are open and very conscientious.

‘What characteristics of sponsored persons are of interest for companies?’ was the second sub-question. For companies it is important that a sponsored person is extraverted, very conscientious, open, and not neurotic. It is not important for companies whether a person is tolerant or not.

The third question was about the important characteristics of sponsored persons for consumers. Sponsored persons should be open for new experiences, be critical, and complete tasks thoroughly. Based on the characteristics of the Big Five model it means that they should be open, not tolerant, and very conscientious.

The fourth sub-question was about the characteristics of sponsored persons in the equestrian sector which are of interest for consumers. Regarding to the sponsored persons outside the equestrian sector equestrian consumers want to have sponsored persons which are more critical.

All sub-questions were leading to the main question about the characteristics of sponsored persons which are of interest for companies to reach consumers. As well as the sponsored person, the companies, the consumers, and the equestrian consumers all indicate the characteristics openness, and high conscientiousness as their own characteristics or as the characters which are important for sponsored persons.

This study can have an impact on the decision-making progress of companies which want to sponsor someone. But there should not be too much meaning on the results of the study because the study population was very small.

More research is needed with more respondents to find out if there are more, or other, characteristics of sponsored persons which are of interest for companies to reach consumers.

6.1 Recommendation

For the short-term, companies, and other people, who choose a person to sponsor, can use the results of the study for choosing a sponsored person if they do not have their own criteria for choosing a sponsored person. But because of the small study population the results of the study are not reliable. That is why companies, and other people should not ignore their previous criteria if these criteria were already successful.

For the long-term, more research is needed with more respondents to find out if the characteristics found out in this research apply to the reality and are of interest for companies to reach consumers. More participants of the surveys, and the interviews are advised for further researches.

This research is a start to find out the characteristics which are important in the sponsoring.

Appendix

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2. Questions

2.1 Interview questions

Companies

1. Who did your company sponsored? (Welche Person hat Ihr Unternehmen schon gesponsert?)
2. Which criteria you used for choosing a person? (Welche Kriterien waren wichtig bei der Auswahl einer Person?)
3. Why your company sponsored this person? (Warum haben Sie diese Person gesponsert?)
4. What do you wanted to reach with the sponsoring? (Was woollen Sie mit dem Sponsoring erreichen?)
5. Do you already sponsored social media influencers (for example blogger, vlogger or people on Instagram)? (Haben Sie schon einmal social media influencer gesponsert (zum Beispiel Blogger, Vlogger oder Instagramer?)
6. Which criteria you used for choosing a social media influencer? (Welche kriterien haben Sie verwendet, um einen social media influencer zu wählen?)
7. How would a perfect person look like you want to sponsor? Which characteristics to he/she have? (The answers are from the question catalogue to the character traits after the Big Five model.) (Wie sieht die perfekte Person aus, die Sie gerne sponsoren würden? Welche Charaktereigenschaften hat sie/er? (Die Fragen habe ich dem Fragenkatalog zu den Charaktereigenschaften nach dem Big Five Modell entnommen.))
 - a. She/ He is rather reserved. (Sie/er ist eher zurückhaltend und reserviert.)
 - b. She/ He is extroverted and sociable. (Sie/er ist extrovertiert und gesellig.)
 - c. She/ He trusts others easily and compassionates and warm-hearted. (Sie/er vertraut anderen leicht und ist warmherzig.)
 - d. She/ He is critical. (Sie/er ist kritisch.)
 - e. She/ He is comfortable, inclined to laziness and careless. (Sie/er ist bequem, neigt zur Faulheit und ist unachtsam.)
 - f. She/ He completes tasks thoroughly. (Sie/er erledigt Aufgaben gründlich.)
 - g. She/ He is relaxed and do not let stress put me off. (Sie/er ist entspannt und lässt sich durch Stress nicht aus der Ruhe bringen.)
 - h. She/ He gets a little nervous and insecure. (Sie/er ist leicht nervös und unsicher.)
 - i. She/ He is conventional. (Sie/er ist konventionell.)
 - j. She/ He is open for new experiences. (Sie/er ist offen für neue Erfahrungen.)

8. What do you want to convey to your (future) customers? (Was möchten Sie mit Ihrem Engagement Ihren zukünftigen Konsumenten vermitteln?)

2.2 Surveys

Influencers

1. What gender are you?
 - a. Male
 - b. female
2. How old are you?
 - a. Younger than 20
 - b. Between 20 and 30
 - c. Between 30 and 40
 - d. Between 40 and 50
 - e. Older than 50
3. Which social media platforms do you use?
 - a. Facebook
 - b. Instagram
 - c. Twitter
 - d. Pinterest
 - e. LinkedIn
4. Where do you live?
 - a. Netherlands
 - b. Germany
 - c. Others
5. What is/are the main topics on your social media account?
 - a. Beauty and style
 - b. Lifestyle
 - c. Travelling
 - d. Horses
 - e. Others
6. Who would you describe yourself? Which characteristics do you have? (The answers are from the question catalogue to the character traits after the Big Five model.)

- a. I am rather reserved.
 - b. I am extroverted and sociable.
 - c. I trust others easily and compassionate and warm-hearted.
 - d. I am critical.
 - e. I am comfortable, inclined to laziness and careless.
 - f. I complete tasks thoroughly.
 - g. I am relaxed and do not let stress put me off.
 - h. I get a little nervous and insecure.
 - i. I am conventional.
 - j. I am open to new experiences.
7. How would other people (for example your friends) would describe you? (The answers are from the question catalogue to the character traits after the Big Five model.)
- a. I am rather reserved.
 - b. I am extroverted and sociable.
 - c. I trust others easily and compassionate and warm-hearted.
 - d. I am critical.
 - e. I am comfortable, inclined to laziness and careless.
 - f. I complete tasks thoroughly.
 - g. I am relaxed and do not let stress put me off.
 - h. I get a little nervous and insecure.
 - i. I am conventional.
 - j. I am open to new experiences.
8. Have you already been sponsored?
- a. Yes
 - b. no
9. Did the sponsor told you a reason why he sponsored you?

Consumers

1. What gender are you?
 - a. Male
 - b. female
2. How old are you?
 - a. Younger than 20
 - b. Between 20 and 30
 - c. Between 30 and 40
 - d. Between 40 and 50
 - e. Older than 50
3. Which social media do you use?
 - a. Facebook
 - b. Instagram
 - c. Twitter
 - d. Pinterest
 - e. LinkedIn
 - f. I don't use social media.
4. Where do you live?
 - a. Netherlands
 - b. Germany
 - c. Others
5. Which characteristics has the perfect sponsored person for you? (The answers are from the question catalogue to the character traits after the Big Five model.)
 - a. She/ He is rather reserved.
 - b. She/ He is extroverted and sociable.
 - c. She/ He trusts others easily and compassionates and warm-hearted.
 - d. She/ He is critical.
 - e. She/ He is comfortable, inclined to laziness and careless.
 - f. She/ He completes tasks thoroughly.
 - g. She/ He is relaxed and do not let stress put me off.
 - h. She/ He gets a little nervous and insecure.
 - i. She/ He is conventional.
 - j. She/ He is open for new experiences.
6. Why do you follow influencers?
 - a. Answer
 - b. I do not follow influencers.
 - c. Not applicable

Consumers in the equestrian sector

1. What gender are you?
 - a. Male
 - b. female
2. How old are you?
 - a. Younger than 20
 - b. Between 20 and 30
 - c. Between 30 and 40
 - d. Between 40 and 50
 - e. Older than 50
3. Which social media do you use?
 - a. Facebook
 - b. Instagram
 - c. Twitter
 - d. Pinterest
 - e. LinkedIn
 - f. I don't use social media.
4. Where do you live?
 - a. Netherlands
 - b. Germany
 - c. Others
5. Which characteristics has the perfect sponsored person in the equestrian sector for you? (The answers are from the question catalogue to the character traits after the Big Five model.)
 - a. She/ He is rather reserved.
 - b. She/ He is extroverted and sociable.
 - c. She/ He trusts others easily and compassionates and warm-hearted.
 - d. She/ He is critical.
 - e. She/ He is comfortable, inclined to laziness and careless.
 - f. She/ He completes tasks thoroughly.
 - g. She/ He is relaxed and do not let stress put me off.
 - h. She/ He gets a little nervous and insecure.
 - i. She/ He is conventional.
 - j. She/ He is open for new experiences.
 - k. Not applicable

6. What is (especially) important for you regarding to Influencers in the equestrian sport?
- a. The handling of the animal
 - b. The popularity
 - c. The used brands
 - d. The riding
 - e. Others
 - f. Not applicable
7. Why do you follow equestrian influencers?
- a. Answer
 - b. I do not follow influencers.
 - c. Not applicable