From social media to the shopping basket

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1   Executive summary

This dissertation addresses the central question, 'How does the impact of influencers and brand ambassadors in the fashion industry affect the buying intentions of teenagers (ages 13-16) and Millennials?' Many brands that use influencer marketing have been more concerned with the scope of an influencer's followers than with his or her connections, relevance and knowledge. As a result, these brands do not benefit enough from applying influencer marketing (Net Imperative Digital Intelligence for Business, 2018). In view of this problem, the objective of this thesis is to investigate the most effective elements of influencer marketing on which brands should focus when considering collaboration with influencers. To clarify the research question, the following sub-questions are posed: 'who are fashion influencers?', 'who are brand ambassadors?', 'what are buying intentions?', 'who is the target group' (Generation Z and Generation X) and 'how do influencer marketing elements relate to the impact that fashion video bloggers and brand ambassadors can have on the buying intentions of teenagers?'. The last of these questions is answered through the analysis. The first four sub-questions are addressed through desk research based on the theoretical framework. Besides desk research, field research was performed in the form of two focus groups, which are a qualitative research method. The first focus group contained five female respondents from Generation Z who were between the ages of 13 and 16. The second group also consisted of five female respondents, but they were between 20 and 24 years of age and thus considered Millennials. In addition, an interview was conducted with Emanuel Ankrah, the YouTube Channel Manager of Social1nfluencers, in order to answer the fifth sub-question. Results from the focus groups indicate that teenagers preferred top-tier influencers over mid-tier and micro-influencers. In contrast, Millennials preferred micro-influencers, and one-third of them perceived more distance between top-tier influencers. Other unexpected results were that no respondents had ever engaged by commenting on an influencer's post on social media, and Millennials preferred relevant content from influencers for their reliability. In the results, the engagement from external and internal stakeholders did not affect respondents from either focus group. In the interview, Ankrah provided information on buying intentions and referred to study cases that he had experienced in his work as a YouTube Manager. To demonstrate how influencer marketing affects intentions, he cited an example from McDonalds wherein promotional collaboration with Nabil and Rutger on Snapchat resulted in all Big Macs selling out. The analysis indicates that influencer marketing affects attitudes towards behaviour and the subjective norm, which in turn influence the intentions that lead to a behaviour. The elements with a substantial effect on the attitude towards behaviour were the scope and relevance of an influencer. These two factors should be favourable in order to create a positive attitude towards behaviour, which subsequently influences intentions either directly or through the subjective norm. This conclusion of the two elements answers the research question.' In view of the findings, companies that apply influencer marketing are recommended to consider the proper scope and relevant content to attract their desired target group, which in this case can be either teenagers or Millennials.

2   Table of contents

3   Preface

This document presents the dissertation entitled 'From social media to the shopping basket', which has been written to fulfil the final step towards graduating as a European Professional from The Hague University of Applied Sciences. My motivation to write about influencer marketing was the interest in influencers and my previous work experience at Hunkemöller, which extensively employs influencer marketing in their marketing strategy.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Ms de Koning, for providing feedback and support throughout this period. I would also like to thank my sister, Barbara Bruce-Boye, who is a European studies alumna and supported my writing through difficult times. I am additionally grateful for my parents for their support and to Jeroen de Wal for encouraging and believing in me. Finally, I would like to thank all focus group participants and Emanuel Ankrah for providing information on influencer marketing and therefore increasing my knowledge of this topic.

4   Introduction

It was a sunny Thursday morning in mid-August when Alexandra Legro suddenly came storming into the Hunkemöller office and said, '"Get the Look" is not getting the results we need!'

As the global marketing and communications director, Mrs Legro immediately demanded that the social media department take action to promote sales. The following day, while scrolling through my Instagram feed, I noticed a post from vlogger and influencer Monica Geuze, who was wearing an outfit from the Hunkemöller 'Get the Look' collection. In her caption, she told her 800,000 followers that Hunkemöller had a special offering of a 20% discount on the 'Get the Look' collection. Through this action, Hunkemöller applied influencer marketing (Instagram, 2018).

Influencer marketing is an action plan in which marketing operates from consumer to consumer through people who communicate on behalf of a brand or organisation through their broad social media network (Lamarque, 2017). Brands and influencers use platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Instagram to attract attention from a specific target group. Furthermore, these platforms function as an online platform for fashion bloggers and brand ambassadors to share their personal interests, clothing ensembles or new purchases. A person sharing interesting purchases can influence the buying intentions of others on an even larger scale when he or she has a broad social media network. Shared content impacts viewers when it reviews a product. Ninety-one per cent of people between the ages of 13 and 24 use social media, which include Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Tumblr and Twitter, for 5.9 hours per week (Defy Media, 2015). Studies have reported that youth regularly use YouTube. On average, young people consume 12.2 hours of digital videos per week, of which 25% is from digital celebs, 25% is from people they do not know and only 15% is from family and friends (Defy Media, 2015). Brands take advantage of this usage by employing vloggers, bloggers and brand ambassadors as promotional tools in their marketing mix to influence the buying intentions of teenagers and Millennials.

Unfortunately, many brands that apply influencer marketing have mostly focused on the scope of followers instead of other elements, such as the trust, connection and knowledge of an influencer (Net Imperative Digital Intelligence for Business, 2018). In view of this problem, the aim of this research is to determine the extent to which influencer marketing impacts the buying intentions of Dutch female youth in the age ranges of 13 to 16 and 20 to 24. This objective informs the following central question:

'How does the impact of fashion influencers and brand ambassadors affect the buying intentions of teenagers (13-16) and Millennials (20-24)?'

The study considers the following sub-questions in order to address the central research question:
1. 'Who are fashion influencers?'
2. 'Who are brand ambassadors?'

3.   'What are buying intentions?'
4.   'Who is the target group of influencers? (Generation Z and the Millennials)'
5.   'How do influencer marketing elements relate to the impact that fashion video bloggers and brand ambassadors can have on the buying intentions of teenagers?'

This dissertation first defines influencers and influencer marketing. Then, it describes brand ambassadors and compares them to influencers. Afterwards, it explains buying intentions and the generational categories. The focus groups and interview comprise the field research to address the fifth sub-question. This paper clarifies the effect of online influencers on the buying intentions of female teenagers between the ages of 13 and 16 and Millennials between the ages of 20-24 in the Netherlands.

5   Theoretical framework

This chapter explains the theoretical background of the study. It also answers the first four sub-questions and provides a basis for the fifth sub-question. Besides presenting the definitions and models, the chapter contains an operationalisation table that illustrates theoretical models and their examples. This table informs the focus group questions that address the fifth sub-question.

5.1   Influencer marketing

Influencer marketing can be classified as human-to-human (H2H) marketing. This contrasts with traditional business-to-business (B2B) or business-to-consumer (B2C) marketing. However, the difference between influencer marketing and word-of-mouth marketing is that the latter is mostly a one-sided relationship; this is not applicable for influencer marketing, which preferably reaches a broad network. According to Oxford Dictionaries, the definition of *influence* is 'having the capability to have an effect on the character, development, or behaviour, of someone or something, or the effect itself' (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017). According to (Lamarque, 2017) '*influencer marketing* is an action plan in which marketing is operated from consumer to consumer through people that have the ability to communicate on behalf of a brand or organisation through their broad social media network'.

The definition *influencer marketing* is most suitable for this dissertation since influencer marketing, unlike word-of-mouth marketing, does involve a two-sided communication from consumer to consumer through a brand. In addition, the definition of *influencer* is incorporated within this definition, which conveys that communication from an influencer has an effect on the reach within his or her network. The research for this dissertation focused on *influencers* and *influencer marketing* and the effect that influencer (marketing) has on Generation Z and Millennials.

Several studies have demonstrated that every €1 invested in influencer marketing yields an average return on investment (ROI) of €6.50 (Lamarque, 2017). In addition, 47% of all Millennials believe that social media influences their buying decisions, and 90% of people read online reviews before purchasing a product (Lamarque, 2017). The aforementioned facts reflect that traditional marketing has a lesser influence than influencer marketing on consumer buying intentions. Lamarque's book references a definition that expresses a theoretical view of influencers.

'Influence = scope x **engagement** x **relevance'**

Figure 1: (Lamarque, 2017)

The *scope* of an influencer represents the number of 'social media followers' that he or she has on a specific platform. The number of followers influences the scope of potential buyers. A connection

with followers through interaction is more important than expanding the scope of followers, as *engagement* through interaction creates a bond between the influencer and followers (Lamarque, 2017). Finally, *relevance* entails matching an influencer with a brand that is suitable for his or her followers and perspective. This formula is not the key to creating a successful influencer, but it is a reliable way to compare influencers and generate a short list that considers the vision and goal of the influencer marketing.

As Lamarque has mentioned, the establishment of strong connections with customers is of higher priority than having a broad network. This statement has also appeared in *De Conversation Company* by Van Belleghem, which is further explained in the section on brand ambassadors.

According to Fashion Beauty Monitor, influencer-brand collaborations have become more serious than in previous years. Since a high ROI is critical for marketers, brands have signed long-term contracts with influencers to improve their ROI (Fashion Beauty Monitor, 2017). In 2016, brands in the United Kingdom spent between £20,000 and £40,000 on influencer marketing, which represented an increase of at least 50% from the 2017 investment of £40,000 and £80,000. According to the global study 'Consumer Trust: Keeping it real' by Olapic, only 6% of consumers did not lose interest in traditional marketing in terms of trust, whereas 56% tended to be attracted to advertisements that have a user-generated picture (Fashion Beauty Monitor, 2017). According to Markerly, size (or scope, as Lamarque has termed it), is not necessarily important when conducting influencer marketing. The related study examined the following ratio to elaborate on the significance of follower counts. After analyzing 800,000 Instagram users, Markerly concluded that the rise in total followers caused a decrease in the rate of engagement, which eventually resulted in diminishing returns in terms of influence and engagement (Fashion Beauty Monitor, 2017).
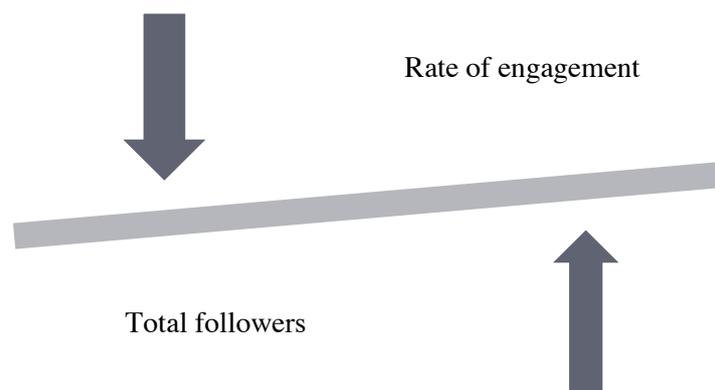

Figure 2: Relation between rate of engagement and followers

According to TrackMaven, the engagement rate is 'a metric that measures the level of engagement that a piece of created is receiving from an audience' (TrackMaven, 2018). Studies have demonstrated that Instagram users with fewer than 1,000 followers had an engagement rate of 8%, whereas users with approximately 10 million followers had an engagement rate of 1.6%. These figures suggest that marketers should target the 'sweet spot of engagement': the micro-influencers with approximately 3,000 to 10,000 followers. On a larger scale, mid-tier influencers with approximately 223,000 followers have obtained positive results with the 'cost-per-like' metric, while top-tier influencers have a larger reach potential of approximately 964,000 followers. Consumers tend to lose interest in top-tier followers because of their perceived lack of authenticity and therefore direct more attention to mid-tier and micro-influencers, who have fewer than 1 million followers. Mid-tier and micro-influencers are also more affordable for companies with a lower budget for the potential reach, and the engagement rate of mid-tier influencers is more desirable than that of top-tier influencers (Fashion Beauty Monitor, 2017).
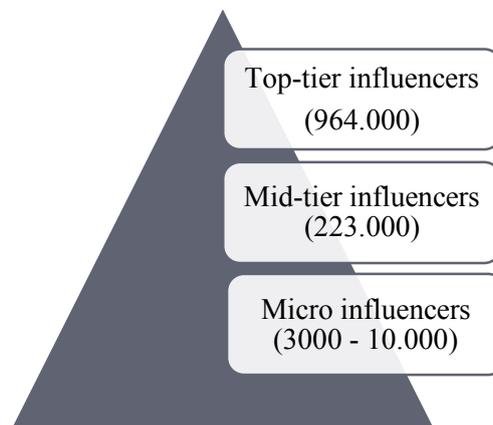
Figure 3: Level of influencers and reach potential (Fashion Beauty Monitor, 2017)

In contrast to other theories, a brand called Lipsy decided to develop its own metric called 'cost per like'. If a sponsored influencer is paid €5,000 for a post and receives 15,000 likes on that sponsored post, then Lipsy calculates the sponsor payment divided by the total likes on a post to determine the metric. In this case, €5,000 divided by 15,000 leads to a cost of €0.33 per like. If the influencer then posts a second post about the brand's product without sponsorship, Lipsy considers the second post to be free promotion.

$$\textbf{Cost per like} = \frac{\textbf{Sponsor payment}}{\textbf{Like on a post}}$$

Figure 4: Cost-per-like metrics (Fashion Beauty Monitor, 2017)

According to J. Cocquerelle, the Marketing Executive of Journolink, there are differences between bloggers, vloggers, trendsetters and influencers (Cocquerelle, 2017). Bloggers maintain or author

blogs on a variety of topics, and they can therefore be found in numerous industry sectors (Cocquerelle, 2017). In addition to providing images, bloggers strive to create content for their websites and write blogs out of a personal interest and passion for writing, which can even become their full-time job (The O City Factor, 2017). Social media can be utilised to promote a blog. Cocquerelle has stated that bloggers have a high credibility level because their articles derive from a personal interest rather than advertisement purposes (Cocquerelle, 2017).
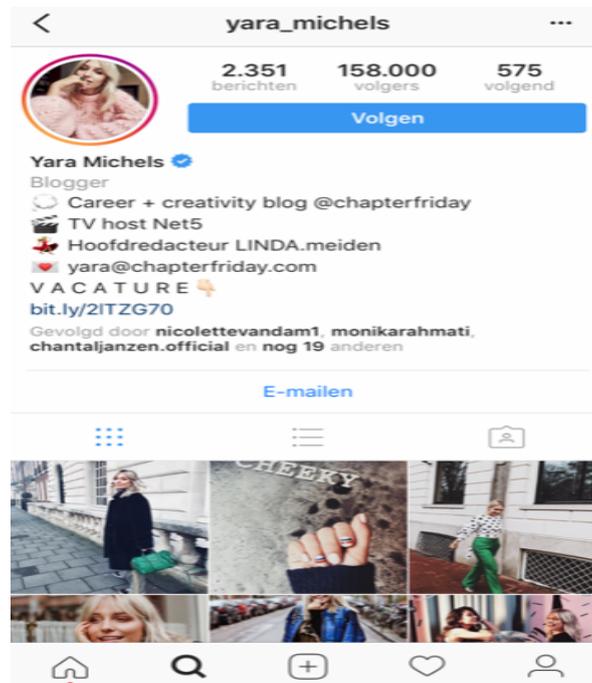
Source: Screenshot of the profile of Instagram user Yara_Michels (Instagram, 2018)

The 28-year-old Yara Michels is one of the first Dutch professional bloggers. Yara owns the blog *ChapterFriday* and is the chief editor of the Dutch magazine *LINDA.meiden* (Stöve, 2017). Yara is an example of a blogger who has become an influencer through the success of her blog.

The term 'vloggers' is a portmanteau of 'video' and 'blogger'; accordingly, vloggers create content through videos on the main platforms of YouTube and Snapchat instead of writing blogs. Through the use of videos, vloggers share their personal opinions, lifestyles and experiences with their audiences (The O City Factor, 2017).

Influencers, on the other hand, do not create trends in the same way as 'trendsetters', yet they share trends with their audiences through their social media platforms. An example is Martin Garrix, a DJ and influencer with 14,022,398 followers on Instagram. Through this network, he reaches a large target audience (Influencer Engagement Index, 2017). A blogger can be an influencer when he or she has a high target audience reach, which is mostly dependent on the audience that a blog attracts. However, influencers are not automatically bloggers, as they need to have a blog in order to be considered a blogger (The O City Factor, 2017).
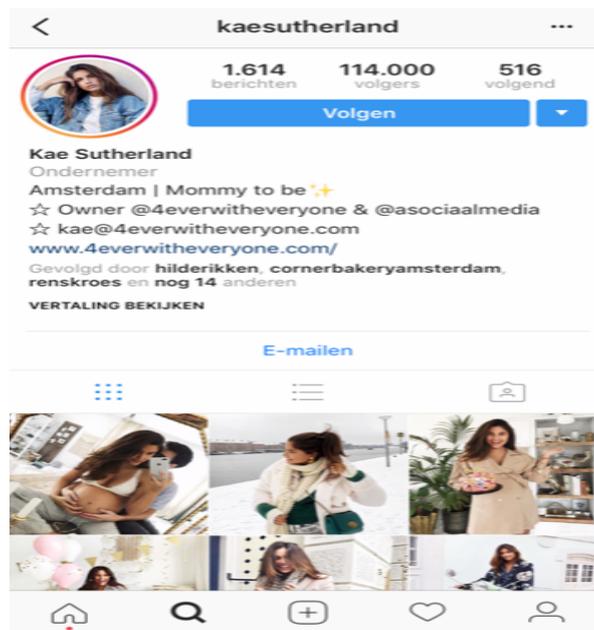
Source: Screenshot of the Instagram profile of kaesutherland (Instagram, 2018)

The 23-year-old Kae Sutherland is an owner of the web shop 4EVER WITH EVERYONE and co-owner of A-Sociaal Media, a business that helps companies improve their social media strategies (Buke, 2016). She is an example of an influencer.

5.2   Brand ambassadors

Another innovative change in technology that is mentioned in '*De Conversation Company'* is mobile Internet. This development has increased the intensity of social media worldwide, which has made it the fastest-growing technology in history. In his book, Van Belleghem has explained a '*social media quadrants matrix'* that uses two dimensions to measure the scope of the network and the relationships with customers (Belleghem, De Converstation Company, 2012).
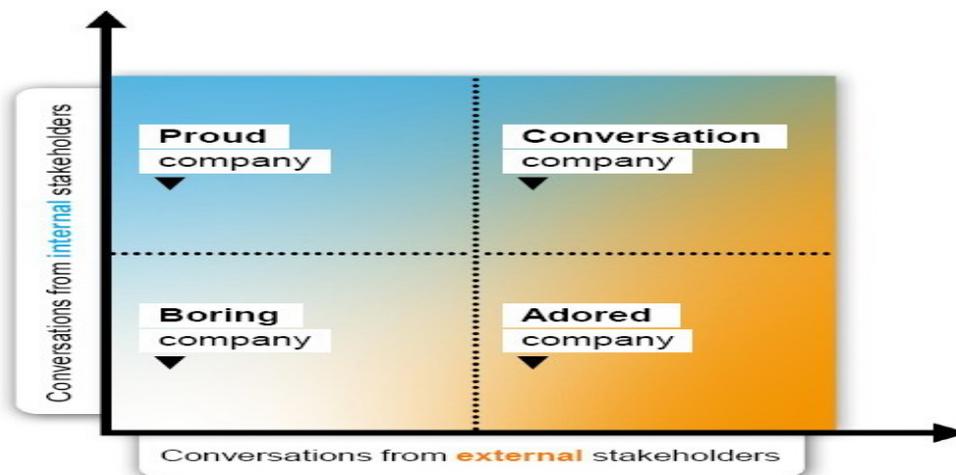

Figure 5: Social media quadrants (Belleghem, The Converstation Company Presentation, 2012)

The figure above illustrates Van Belleghem's social media quadrants. The social media quadrants matrix is a formula that elaborates on the communication between customers and internal stakeholders, which involves brand ambassadors as well as external stakeholders such as influencers. The matrix demonstrates that a high level of communication from internal stakeholders enhances consumer perceptions of the company. Companies that have a high internal conversation level are perceived as proud companies, whereas companies with a lower conversation level are considered boring. According to Van Belleghem's matrix, companies that engage with their customers from an internal source positively contribute to the pride of the company.

In addition, the matrix elaborates on external stakeholders and the perceptions of customers. An increase in conversation from an external stakeholder can result in adoration of the company from a consumer point of view. In contrast, a low level of conversation from external stakeholders gives consumers less or no interest in the 'boring' company. An increase in conversation can arguably enhance perceptions of a company such that it is either adored or proud, depending on whether the source of conversation is internal or external. Conversely, less conversation from either an internal or external source can convey to consumers that the company is boring (Belleghem, The Converstation Company Presentation, 2012).

All brand ambassadors exert influence, but not all of them can be classified as influencers. Lamarque has stated that the main difference between an ambassador and an influencer is that the former communicate positively about the brand while the latter can be critical about products of a specific brand (Lamarque, 2017). For example, former Apple CEO Steve Jobs was a brand ambassador who promoted the brand through press coverage, readings and media while part of the organisation. Companies can also hire external influencers to function as brand ambassadors, but these brand ambassadors are only allowed to praise the brands' products as 'evangelists', as Lamarque has termed them. For example, Guy Kawasaki was a 'software evangelist' and later the 'chief evangelist' for Apple. He has a strong personal brand and a broad scope of followers, and he therefore represents how an influencer can be a brand ambassador. However, this is not always the case. A famous environmentalist can be critical of the oil wells of a company, but it does not make him or her an ambassador but rather an important influencer to note (Lamarque, 2017).

For this dissertation, Figure 1 (influence), Figure 2 (the engagement rate), Figure 3 (level of influencers) and Figure 5 (*The Conversation Company*) are most suitable for the research. Figure 1 indicates the elements that create influence and can be used to research which elements are most crucial. In Figure 2, the engagement rate reflects a combination of the scope and engagement and explains how the number of followers can increase or decrease the engagement rate. Figure 3 presents

the types of influencers according to levels. Finally, *The Conversation Company* can facilitate research on brand ambassadors as well as internal and external communication between a company and its customers through brand ambassadors.

5.3   Buying intentions

The following section explains two models of buying intentions: the cognitive model of buying intentions and the theory of planned behaviour.
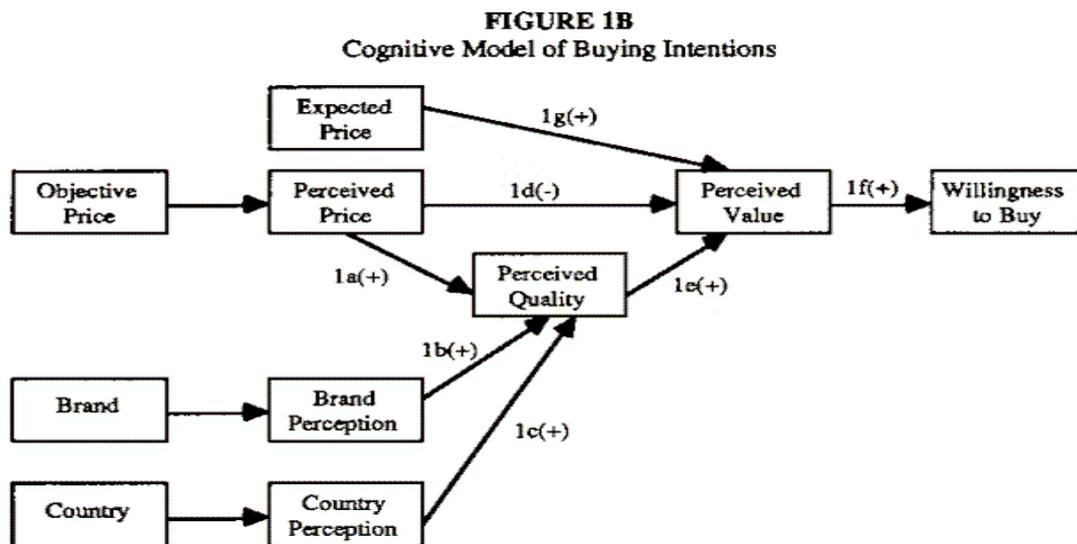
Figure 6: Cognitive model of buying intentions (Wai Kwan, Monroe, & Chan, 1994)

The cognitive model of buying intentions identifies factors that inform the buying intentions of specific products. In this case, price, brand and country origin influence such willingness. First, when the expected price is higher, buyer perceptions of the value increase, which then contribute to their willingness to buy. Conversely, when the perceived price increases expectations, the perceived value decreases. Then, in terms of the brand, the perception and quality increase the perceived value, which then enhances the willingness to buy a specific product. Finally, if the perception of the country is higher, the perceived value increases, which in turn advances the perceived value and buying intentions.

In terms of quality, price has a positive effect that contrasts the perceived value, which has a negative effect on willingness to buy. Overall, price, brand and country influence willingness to buy, and the overall effect is therefore positive. 'In the Dodds et al. (1991) study, price had a positive effect on perceived quality, but a negative effect on perceived value, while the overall effect on willingness to buy was positive' (Wai Kwan, Monroe, & Chan, 1994).
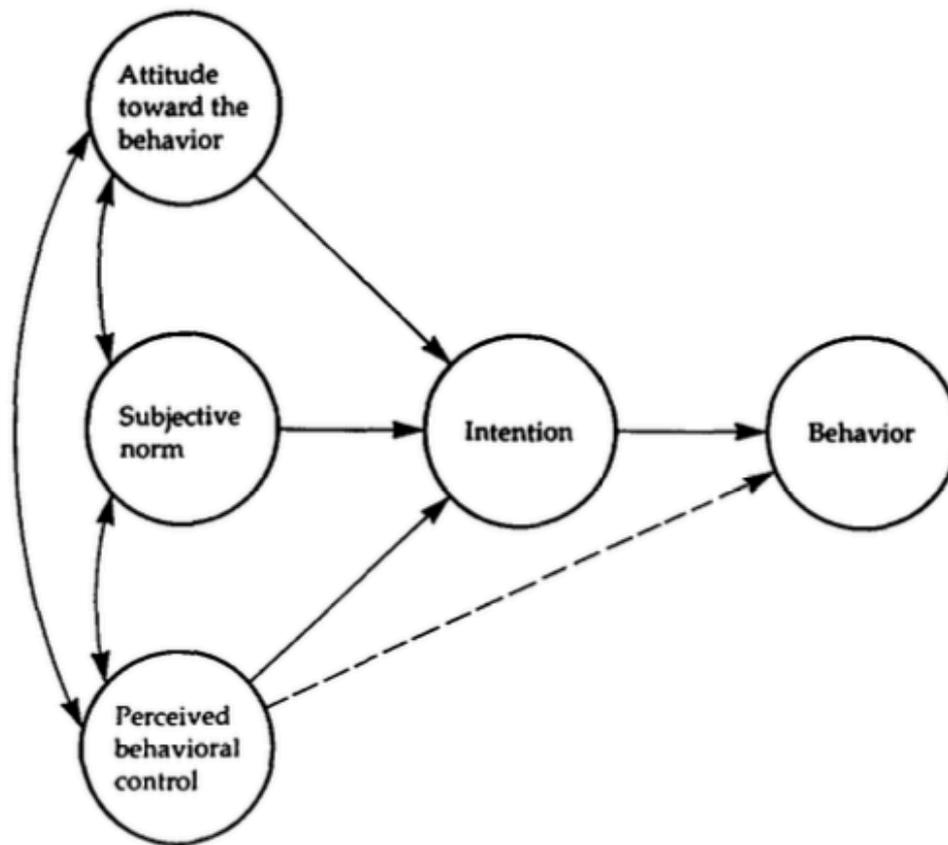
FIG. 1. Theory of planned behavior.

Figure 7: Theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)

According to Ajzen, the theory of planned behaviour explains an individual's intention to perform a given behaviour (Ajzen, 1991): '*Intentions* capture the motivational factors that influence a behaviour and reflect on how hard people are willing to try, exert and perform a certain behaviour' (Ajzen, 1991). Motivational factors are the availability of opportunities and resources, of which time, money, skills and co-operation of others are examples (Ajzen, 1991). Intentions are directly linked to *perceived behaviour control* and directly predict *behaviour* achievement. '*Perceived behaviour control* refers to an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty to perform a behaviour of interest' (Ajzen, 1991). Perceived behavioural control is also linked *to attitude towards the behaviour* through the *subjective norm* and directly connected to the *attitude towards the behaviour* without the involvement of the subjective norm. The attitude towards behaviour refers to favourable or unfavourable evaluation of the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Humans automatically develop negative or positive attitudes towards behaviour. Favourable behaviour has desirable consequences, while unfavourable behaviour entails undesirable outcomes. *Subjective norm* is linked to the attitude towards a behaviour and refers to the social pressure to perform or avoid a behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Most favourable is when the attitude towards a behaviour is positive. As a general rule, when the attitude

towards a behaviour is more favourable, and the subjective norm with respect to a behaviour is positive, it yields a greater perceived behavioural control, which increases an individual's intention to perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). In some cases, attitude directly impacts intentions, while in other instances, perceived behavioural control has a direct influence on the behaviour with or without the intention of acting on the behaviour.

The theory of planned behaviour is most suitable for the research in this dissertation since it focuses on the intentions and overall behaviours in the attitudes of teenagers and Millennials regarding the impact of social media influencers. Figure 7 clarifies the causes and bases of intentions (attitude, subjective norm and perceived control). It also explains alternative cases and other means of influencing behaviour (e.g. directly through attitude or perceived control).

The figure below combines a visual representation of the theory of planned behaviour with the elements of influencer marketing.
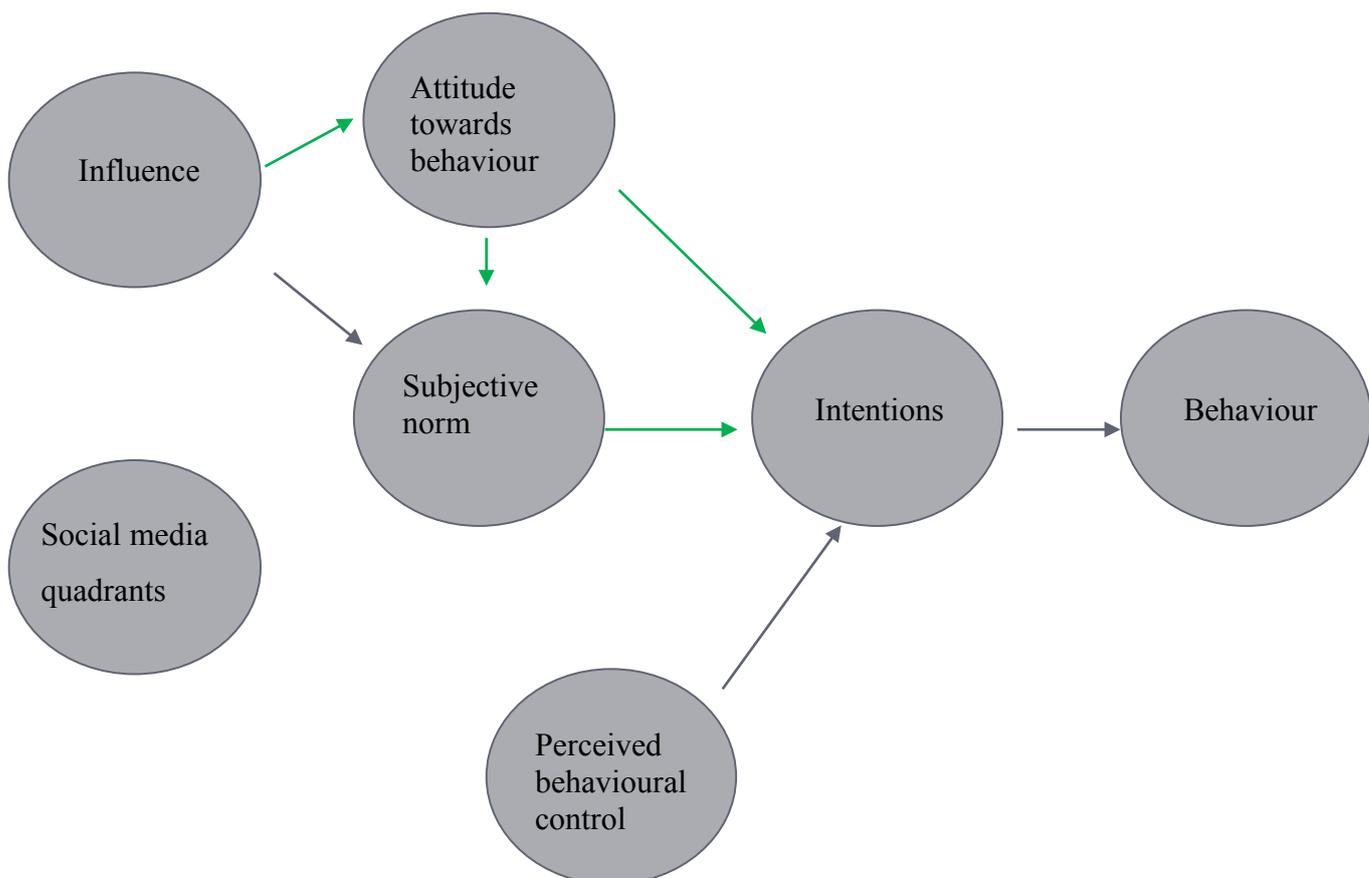
Figure 8: Conceptual model of influence and brand ambassadors on the theory of planned behaviour

5.4   Teenagers and Millennials

Generation Z is the teenage generation that was born after 1995. This group has never known a world without computers and mobile devices. Generation Z has incorporated technology into their lives since an early age (Fourhooks, 2015). As customers, Generation Z know which products they want from brands and entirely depend on information technology (IT). In view of these characteristics, they have also been called the 'Technoholics' (Fourhooks, 2015).

Generation Y, or the Millennials, refer to people born between 1981 and 1995. This generation is sophisticated in terms of technological understanding and is immune to traditional marketing and sales pitches (Fourhooks, 2015). Unlike preceding generations, Millennials tend to delay steps into adulthood, such as marriage and housing. In addition, this generation is the first to be considered 'digital natives', and Goldman Sachs has claimed that the affinity of Millennials with technology has informed how they shop, both online or in stores. Moreover, this generation employs technology to access price comparisons, research product information and consult peer reviews (Fourhooks, 2015). This generation is less loyal to brands because the options and flexibility of the Internet have allowed them to create their own style, fashion and way to communicate them. Therefore, this generation contains the first 'digital natives'.

Compared to Generation Y, Generation Z exhibits a stronger preference for influencer marketing. According to C. O'Neil-Hart and H. Blumenstein from 'Think with Google', 70% of teenage YouTube subscribers reported that they relate to YouTube creators more than to traditional marketing (O'Neil-Hart & Blumenstein, 2016). This proportion was larger than that of Millennials, as 4 out of 10 reported that their favourite creator understood them more than their friends did (O'Neil-Hart & Blumenstein, 2016). Besides a stronger preference for influencer marketing compared to Millennials, Generation Z engages with a higher number of digital platforms simultaneously and views content for a shorter period of time, which makes them difficult to reach (Patel, 2017). Both Generation Z and Generation Y prefer authentic content, but Generation Z further explicates that they do not want to be subject to marketing. This generation does not want to be a part of the mainstream and has a stronger desire for relatable content compared to Millennials (Patel, 2017).

The following operalisation table is based on the theory of behaviour and provides a foundation for the field research.

'How does the impact of influencers and brand ambassadors in the fashion industry affect the buying intentions of teenagers (ages 13-16) and Millennials (ages 20-24)?'

Theory	Examples derived from the theory	Questions for field research linked to the theory
Theory of planned behaviour		
Attitude towards behaviour	A favourable or unfavourable attitude	Is there a difference in how influencers try to stimulate advertisements?
The subjective norm	Peer pressure from friends and family; Insulting, reasoning, rejection and unspoken pressure	If your friend rejected a pair of jeans, would you still like to wear it?
Perceived behavioural control	Opportunities and resources such as time, money, skills and co-operation of others; Individual perceptions of the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour of interest	Can you decide for yourself which clothes you want to buy? Do you have enough money to buy the clothes you want to wear? Do you have enough time to dress as you would like to?
Intentions	Willingness to engage in a certain behaviour; Decision making	If you had adequate time, money or freedom, how likely would you be to buy the product? If your friend also likes the product, would you be (more) likely to buy the product?
Behaviour	Buying or not buying a product	Have you ever bought a product because a friend, family member or influencer wore it?
Influence		
Influence	Change in thoughts, feelings and behaviour due to interaction with another individual or group; A desire to fit in or meet another's expectations	What are your feelings towards someone you respect? Does a person who has similarities or an expertise in the fashion industry affect your thoughts on trends?

Scope	Number of social media followers of an influencer: a top-tier influencer has approximately 964,000 followers, a mid-tier influencer has about 223,000 followers and a micro-influencer has around 3,000 to 10,000 followers	Would you prefer to follow an influencer with a large number of followers (900,000 and more) or an influencer with fewer followers (3,000 to 10,000)?
Engagement	Communication between the influencer and follower in the comments section; Liking Instagram posts; Receiving answers from questions to influencers	Have you ever commented on an influencer's post? If so, has he or she responded to you through a comment or a like?
Relevance	Conducting business within a specific industry; Matching a brand with an influencer who suits the brand in terms of interests	Would you mind if a beauty blogger promoted a car or technical device?
Social media quadrants		
Internal stakeholders	An employee or board member	Would you be more interested in a product if an employee of the company recommended it?
External stakeholders	Hired ambassador; Celebrities	Does collaboration with a celebrity change or increase your interest in a brand?

6   Methodology

This dissertation employed specific research methods, namely desk research and qualitative approaches.

The desk research addressed the first four sub-questions. The theoretical framework has answered the first sub-question, 'Who are influencers?', by defining the term according to Lamarque's book, *Influencers*. This source is reliable not only since Lamarque herself has been a marketer for 20 years but also because RetailTrends has rated the book within the top-10 books for retailers to read (Retail Trends, 2017). Fashion Beauty Monitor was consulted for in-depth information on influencers and to identify cases of companies who are also clients of Fashion Beauty Monitor. This website is reliable since, according to Fashion Beauty Monitor, they are 'the leading influencer marketing and [public relations] PR solutions provider for the fashion, beauty and lifestyle industry' (Fashion Beauty Monitor, 2017). Other clients of Fashion Monitor Beauty are Burberry, Benefit Cosmetics, Zara and Unilever.

 The theoretical framework has also addressed the second sub-question, 'Who are brand ambassadors?' The most valuable source in this regard was the book *The Conversation Company* by Steven van Belleghem (Belleghem, De Converstation Company, 2012). This book was written to help companies adjust their corporate culture. It also explains the impact of social media on a company's internal stakeholders (employees) and external stakeholders (brand ambassadors).

 The theoretical framework has additionally answered the third sub-question, 'What are buying intentions?' The cognitive model of buying intentions by Wai Kwan offered a reliable source since the website *Association for Consumer Research* exchanges scholar information and facilitates access to academic and governmental information. The model was written for the University of Illinois (Wai Kwan, Monroe, & Chan, 1994). Another source was the theory of planned behaviour by the social psychologist Icek Azjen, who developed the theory for the University of Massachusetts, where he was a psychology professor. According to Tiggelaar, Azjen is the most-cited author within scientific psychology in 40 years (Tiggelaar, 2013). Furthermore, he won the Distinguished Scientist Award in 2013 (Society of Experimental Social Psychology). In view of these merits, the theory of planned behaviour can be considered a valuable theory.

The theoretical framework also addressed the fourth and the final sub-questions. Think by Google was used to obtain data results through analytic research by Hart, a video marketing employee at Google, and Blumenstein, a product marketing manager at YouTube, and was therefore reliable. The source of Fourhooks used the previously mentioned Google report as well as examples from various newspapers

and companies to define Generation Z and Generation X. The combination of sources within Fourhooks distinguishes it as a reliable source.

Besides the desk research, the research for this dissertation also entailed field research. A useful method was to administrate a focus group among teenagers between the ages of 13 and 16. Froukje Nzeyimana and four friends were the participants of the focus group. Thus, a focus group was conducted with teenagers between the ages of 13 and 16 to acquire qualitative knowledge about their motivations to buy specific clothing brands. In addition to this group of teenagers, a group of young women between the ages of 21 and 27 were interviewed to gather insight into their perceptions of influencer marketing and its affects on their buying intentions. Posing the same questions that derived from the theory enabled a comparison between the two groups of women. All the questions that were asked of both focus groups were based on the models of the theoretical framework and converted in the operationalisation table. This research conducted two focus groups because multiple attempts to find more teenagers to interview unfortunately failed. The aim was to interview two focus groups of teenagers and two of Millennials. The size of five participants per focus group was chosen to permit an overview of the interview and increase the chance that all participants would speak and would answer questions without feeling rushed. The fifth sub-question, 'How do influencer marketing elements relate to the influence that fashion video bloggers and brand ambassadors can have on the buying intentions of teenagers?', was answered through the field research with the focus groups and the interview with Emanuel Ankrah, which represents another qualitative research method. Ankrah is the YouTube manager of Social1nfluences and has worked with vloggers such as Beauty Gloss, Sophie Milzick, Laura Ponticorvo Furtjuh, Dylanhaegens, Manon Tilstra and Paulien Tilstra, among many others. Furthermore, he has collaborated with SBS 6, VT Wonen and Autoweek. Ankrah has started his own company in which he works with the aforementioned vloggers and teaches companies to use YouTube as a marketing tool.

7   Results

The following sections present the information that was gained through the two focus groups of five participants per group and the qualitative interview with the expert in the social media field. Sections are structured per each topic of the operationalisation table in the theoretical framework.

7.1   The theory of planned behaviour

7.1.1   Attitude towards behaviour

To summarise, the attitude towards a behaviour refers to a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of that behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The attitude towards a behaviour is directly linked to the intention, which then culminates in a certain behaviour. The following question embodies the definition of the attitude towards a behaviour and was therefore asked during the two focus groups: 'Is there a difference in how influencers try to stimulate advertisements?' The teenage respondents immediately answered that influencers use sponsors with famous brands, which leads customers to buy products or services from these famous brands. In addition, 60% of the respondents agreed that when a famous person uses a product, teenagers are more likely to buy or use it because they want to emulate that person. One respondent contributed an example from her own experience: 'when the influencer buys a bag or something else, you will think, "Oh, I need that bag too, because she (the influencer) has it too"'. All other respondents agreed with this insight.

Moreover, respondents added information regarding how influencers promote products. One respondent mentioned that influencers use pictures for this purpose, and followers see the clothing they wear. Another respondent noted that influencers tag brands in their Instagram posts to directly link to their page, and yet another respondent stated that influencers add the name of brands in the captions as well. According to one teenage respondent, influencers apply captions and can make the description as detailed as they want in order to provide thorough information. In this regard, another respondent added that influencers also use '#linkinbio' in captions to refer to their biographies on pages where they add a link to a vlog. One teenager respondent explained that influencers mention the origins of their products in vlogs, and another respondent added, 'I mostly see female influencers adding this information to their vlogs instead of males'. A respondent also shared that there are special Instagram accounts for the outfits of influencers. Apart from advertisements on their pages, one respondent said that influencers have more reach on Instagram than on other platforms: 'sometimes when I check Instagram, I see influencers or brands in the "discover" part.' A Millennial respondent explained that influencers employ a variety of platforms for promotion and, according, multiple types of advertisement. YouTube can be the main platform of one influencer, whereas another influencer mostly uses Instagram. The respondent also noted that some influencers establish partnerships and promote more often than other influencers who do not have such agreements. Also, advertisements occur on Youtube by depicting the promoted clothes through videos, whereas Instagram influencers

solely use tags. She added that it is more important to adjust the promotion to their target group and the industry in which they want to practice. Another respondent from the Millennial focus group answered the question by referring to surreptitious advertisements, expressing, 'they get paid for a post, but they do not want others to know that they collaborate with a brand. Then, the influencer does not use tags, and so on'. However, one respondent defended this by highlighting that some influencers are honest in advertisements, and because they are popular, followers still buy the promoted products because they want to look like those influencers. The focus groups also raised the topic of surreptitious advertising, as this has become a legal restriction. The respondents then discussed the difficulty of proving this charge given that unknown brands can sponsor an influencer without mentioning it and therefore using advertisements. Another respondent added, 'I see many influencers promote products online. I think influencers do it mostly for the products and that makes them popular. To be honest, I do not notice influencers that do not use promotions. Promotions is what makes an influencer and influencer'.

7.1.2   The subjective norm

The subjective norm refers to the social pressure to perform or avoid a certain behaviour. It is linked to the attitude towards a behaviour. The following question addresses the subjective norm:

 'If your friend rejected a pair of jeans, would you still like to wear it?' Respondents from the teenage focus group preferred to look good and cared about the fit of the jeans. However, if someone would say that they did not look good, then 40% would not buy them. One respondent was opinion: 'No, if I like something on myself, I would definitely buy it. Even if my mom would reject a clothing, I would still buy it'. Another respondent explained that it depended on the situation; when shopping with a friend, they influence their opinion, and it changes whether or not they like a product. She offered the following example: 'When I have a new shirt or jeans and I tell my friend that I want to buy that item, then my friend usually tells me if they like it or not. Mostly, I like a product in first instance, but then when talking about the product and talking to a friend, it can change my opinion. I then take a good look at it and decide if have considered to buy it too soon or not'.

The Millennial focus group answered the same question differently, as almost all participants would not consider the opinion of a friend regarding a pair of jeans. The exception was one participant, who said, 'I am easily influenced. If a friend would say that jeans does not look nice on me, I would not wear it'. The other participants agreed that if they thought the jeans looked good on them, then they would wear them. One respondent said, 'yes, when I see a product that I like knowing it looks good on me, I would not wear it because a friend does not like it. I would still wear or buy it. It does not have an impact on my behaviour. I can imagine that others might have that they feel influenced, but that does not count for me'. Because of her rebellious nature, one participant believed that she would be even more likely to buy a pair of jeans if a friend rejected it.

7.1.3   Perceived behavioural control

The perceived behavioural control refers to an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing a behaviour of interest, which includes opportunities and resources such as time, money, skills and the co-operation of others (Ajzen, 1991). This section presents the results of questions that concern perceived behavioural control.

In response to the question of whether they could decide for themselves which clothes to buy, all teenage respondents answered that they do decide for themselves which clothes they want to buy. However, 40% of the teenagers explained that they do ask their mother or friends for advice but still ultimately decide for themselves. One respondent was not interested in clothes that she saw on other people but was more attracted to the clothes on mannequins in shop displays. One respondent said, 'for example, when Noa wears cool sweatpants and I like it too, I would also want to buy it'. One Millennial respondent noted that she does decide for herself which clothes to wear, but she feels inspired by social media: 'yes, I always think about what I want to wear when it comes to clothes; however, Instagram does influence my buying decision. Sometimes when I shop at Zara to see a promoted shirt or other item I have seen on social media. I do however get inspired for what is see on social media'. Other respondents identified the importance of being part of a group and feeling included by wearing the same clothes. In addition, they only noticed clothes because other people had worn it before them. Another respondent said, 'recently, I have created a look which was all based on what I have seen others wear on the streets or on social media. It is all based on what I see and because I want to be "as cool as the person that wears it".

For the question, 'Do you have enough money to buy the clothes you want to wear?', teenage respondents universally answered affirmatively. However, four participants mentioned that they would have to save for an item if it was expensive. One respondent shared, 'I do not always have enough money to buy the clothes I want to wear. However, when I do want something, I save for it and buy it eventually. Even if I see a pair of shoes for €500, I will save up to €500 to buy it'. Only one respondent would prefer a cheaper version of an item that she likes; for example, she would prefer a similar Primark jacket over a Zara jacket because of the price. The Millennials mostly expressed that they did not have enough money to buy the clothes they want to wear. Only two participants were exceptions. One such participant preferred basic clothing and was not particularly interested in high fashion brands. The other mentioned that she would even spend less on clothes if she could decide for herself. The other respondents, who answered no to the question, referred to high fashion brand items, such as a timeless €1,200 Chanel bag. According to one respondent, the price could influence her decision: 'before checking the price tag, I can find something really interesting, but this can change immediately after seeing that it is too expensive for me'.

Most Millennial respondents answered 'no' to the question of whether they had enough time to dress as they would like. Only two of these participants supposed that it depends on the environment and

cited the example of requiring more time when going out to a club and less when preparing for university, as there were not many people involved in trends, and this diminished their interest in dressing according to trends.

In contrast, all teenage respondents answered the same question with 'yes'. One respondent mentioned that she has moments where she does not have enough time but makes time to dress as desired. Other respondents answered that they simply grab a shirt and jeans from the closet and check if it looks good together. Only one respondent did not dedicate much thought to dressing herself unless there was a special occasion and did not feel a need to look nice in class.

7.1.4   Intentions

Teenage respondents offered largely the same answer to the question, 'if you have enough time, money or freedom, how likely would you be to buy the product?' Two out of five participants would dress the same as they did at the time, and one mentioned that she would use her time more effectively to search for clothing but still use less time to get dressed. The other three explained that they would invest more in expensive clothing and buy, for example, a Michael Kors bag.

The Millennials answered the same question by expressing **that they would all use their freedom, time and money to buy different products. One respondent said, 'when you do not have any limits, it gives you more options'.** They subsequently explained that this would not make them happier because they would have a small and temporary feeling of excitement after a purchase.

With regard to the question of whether they would be (more) likely to buy a product if their friend also liked the product, one teenage respondent expressed that she experienced this in reverse: she noticed that her friends would buy items that she had purchased. Another respondent noted that she would not like the product because a friend has it: 'I do not have it because of my friend, but if I see my friend with a nice item I like, I would buy it too. The same counts if I would see a stranger with the same item'. The other respondents would ask for advice from friends and family members if they liked a product.

The Millennials answered the same question by first highlighting that it would not increase their likelihood to purchase the product. Being unique and distinguishing oneself from others was more important, although one respondent admitted to being influenced by friends. She then said, 'if I like a product and a friend agrees on that, I am more indented to buy the product. If a friend is negative about a product, my opinion stays neutral'. The other respondents corroborated this opinion.

Ankrah also answered the question, 'In which way do you think influencer marketing on YouTube affects buying intentions?' He asserted that it must have a substantial effect because **if this was not the case, then companies would not pay so much money to YouTubers to promote their business**

with their service or product. Previously, people did not believe in social media as much and employed interns to perform their social media activities. However, such activities have now become a key part of a company strategy. He cited the example of two Dutch vloggers, Nabil and Rutger, who conducted a Snapchat campaign for McDonalds. Their work yielded remarkable results, as Big Macs were soon sold out. Ankrah mentioned that McDonalds had in fact called to request that they stop the campaign because the Big Macs had sold out. He also mentioned another example of the 4LIFE girl band and YouTube vloggers, who collaborated on a campaign with HEMA to promote a raincoat for impression purposes 'because sometimes it is about showing the product which sub-consciously influences the buying intentions', Ankrah emphasised. 4LIFE creatively utilised the raincoats by creating a song about them. This approach was successful for HEMA and received approximately half-a-million views. He offered yet another example of 'back-to-school' products for HEMA with YouTuber Beautynezz, which returns every year and is consistently effective. Also, Dylanhaegens collaborated with Bruna for a 'back-to-school' collection and, together with Beautynezz, had a tour in which they signed autographs for fans.

The last example from Ankrah was the Tina Dag, for which he was responsible for the YouTube part. He mentioned that YouTuber EnzoKnol needed bodyguards, and there was a massive line just to buy shirts from him. He then said, 'talking about influencer buying intentions, he shows these shirts every time in his videos. Believe me when he says that when EnzoKnol is going to be somewhere, it will be crowded and he will sell a lot of shirts. So, influencers definitely have an influence purchase decision of people or buyer decision of people'.

In response to a mention from the interviewer of the pyjama collection of two YouTubers, Monica Geuze and Queenofjetlags, which costs around €120 a piece, Ankrah said, 'I mean, in the USA, this has been happening for a long time, and the amount of money is way higher than they get over there compared to the Netherlands. Lily Singh is a good example of this. She is like a brand ambassador for different products and different services. The YouTube artists are treated like mainstream stars in the USA. In the Netherlands, it is starting to come up more. Anna Nooshin is a great example. She knows how to market herself, even though it is fake.'

Ankrah further explained, '**they are like influencers, but the thing with YouTubers is that the people who watch their videos think that the YouTubers are their friends and think they have a personal connection. So, it is also that you can compare it to mouth-to-mouth marketing, which works perfect as well, because you believe that you want to buy from people you know.** That is another role why influencer marketing is so powerful. You can basically communicate with them, or that is at least how the people feel as their friend from what they see on YouTube'. He also mentioned that the target group wants to emulate older YouTubers and aspires to be like them, while the YouTubers of their age are who they want to mimic now, and they are concerned with current happenings.

To the question, 'what kind of methods do they use to increase sales?', Ankrah answered that they engage in product placement by depicting the products and in brand contact, which involves creatively engaging doing something creative with the product, or they conduct a whole campaign with the brand and make several videos. They also utilise sweepstakes in which followers can win prizes. However, most of the time, Ankrah would speak with brands and ask whether they wanted the link in the description of the video so that people could directly visit the website. He also mentioned that brands can offer a 'kickback', whereby the YouTuber is rewarded with a gift bag when a certain amount of the product is sold. He then clarified, 'of course, the YouTuber will get its fee, but if there is amount for the kickback, they are going to work until they get the kickback fee'.

To calculate sales, companies use the click-through rate (CTR) to determine how many people accessed and engaged with a link, which translates to profit. Ankrah referred to an example from McDonalds that increased the company's gross margin. He also mentioned that some firms are sceptical and want to see examples, but influencer marketing is becoming more mainstream, and everybody is trying to use influencers to be hip. He also mentioned that YouTube uses the cost per mille (CPM), which relates to the impressions and cost per view (CPV) and effective CPV. Moreover, the engagement rate and ROI are employed: 'with the ROI, they see how much they have invested and how much came back through clicks and that is what they measure against each other to see if they got their money back'.

7.1.5   Behaviour

Teenage respondents offered different answers to the question, 'have you ever bought a product because a friend, family member or influencer wore it?' One respondent immediately answered affirmatively and explained that she had this experience with a leather jacket. Another respondent recognised it with the beauty products that she has bought, as she was inspired by Delilah Skin Master and then bought a comparable but more affordable item. Another respondent did not buy the same products but did buy the same brands. Other respondents answered that they experienced this with friends instead of family members and influencers.

Among Millennials, all respondents answered this question by explaining that their friends influence them. They either sent friends a picture when shopping to ask for opinions or just went shopping together. One respondent said, 'no, I try not to choose the products others wear, but I tend to buy a product sooner when others are there too, just for their opinion. When I am alone, I more easily say no to myself'.

7.2   Influence

The following questions connect to Figure 1 of the theoretical framework, which explains elements of influence as well as influence itself. Results linked to the elements of influence are divided into sub-parts.

To the question, 'what are your feelings towards someone you respect?', respondents answered that they felt more respect for their parents and teachers than for classmates, and their respect for older people was much greater than for their peers. One respondent said, 'the way you act towards a friend or a teacher is very different. You have to be polite to your teacher, more to a teacher than to your friend'. In addition, one respondent noted that she could have respect for a person of her own age because of the disposition and achievements of that person.

Another respondent explained that when she respects someone, she devotes more consideration to that person's statements. She also considers their opinions more strongly than she normally would. Some respondents remarked that they would want help from a person they respect when in a difficult situation. In contrast, one respondent answered that she did not need to see the person or talk to them. One respondent even asserted, 'I think that there is a difference in having respect and looking up to a person. For example, I have respect for my mother, but feel as if we are on the same level without a special admiration for her. I can see the mistakes she makes and there are disagreements. A person I look up to, does not have that'.

In response to the question, 'does a person who has similarities or expertise in the fashion industry affect your thoughts on trends?', all teenage participants expressed that a person with similarities affected their thoughts about trends. **However, all respondents referred to their friends rather than to an influencer.** One respondent explained, 'I have it with my friends. When looking at an influencer like Monica Geuze, I do not feel that we have the same thoughts and lifestyle. My friends and I have the same goal and are on the same page when it comes to thoughts and lifestyle. Also with fashion, we have the same opinion. Of course, we do have differences'. Another respondent added, 'with a friend, it is more personal, because you know each other, than Monica Geuze, for example. You know her, but she does not know you'. One Millennial respondent noted that the fashion industry is used for inspirational purposes to observe how others use products and combine clothing. Another respondent said, 'yes, I think you do want to know what is in fashion. If I am with a person that knows a lot about fashion, it changes the way I dress. For example, my aunt is very fashionable and a professional in that industry. If I am with her, I do consider what to wear'. Still another respondent answered, 'if you can identify yourself with a person, the willingness of acting like the person increases. Karl Lagerfeld, for example, is a fashion expert, but I do think he looks weird'. Another respondent agreed on importance of identifying with a person. Furthermore, **60% believed that the fashion industry makes it**

impossible to not be fashionable because all the clothes that one buys at H&M are based on trends and are thus automatically fashionable clothes.

With regard to the question, 'what are your thoughts on tradition marketing versus influencer marketing?', Ankrah expressed that the concepts go hand-in-hand; one cannot occur without the other because not everybody is digital, and traditional marketing is effective for storytelling. He also cited an example of Seth Godin, wherein he stated that a brand cannot survive if it cannot tell its story. He said, 'even simple products, such as a shaving machine, have a story, and they use influencer and celebrity marketing. You have to be visual with most products'.

He further explained that the difference between a celebrity and an influencer is that an influencer can be a 'girl next door' and is more reliable than, for example, Madonna. He then mentioned, 'it is not as close as Mascha (Beauty Gloss), who can basically be your neighbour, and I think that is the power of influence as well. I think it is targeted as well, and they have a specific group that they gravitate towards. I think that is the power of YouTube influencers as well, because there are different kinds of YouTube influencers as well'.

7.2.1   Scope

With regard to the question, 'do you prefer to follow an influencer with a large number of followers (900,000 or more) or an influencer with a smaller number of followers (3,000 to 10,000)?', **all teenage respondents answered that they would prefer to follow an influencer with a large number of followers**. One respondent explained, 'an influencer that has achieved more is more interesting for me, also because they have a good reach. For example, Kim Kardashian has that reach, and if she posts something about her make-up line, I check it more easily'. To add, another respondent said, 'maybe it is more interesting because they have more experience in their field of social media. On the other side, I would rather choose something that attracts my attention regardless of the number of followers'. In contrast, one respondent said that she prefers to follow someone who attracts her, and she would prefer an influencer with 300 followers over a make-up brand's Instagram page: 'the Instagram account of MAC cosmetics has a lot of models that wear heavy make-up, which is not interesting for me. Then I see a make-up artist that has 300 followers and makes nicer tutorials, which would then have my preference'. By comparison, **all millennial respondents answered that they would prefer an influencer who has a smaller number of followers.** One respondent answered, 'people with a large number of followers are less interested in their followers and sometimes I get the idea that they promote products they are not a fan of. Smaller accounts consider the opinions of their followers more and make use of the feedback given by followers. Smaller influencers are not that obsessed with the media world, I think'. In addition, 40% of respondents perceived more distance between an influencer with a large number of followers. One respondent noted, 'I would rather follow a friend or blogger with a smaller number of followers, because you can directly contact the person

and buy products. My friend has 200 followers, for example. I would rather go for engagement and quality instead of popularity'. Another respondent identified uniqueness as an important quality, stating, 'it is more alternative, and the more followers, the more people see it, and the more people wear their products or copy their behaviour. You want to be different'.

7.2.2   Engagement

All respondents broadly answered 'no' the question, 'have you ever commented on an influencer's post? If so, have they responded to you with a comment or a like?**' Specifically, no respondents had ever commented on an influencer's post.** Eighty per cent of respondents had 'liked' posts from influencers, however. One respondent answered, 'no. I like it most of the time, but I do not respond to posts. As if the influencer would read my comment, because I do not think they would do that'. One respondent believed that giving a 'like' is not necessary. With regard to receiving a response from an influencer through a mutual like or comment, only one respondent had ever experienced interaction. One participant admitted, 'I do check accounts with quotes. I have seen an account of a girl with many followers that posts a lot of quotes. I am now in contact with her through WhatsApp. She influences me with her nice stories'.

Ankrah answered the question of 'how do you see influencer marketing changing in the future?' by emphasising that he believes in micro-influencer marketing and that it is not about numbers but instead about engagement. He also predicted that budgets will increase, and all companies will create their own influencers.

7.2.3   Relevance

To the question of whether they would mind if a beauty blogger promoted a car or technical device, teenage participants responded that they would not mind it. One respondent explained that she would be interested if she were a different age: 'I would be interested if I would be a bit older than I am now. I cannot buy a car now, but hopefully when I am 24. If I would see it then, and the influencer promotes the car correctly, I would consider it. Also, the type of car – if it would be a Range Rover, I would be interested'. Another respondent answered that her attraction to the product would depend on her financial situation. Only one respondent expressed that if a fitness influencer promoted a PlayStation 4, she would be doing it for the money. One millennial respondent said, 'I would not mind if a blogger would promote that, but I would find it quite odd. **The influencer should promote something of their personal interest**. I think that promoting a product besides their interest is because of money purposes'. All other respondents agreed on this point and added that it would be too marketing related. In contrast, one respondent opined, 'it increases their willingness to buy because companies would not reach this scope of followers which an influencer can'.

7.3   Social media quadrants

The following questions connect to Figure 5 of the theoretical framework and concern brand ambassadors.

7.3.1   Internal stakeholders

To the question 'would you be more interested in a product if an employee of the company recommends it?', respondents shared that **they would be less interested in a product if an employee recommended it. All Millennial respondents apart from one agreed that the employee would be promoting the product because it was is or her job to sell it.** One respondent answered as follows: 'when a shop advisor tells me that, I just think that that is their job to do and say. It does not seem reliable' In contrast, another respondent explained that she would be more interested 'because the person that works for the company tries to convince you that they have the best products'.

Two out of the five teenage respondents reported that they would listen to the advice of the employee but would not necessarily buy the product. One respondent reasoned, 'I would be take advice from someone that works there because they are more experienced', while another respondent disagreed and asserted that she would not take the employee's advice. Otherwise, one respondent mentioned that she would rather trust a person who has used the product instead of an employee: 'I would not immediately believe someone that works at the company because they can promote something without being reliable. A person that has used the product and has experience with the product would be more reliable, in my opinion'.

7.3.2   External stakeholders

Regarding the question of whether a collaboration with a celebrity would change or increase their interest in a brand, **all respondents answered negatively.** One respondent even believed that she would be less interested because of a price increase: 'no, when a celebrity or brand would collaborate with H&M, I would not be interested. Mainly because of the price'. Three of the 10 respondents would want a product to flatter them and would buy it if they liked the product – not because of collaboration with a famous person. Another respondent from the Millennial focus group answered, 'yes, that is interesting to see. I do not immediately think that I need to have a product when there is a collaboration. At H&M, I have seen some nice things when they collaborate with brands or famous people. The quality of the product is more important to me. If the product is good, I'm interested'. One respondent would even prefer a brand from its own store instead of from a collaboration and explained, 'if I would want to buy something from a brand, I would go to their own store instead of buying something from a collaboration'.

8   Analysis

The following chapter analyses the results that were gained through the qualitative research of two focus groups and an interview with a YouTube manager.

Figure 7 in the theoretical framework depicts the three elements of the theory of planned behaviour: subjective norm, perceived behavioural control and attitude towards the behaviour. These elements affect buying intentions. In the case of influencer marketing, the factors of influence, relevance, scope, engagement, and internal and external stakeholders determine buying intention. The questions posed to the focus groups, which can be found in the theoretical framework, are indirect examples that link to the elements of the theory of planned behaviour, the theory of influence and the theory of social media quadrants.

The aim of the analysis is to compare the elements of influencer marketing and identify which elements can most effectively influence buying intentions through brand ambassadors and influencers.

8.1   Theory of planned behaviour

The following analysis considers the three elements of the theory of planned behaviour. According to Ajzen, these elements of attitude towards a behaviour, the subjective norm and the perceived behavioural control influence the intention and, eventually, the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).

8.1.1   Intentions

In theory, the perceived behavioural control, subjective norm and attitude towards a behaviour influence intentions. The question of whether respondents would consider buying a product when in possession of all necessary resources, such as time, money and freedom, is directly connected to the perceived behavioural control. A majority of the respondents – three out of five of the teenagers and all Millennials – would dress differently if their perceived behavioural control were greater. This finding suggests that, according to the research, the perceived behavioural control had a positive effect on the influence of both groups.

Also, the subjective norm theoretically influences intentions. The question in the focus groups that was directly linked to the subjective norm was, 'if a friend liked the product too, would you then be (more) likely to buy the product?' The majority of the teenagers and Millennials did not perceive their friends or family to affect their buying intentions. This indicates that the intentions linked to the subjective norm are less effective than those relating to the perceived behavioural control.

Influencer marketing does inform buying intentions on YouTube, according to Emanuel Ankrah, a Dutch YouTube and social media expert, as influencer marketing would otherwise not be so advertised. To add, he offered some examples of cases where McDonalds and HEMA hired

influencers for campaigns that immediately sold out the related products. In addition, the CPV, CPM and engagement rate are used to calculate profits that result from influencer marketing.

Ankrah compared YouTubers with mouth-to-mouth marketing, which is H2H marketing simplified in a two-sided communication (Lamarque, 2017). Influencers are more approachable than celebrities since interactions can occur through social media platforms and thereby offer a more personal connection for followers. An influencer can be a 'girl next door', and according to Ankrah, they are more reliable than, for example, Madonna. Besides influencer marketing, traditional marketing will likely continue to necessary and go hand-in-hand with influencer marketing, as not everybody is or will become digital.

8.2   Influence

Lamarque has expressed a theoretical view of influence as 'scope x relevance x engagement', and it is therefore a key element of influencer marketing (Lamarque, 2017). During the focus groups, two questions were asked that are known on a theoretical basis as examples of influence.

Eight out of the 10 respondents agreed that feelings towards someone they respected were different from those towards someone they did not respect, and they considered a person's opinion more closely when they respected that person. To conclude, the majority expressed different feelings towards individuals they respected, which signifies a change in feelings and behaviour and, moreover, the definition of influence. All teenage respondents agreed that a person with similarities in the fashion industry can affect their thoughts about trends in referring to their friends rather than influencers, with the reasoning that an influencer does not know them, which made it less personal. Sixty per cent of the Millennial respondents believed that the fashion industry makes it impossible to be unfashionable because all products are based on trends established by experts. To summarise, 50% of respondents did not think the fashion industry affected their thoughts on trends but did express that their friends do have such an effect since they have similarities. The other 50% believed that the fashion industry does in fact impact their thoughts about trends since all clothes that they can buy are designed according to trends. If either friends or experts change a person's thoughts about trends, that person will want to fulfil another's expectation, which represents an influence.

8.2.1   Scope

All teenager respondents preferred a top-tier influencer over micro-influencers because the former have more experience and higher achievements than mid-tier and micro-influencers. In contrast, Millennials preferred micro-influencers to mid- and top-tier influencers. The majority of the Millennials expressed that mid- and top-tier influencers are less engaged with their followers.

The scope of followers is important to both teenagers and Millennials; however, teenagers are more focused on mid- and top-tier influencers compared to Millennials, who are more attracted to micro-

influencers. The scope is an effective element of influence since it indicates how the target group perceives the influencer. Intentions are therefore partly based on the scope of followers. According to Young, teenagers are more likely to be influenced. Furthermore, they are used to 'a more crowded social space' than Millennials are, as the latter uses social media solely to interact with friends (Young, 2017). In addition, teenagers are a market-aware generation of 'digital natives'. Compared to teenagers, Millennials can recall a life without social media (Young, 2017). These findings indicate that Millennials preferred smaller influencers to larger ones, while teenagers reported the reverse.

8.2.2   Engagement

Engagement refers to the communication between an influencer and his or her followers. No respondents in either focus group had ever commented on a post. A majority of 80% had 'liked' an influencer's post, however. Still, 9 out of the 10 respondents had never experienced interaction through a mutual like or comment. This suggests that both groups perceived a barrier to commenting on a post, though 80% had still engaged through a 'like'.

Ankrah opined that engagement is more important; however, in theory, it seems that the engagement rate only increases when the scope of followers decreases (Fashion Beauty Monitor, 2017). Yet, the findings indicate that teenagers who prefer top-tier followers over micro-influencers did not expect engagement from influencers, and Millennials who focused on micro-influencers shared that opinion. Thus, it can be concluded that the qualitative research results differ from the theory. Research on engagement would be more effective on a larger scale since micro-influencers have an 8% engagement rate, while that of top-tier influencers is only 1.6% (TrackMaven, 2018).

8.2.3   Relevance

The majority of teenagers would not mind if a beauty blogger promoted a car as long as it was promoted correctly. Relevance to teenagers was therefore not as necessary as it was for Millennials, who unanimously agreed that irrelevant promotion occurs for monetary purposes since it is apart from the influencer's interest.

This finding can imply that relevance is more effective for influencing buying intentions of Millennials than for impacting those of teenagers, who did not mind if the content was relevant.

8.3   Social media quadrants

The social media quadrants matrix in Section 5.2 focuses on conversation. As Belleghem has stated, more conversation from internal stakeholders fostered adoration towards a company, and more conversation from external stakeholders contributes to a proud company (Belleghem, De Converstation Company, 2012).

8.3.1   Internal stakeholders

Internal stakeholders are employees and board members of a company or organisation. The majority of participants would not be interested in a recommendation from an internal stakeholder. Such recommendations could even be viewed as unreliable and considered non-genuine promotion for job-related purposes. A minority of teenagers would rather trust reviews from customers than the word of an employee. This particular insight indicates that internal stakeholders are not an effective element to increase the buying intentions of teenagers or Millennials. In theory, the social media quadrants matrix is more focused on conversation from internal stakeholders (Belleghem, De Converstation Company, 2012). Nevertheless, the operationalisation table insufficiently focused on conversation, and in practice, it can indicate that teenagers and Millennials would be more trusting of other customers than of employees.

8.3.2   External stakeholders

External stakeholders are ambassadors and celebrities who collaborate with a brand. The majority of the teenagers and Millennials were not particularly enthusiastic about external stakeholders, as they felt that it affects their interest in a brand. External stakeholders are interesting for exposure since many teenagers and Millennial respondents were aware of collaborations. However, the findings suggest that external stakeholders are not an effective element to increase buying intentions since there would not be any interest in buying the products. In theory, the social media quadrants matrix focuses more on the increase of conversation from external stakeholders, which is engagement with a company, instead of conversations from external stakeholders with followers (Belleghem, De Converstation Company, 2012).

According to Lamarque, the scope, relevance and engagement are elements that combine to create influencer marketing (Lamarque, 2017). These three elements relate to the attitude towards a behaviour since the perception of an influencer is developed through the scope of followers of an influencer and the relevant content in which he or she is interested. For example, a Millennial would have a more favourable attitude when an influencer has a smaller scope of followers and provides relevant content. In the theory of planned behaviour, the attitude towards a behaviour should be favourable in order to affect the subjective norm or directly inform intentions. Unfortunately, the research indicates that external and internal stakeholders, including brand ambassadors, do not impact intentions in the theory of planned behaviour.

This dissertation has only investigated the impact of influencer marketing on the buying intentions of teenagers and Millennials on a small scale through two focus groups and an interview with a YouTube manager. Further research on a larger scale is required to investigate whether the scope of followers

and relevance of influencers impact buying intentions within Generation Z and Generation X. Such research can allow for conclusions rather than indications that apply for both generational groups. Also, future studies should investigate the engagement rate as well as brand ambassadors on a larger scale in order to clearly determine the impact of buying intentions on brand ambassadors and explore the engagement rate at all influencer levels.

9   Conclusion

This dissertation has answered the research question, 'how does the impact of influencers and brand ambassadors in the fashion industry affect the buying intentions of teenagers (ages 13-16) and Millennials?' It has addressed this main question through sub-questions, which were mostly resolved in the theoretical framework.

First, 'who are fashion influencers?' was answered by defining the term *influencer marketing,* which entails an action plan in which marketing operates from consumer to consumer through people who have the ability to communicate through their broad social media network on behalf of a brand or organisation (Lamarque, 2017). This form is, in theory, H2H marketing. Through field research, the dissertation has concluded that fashion influencers mostly have a one-sided relationship, as there is no clear response to followers.

The question 'who are brand ambassadors?' was addressed by establishing that brand ambassadors are influencers because they are so influential. The difference between fashion influencers and brand ambassadors is that the latter can only speak positively about a brand, as they have a contract with the company. Influencers, on the other hand, can be critical and opinionated, as they do not have long-term contracts with companies.

The question of 'what are buying intentions?' contributed to answering the research question by introducing the theory of planned behaviour and the cognitive model of buying intentions. The cognitive model of buying behaviour is more focused on the price perception compared to the theory of planned behaviour, and it was therefore not researched through the focus groups. In theory, the subjective norm, attitude towards a behaviour and perceived behavioural control increase the intentions and, eventually, the behaviour of consumers. Besides the definitions, the question of 'how do influencer marketing elements relate to the impact that fashion video bloggers and brand ambassadors can have on the buying intentions of teenagers?' was answered through the analysis, which established a link between the scope, relevance and engagement. Unfortunately, brand ambassadors have not related to intentions as influencers do. Yet, van Belleghem has focused on conversations from brand ambassadors, which is a form of engagement; however, the results have indicated that teenagers and Millennials did not feel a need for engagement through either brand ambassadors or influencers.

According to Lamarque's influencer definition, elements such as scope, engagement and relevance combine to create influence (Lamarque, 2017). According to the results, both the scope and relevance had a greater effect on the intentions than engagement did. Yet, influence mainly derived from friends, and the majority of the Millennials were subconsciously influenced by experts in the fashion industry. Combining the theory of planned behaviour with the definition of influence by Lamarque can imply that influencer marketing affects the subjective norm and the attitude towards a behaviour, as Figure 8

illustrates. The scope of an influencer, the engagement and the relevance are linked to how teenagers and Millennials perceive an influencer, which can be favourable or unfavourable, and it is therefore the attitude towards a behaviour. However, both groups mentioned that influence as a whole occurred mainly through peer pressure. Therefore, the whole theory of influence by Lamarque affects the subjective norm through the attitude towards a behaviour, which eventually influences intentions. This can indicate that when the scope and relevance are favourable, teenagers and Millennials feel a positive effect towards an influencer. Then, when the attitude towards a behaviour has a positive effect and teenagers and Millennials feel influenced by the subjective norm, it then affects their intentions, which provides an answer to the research question of **'How does the impact of fashion influencers and brand ambassadors affect the buying intentions of teenagers (ages 13-20) and Millennials (ages20-24)?'** To address the problem statement, applications of influencer marketing should consider the scope of followers and the relevance in order to attract teenagers or Millennials.

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11   Appendices

11.1   Appendix 1: Focus group transcript 'Millennials'

The Hague. Conducted on February 13th, 08:00 PM by Laura Bruce-Boye.

Attendants:

Kelly (23)

Puck (22)

Shalini (24)

Barbara (27)

Suzana (22)

1.   Is there a difference in how influencers try to stimulate advertisements?

Kelly: When looking at YouTube or Instagram I see many different social platforms on which influencers promote. It also depends on the type of advertisements they promote, for some influencers YouTube is their main platform for advertisements and for other influencers it is Instagram. Besides that, it depends on the type of advertisements an influencer wants to promote. Some influencers have partnerships with a brand and promote their products more than ones. YouTubers in general can show promoted clothes through a video, whereas influencers on Instagram solely use a tag of the brand. It is more important to adjust the promotion on their target group and the industry they want to practice in.

Puck: Yes, some influencers are honest about advertisements and tell their followers that products are promoted. Some even give their followers a discount voucher for the brand's web shop. There are others that do not even say that they promote products. How do you call that?

Shalini: Surreptitious advertising?

Puck: They get paid for a post, but they do not want others to know that they collaborate with a brand. Then, the influencer does not use tags and so on.

Suus: Some influencers are honest in advertisements, because they are popular and followers buy it because they want to look like her.

Barbara: Sometimes I see influencers like Kylie Jenner promoting a product, then I know people would buy it because it is Kylie Jenner and because of her popularity. I do not know if this is the same with Dutch influencers.

Laura: There is a law that restricts influencers from using surreptitious advertising. On Instagram, you see that an influencer has a partnership with a brand.

Suus: How do they prove that?

Puck: Yes, it is hard to prove, since they might get products sponsored from unknown brands.

Laura: true, but this is more about the influencer and less about the brand.

Puck: It does impact the influencer since they promote the brand's product.

Laura: Shalini what do you think about this?

Shalini: I see many influencers promote products online. I think influencers do it mostly for the products and that makes them popular. To be honest, I do not notice influencers that do not use promotions. Promotions is what makes an influencer and influencer.

2. What if your friend would reject some jeans, would you still like to wear it?

Kelly: Yes, when I see a product that I like and knowing it looks good on me, I would still wear it even when a friend dislikes it. I would still wear or buy it. It does not have an impact on my behaviour. I can imagine that others might have that they feel influenced, but that does not count for me.

All: Yes.

Barbara: Depends on who says it, which friend.

Laura: Why does this depend per friend?

Puck: It depends on respect towards the person which influences the opinion on clothes.

Shalini: True, but I would still buy it.

Suus: I think that it would have influence. I would buy it and wear it, but it would change my thoughts on the clothing if a friend would reject the jeans.

Puck: I would wear it to show it does suit me. (rebellious act)

Barbara: I am easily influenced. If a friend would say that jeans does not look nice on me, I would not wear it.

Suus: I also act as if I do not care, but I think it does matter what my friends would say or think.

Puck: How often does it actually happen that a person says this. I don't think that happens much.

3. Can you decide for yourself what clothes you want to buy?

Kelly: Yes, I always think about what I want to wear when it comes to clothes, however Instagram does influence my buying decision. Sometimes when I shop at Zara to see a promoted shirt or other item I have seen on social media. I do, however, get inspired for what is see on social media.

Puck: I do not think so. Recently I have created a look which was all based on what I have seen others wear on the streets or on social media. It is all based on what I see and because I want to be 'as cool as the person that wears it'.

Suus: You also only see clothes because others wear it.

Barbara: I also think that it is important to be a part of a group. People want to feel included and wear the same things. I, as a person, am insecure and I sometimes check on Instagram and Pinterest for inspiration and combination styles.

Shalini: Yes, I do that too, but not that much. I have three styling icons of which I get inspiration from. For example, Beyoncé and Rihanna and in the working life I check what my colleagues wear.

4. Do you have enough money to buy the clothes you want to wear?

Kelly: I prefer basic clothing and I am not a big fan of high fashion brands. I usually go to affordable stores when shopping. In that case, I do have enough to spend on the clothes I want to wear. I usually shop at Bershka, Zara, H&M and Monki.

Shalini: No

Puck: No

Barbara: No

Puck: I recently saw a bag that I liked but it was around 1200 euros.

Shalini: yes, I had it with an umbrella that was 50 euros.

Suus: I do, because I prefer to spend less on clothing.

Shalini: I have it too, before checking the price tag I can find something really interesting, but this can change immediately after seeing that it is too expensive for me.

Puck: it does not always have to do with trends, but it can be a timeless item.

Barbara: if I had all the money in the world I would have a timeless Chanel bag.

Laura: would you dress the same as you would do now?

Barbara: Yes, it would change the way I look, but I would still buy clothes from Zara for example.

Puck: I would definitely dress differently.

Suus: To recap on your previous question. If I could decide for myself what I want to wear I would even spend less money. If I had more money I would not spend more on clothes than I do now.

5. Do you have enough time to dress as you would like to?

Kelly: No, I have become lazier through the years. I do try to match all my clothes to look stylish. My job and the pressure of it has resulted in me having less time to spend on my clothing as i would.

Suus: I do not have enough time to create the perfect combination of clothes to make a nice outfit. When I was a bit younger, I used to create outfits.

Shalini: When I was in high school I could just take the time to dress, but nowadays I just leave it.

Suus: I just pull something out of the closet and I'm done.

Shalini: Exactly.

Barbara: it depends on the environment. I am a student at the University of Antwerp. There I do not see many being involved in trends. Because of that I lose interest in dressing myself according to trends.

Suus: Yes, it depends on where you are going. When you are going to a club, it takes more time than usually.

Barbara: Exactly.

Laura: When going out, you have more time to dress than on a daily base.

All: Yes

6. So, if you have enough time, money or freedom, how likely would you be to buy the product?

Kelly: If so, I would have more attention to spend on specific products with the extra time I would have. I would also have more interest in looking for specific clothing that would maybe be higher priced than the clothes I wear. This will have more influence on my buying behaviour.

Barbara: Yes.

Shalini: Very likely, you would have more freedom and money to buy the clothes you really want to wear for yourself, whereas before you would not have time, money and freedom for it.

Puck: When you do not have any limits, it gives you more options

Suus: I would do that too, but I don't know if that would make me happier.

Laura: why?

Suus: I once went to a fair fashion festival and there they told me that buying new clothes with all the money and freedom you have, but in the end, you will always go for something new. You keep buying and buying.

Shalini: Yes, I understand, but I think the question was if you would do it.

Suus: Yes.

Puck: Yes, then it is a question of time to find out that it does not make you happy

Suus: Yes, what is the purpose then? Is it enough then?

Puck: I would not think about the purpose. If I like the product, I buy it because I have the money and so on.

Shalini: I do not think that I makes me less happy. The feeling stays neutral.

Puck: a small feeling of excitement after purchasing.

7. And if your friend would like the product too, are you then (more) likely to buy the product?

Kelly: The opinions of friends do count for me, but it does not affect my decision entirely. To me it is more important if I feel good about myself. If someone else would say it looks good on me, it would definitely give me a boost to buy the product.

Puck: No

Barbara: No

Shalini, No, it is very personal. If Puck for example wears a pink lipstick it might look good on her, but that does not suit me. Then I would not buy it.

Laura: And in terms of clothes?

Shalini: Yes, if a friend would wear a tight dress, I know it will not suit me for example.

Barbara: I think it is good be unique instead of copying a clothing style from others. Distinguishing yourself from others.

Puck: You don't want to walk around looking like identical twins

Laura: So, a friend cannot influence if you like a product or not?

Puck: I would like to think that I am not influenced by friends, but to be honest I think I do.

Shalini: Yes, I agree on that.

Suus: I see it as a competition.

Puck: If I like a product and a friend agrees on that, I then am more indented to buy the product. If a friend is negative about a product, my opinion stays neutral.

Shalini: Same thing.

Laura: Suus, do you have something to add?

Suus: No, I agree on what Puck says.

Barbara: Me too.

8. Have you ever bought a product because a friend, family member or influencer wears it?

Kelly: To be honest, not because an influencer has it. Influencers do not have effect on how I choose my products. Of course, I do have some items because my friends have it or recommended it. I have also bought products because of friends because I wanted to try it out. If my friends are positive about a product, I would like to try it out as well.

Barbara: Yes, I have once bought a dress that I would never buy or wear, but he convinced me to buy it and then I tried it on. If I would go alone, I would never buy the product.

Puck: When I shopped with my mom, she would regularly find an item for me that I would never consider, but after trying it on, I liked it.

Laura: And when we are shopping together?

Puck: Not that much, because that does not happen quit often. I am then never in the mood to try an item on. I mostly shop alone.

Barbara: Still, when I go alone, I do send a picture to friends for their opinion.

Puck: I do that afterwards.

Suus: I never had that.

Shalini: I have had it several times when my boyfriend had Timberlands.

Barbara: I had it too when my sister tagged me in the shoes on an Instagram post.

Suus: No, I try not to choose the products others wear, but I tend to buy a product sooner when others are around too. Just for their opinion. When I am alone I easier say no to myself.

Puck: Do you think of that in a positive way? Or do you then think that someone tries to talk you into it.

Suus: Exactly, but also in a positive way. I do like some products I buy that are recommended by a friend.

9. What are your feelings towards someone you respect?

Kelly: I think that when you respect someone you consider what you say to the person more. You also consider their opinion more than you would rather do.

Barbara: What do you mean? I look up to the person and what the person says is important to me. An example, if I have difficulties with my studies and a person I respect tells me I can do it, I do not feel the urge to give up.

Shalini: In a difficult situation, I think of what the person I respect would try to solve this difficult issue.

Suus: I would easier copy and believe in what they say.

Puck: I think that there is a difference in having respect and looking up to a person. For example, I have respect for my mother, but feel as if we are on the same level without a special admiration for her. I can see the mistakes she makes and there are disagreements. A person I look up to, does not have that.

Shalini: I know a person I have a lot of respect for, but it does not mean I need to see the person or talk to him.

10. Does a person that has similarities or an expertise in the fashion industry affect your thoughts on trends?

Kelly: Yes, till a certain extent, however it would not influence my whole buying decision. I would rather use It for inspirational purposes to see how

 others use products or combine clothing items.

Suus: Depends on the person. If it is a friend, then yes.

Laura: Is that because you have similarities with the friend?

Suus: Yes.

Puck: If you can identify yourself with a person, the willingness of acting like the person increases. Karl Lagerfeld for example, is a fashion expert, but I do think he looks weird.

Barbara: The influence of a catwalk? Do you mean that?

Laura: No, a person that is similar or an expert within the fashion industry. A person that knows a lot about fashion, is a stylist for example or someone that knows a lot about fashion.

Barbara: Yes, I think you do want to know what is in fashion. If I am with a person that knows a lot about fashion, it changes the way I dress. Their opinion matters. For example, my aunt is very fashionable and a professional in that industry. If I am with her, I do consider what to wear.

Laura: I have that too with her, we have the same aunt.

Suus: Yes, you look up to the person.

Puck: You cannot not wear fashion, because all the clothes in stores like H&M are based on the actual trends. You automatically buy fashionable clothes.

Barbara: Even in vintage stores I see this happening.

Shalini: I do not want it, but you are directly influenced by the industry. You adjust to your environment.

Suus: I have this with a person I can identify myself with.

11. Do you prefer following an influencer with a large number of followers (900.000 and more or an influencer with a smaller number of followers (3000 -10.000)?

Kelly: People with a large number of followers are less interested in their followers and sometimes i get the idea that they promote products they are not a fan of. Smaller accounts consider the opinions of their followers more and make use of the feedback given by followers. Smaller influencers are not that obsessed with the media world, I think.

Barbara: I think influencers with a large number of followers have more reach, but it seems too distance. It does not look realistic, because their accounts look too perfect. I would prefer a smaller one.

Shalini: Yes, Kylie Jenner for example has so many followers. I would rather follow a friend or blogger with a smaller number of followers, because you can directly contact the person and buy products. My friend has 200 followers for example. I would rather go for engagement and quality instead of popularity.

Puck: I think that I would prefer a smaller influencer. I follow many accounts just to watch and not to buy things.

Suus: I would also choose a smaller influencer. It is more alternative and the more followers, the more people see it and the more people that wear their products or copy their behaviour. You want to be different.

12. Have you ever commented on an influencers' post? If so, have they responded to you in a comment or a like?

Kelly: No, I have never commented. I have never received a like back on my personal

Barbara. No.

Shalini: No.

Puck: No.

Suus: No.

Puck: I have two Instagram accounts, one private and on that account, I follow my friends. The other account is for influencers. I just check on that account, but never like or comment on a post.

13. Would you mind if a beauty blogger would promote a car or technical device?

Kelly: I would not mind if a blogger would promote that, but I would find it quite odd. The influencer should promote something of their personal interest. I think that promoting a product besides their interest is because of money purposes.

Barbara: I think what Kelly says is correct. Why would you promote a car, it is not your target group?

Shalini: Uh, what do you mean? It does not seem reliable.

Puck: I think the same, I think that an influencer does that for money purposes.

Suus: It would not influence me, but I think it is marketing related. If a beauty blogger promotes a car it reaches a target group that would normally not look into this. It might increase their willingness to buy.

Puck: I do not think so.

Suus: Companies would not reach this scope of followers and an influencer can.

Laura: Is this about bigger influencers or smaller.

Suus: Bigger.

14. Would you be more interested in a product if an employee of the company recommends it?

Kelly: No, I would be less interested if an employee of a company would recommend it. I would be more interested if someone outside the company would promote the product. I think employees promote products because they have to.

Barbara: Yes, because the person that works at the company tries to convince you that they have the best products.

Shalini: Not entirely, only if I am already interested.

Puck: If you work at Hunkemöller and you tell me that it is a good product, then yes because I know you. When a shop advisor tells me that, I just think that that is their job to do and say. It does not seem reliable.

Suus: It annoys me when a shop advisor tells me this.

15. Does a collaboration with a celebrity change or increase your interest in a brand?

Kelly: Yes, that is interesting to see. I do not immediately think that I need to have a product when there is a collaboration. At H&M I have seen some nice things when they collaborate with brands or famous people. The quality of the product is more important to me, if the product is good, I'm interested.

Barbara: No, when a celebrity or brand would collaborate with H&M, I would not be interested. Mainly because of the price.

Shalini: No, I do not feel the urge to buy it because a celebrity or brand promotes it. The bikini's from Beyonce did not suit me as well. I would want to wear something that looks good on me.

Puck: I am never a huge fan of someone that I feel the urge to buy a product.

Suus: No, I think we are mature enough to not feel this influence.

11.2   Appendix 2: Focus group transcript 'teenagers'

Groen Hart Leerpark in Alphen aan den Rijn. Conducted on March 19th, 02:15 PM by Laura Bruce-Boye.

Attendants:

Froukje (17)

Noa (16)

Faith (17)

Merel (16)

Sarah (16)

1.   Is there a difference in how influencers try to stimulate advertisements?

Faith: I think that they use sponsors with famous brands which leads us to buy the famous brands.

Sarah: Yes, I think that as well. I think when an influencer promotes a product we like, it would immediately result in buying.

Merel: That is also the case when a famous person uses a product, teens are more likely to buy and use the product, because they want to be like them.

Noa: Yes, I wanted to say that too. There will be people buying the product, because the influencer has it too. In this way, they feel that they look like the influencer more.

Froukje: For example, when the influencer buys a bag or something else, you will think 'O, I need that bag too, because 'she' (the influencer) has it too.

All: Yes.

Laura: Do you think there is a difference in how different influencers try to advertise?

Faith: No, I think it is the same.

Laura: Why exactly?

Faith: How they do it?

Laura: The way they advertise I mean.

Faith: They all promote brands through pictures and then we see what they are wear.

Laura: Does anyone think of it differently?

Noa: Mostly they show what they are wearing so others buy it too.

Froukje: Yes, and then tag the brand in their Instagram post.

Merel: Or they add the brand name in the caption of the post.

Faith: Or they tell you where their products are from, from which brand or store.

Froukje: I mostly see female influencers adding this information to their vlogs, instead of males.

Faith: There are some special Instagram accounts for outfits of influencers

All: Yes.

Laura: You mentioned YouTube, but there are more platforms like Instagram and Facebook and Twitter, which are used less. However, on Instagram the promotion type is different than on Snapchat and YouTube.

Froukje: I think the reason is that, influencers have more reach on Instagram compared to other platforms. Sometimes when I check Instagram I see influencers or brands in the 'discover' part.

Noa: The added captions under an Instagram post can be very detailed and you can type as much as you want. So, this gives the influencer the opportunity to give detailed information.

Sarah: Yes, sometimes they even add a hashtag '#linkinbio' where they refer to their bio in which they have added a link to a vlog.

2. What if your friend would reject some jeans, would you still like to wear it?

Froukje: Yes, I would wear it. No, I do not know. If I have seen the jeans on someone else and I want it too, I would be sad if my friend would reject it. I do think that it is more important if it fits good and looks good on me. However, if someone would say that it does not look good on me, I would not buy it.

Laura: in this case it is about someone you are close with, for example you best friend telling you that the jeans does not look good and you should not buy it. Would you then think it still looks good or would you consider her opinion and not buy it?

Froukje: Difficult question. I think that I would consider her opinion and not buy it.

Noa: No, if I like something on myself, I would definitely buy it. Even if my mom would reject a clothing, I would still buy it.

Sarah: Me too, if I like something, I wear it.

Faith: Depends on the situation.

Laura: Explain.

Faith: When you're together with a friend and they tell me something I am wearing does not look good on me, I change my opinion. Most times you have the same taste as your friend.

Laura: So, also because you have the same taste and style, you are more likely to listen to their opinion.

Faith: Yes, for example when I have a new shirt or jeans and I tell my friend that I want to buy that item. Then my friend usually tells me if they like it or not. Mostly I like a product in first instance, but then when talking about the product and talking to a friend, it can change my opinion. I then take a good look at it and decide if I have considered buying it too soon or not.

Sarah: Yes, for advice purposes.

Faith: Yes, or if it does not look good on you.

Laura Exactly, then the next question.

3. Can you decide for yourself what clothes you want to buy?

Froukje: Yes, I always decide for myself what I want to buy. Mostly I discuss with my mother if the item is nice. It is not the case that I look at others to decide what I want to buy. I check the items that are available in store and choose what attracts me.

Laura: Is it the case that you like something because you have seen it on someone else?

Froukje: Both, for example when Noa wears cool sweatpants and I like it too, I would also want to buy it.

Noa: I do not usually have it that I see somebody wearing an item I like. Most times, I go to shop or I drive past a place where I see something I like from the outside. That attracts me more than seeing it on someone else.

Froukje: It also depends on how people combine their outfits. If someone with a nice style of clothing knows how to combine shoes, accessories and clothing, I see it sooner and it attracts me easier.

Sarah: I have that too, but also with girls doing a presentation (in school). Then I think by myself: 'I would also want something like that'. Then I would try to find something similar.

Faith: If my mom has something nice or wears something nice, I ask her where she got it from. I have it too with friends. My own opinion also matters.

Laura: So, the next question

    4. Do you have enough money to buy the clothes you want to wear?

Faith: Yes.

Laura: For example, in an imaginary world where you can buy anything you want.

Froukje: It is not the case that I can purchase Gucci shoes, but I can live with that.

Noa: I do not always have enough money to buy the clothes I want to wear. However, when I do want something, I save for it and buy it eventually. Even if I see a pair of shoes for 500 euros, I will save up to 500 euros to buy it.

Sara: Sometimes, I mostly buy cheaper versions of the items that I like. For example, a jacket in Primark which is cheaper than the same jacket in Zara.

Laura: If you would have enough money to buy the jacket from Zara, would you then still buy the Primark jacket?

Sara: No.

Laura: So, it does not matter?

Sara: Yes, if it looks good, it does not matter where it is from. It depends on an item. When it comes to shoes I would prefer a better quality.

Faith: It depends on the time of the month. Mostly if I want something, for example expensive shoes or jackets, I have to wait for it a bit. Quality is also important to me. Expensive jackets and shoes are more important to me than other clothes, for that I would go to Primark (which is cheap).

    5. Do you have enough time to dress as you would want to?

Froukje: Yes.

Laura: Always?

Froukje: Sometimes I have moments when I do not have that much time, but I make time to dress as I would like to.

Noa: I just grab a shirt and jeans from my closet. I do check if it looks good together.

Sara: Me too, I do not think about it too much, unless I have a special event or something like that. Or when I have to look good, but in class I do not feel the need to look nice.

Faith: I do not have it at all. I just grab something out of my closet and wear it.

6. So, if you have enough time, money or freedom, how likely would you be to buy the product?

Faith: I would dress the same as I do now.

Sarah: I would spoil myself more with a Michael Kors bag for example. That is something I would not instantly buy when going shopping. When I have enough money and I like it, I would definitely buy it.

Noa: I have that too.

Froukje: Yes.

Laura: Can you give some examples.

Froukje: I would definitely buy expensive bags and shoes.

Noa: I would invest more time in searching and buying clothes, however I would still just grab something out of my closet without thinking about it too much.

Laura: So, your behaviour stays the same.

Noa: Yes.

 Laura: In this fantasy world, you have enough time, enough money and it does not matter what others might think.

Faith: I never mind what people might think of my clothing. I would dress the same as I do right now, but with some more expensive items.

7. If your friend would like the product too, are you then (more) likely to buy the product?

Froukje: I have it the other way around when I see that my friends buy the items I purchased. It is not the case that I would buy a product because I have seen it on someone else.

Laura: Yes, but the case is that your best friend has an item which you also like.

Froukje: No.

Noa: I do not have it because it is my friend but if I see my friend with a nice item I like, I would buy it too. The same counts if I would see a stranger with the same item.

Sarah: When I see something nice, I might be interested. In case I am actively looking for an item, I ask for advice.

Laura: Who do you ask for advice?

Sarah: Friends and family members.

Laura: And you (Faith)?

Faith: Depends on the situation. If I have something I like, I do ask my friends for their opinion, but if I have something I really like, I will buy it (without asking for advice).

8.   Have you ever bought a product because a friend, family member or influencer wears it?

Froukje: Yes.

Laura: Like what?

Froukje: Jeans, a leather jacket.

Laura: Can you tell me more about it. You have bought a leather jacket and who wore it?

Froukje: I wanted a leather jacket, because it was the perfect weather for it. I saw it on Instagram a lot and saw how people on Instagram combined the jacket. My friend also had a leather jacket and I thought it was convenient for spring to wear a leather jacket.

Noa: I had it with a mascara from a friend and with the jacket I am wearing right now, but that is it.

Sarah: I have it with facial products, make-up or cleansing products.

Laura: Where do you get information from?

Sarah: From people, online or famous people on snapchat. I also have friends who do that, so we share it with each other.

Laura: So, a view vloggers. Can you give some examples?

Sarah: Deliah Skin Master, she uses high end brands. I try to find something similar at 'De Tuinen'.

Laura: So, she promotes expensive items and then you look for something similar to what she promotes.

Faith: Not exactly the same products, but the same brands.

Laura: Is that because a friend, family member or influencer recommends it?

Faith: I do not watch vlogs. I think family and friends.

9.   What are your feelings towards someone you respect?

Froukje: For example, I respect my mom a lot. The feeling I have with that is love.

Laura: What else?

Froukje: I am different to my mom than to classmates.

Sarah: More open.

Froukje: Yes, you are more open and I would never tell my mom to 'shut up' for example, so it is very different. I have more respect for my parents than for classmates for example.

Sarah: More trust.

Faith: I am more open to people that are closer to me than to my classmates.

Noa: The way you act towards a friend or a teacher is very different. You have to be polite to your teacher, more to a teacher than to your friend.

Sarah: Yes, you have more respect towards them, but that depends on the upbringing.

Faith: Yes, and towards older people you have respect as well. Does not matter who it is or what happened. I mean that you always have to speak polite.

Sarah: I work at the Hoogvliet (local supermarket) and customers always approach me politely.

Froukje: Yes, but that is work.

Laura: It can also be the case that you have a lot of respect for somebody you own age.

Faith: Yes because of how the person is and what he or she has achieved.

Laura: It can also be that people have that with someone who is successful and that they look up to that person. Which is also a form of respect.

Faith: I do not have that that easily, you have to appreciate yourself.

Sarah: Yes.

Froukje: No, it is not that I have an idol and look up to someone. I do not think about it too much.

Noa: I don't have it as well.

Faith: it depends per person, right?

Noa: I do not have that with anyone.

Froukje: A footballer might have a lot of fans, for example.

Sarah: Yes, a lot of guys have that, but it is an example for someone who has achieved a lot.

Froukje: Yes.

10. Does a person that has similarities or an expertise in the fashion industry affect your thoughts on trends?

Faith: I have it with my best friend

Sarah: Yes.

Noa: Yes

Froukje: I have it with my friends. When looking at an influencer like Monica Geuze, I do not feel that we have the same thoughts and lifestyle. My friends and I have the same goal and are on the same page when it comes to thoughts and lifestyle. Also with fashion, we have the same opinion. Of course, we do have differences.

Laura: Is that because you have the same lifestyle?

Froukje: Yes.

Noa: Yes, with a friend it is more personal, because you know each other than Monica Geuze for example. You know her, but she does not know you.

Sarah: I think the same. I mostly talk with my friends and family for advice and sometimes think that I want the same outfit. I do not have it with vloggers.

Faith: I do not watch or have interest in vloggers. I mostly have it with friends and the environment I live in.

11. Do you prefer following an influencer with a large number of followers (900.000 and more or an influencer with a smaller number of followers (3000 -10.000)?

Froukje: An influencer that has a large number of followers. An influencer that has achieved more is more interesting for me, also because they have a good reach. For example, Kim Kardashian has a reach and if she posts something about her make-up line, I check it easier.

Noa: Maybe it is more interesting because they have more experience in their field of social media. On the other side, I would rather choose something that attracts my attention regardless of the number of followers.

Sarah: I have that too. For example, the Instagram account of MAC cosmetics has a lot of models that wear heavy make-up, which is not interesting for me. Then I see a make-up artist that has 300 followers and makes nicer tutorials, which would then have my preference.

Faith: I never check those kinds of accounts.

Laura: Do you use Instagram?

Faith: Yes, I do, but I do not follow famous people. I do not have many people that I follow.

Laura: You do not have a preference for that.

Laura: In my case, I prefer to follow someone with less followers instead of so many. Influencers with a million followers do not seem that reliable to my opinion.

Froukje: Yes, that is true.

Laura: Also, I have the idea that they are not very approachable when they have that many followers.

Noa: Yes.

12. Have you ever commented on an influencers' post? If so, have they responded to you in a comment or a like?

Froukje: No. I like it most of the times, but I do not respond to posts. As if the influencer would read my comment, because I do not think they would do that.

Laura: Have you received a like back from the influencer?

Froukje: No.

Noa: I never like pictures and I do not respond. I think a 'like' is not that necessary.

Sarah: I read the reactions, but I do not comment on their posts.

Laura: Do you like their posts?

Sarah: Yes, I do like their posts. I do that automatically.

Laura: Have you ever received a like back on your own page?

Sarah: My page is locked, so they cannot see it.

Faith: I do not care about that. I see videos with hair, but I do not care. I do check accounts with quotes. I have seen an account of a girl with many followers that posts a lot of quotes. I am now in contact with her through WhatsApp.

Laura: Who is that?

Faith: I do not know, but she lives in Nijmegen.

Laura: That is contact with someone that has influence.

Faith: No, it is just a nice story, but I do not see that as influence.

Sarah: Do her stories touch you?

Faith: Yes.

Laura: That is the influence she has. There are influencers in every industry.

Faith: Yes, okay. Then she influences me with her nice stories.

13. Would you mind if a beauty blogger would promote a car or technical device?

Froukje: I would be interested if I would be a bit older than I am now. I cannot buy a car now, but hopefully when I am 24. If I would see it then and the influencer promotes the car correctly, I would consider it. Also, the type of car, if it would be a Range Rover I would be interested.

Laura: It is an example. It does not have to be a car, but it can be something that the influencer promotes outside of their interest.

Noa: I would be interested to watch it. If Monica Geuze would promote male clothes or socks, I would not care.

Froukje: It can be good, I think, or very nice. I would check and see what it is.

Laura: Why good and nice?

Faith: If she would promote nice socks, I would still buy it if I see it.

Sarah: I think it depends on your financial situation. I do not think that an influencer would promote an Opel Corsa (second hand car), but a much more expensive car. It also depends on their reach and number of followers.

Laura: What if a fitness model would promote a PS4?

Froukje: She would do it for the money.

Faith: I think that too, but boys watch that.

Sarah: Yes

Faith: Boys will see it at the 'discover part'.

Sarah: Maybe.

Faith: I think this all depends on the environment you live in. If my dad has an expensive car I would think that I would want the same for myself in a few years. At the age of 18 you should be happy if you even have a car.

Noa: Yes.

Froukje: Yes, you do not need a very expensive one.

Noa: My mom still drives a second-hand car.

14. Would you be more interested in a product if an employee of the company recommends it?

Froukje: Yes. What do you mean?

Laura: For example, me working at Hunkemöller and telling you that a bra is very good etc.

Froukje: Yes, I would buy it.

Noa: I would listen to it, but I would not immediately buy it. You can say everything, because you work there. That does not make it more reliable.

Laura: Another example are KLM flight attendants that turn into influencers trying to promote places for KLM. Would you be more interested from someone working there or someone that does not work for the company?

Noa: I would be take advice from someone that works there, because they are more experienced.

Sarah: I would not take advice from someone that works that.

Faith: I would not immediately believe someone that works at the company, because they can promote something without being reliable. A person that has used the product and has experience with the product would be more reliable to my opinion.

Laura: So, you all think that someone that does not work there is more reliable, but you (Froukje and Noa) would take advice from an employee, because they are experienced.

Faith: You can take the advice, but also check what customers think of it.

15. Does a collaboration with a celebrity change or increase your interest in a brand?

Laura: For example, Madonna for H&M and Gigi Hadid for Tommy Hilfiger.

Froukje: It is not the case that I would buy more things at H&M, because they have a collaboration with a brand or celebrity.

Noa: I buy something because I like it. It is not the case that I would check and see what they have because they have a collaboration.

Sarah: If I would want to buy something from a brand, I would go to their own store instead of buying something from a collaboration.

Faith: Me neither.

11.3   Appendix 3: Transcript Interview YouTube Channel Manager – Emanuel Ankrah

Amsterdam Zuid-Oost, Mr. Emanuel Ankrah, YouTube Channel Manager. Conducted on March 24th, 12:00 PM.

'How does the impact of influencers and brand ambassadors in the fashion industry affect the buying intentions of teenagers (13-16) and millennials?'

Tell me about your professional history and current work situation

Basically, my working history goes back to social work and working with youngsters and doing music myself. I found the need that I wanted to learn more about the music business. I went to a music conference and I knew YouTube was getting more important and that is when I learned more about YouTube. I felt the need to specialize into that and get more information. I was going to Los Angeles for a traineeship the year after. So, I wanted to work for a record label and then I was like 'I am not going to work for that record label'. Someone was explaining that they managed YouTube talents and that was the moment I decided to go to that company. That is how I got my introduction to the (YouTube) industry. I was already working with artists on their YouTube channels anyways, but there is where I learnt it professionally. I worked with the big guys like Tamia and Lilly Singh who are one of the biggest YouTubers. These people were all signed to that company. The CEO of the company was the manager of Martin Lawrence and he said he made the transition from normal artist to entertainer to digital artist. He saw a huge opportunity in that. So, that was my step and there I learned the ropes of the business.

I came back to the Netherlands, worked for a company as well (Social1nfluences) and worked with the biggest Dutch social influencers Mascha (Beautygloss) Sophie (Sophie Milzick) Rutger (Furtjuh), Dylan (Dylanhaegens) you name it. Mothers, Manon Tilstra and Paulien Tilstra etc etc. I also work with brands, K3 zoekt K3, Fashionista, VT Wonen, SBS 6, Autoweek which is one of the biggest YouTube car channels in the Netherlands. Laura Ponticorvo, you can name it. So that is my history, now I have my own company. We have Hashtagdieboys of which Defano Holwijn is a part of.

Laura: What is the name of your company?

Emanuel: UWon1 Consultancy

We are also going to work with 'Zware Jongens' which has more than 100.000 subscribers.

I am also starting to focus on Ghana, so I am going to work with Esedanka, a professional athlete S. Danquah who was also a part of the Olympic Games.

I have focussed my eyes more on Ghana now, since there are a lot of opportunities. So, that is what I am doing right now.

Laura: Cool. You work with influencers as you told me. Do you do that with your own company or do you do that with another company?

Emanuel: My own company and I also teach people to use YouTube as a marketing tool.

Laura: When do you do that? In your free time or?

Emanuel: That is my job, that is my company.

Laura: Nice.

In what way do you think that influencer marketing on YouTube affects the buying intentions?

Emanuel: It does very much. If it was not advertising, they would not pay a lot of money to YouTubers in order for them to promote their business with their service or product. Like social media, people did not really believe in that and took interns to do their social media. Now it is part of the strategy. You need to have it in order to be a business and that is going to be the same with influencer marketing. Now, it is booming, but it is going to be a part of the marketing. You cannot do it without this, so it is inevitable. So, every business will adapt and has to be visual and tell stories. If you cannot do that, you have a problem as a business. So, that is how I look at it and I have seen a great example from Nabil and Rutger (vloggers). They had a campaign on Snapchat and I remember very well that McDonald's had to call the company and tell that they needed to stop promoting it, because the Big Mac's are sold out. So, if you are talking about buying intentions, that is a good business case. They had to call and say: 'Okay, let them stop the campaign, because it is just sold out.'

Laura: Do you have examples of other brands as well?

Emanuel: Well, we had McDonald's which was very successful.

Laura: That was with Nabil and Rutger, right? He is a YouTuber, right?

Emanuel: He is a YouTuber, Instagrammer and Snapchatter, but more active on Instagram and Snapchat. Rutger is really a YouTuber.

Another example is '4LIFE', they had a raincoat of HEMA and for HEMA it was important to have 'impression'. So, not everything is about buying intentions, sometimes it is about showing the product, which sub-consciously influences the buying intentions. They had approximately half a million views. They did it in a creative way, by making a music video with the raincoats on and made a song about it and it was good! HEMA was happy with it.

Another thing that really works well are 'Back to School' products, so for example Beautynezz had her own line of agenda's and it always works well. Every year they keep coming back. Well, that was with a company I used to work for.

Laura: Is that in HEMA as well or in other stores?

Emanuel: Dylan(haegens) had it in Bruna and Beautynezz had it in HEMA. So, they did a live tour as well. They went to the HEMA as well and signed agendas and made pictures with their fans.

Another example of buying intentions is the Tina Dag. I was one of the people that was responsible for the YouTube part and EnzoKnol needed bodyguards. There was a huge line just to buy his shirts.

Talking about influencer buying intentions, he shows these shirts every time in his videos. Believe me when he says that he is going to be somewhere, it is going to be packed and he will sell a lot of shirts. So, influencers definitely have an influence on the purchase decision of people or buying intention of people.

Laura: I have also found two examples of Monica Geuze and Noor de Groot (Queenofjetlags).

Emanuel: Ah ha. Queenofjetlags yes.

Laura: Yes, they had a pyjama collection and some items immediately sold out. The items costs around €120,- even though their price was really high for the quality they offered, the product was sold out. That is really strange.

Emanuel: I mean, in the USA this has been happening for a long time and the amount of money they earn is way higher over there compared to the Netherlands. Lily Singh is a good example of this, she is like a brand ambassador for different products and different services. The YouTube artist are treated like mainstream stars in the USA. In the Netherlands, it is starting to come up more. Anna Nooshin is a great example. I do not like her, ha-ha.

Laura: She did some things for Hunkemöller while I was working at their HQ.

Emanuel: And she is on TV shows and etc. She knows how to market herself, even though it is fake.

Laura: Yes, that is true. Within the company she was not very liked.

Emanuel: Ha-ha, so I am not the only one.

Laura: Ha-ha. I also saw that Mascha (Beautygloss) has her own product for eyelashes.

Emanuel: Sold at Kruidvat, exactly.

Laura: I also sometimes see the YouTubers going to salons. For example, doing their eyebrows or laser treatments. Does that also affect the business of the people? Do you know that?

Emanuel: Most definitely, because the people will be like 'Okay, Mascha is doing her eyes somewhere. Then it must be good, so I will go over there and do it' They like influencers, but the thing with Youtubers is that the people who watch their videos think that the Youtubers are their friends and think they have a personal connection. So, it is also that you can compare it to mouth-to-mouth marketing which works perfect as well, because you believe want to buy from people you know. That is another role why influencer marketing is so powerful. You can basically communicate with them or that is at least how the people feel as their friend from what they see on YouTube.

Laura: Yes, I have also added that to my research, which I found through desk research. However in the theory when I asked my focus groups, they saw it a bit differently. They saw that their lives differ from theirs. For example, there girls were around 16-17 and they are looking at influencers the age of 25 and older, so they see a little difference. One of them mentioned Beautynezz that they see a comparison with her because of the age. They see the difference more with Monica Geuze who is pregnant right now. It is a different lifestyle and they feel attracted to someone who is their friend.

Emanuel: Yes, of their age, exactly. They want to be like older people or are aspired by them. The YouTubers of their age is who they want to be now and they look at what is hot and happening. That is how it works.

Laura: What kind of methods do they use to increase sales?

Emanuel: Youtubers use different methods. They have product placements, which is just showing the product. You have branding contact, which is doing something creative with the product like a shout

out or they do a whole campaign with a brand and they make several of videos for their brand on their channel of the brand or their own channel. There is sweepstakes (winacties). Most of the time we will speak with the brand and ask if they want a link in the description where people could directly go to your website and directly buy the stuff, but that is something brands have to pay for obviously. Sometimes what we will do is take a kickback as well and when there is an number of products sold, the YouTuber will be rewarded with a gift bag. Those are the things we do. Of course, the YouTuber will get its fee, but if there is an amount for the kickback, they are going to work until they get the kickback fee.

 Yes. How do companies profit from this, because an influencer gains profit because they earn money and it is their job. The company also wants to get more money out of it. What methods do they use to calculate that?

Emanuel: It is a more effective and more measurable way of marketing, because you will get your numbers. You will see how many people it has reached and you can see how many people clicked through (CTR Click Through Rate) and you can see how many people are engaged. That is how they profit. I gave an example of McDonalds. So, their gross margin increases which definitely have influence on them otherwise they would not have done it. Some firms are sceptical and want to see examples, but it is becoming more mainstream and everybody is trying to use influencers to be hip or whatever. You can see it with YouTube channels of Telfort and Toyota, when you look at it you only see crap, but they do not know what to do. So, they just jump on the bandwagon and try to do it. It is the same thing with social media, you can see companies like that searching for the knots, but they do not know how to do it. In the USA, they are a couple steps further than that.

Laura: I found a company case from Lipsy, that they use Cost Per Like as a company to see how much profit they gain from one Instagram Post, but I do not know how it is on YouTube. They used Instagram to calculate how much they earned per like.

Emanuel: On YouTube, there are different methods. Brands pay for CPM (Cost per Mille) which is for the impressions. You also have a CPV (Cost per View) which is different, because the impression is different from the view, of course. There is also, effective cost per view and they also use the Click Through Rate (so, how many people clicked through). Engagement rate is also an important rate to measure and there is also the ROI, but there is a special name for that, I cannot come up with that, but ROI is Return on Investment and with that they see how much they invested and how much came back through the clicks and that is what they measure against each other to see if they got their money back from the campaign.

Laura: They do that on Instagram as well, the ROI and also for other companies. They use ROI in traditional marketing as well.

Emanuel: Yes.

Laura: What are your thoughts on traditional marketing versus influencer marketing?

Emanuel: It goes hand in hand, you cannot do one and leave the other one out, because not everyone is digital and I think traditional marketing is good and it is all about telling stories. Seth Godin is a good example. He explains it very well. He tells that you cannot survive if you cannot tell the story. Even a simple product such as a shaving machine has a story and they use influencer and celebrity marketing. You have to be visual with most products, not every product.

Laura: If they use a celebrity then it is still a collaboration, but it is not directly influencer marketing, right? Which has been going on for many years, for example Madonna for H&M and Gigi Hadid for Tommy Hilfiger. They do have a contract for a period of time.

Emanuel: The difference with a celebrity and an influencer is that an influencer is your average Joe. It can be the girl next door. It is more believable than when they talk about Madonna or some other celebrity. It is not as close as Mascha who can basically be your neighbour and I think that is the power of influence as well. I think it is targeted as well and they have a specific group that they gravitate towards. I think that is the power of YouTube influencers as well, because there are different kinds of YouTube influencers as well. You have beauty people and you have people that want to use technology in a different way for example setting up fire with sticks. That guy has more than 1 million subscribers.

Laura: Yes. Sometimes you also see the videos on Facebook, which gives it promotion for YouTube.

Emanuel: Yes, so different kinds of influences.

Laura: Yes, with this research I am mostly focusing on the beauty part, because I want to keep it a bit narrowed down.

 Then my last question, how do you see influencer marketing change in the future?

Emanuel: The Netherlands is two years behind the USA. When I came back I saw everything happening that I saw in the USA. I believe in micro-influencer marketing and that it is not about the number, but instead more about engagement. I also believe that budgets are going to increase drastically and everybody wants to make visuals and try to create their own influencers. That is what is going to happen, firms having their own influencers in the future. I will be going to a conference this year in Cannes, but I will not go to the LA one. I will tell you more then.