

SPONSORSHIP DISCLOSURE EFFECTS ON PERSUASION IN ONLINE MEDIA.

Sponsorship disclosure effects on persuasion in online media: The moderating role of consumer self-control.

Manon Meylemans

ANR: 662031

Master Thesis

Communication and Information Sciences

Business Communication and Digital Media

Faculty of Humanities

Tilburg University, Tilburg

Supervisor: dr. L. Janssen

Corrector: dr. E. Oversteegen

May 2017

Abstract

Consumers are being persuaded through every screen in their environment; not only via television, but also via social media. Content on social media is often consumed for relaxation or time-passing in a state of low self-control, which results into consumers not being aware of what is communicated to them by brands. It is therefore questioned whether the consumer should be warned for sponsored editorial content on social media through disclosures. This study aims to explicate the effects of sponsorship disclosures for consumers low in self-control on brand evaluations on Instagram. Results showed that the effects of disclosures are mostly dependent on characteristics inherent to the consumer. Results have shown that women are more susceptible to the effects of covert commercial messages than men, and were also more sensitive to persuasive messages when low in self-control. The same holds true for consumers who are already familiar with a brand. Future research should study whether the function of a disclosure, namely to warn the consumer, is achieved in online environments.

Keywords: persuasion, online media, Instagram, disclosures, marketing, self-control

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	7
2.1 SPONSORED EDITORIAL CONTENT	7
2.2 DISCLOSURES OF SPONSORED EDITORIAL CONTENT	8
2.3 DISCLOSURES, PERSUASION KNOWLEDGE AND BRAND EVALUATIONS	10
2.4 SELF-CONTROL	12
3. METHOD	15
3.1 PARTICIPANTS	15
3.2 PROCEDURE	16
3.3 MATERIALS	16
3.4 MEASUREMENTS	17
4. RESULTS	19
4.1 CONTROL VARIABLES	19
4.2 MANIPULATION CHECKS	20
4.3 ASSUMPTIONS	21
4.4 MAIN ANALYSES	22
5. DISCUSSION	29
5.1 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	32
5.2 CONCLUSION	33
6. REFERENCES	34
7. APPENDIX	39
A: INSTAGRAM POSTS	39
B: SELF-CONTROL TASK	42
C: QUESTIONNAIRE	44

1. Introduction

Nowadays, it may appear as if advertisements and commercials are omnipresent. Consumers get blindsided by myriad marketing communications brands throw at them, making it impossible to process every message reaching the processing memory. In spite of marketers' ongoing efforts to scoop attention, consumers develop more proficient manners to fence off unwanted messages (Petty & Andrews, 2008). In other words, consumers explicate a more critical attitude and, in the length of this criticism, suspicion and skepticism towards advertising (Calfee & Ringold, 1994; Moore & Rodgers, 2005; Obermiller & Spangenberg, 2000; Obermiller, Spangenberg & Maclachin, 2005; Wei, Fischer & Main, 2008). Brands have therefore been searching for novel ways to persuade their target audiences (Wong, 2014). One of these options is sponsored editorial content.

Sponsored editorial content is commonly defined as an integration of brands, products, and persuasive messages into traditionally non-commercial contexts (Cain, 2011; Van Reijmersdal, Neijens & Smit, 2007). Consumers are exposed to branded products that are embedded into content where advertising is not typically placed (e.g., social media profiles), and where it appears to be from independent parties. These independent parties are often influencers with a rather large follower base. In other words, this person associates him- or herself with a brand and often receives a (monetary) incentive for this. An example is Gaz Beadle (i.e. original cast member of the reality show *Geordie Shore* on MTV), who often posts pictures on his Instagram feed where he wears vests of the clothing line Siksilk. It may however be difficult for his followers to recognize the persuasive intention behind this sponsored editorial content (Chia, 2012; Pollit, 2015). Because of the difficult recognition sponsored content is often referred to as covert marketing (Wei et al., 2008, p. 35), masked marketing (Petty & Andrews, 2008, p. 7) or hidden persuasion (Campbell, Mohr & Verlegh, 2013).

Sponsored editorial content could be perceived as unfair and deceptive, since recognition of persuasion is seen as a consumer's right (Cain, 2011). Therefore, legislators have established rules for the disclosure of sponsored editorial content on a European level (Cain, 2011). In a specific area of sponsored editorial content, product placement - prominently displaying brands in movies or television shows against a fee, it is now obligated to display a warning message or symbol at the beginning of a television show or movie (Audiovisual Services Directive, 2010; Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2014a). In this manner, viewers are protected from a, potentially unwanted, persuasive message because they

are warned. These legislations however only exist for televised content, not for content online. As a result, marketing agencies such as Mediakix, Frankwatching and Markethings have given guidelines on disclosing sponsored editorial content on social media, e.g. the use of hashtags #sp #spon #sponsored #ad or a sentence stating “*This post is sponsored by [brand]*”.

Marketers are rather fond of sponsored editorial content, as it is known to elicit positive responses and purchase intentions towards brands, in addition to an increased sense of quality among consumers (Becker-Olsen, 2003). However, the hidden nature of the content makes it difficult for consumers to recognize it as such and protect themselves from unwanted persuasion (Boerman, Van Reijmersdal & Neijens, 2012; Meenaghan, 2001; Nebenzahl & Jaffe, 1998), as consumers are unable to activate their persuasion knowledge. Persuasion knowledge is the cumulative knowledge that consumers create about the used tactics in persuasive attempts (Friestad & Wright, 1994). In other words, persuasion knowledge helps consumers to understand persuasion and to protect themselves for masked marketing practices. The main goal of a sponsorship disclosure is to activate a consumer’s persuasion knowledge, and as a result the consumer is aware of the persuasive intent of the message.

Even though myriad studies have evaluated the effects of disclosure in offline contexts (e.g., television shows and movies), few studies examined the effects of sponsorship disclosures on brand evaluations in online contexts. One of these studies is by Van Reijmersdal et al. (2016), who showed that consumers activate their persuasion knowledge in response to a disclosure, which results in various resistance strategies (i.e. cognitive and affective) to decrease the persuasion of sponsored content in a blog context. It is however unclear how the different forms of disclosures that are currently being used in online media, such as Instagram, may affect the brand evaluations and purchase intentions of consumers towards a brand, and if these disclosures can instigate active persuasion knowledge. It is therefore important to illustrate the effectiveness of sponsorship disclosures in a rapidly advancing environment, namely social media, especially because these are becoming more popular amongst influence-sensitive populations like adolescents.

It is however still unclear to which extent disclosure effects are dependent on the circumstances in which the consumer is confronted with them. The entertaining content on social media is often consumed when consumers are relaxed and not that perceptive. A prior study on sponsorship disclosures in television shows demonstrated that viewers depleted of their self-control (i.e. couch potatoes; relaxed state of mind) reacted rather different than expected on sponsorship disclosures. They had more favorable brand evaluations and showed a decreased resistance to the persuasive content than viewers who were not depleted of their

self-control (Janssen, Fransen, Wulff & Van Reijmersdal, 2016). In other words, when participants were less perceptive and exposed to a sponsorship disclosure, their brand attitude and purchase intention rose as compared to the participants who were still perceptive. Self-control depletion occurred when consumers' ability and/or motivation to override impulsive responses is diminished (Vohs & Heatherton, 2000). In other words, the disclosure worked as an extra persuasive means for participants who were unable or unmotivated to resist the persuasive message behind sponsored content, which resulted in more (unwanted) persuasion. The goal of this study is therefore to illustrate the effects of sponsorship disclosures for consumers low in self-control on brand evaluations in an online context. This study aims to answer the following research question:

RQ: How do sponsorship disclosures on Instagram affect brand evaluations and persuasion knowledge, and what is the influence of self-control in this process?

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Sponsored Editorial Content

There is an abundance of commercial online content, which forces marketers to establish improved manners to maximize their visibility to the public (Pollit, 2015). In addition, marketers hope to evade consumers' skepticism towards marketing communications by employing original and 'out of the box' marketing strategies (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004). One innovative kind of marketing communication is sponsored editorial content, a form of so-called 'native advertising'.

A certain form of sponsored editorial content that has received ample academic interest is product placement in television shows. Product placement is the inclusion of branded products in movies, games, or television programming (Smit, Van Reijmersdal & Neijens, 2009). A practical example is when actors in *GTST* (a Dutch prime time soap opera) drink Red Bull in one of the scenes and the brand is prominently shown to the viewers. Marketers increasingly use product placement as an addition to traditional marketing practices to reach (a wider) target audience (Smit et al., 2009). Studies have also shown that the promotion of a branded product in the editorial content of a movie or television show can have a positive effect on the brand attitudes and brand choices of viewers (e.g. Law & Braun, 2000; Russell, 2002; Yang & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2007).

Another form of sponsored editorial content that has explosively risen the past few years is influencer marketing. It becomes more common for brands to send free products to bloggers for a wider range of exposure, and have them "unbox" the products on their social media channels. With influencer marketing, focus is placed on key individuals, most commonly bloggers or celebrities, with whom potential buyers can identify. These influencers thus have the ability to steer the potential marketing activity (Talavera, 2015). These influencers have a strong influence on their devotees, which can result in the ability to convince their followers into purchases or the distribution of positive eWOM (Jin & Phua, 2014). Practical examples of influencers are models (e.g., Cara Delevigne, Kendall Jenner), bloggers (e.g. Fleur De Force, The Huda Sisters), or participants of reality shows (e.g., the whole cast from an MTV show). In theory, everyone could become a social media influencer. If the content is able to attract people to the influencer's profile and eventually follow them, the reach of an influencer can become rather substantial.

Influencer marketing often originates on social media, "mobile and web-based technologies that enable individuals and communities to share, create, discuss, and modify

user-generated content” (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011). Social media enable consumers to educate each other about brands (Blackshaw & Nazarro, 2006, p. 4). Because of their novelty, social media have experienced an enormous growth as brands’ marketing tool (Thomas & Akdere, 2013). Above all, social media are an excellent platform of choice to distribute sponsored editorial content (Mediakix, 2016).

One social media platform that is often used for sponsored editorial content is Instagram. Instagram is described as “a fun and quirky way to share your life [...] through a series of pictures” (Instagram, 2016). Sponsored editorial content can be designed in such a manner that it becomes embedded in the native look and feel of Instagram (Chia, 2012; Pollit, 2015). For sponsored editorial content, an Instagram user associates him- or herself with a brand in the form of a paid-for testimonial (De Andrade, Hastings, & Angusargue, 2013). It is however questionable whether or not the consumer perceives the content as sponsored. Without any disclosure of the sponsoring, consumers may believe that the bloggers give an honest and independent opinion and their message can therefore be seen as a form of hidden persuasion (Campbell et al., 2013).

In other words, it is considered as a consumer’s right to recognize sponsored editorial content (Cain, 2011). As it combines characteristics of both advertising and publicity (Balasubramanian, 1994), consumers may have difficulties in recognizing the persuasive intention (Boerman et al., 2012; Nebenzahl & Jaffe, 1998). Therefore, sponsored editorial content may be seen as a kind of unfair or deceptive marketing (Cain, 2011; Nebenzahl & Jaffe, 1998). It therefore caught the attention of legislators that sponsored content should be communicated to consumers, as it is their right to have knowledge about the persuasive intentions of brands (Cain, 2011). As a result, disclosures of sponsored editorial content became mandatory on a European level (Audiovisual Media Services Directive, 2010).

2.2 Disclosures of Sponsored Editorial Content

Legislation on the disclosure of sponsored editorial content to the consumer was first implemented in televised content (Audiovisual Media Services Directive, 2010), where warning messages were shown at the beginning of a television show (e.g. “*This show contains product placement*”). These warnings, commonly known as disclosures, should inform the consumer about the presence of sponsored content. In turn, consumers are enabled to resist or correct the persuasive intention from the message through increased recognition (Boerman et al., 2012; Cain, 2011).

However, European regulations on sponsored editorial content are solely existent for televised content, whereas guidelines for sponsored editorial content in an online setting are absent. Disclosures appear in different forms online, and can be divided into two categories: symbolic disclosures and textual disclosures. Symbolic disclosures can be rather inconspicuous and are often constructed through ‘grouping mechanisms’ on social media, more commonly known as #hashtags (e.g., on Instagram and Twitter) or tags (on Pinterest, Tumblr and YouTube). These hashtags are a user-generated mechanism that enables users to collate related messages by using brief keywords or abbreviations, often prefixed with the “#” symbol (e.g., *#WomensMarch*, *#SuperBowl*) to address particular themes (Bruns & Burgess, 2011). MediaKix (2016), a marketing agency specialized in online marketing, provided an exhaustive list of symbolic disclosures that can be applied simultaneously in an online setting, namely *#sp*, *#ad*, *#spon* and *#sponsored*. A textual disclosure is rather straightforward, often consisting out of one sentence that clarifies the sponsoring brand, e.g. “*This post is sponsored by [BRAND]*” or “*I have received this package from [BRAND]*”. It is apparent for the reader that the content has been sponsored. In this study, the symbolic disclosures are compared to the textual disclosures and contrasted against a baseline condition that has not been exposed to any disclosure at all. This will be done to fill the gap in experimental research on the comparison of different disclosure types currently in use on social media platforms, and their ability to aid the consumer in warding off unwanted persuasive messages.

The main goal of a sponsorship disclosure is to activate consumers’ persuasion knowledge, in order to defend themselves against unwanted messages (Cain, 2011). But, are disclosures effective in reaching their goal? This has been studied extensively in the context of product placement in television shows, where both symbolic as well as textual disclosures were applied. The symbolic disclosure for product placement is by law embodied with “PP” (Tessitore & Geuens, 2013), which is regarded as a rather inconspicuous disclosure (Boerman, Van Reijmersdal, & Neijens, 2015). An example of a textual disclosure for product placement on television is “*This program contains product placement*” (Boerman et al., 2015). These lines often move through the viewer’s screen, which is why the textual disclosure is regarded as more noticeable (Boerman et al., 2015).

Few studies have however compared symbolic and textual disclosure types in an experimental setting. Tessitore and Geuens (2013) have executed a study in which symbolic and textual disclosures were compared and combined, showing that a combination of a symbolic and textual disclosure was most effective in enhancing the recognition of persuasive intentions in a product placement setting. In turn, recognition leads to the activation of

defensive mechanisms that enable consumers to resist persuasion. Additionally, research of Wojdyski and Evans (2016) showed that recognition of sponsored editorial content was increased when a textual sponsorship disclosure was added in online news stories (e.g. “*sponsored*”, “*advertising*”). It was also stated that a symbolic disclosure was less effective in activating persuasion recognition compared to a textual disclosure and a disclosure combination (Tessitore & Geuens, 2013).

This study will compare two of the most commonly used types of disclosures (i.e. symbolic and textual disclosures) on social media, and compares the differences in effects on brand evaluations and activation of persuasion knowledge between the different types, as well as with a baseline condition that does not show a disclosure at all.

2.3 Disclosures, Persuasion Knowledge and Brand Evaluations

A disclosure’s primary goal is the activation of consumers’ persuasion knowledge (Cain, 2011), which is the recognition of and the following defense against persuasive messages (Friestad & Wright, 1994). The Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM: Friestad & Wright, 1994) provides an explanation on how people cope with the constant persuasive intentions brands expose them to. Over time, consumers acquire a cumulative knowledge set about the persuasive attempts and tactics of marketers to persuade them. If consumers are able to recognize these persuasion tactics, it becomes feasible that consumers have the ability to guard themselves against unwanted persuasive attempts. Thus, the ability to recognize the sponsored editorial content in an online setting makes consumers more critical evaluators (Boerman et al., 2012, 2014a; Campbell et al., 2013; Dekker & Van Reijmersdal, 2013; Tessitore & Geuens, 2013).

In accordance with the arguments of Rozendaal, Lapierre, Van Reijmersdal and Buijzen (2011), both the cognitive as well as the attitudinal aspect of persuasion knowledge should be taken into account. Persuasion knowledge can be seen as consisting of an attitudinal and a conceptual dimension. Conceptual persuasion knowledge is “the cognitive dimension that embraces the recognition of advertising, its source and audience, and the understanding of the advertising’s persuasive intent, selling intent, and tactics” (Boerman et al., 2012, p. 1049). In other words, adding a disclosure to sponsored editorial content should aid consumers in recognizing the content as commercial, which in turn leads to the activation of so-called cognitive defense (Nebenzahl & Jaffe, 1998). Consumers can however also apply the attitudinal dimension of persuasion knowledge, which includes “attitudinal mechanisms that [...] involves critical feelings about honesty, trustworthiness, and credibility” (Boerman et

al., 2012, pp. 1049-1050). Whereas the conceptual dimension guards the consumer through activated defensive mechanism, the attitudinal dimension makes consumers more critical towards the content.

Several studies showed that sponsored editorial content elicited positive responses towards a brand (Becker-Olsen, 2003), but after activation of consumer's persuasion knowledge this was nullified (Boerman et al., 2012, 2014a; Wei et al., 2008). Wei et al. (2008) created campus radio shows for their experiment, in which sponsored editorial content was manipulated throughout the experimental conditions. Eventually, results showed that consumers became more critical towards the content and lowered their brand evaluations when they became aware of the commercial intent behind the message. Thus, when consumer's persuasion knowledge becomes active, sponsored editorial content appears to be ineffective in persuading consumers into liking or purchasing the brand (Boerman et al., 2012, 2014a; Wei et al., 2008). In addition, studies of Boerman et al. (2012, 2014a) showed that the presence of product placement disclosures resulted into a more critical processing of the content. Boerman et al. (2012) found that the presence of a sponsorship disclosure directly increased the brand memory for the exposed brand. This was independent of the duration of the disclosure. In other words, disclosures mainly aid consumers into guarding themselves against the commercial intentions of sponsored editorial content, and may therefore lead to less favorable brand evaluations.

Whereas the preceding research was done in an offline product placement content, the recent study of Van Reijmersdal et al. (2016) evaluated the effects of online sponsored editorial content in blogs on brand evaluations. It became clear that participants counterargued the claims made in the sponsored content after being exposed to a sponsorship disclosure, which eventually lead to a higher activation of persuasion knowledge and eventually a decrease in persuasion. Consumers who were exposed to a disclosure (i.e. “[brand] has paid for this blog and it aims to influence you”) also showed less favorable brand attitudes and a decreased purchase intention compared to those who were not exposed to a disclosure. Therefore, the following hypothesis was composed:

Hypothesis 1: The presence of a disclosure as compared to the absence of a disclosure will (a) elicit a higher rate of persuasion knowledge and (b) will therefore result into a less favorable brand attitude and purchase intention.

A study by Boerman et al. (2015) evaluated whether consumers were more aware of the sponsored brand when being exposed to various types of disclosures in a product placement setting. Results showed that textual disclosures (e.g., “*This program contains product placement*”) were more effective in activating persuasion knowledge as compared to symbolic disclosures (e.g. “*PP*”). A recent study of Wojdyski and Evans (2016) demonstrated that ‘word markers’ such as “*sponsored*” and “*advertising*” activated persuasion knowledge (Wojdyski & Evans, 2016). As stated by Campbell et al. (2013), a consumer must recognize the disclosure in order to effectively employ it in activating persuasion knowledge. Adding the ‘word markers’ as hashtags could then improve the recognition of the sponsorship disclosure. Therefore, symbolic disclosures will consist of a merge of four hashtags: #ad #sp #spon #sponsored and will be compared to a textual disclosure saying “*This post is sponsored by [BRAND]*”. This leads to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2: A textual disclosure as compared to both a symbolic disclosure as well as an absent disclosure, will (a) elicit a higher rate of persuasion knowledge and (b) will therefore result into a less favorable brand attitude and purchase intention.

2.4 Self-control

It is not only important to study whether consumers’ brand evaluations become more or less favorable after being exposed to a disclosure online, but it is also important to take into account whether participants are able to recognize the persuasive intent behind the message (Campbell et al., 2013). When people consume online content, their goals are mainly entertainment, pass time, escaping reality and relaxation (Kaye, 1998; Whiting & Williams, 2013). This state of mind is also known as the ‘web potato’ and, according to Kaye (1998), most people in this mindset consume online editorial content without evaluating the underlying message. In other words, the ‘web potato’ is unable or unmotivated to evaluate incoming messages, and may therefore be an easy target for hidden persuasion. It is thus the question whether the presence of disclosures is even noticed by the consumer – after all, online content is often consumed for relaxation (Whiting & Williams, 2013) and people may therefore lack the motivation, energy, or resources to activate their persuasion knowledge in response to a disclosure. Then, if participants fail to recognize the persuasive message and activate their persuasion knowledge, brand attitudes may become more favorable and purchase intentions could increase as compared to situations where persuasive messages are straightforward (e.g., in commercials).

A recent study of Janssen et al. (2016) took a specific mental state called self-control into consideration while exposing participants to disclosures in a product placement experiment. Self-control, or self-regulation, occurs when people have both the cognitive ability and motivation to protect themselves from persuasive attempts by regulating their own responses (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven & Tice, 1998). People who have a high self-control are cognitively more able and motivated to react to persuasive messages as compared to people who have low self-control. Self-control depletion occurs when a person does not have the motivation or ability to process content, which is often the result of demanding activities like work or studying (Baumeister et al., 1998). In two experiments, Janssen et al. (2016) displayed product placement disclosures in television shows to participants that were either depleted of their self-control or not. The results display that disclosures indeed increase the resistance to persuasive messages when people have self-control, and this subsequently leads to less favorable brand evaluations and a decreased purchase intention. However, when participants were depleted of their self-control, the effect of a sponsorship disclosure on brand evaluations topples. After seeing a disclosure, participants low in self-control did not show any resistance to the persuasive message, and reported more favorable brand evaluations and increased purchase intentions. In other words, the study shows that people who lacked the resources to effectively exploit the purpose of a disclosure become the victim of unwanted persuasion. This point of view is supported by a meta-analysis from Wood and Quinn (2003), which shows that disclosures fail to affect brand evaluations when people are unable or unmotivated to defend themselves against a persuasive attack (i.e. when depleted of self-control).

Consequently, when people scroll through their social media pages to pass some time or entertain themselves, they may be in a depleted state of self-control. The presence of the disclosure may therefore go unnoticed for them, and this leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: People depleted of their self-control compared to people who are not depleted will (a) have a lower rate of persuasion knowledge and (b) will therefore have a more favorable brand attitude and purchase intention.

As this is the first empirical study to evaluate the interplay between disclosure type (textual versus symbolic) and consumer's self-control, the following research question is formulated to explore these effects:

SPONSORSHIP DISCLOSURE EFFECTS ON PERSUASION IN ONLINE MEDIA.

Research question 1: Is there an interaction between disclosure type (textual vs symbolic vs absent) and people's self-control (depleted vs not depleted) on brand attitude and purchase intention? And if so, what is the form of that interaction?

Ultimately, the above discussion leads to the conceptual framework visualized in Figure 1.

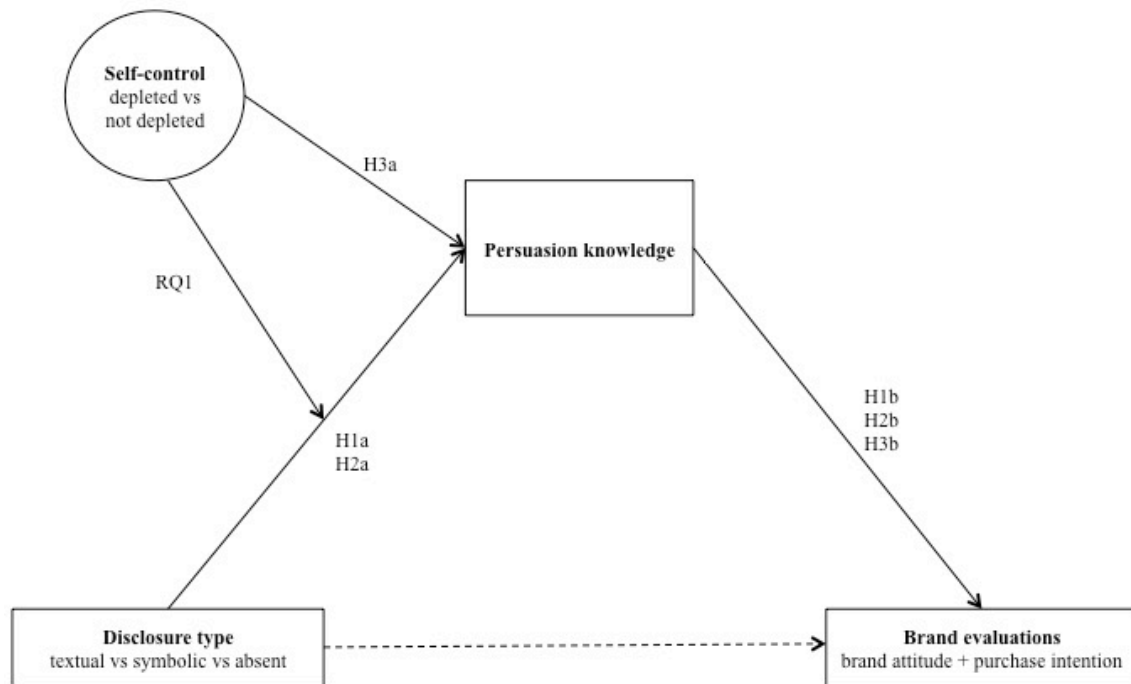


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

3. Method

To test the effects of sponsorship disclosures on persuasion knowledge and brand evaluations, an experiment was conducted. The design was a 2 (self-control: depletion vs no depletion) x 3 (disclosure type: textual vs symbolic vs none) between-subjects design that resulted into six conditions (see Table 1).

3.1 Participants

After distribution, 871 participants started the questionnaire via the anonymous link; 257 were excluded from further analysis due to incomplete answers; 38 were excluded because they did not meet the age requirements of the study (between 18 and 35 years old); 164 were excluded from analysis due to malfunction of the questionnaire (both conditions for self-control were shown to all participants); 98 were excluded from analysis due to incorrect answers on the self-control manipulation task; 39 were excluded because they incorrectly remembered seeing a disclosure. Last, 14 participants indicated that they were unfamiliar with the social media site Instagram – they were excluded from further analyses. This leads to a remaining convenience sample of $N = 261$ participants, whose distribution over the six conditions can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of the participants over the six experimental conditions.

		Disclosure			
		Textual	Symbolic	Absent	
Self-control	Not depleted	32	36	36	104
	Depleted	46	48	63	157
		78	84	99	261

Participants had a mean age of 24.48 ($SD = 3.72$), within an age range of 18 up to 35 years. The great majority of the participants were female (73.2%), the remaining participants were male (26.8%). In addition, the vast majority of the participants were highly educated (i.e. HBO or university; 78.9%). All participants were familiar with the social medium Instagram and a majority of them had a personal account on the social media application (72.4%), of whom 76.7% were considered active users as they checked their account on a daily basis. Moreover, 61.4% of those with an Instagram account follow influencers in their timeline.

3.2 Procedure

Participants enrolled in the study's questionnaire by clicking on the anonymous link that was distributed by the experimenter. The questionnaire was disseminated via social networking sites, fora and direct emails. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of the six conditions. First, demographics from the participant were requested (e.g., age, gender and education), as well as the use of the social network site Instagram. After that, participants were instructed to execute a self-control task followed by an indication of their current mood. Thereafter, all respondents were shown an Instagram post that portrayed sponsored editorial content of Monster Energy Drink, with varying disclosures dependent on the condition. Male participants were shown an Instagram post from a male lifestyle blogger, whereas female participants were shown an Instagram post from a female lifestyle blogger (see Appendix A for the Instagram posts). Next, different measurements were assessed. Finally, participants were thanked for their time and were debriefed with additional information via email if they requested so.

3.3 Materials

Self-control task. All participants started with a self-control manipulation (based on Janssen et al., 2016). Each participant was presented with a task, showing 15 common Dutch expressions and proverbs. Every sentence lacked one word in it, all of which contain one or multiple instances of the letter 'e'. Participants in the no self-control depletion condition were then instructed to complete the expressions. However, participants who were in the self-control depletion condition were instructed to complete the expressions without using the letter 'e' in their answer. The letter 'e' is the one of the most commonly used vowels in the Dutch language, which makes it difficult for participants to devise words without it. Appendix B gives an overview of the self-control tasks.

Disclosure type. In total, two Instagram posts were created as material for the experiment (see Appendix A), one from a male fictional lifestyle blogger called @callmemister and one from a female fictional lifestyle blogger called @blogofthemisses. The profile pictures only showed a silhouette of either a man or a woman to bypass any unwanted source effects. The picture in the post solely showed a can of the new Monster Energy Ultra Drink. Both Instagram posts contained the same message "*New @monsterenergy Ultra. Zero calories, same kick! Did you try it?*". Additionally, disclosure messages were added (based on Boerman et al., 2015; Tessitore & Geuens, 2013). The Instagram posts either contained a textual sponsorship disclosure, "*This message is sponsored*

by *Monster Energy Drink*”, or a symbolic sponsorship disclosure, namely the following hashtags: “#sponsored #spon #ad #sp”. In the control condition, the Instagram post did not contain any disclosure message.

3.4 Measurements

Brand Attitude. Participants’ attitude toward *Monster Energy Drink* was measured using six 7-point semantic-differential scales: *bad/good*, *unpleasant/pleasant*, *unfavorable/favorable*, *negative/positive*, *dislike/like*, *poor quality/high quality* (Boerman et al., 2012). Factor analysis revealed the items loaded on one factor (Eigenvalue = 4.59; explained variance = 76.5%; Cronbach’s alpha = .94). The mean score of the six items was used as a measurement of brand attitude ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 1.36$).

Purchase Intention. Participants’ intention to purchase *Monster Energy Drink* was measured using two statements on a 7-point Likert scale: “*I would like to try Monster Energy Drink*” and “*I will probably buy Monster Energy Drink*” (based on Tessitore & Geuens, 2013). Reliability analysis showed a Cronbach’s alpha of .93. The mean score of the two items was used as a measurement of purchase intention ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 1.56$).

Brand Familiarity. Participants were asked to indicate their familiarity with *Monster Energy Drink* with two statements. First, whether or not they knew *Monster Energy Drink* before participating in the questionnaire (yes or no). Overall, 96.2% of the participants ($N = 251$) indicated they were familiar with *Monster Energy Drink* before participation in the questionnaire. Personal experience with *Monster Energy Drink* was also assessed as a form of brand familiarity (Janssen et al., 2016), by asking participants whether or not they had consumed a *Monster Energy Drink* before (yes or no). Overall, 47.5 % of the participants ($N = 124$) indicated they had consumed *Monster Energy Drink* prior to this study.

Persuasion Knowledge. Two measures corresponding to the attitudinal and conceptual dimensions of persuasion knowledge were used in this questionnaire to measure the activated persuasion knowledge of the participants (based on Ham, Nelson & Das, 2015). The dependent variable *attitudinal persuasion knowledge* was measured using eleven 7-point semantic differential scales: *unreliable/reliable* (R), *not persuasive/persuasive*, *unfair/fair* (R), *not manipulative/manipulative*, *not fun/fun* (R), *not credible/credible*, *not entertaining/entertaining* (R), *not misleading/misleading*, *unacceptable/acceptable* (R), *not annoying/annoying*, and *distractive/not distractive*. Reliability analysis showed a Cronbach’s alpha of .74. The mean score of the eleven items was used as a measurement of attitudinal persuasion knowledge ($M = 4.43$, $SD = .81$). The dependent variable *conceptual persuasion*

knowledge was measured using six statements on a 7-point Likert scale, e.g. “*The blogger advertised in the Instagram post*” and “*The blogger showed Monster Energy Drink to stimulate the sales of Monster Energy Drink*”. Reliability analysis showed a Cronbach’s alpha of .81. The mean score of the six items was used as a measurement of conceptual persuasion knowledge ($M = 5.84$, $SD = .92$). All seventeen items of the persuasion knowledge measurements showed a Cronbach’s alpha of .75. Therefore, the mean score of the seventeen items was used as a measurement of persuasion knowledge ($M = 5.14$, $SD = .71$).

Mood. Participants’ mood after the self-control task was measured to control for unwanted mood effects of the manipulation. Participants’ were asked to indicate their mood on a 7-point Likert-scale ranging from ‘*extremely negative*’ to ‘*extremely positive*’ ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 1.22$).

Self-control as a Personality Trait. Participants’ self-control as a personality trait was evaluated to check whether participants did not exhibit an extremely high or low self-control, as this could alter the manipulations of self-control (i.e., when someone is already high in self-control, they are less quickly depleted). It was measured using thirteen statements on a 5-point Likert scale called the Brief Self-Control Scale (Tangney, Baumeister & Boone, 2004), e.g. “*I have a hard time resisting temptation*” and “*I refuse to do things that are bad for me*”. Reliability analysis showed a Cronbach’s alpha of .80 for the thirteen items combined. The mean score of the thirteen items was used as a measurement for self-control as a personality trait ($M = 3.06$, $SD = .56$).

Manipulation Check Self-control Task. The manipulation check for the self-control task was measured with four statements on a 7-point Likert scale (Janssen, Fennis & Pruyn, 2010). The statements were “*I thought the task was difficult*” ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.92$); “*The task took me a lot of effort*” ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.87$); “*During the task I had to suppress an automatic response*” ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 2.05$); “*During the task I had to exert control over myself*” ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.88$).

4. Results

4.1 Control variables

It was examined whether the participants in the different conditions varied on demographic variables and whether the manipulations of the material were effective in the concerning conditions. If the participants differed on control variables, these specific variables were regarded as confound and were controlled for in the main analyses.

First, statistical analysis was used to check whether participants correctly remembered being exposed to a disclosure about a sponsored Instagram post or not. The participants in the different conditions did not vary in correctly recalling the sponsorship disclosure ($\chi^2(5) = 5.36$, $p = .373$). A small portion of the participants ($N = 39$) was excluded from further analysis due to incorrect recall of the disclosure (i.e. the participant either recalled seeing a disclosure without being exposed to one, or the participant recalled seeing a symbolic disclosure when exposed to a textual disclosure or vice versa).

It was then examined whether the participants were equally distributed amongst the conditions in terms of educational level and gender. The educational level of the participants was equally distributed over the different conditions ($\chi^2(15) = 6.25$, $p = .282$). In other words, participants with a lower education (i.e. high school or practical education) as well as participants with a higher education (i.e. college or university) were equally presented in the different conditions. Participants were however not equally distributed over the different conditions in terms of gender ($\chi^2(5) = 10.87$, $p = .054$). Women were overrepresented as well as unequally divided in all the conditions whilst men were underrepresented and unequally divided as well. Gender was therefore considered as a confounding variable and was controlled for in the main analyses.

Then, brand familiarity had a two-fold measurement, namely whether the participant had ever heard of the brand Monster Energy Drink and whether the participant had ever consumed Monster Energy his- or herself. Participants who knew the Monster Energy Drink by name were equally distributed over the conditions ($\chi^2(5) = 3.21$, $p = .668$). Participants who were familiar with Monster Energy Drink through personal consumption were however unequally distributed over the conditions ($\chi^2(5) = 11.25$, $p = .047$). Therefore, all statistical analyses were controlled for participants who were familiar with Monster Energy Drink through personal consumption, as they were unequally represented in the conditions.

Participants were also inquired about their Instagram use. Whether participants owned a personal Instagram account did not differ between the conditions ($\chi^2(5) = 8.37$, $p = .137$). In

addition, those participants who had a personal account and use the application on a daily basis were also equally distributed over the conditions ($\chi^2(5) = 8.47, p = .132$). Finally, participants who followed influencers on their personal profile also did not vary between the conditions ($\chi^2(5) = 6.11, p = .296$).

And last, self-control as a personality trait was not different for the participants between the various conditions ($F(5, 255) = .67, p = .645$). It was therefore rendered unlikely that the personality trait had an effect in the main analyses.

4.2 Manipulation checks

It was shown with independent samples t-tests that participants who had to complete sentences without using the letter 'e', and were thus depleted of their self-control, considered the task to be more difficult ($t(259) = 13.87, p < .001$) and effortful ($t(259) = 15.64, p < .001$) than participants who were not depleted of their self-control (see Table 2 for all means). In the same way, depleted participants indicated that they had to put more effort into suppressing automatic responses when completing the task ($t(259) = 11.94, p < .001$), and felt they had to control themselves more during the task ($t(259) = 10.91, p < .001$) as compared to participants who were not depleted. It may therefore be assumed that the self-control manipulation was successful.

Table 2. Means (*SD*) on self-control manipulation questions (scale 1-7).

		Self-control	
		No depletion	Depletion
Items	<i>I thought the task was difficult.*</i>	2.09 (1.28)	4.64 (1.57)
	<i>The task took me a lot of effort.*</i>	1.78 (.88)	4.43 (1.57)
	<i>During the task I had to suppress an automatic response.*</i>	2.74 (1.66)	5.23 (1.64)
	<i>During the task I had to control myself.*</i>	2.55 (1.45)	4.69 (1.62)

Note. * $p < .001$

Participants depleted of their self-control ($M = 4.71, SD = 1.26$) reported a less positive mood ($t(259) = 2.36, p = .019$) than participants who were not depleted of their self-control ($M = 5.07, SD = 1.13$). It may be plausible that reported mood has an effect in the main analyses. Reported mood was therefore analyzed as a covariate in the main analyses.

4.3 Assumptions

To adequately perform the upcoming analyses, several assumptions had to be met for the moderation mediation models (i.e. regression analyses) to be regarded as reliable: independence, homoscedasticity, linearity and normality.

The first assumption is the assumption of independence, which states that the errors in a model should not be related to each other. This can be achieved by gathering all observations independent from each other. As the participants have completed the questionnaire in the privacy of their homes, all observations in this study were gathered independently. Therefore, it is rendered unlikely that participants influenced each other's answers throughout the experiment. The assumption of independence was therefore met.

The second assumption of homogeneity of variance (i.e. homoscedasticity) states that the spread of the outcome variable should be roughly equal among different points of the predictor variable. This study consists of three predictor variables (i.e. disclosure presence, disclosure type, and self-control) and measured three outcome variables (i.e. persuasion knowledge, brand attitude and purchase intention). The spread of the outcome variables persuasion knowledge, brand attitude and purchase intention has been assessed with a Levene's test and can be found in Table 3. When a Levene's test is non-significant, it shows that the predictor variable was roughly equal at different points of the predictor variable. As can be seen in Table 3, some of the Levene's tests were flagged as significant. The assumption of homoscedasticity was therefore violated.

Table 3. Levene's tests per predictor and outcome variable

	Persuasion knowledge	Brand attitude	Purchase intention
Disclosure presence	$F(1, 258) = 1.44, p = .231$	$F(1, 258) = .01, p = .927$	$F(1, 258) = .40, p = .526$
Disclosure type	$F(2, 258) = .72, p = .486$	$F(2, 258) = .09, p = .912$	$F(2, 258) = .17, p = .845$
Self-control	$F(1, 258) = 2.40, p = .123$	$F(1, 258) = 2.80, p = .096$	$F(1, 258) = 9.67, p = .002^{**}$

Note. $^{**} p < .005$

Linearity is the third assumption that should be met for the moderated mediation model to be regarded as reliable. The assumption of linearity states that the outcome variable should be linearly related to the predictor variable – their combined effect is then best described by adding the effects together. All outcome variables are linearly related to the predictor variables in this study. The assumption of linearity has therefore been met.

The fourth and final assumption is the assumption of normality, which is important to fit models to the data. Statistics of skewness and kurtosis gave an indication about the data distribution of the predictor variables, and whether this was normal or not (see Table 4). Additionally, both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test provided an extra indication about the normality of the predictor variables. Deviations of normality have been highlighted in Table 4. Some of the predictor variables showed an abnormal distribution, and the assumption of normality was therefore violated.

Table 4. Statistics regarding the assumption of normality

	Persuasion knowledge	Brand attitude	Purchase intention
skewness (<i>SD</i>)	-.49 (.15)	.77 (.15)	1.47 (.15)
kurtosis (<i>SD</i>)	.41 (.30)	.46 (.30)	1.34 (.30)
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	$D(261) = .08, p = .001$	$D(261) = .11, p < .001$	$D(261) = .26, p < .001$
Shapiro-Wilk	$D(261) = .98, p = .002$	$D(261) = .93, p < .001$	$D(261) = .77, p < .001$

As a consequence of several violated assumptions, the results of the main analyses should be interpreted with caution. As the statistical tests are rather robust, bootstrapping was considered unnecessary.

4.4 Main Analyses

The main analyses were performed with two moderated mediation models with reported mood as a covariate. The first moderated mediation model applied disclosure presence (present vs absent) as the predictor variable with both brand attitude and purchase intention as the outcome variables. Self-control depletion was the moderator, and activated persuasion knowledge the mediator. The second moderated mediation model applied disclosure type (symbolic vs textual vs absent) as the predictor variable. The remainder of the model was the same. All means and SD's for the outcome variables can be found in Table 5.

Persuasion Knowledge.

Disclosure Presence. It was predicted in Hypothesis 1a that the presence of a sponsorship disclosure would cause participants to activate their persuasion knowledge more as compared to when a sponsorship disclosure was absent. On average, participants who were exposed to a sponsorship disclosure reported decreased levels of activated persuasion knowledge as compared to when a sponsorship disclosure was absent (see Table 5 for means). This difference was however not significant ($b = .04, t = .46, p = .645$). In other words, it did not affect the levels of activated persuasion knowledge whether a sponsorship disclosure was present or not. Therefore, Hypothesis 1a could not be confirmed.

Disclosure Type. It was predicted in Hypothesis 2a that exposure to a textual sponsorship disclosure would result into elevated activation of persuasion knowledge than exposure to a symbolic sponsorship disclosure or when a disclosure was absent. On average, exposure to a symbolic disclosure resulted into more elevated activated persuasion knowledge than exposure to a textual sponsorship disclosure or when a sponsorship disclosure was absent (see Table 5 for means). The main effect of disclosure type on activated persuasion knowledge was not significant ($b = .02, t = .29, p = .775$). Additionally, a post hoc Tukey test showed that activation of persuasion knowledge was not different after exposure to a textual disclosure as compared to a symbolic disclosure ($p = .959$), or when a disclosure was absent ($p = .936$). There was also no difference in persuasion knowledge when participants were exposed to a symbolic disclosure as compared to an absent disclosure ($p = .795$). In other words, it did not matter for a participant's persuasion knowledge whether he or she was exposed to a textual, symbolic or no disclosure at all. Hypothesis 2a could therefore not be confirmed.

Self-control. It was predicted in Hypothesis 3a that depletion of self-control would result into a decreased activation of persuasion knowledge as compared to when the consumer was not depleted of his or her self-control. On average, depleted participants reported lower levels persuasion knowledge than non-depleted participants (see Table 5 for means). This difference was however not significant ($b = -.01, t = -.12, p = .908$). In other words, activated persuasion knowledge did not differ between depleted participants and non-depleted participants. Therefore, Hypothesis 3a could not be confirmed.

Interaction Disclosure Type and Self-Control. The moderated mediation analysis showed that there was no interaction effect of disclosure type and self-control on activated persuasion knowledge ($b = -.16, t = -1.34, p = .182$). Follow-up analyses revealed that men showed no difference in activated persuasion knowledge after exposure to either a symbolic or textual disclosure or when a disclosure was absent, regardless of whether they were depleted of their self-control or not ($b = .12, t = .47, p = .639$). Analyses however revealed a marginally significant interaction between disclosure type and self-control on activated persuasion knowledge for women ($b = -.23, t = -1.91, p = .058$). See Figure 2 for a visualization of this interaction effect.

Simple main effect analyses revealed that there was no difference in activated persuasion knowledge after exposure to the various disclosure types between women who were not depleted ($F(2,184) = 1.76, p = .175$) and women who were depleted ($F(2, 184) = .72, p = .490$). Simple main effect analysis additionally revealed that there were no differences

between depleted and non-depleted participants in activated persuasion knowledge when a sponsorship disclosure was absent ($F(1,184) = .58, p = .446$). There was however a significant difference in persuasion knowledge after exposure to a textual disclosure between depleted and non-depleted participants ($F(1,184) = 3.06, p = .053$), and also a trend after exposure to a symbolic disclosure ($F(1,184) = 3.78, p = .082$). In other words, participants depleted of their self-control show a lower activation of persuasion knowledge after exposure to a symbolic or textual disclosure than participants who were not depleted. This is opposite of what was expected, as it was expected that exposure to any disclosure (i.e., symbolic and textual) would lead to more activated persuasion knowledge.

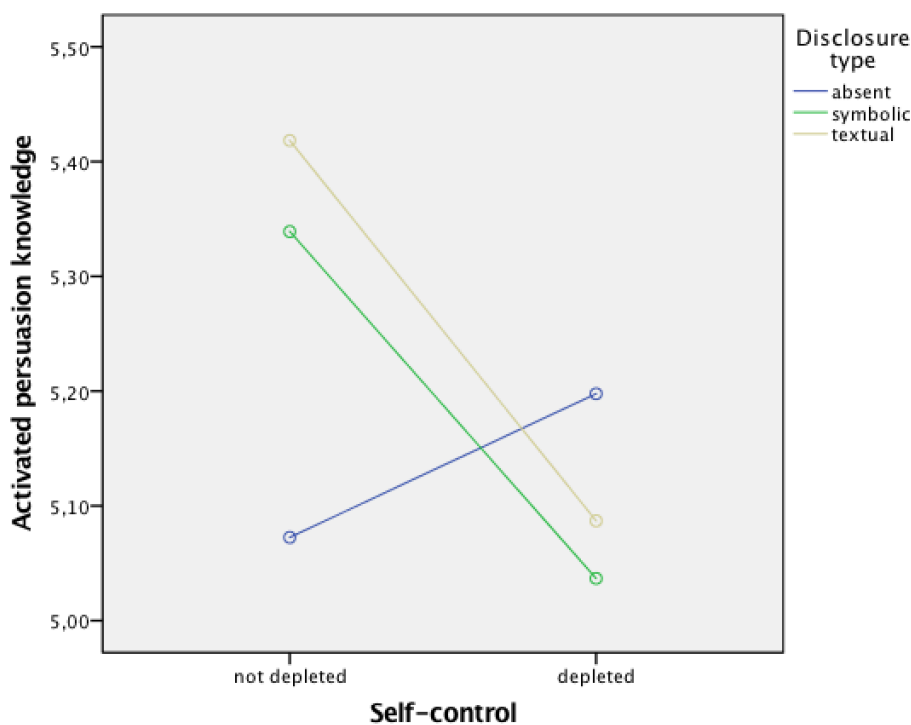


Figure 2. Interaction effect of disclosure type and self-control on activated persuasion knowledge for women.

Brand Attitude.

Disclosure Presence. It was predicted in Hypothesis 1b that exposure to a sponsorship disclosure would result into a less favorable brand attitude as compared to when a sponsorship disclosure was absent, due to the elevated levels of activated persuasion knowledge. On average, participants exposed to a sponsorship disclosure reported a more favorable brand attitude towards Monster Energy Drink as compared to when a sponsorship disclosure was absent (see Table 5 for means). The main effect of disclosure presence on brand attitude was significant ($b = .36, t = 2.28, p = .023$). When persuasion knowledge was added as the mediating variable, this effect disappeared ($b = .21, \text{BCa } 95\% \text{ CI } [-.07, .53]$). Thus, exposure

to a sponsorship disclosure resulted into a more favorable as compared to when a sponsorship disclosure was absent. For brand attitude, Hypothesis 1b could be confirmed in the opposite direction of what was predicted. It was predicted that the presence of a disclosure would lead to less favorable brand attitudes than when a disclosure was absent. Results however showed the opposite.

Follow-up analyses revealed that women responded differently to a sponsorship disclosure than men. Women who were exposed to a sponsorship disclosure reported a more favorable brand attitude than women who were not exposed to a sponsorship disclosure (see Table 6 for means), which was significant ($b = .38, t = 2.12, p = .035$). It was even more surprising that an indirect effect occurred of disclosure presence on brand attitude via persuasion knowledge ($b = .33, \text{BCa } 95\% \text{ CI } [.026, .73]$), as this was not significant when the complete sample was evaluated. Men however showed no difference in brand attitude after exposure to a disclosure or not ($b = .39, t = 1.11, p = .273$). In other words, women responded with elevated persuasion knowledge after exposure to a sponsorship disclosure, and as a result had a more favorable brand attitude towards Monster Energy Drink than when a disclosure was absent. Similarly, follow-up analyses also revealed that participants who had not consumed Monster Energy Drink before responded differently to a sponsorship disclosure (direct: $b = .33, t = 1.87, p = .064$, indirect: $b = .17, \text{BCa } 95\% \text{ CI } [-.14, .52]$) than participants who were familiar with Monster Energy Drink through consumption (direct: $b = .39, t = 1.49, p = .140$, indirect: $b = .27, [-.19, .81]$). Participants who had never drank Monster Energy Drink and who were exposed to a disclosure reported more favorable brand attitudes than participants familiar with the brand with an absent disclosure (see Table 7 for means).

Disclosure Type. It was predicted in Hypothesis 2b that exposure to a textual sponsorship disclosure would result into a less favorable brand attitude than exposure to a symbolic sponsorship disclosure or when a disclosure was absent. On average, participants exposed to a textual sponsorship disclosure or when a disclosure was absent, reported less favorable brand attitudes than participants who were exposed to a symbolic sponsorship disclosure (see Table 5 for means). The main effect of disclosure type on brand attitude was however not significant ($b = .16, t = 1.64, p = .774$). Additionally, a post hoc Tukey test showed that brand attitude was not different after exposure to a textual disclosure as compared to a symbolic disclosure ($p = .840$), or when a disclosure was absent ($p = .459$). There was also no difference in brand attitude when participants were exposed to a symbolic disclosure as compared to an absent disclosure ($p = .168$). When persuasion knowledge was added as the mediating variable, this effect remained non-significant ($b = .11, \text{BCa } 95\% \text{ CI } [-$

.04, .29]). In other words, whether a participant was exposed to a textual disclosure, a symbolic disclosure or no disclosure at all, brand attitude remained the same. Hypothesis 2b could therefore not be confirmed for brand attitude.

Self-control. It was predicted in Hypothesis 3b that self-control depletion would lead to more favorable brand attitudes as compared to when a participant was not depleted of his or her self-control. On average, participants who were depleted of their self-control reported a more favorable brand attitude than participants who were not depleted of their self-control (see Table 5 for means). This difference was however not significant ($b = .05$, $t = .30$, $p = .761$). In other words, there was no difference in brand attitude between the participants who were depleted of their self-control as compared to those who were not depleted of their self-control. Hypothesis 3b could therefore not be confirmed for brand attitude.

However, follow-up analyses revealed that participants who were familiar with Monster Energy Drink responded differently when being depleted of their self-control than participants who were not familiar with Monster Energy Drink. Prior consumers who were depleted reported a more favorable brand attitude than participants who were not depleted (see Table 7 for means), which was marginally significant ($b = .47$, $t = 1.91$, $p = .058$). An indirect effect however did not occur ($b = .27$, BCa 95% CI [-.19, .81]). Participants who were not familiar with Monster Energy Drink did not show any difference between the depletion conditions ($b = -.09$, $t = -.47$, $p = .642$). In other words, when a participants had already consumed Monster Energy Drink before and was thus familiar with the brand responded opposite of what was expected based on the literature. When they were depleted of their self-control, they reported more favorable brand attitudes as compared to participants who were not depleted. Hypothesis 3b could therefore be confirmed for consumers who were already familiar with the brand.

Interaction Disclosure Type and Self-control. The moderated mediation analysis showed that there was no interaction effect of disclosure type and self-control on brand attitude ($b = .04$, $t = .22$, $p = .823$).

Purchase intention.

Disclosure Presence. It was predicted in Hypothesis 1b that exposure to a sponsorship disclosure would result into a lower purchase intention as compared to when a sponsorship disclosure was absent, due to the elevated levels of activated persuasion knowledge. On average, participants who were exposed to a sponsorship disclosure reported a more positive purchase intention towards Monster Energy Drink than participants who were not exposed to a sponsorship disclosure (see Table 5 for means). This effect was however not significant (b

= .24, $t = 1.25$, $p = .213$). When persuasion knowledge was added as the mediating variable, the effect remained non-significant ($b = .20$, BCa 95% CI [-.07, .51]). Thus, when a participant was exposed to a sponsorship disclosure, his or her purchase intention of Monster Energy Drink was the same as the purchase intention of a participant who was not exposed to a disclosure. Hypothesis 1b can therefore not be confirmed.

Disclosure Type. It was predicted in Hypothesis 2b that exposure to a textual sponsorship disclosure would result into a lower purchase intention than exposure to a symbolic sponsorship disclosure or when a disclosure was absent. On average, participants who were exposed to a textual sponsorship disclosure or when a disclosure was absent reported a less positive purchase intention than those who were exposed to a symbolic sponsorship disclosure (see Table 5 for means). This difference was however not significant ($b = .07$, $t = .64$, $p = .524$). Additionally, a post hoc Tukey test showed that purchase intention was not different after exposure to a textual disclosure as compared to a symbolic disclosure ($p = .690$), or when a disclosure was absent ($p = .950$). There was also no difference in purchase intention when participants were exposed to a symbolic disclosure as compared to an absent disclosure ($p = .465$). In other words, there was no difference in purchase intention between participants who were exposed to a textual sponsorship disclosure, compared to symbolic disclosures or when a disclosure was absent. When persuasion knowledge was added as a mediating variable, the result remained non-significant ($b = .11$, BCa 95% CI [-.04, .28]). Therefore, Hypothesis 2b could not be confirmed.

Self-control. It was predicted in Hypothesis 3b that self-control depletion would result in a higher purchase intention as compared to when a participant was not depleted. On average, depleted participants reported a higher purchase intention than non-depleted participants (see Table 5 for means). This difference was however not significant ($b = -.01$, $t = -.12$, $p = .908$). In other words, there was no difference in brand attitude between the participants who were depleted of their self-control as compared to those who were not depleted of their self-control. Hypothesis 3b could therefore not be confirmed.

However, follow-up analyses revealed that participants who were familiar with Monster Energy Drink responded differently after depletion than participants who were unfamiliar with Monster Energy Drink. Prior depleted consumers reported a higher purchase intention than not depleted participants (see Table 7 for means), which was significant ($b = .72$, $t = 2.37$, $p = .019$). Participants who were not familiar with Monster Energy Drink did not show any difference between the depletion conditions ($b = .01$, $t = .08$, $p = .939$).

SPONSORSHIP DISCLOSURE EFFECTS ON PERSUASION IN ONLINE MEDIA.

Therefore, Hypothesis 3b could be confirmed for participants who had consumed Monster Energy Drink before.

Interaction Disclosure Type and Self-control. The moderated mediation analysis showed that there was no interaction effect of disclosure type and self-control on brand attitude ($b = .03, t = .11, p = .909$).

Table 5. Means (SD's) of persuasion knowledge, brand attitude and purchase intention as a function of the predictor variables.

		Persuasion knowledge	Brand attitude	Purchase intention
Disclosure presence	Absent	5.10 (.75)	2.49 (1.38)	2.10 (1.61)
	Present	5.16 (.69)	2.80 (1.35)	2.28 (1.53)
Disclosure type	Absent	5.10 (.75)	2.49 (1.38)	2.10 (1.61)
	Symbolic	5.17 (.71)	2.86 (1.32)	2.38 (1.51)
	Textual	5.14 (.67)	2.74 (1.38)	2.17 (1.56)
Self-control	No depletion	5.16 (.77)	2.63 (1.23)	2.08 (1.36)
	Depletion	5.12 (.69)	2.71 (1.44)	2.30 (1.68)

Table 6. Means (SD's) of persuasion knowledge, brand attitude and purchase intention as a function of the predictor variables for both men and women.

		Persuasion knowledge		Brand attitude		Purchase intention	
		men	women	men	women	men	women
Disclosure presence	Absent	4.98 (.85)	5.15 (.71)	2.96 (1.56)	2.30 (1.26)	2.50 (1.88)	1.94 (1.47)
	Present	5.08 (.87)	5.18 (.61)	3.22 (1.45)	2.65 (1.28)	2.74 (1.68)	2.12 (1.45)
Disclosure type	Absent	4.98 (.85)	5.15 (.71)	2.96 (1.56)	2.30 (1.26)	2.50 (1.88)	1.94 (1.47)
	Symbolic	5.20 (.94)	5.16 (.58)	3.10 (1.48)	2.75 (1.25)	2.75 (1.57)	2.21 (1.46)
	Textual	4.88 (.74)	5.21 (.64)	3.42 (1.43)	2.56 (1.32)	2.72 (1.90)	2.03 (1.45)
Self-control	No depletion	4.93 (.95)	5.29 (.62)	3.07 (1.30)	2.38 (1.13)	2.46 (1.55)	1.86 (1.20)
	Depletion	5.17 (.73)	5.11 (.65)	3.18 (1.49)	2.59 (1.35)	2.86 (1.97)	2.15 (1.57)

Table 7. Means (SD's) of persuasion knowledge, brand attitude and purchase intention as a function of the predictor variables for personal experience with Monster Energy Drink.

		Persuasion knowledge		Brand attitude		Purchase intention	
		unfamiliar	familiar	unfamiliar	familiar	unfamiliar	familiar
Disclosure presence	Absent	5.09 (.73)	5.11 (.78)	2.15 (.97)	2.87 (1.64)	1.63 (1.12)	2.62 (1.89)
	Present	5.21 (.65)	5.10 (.72)	2.40 (1.09)	3.23 (1.47)	1.76 (1.08)	2.85 (1.75)
Disclosure type	Absent	5.09 (.73)	5.11 (.78)	2.15 (.97)	2.87 (1.64)	1.63 (1.12)	2.62 (1.89)
	Symbolic	5.15 (.67)	5.19 (.74)	2.57 (1.15)	3.09 (1.42)	1.93 (1.15)	2.74 (1.68)
	Textual	5.26 (.64)	4.97 (.62)	2.27 (1.03)	3.44 (1.54)	1.62 (1.01)	3.02 (1.87)
Self-control	No depletion	5.24 (.75)	5.10 (.79)	2.33 (1.00)	2.86 (1.35)	1.67 (.95)	2.38 (1.54)
	Depletion	5.13 (.65)	5.11 (.70)	2.30 (1.08)	3.32 (1.68)	1.73 (1.15)	3.12 (1.97)

5. Discussion

Persuading audiences with sponsored content is perceived as unfair and deceptive (Cain, 2011; Nebenzahl & Jaffe, 1998), which has resulted into legislation in the area of product placement in television shows (Audiovisual Media Services Directive, 2010). Inability to recognize the commercial intent of sponsored content may result into unwanted persuasion. Sponsorship disclosures have aided consumers in the area of product placement through the activation of their persuasion knowledge (Campbell et al., 2013). As sponsored editorial content gains popularity on social media, research has shifted from offline to online contexts where the disclosures most commonly occur in two forms: symbolic and textual (e.g., Campbell et al., 2013; Wojdyski & Evans, 2016). Recent studies however have counterargued the effectiveness of sponsorship disclosures. Research by Janssen et al. (2016) showed that consumers who were depleted of their self-control were persuaded more after exposure to a disclosure than consumers who were not depleted. This conflicts with the goal of a disclosure, namely to protect the consumers from unwanted persuasive messages. The goal of this study was therefore to investigate what the relationship between consumers' self-control and the exposure to different disclosure types was on the activation of persuasion knowledge and their rating of different brand evaluations. This was explored through three hypotheses and one explorative research question.

The first hypothesis predicted that when a consumer is exposed to a sponsorship disclosure, this would elicit a higher activation of persuasion knowledge and thus results into less favorable brand evaluations as compared to those who are not exposed to a sponsorship disclosure. Results demonstrated that disclosure presence did not have any effect on the activated persuasion knowledge or purchase intention. However, it became clear that both women and consumers who were unfamiliar with the brand reported more favorable brand attitudes after exposure to a disclosure for sponsored content than respectively men and consumers with the brand. Additionally, women reported more favorable brand attitudes even though their persuasion knowledge was activated more after seeing a disclosure. Hypothesis 1a could not be confirmed, as there was no difference in activated persuasion knowledge when a disclosure was present or absent. For Hypothesis 1b, both women and consumers unfamiliar with Monster Energy Drink showed more favorable brand attitudes after seeing a disclosure than men and consumers who were already familiar with Monster Energy Drink, contrary to what was expected. There was however no difference in purchase intention after exposure to a disclosure as compared to when a disclosure was absent.

The second hypothesis predicted that a textual disclosure would elicit a higher activation of persuasion knowledge and would thus result into less favorable brand evaluations as compared to symbolic disclosures or no disclosure at all. Unfortunately, there was no evidence to support this hypothesis. In other words, consumers who were exposed to different types of disclosures all reacted with an equal amount of activated persuasion knowledge. Also, there was no difference in both brand attitude as well as in purchase intention after exposure to the different disclosure types (i.e. textual, symbolic and absent). In short, Hypothesis 2 cannot be confirmed.

The third hypothesis predicted that self-control depletion could lead to a lowered activation of persuasion knowledge and therefore results in less favorable brand evaluations. Results showed that self-control depletion directly affected the brand attitude and purchase intention of consumers who were already familiar with the brand. Persuasion knowledge was however not affected by depletion of the consumer. Consumers who were familiar with the brand and were depleted of their self-control reported a more favorable brand attitude and purchase intention than those who were not depleted of their self-control. In other words, when a consumer did not have the cognitive ability to process the commercial intent behind the content and was already acquainted with the brand, their brand evaluation became more favorable. Hypothesis 3a could not be confirmed. Hypothesis 3b could be confirmed, but only for consumers who were already familiar with Monster Energy Drink.

Finally, a research question was composed to investigate the interaction between disclosure type and consumers' self-control on both brand attitude and purchase intention. It was found that when a woman was exposed to a symbolic disclosure whilst being depleted of her self-control, her persuasion knowledge was less activated than women who were not depleted of their self-control. The same was true when women were exposed to a textual disclosure. In other words, self-control depletion and exposure to a disclosure (both symbolic and textual) activated persuasion knowledge more than when a disclosure was absent.

This study contributes to disclosure research and brings a new social media platform in the mix. Disclosure research has taken television programs, blogs and vlogs into account, but never a social media platform such as Instagram. Experimental research on what effects sponsorship disclosures have on consumers are however of the utmost importance, as Instagram is used more commonly by organizations to persuade their audience via influencers and their social media accounts. A disclosure's main goal is to alert the consumer of the commercial intent of the content, so the consumer can resist or correct on the persuasive action (Boerman et al., 2012). Based on this research, and research of e.g. Wei et al. (2008), it

becomes clear that sponsorship disclosures in online environments may not fulfill their purpose of a warning signal. In contrast with the studies of Tessitore and Geuens (2013), and Boerman et al. (2015), this study showed no differences in activated persuasion knowledge or brand evaluations between the different kinds of disclosure types. This could be due to the fact that the disclosures are not salient enough as compared to the sponsorship disclosures in for example television shows where they appear on screen. More specifically, when product placement disclosures are communicated to the viewers of a branded television show, the disclosure is in motion on the screen. Often times, it is a banner in the top of the screen that exposes the textual disclosure, or the symbolic disclosure appears in a corner of the screen. Research by Boerman et al. (2014a) even showed that a longer exposure to a sponsorship disclosure activated persuasion knowledge more than a shorter exposure. However, in an online environment where consumers are often depleted of their self-control and consuming content for their relaxation (Kaye, 1998), it may be that the consumer does not even notice the disclosure.

A different explanation than motion could be that consumers were unfamiliar with the applied symbolic disclosures (#ad #sp #spon #sponsored) and were therefore unable to activate their persuasion knowledge, which has been noted by Tessitore and Geuens (2013). According to their study, a symbolic disclosure only meets its goal when the viewers know what it means. This was however not assessed in the questionnaire, so it could have been that the participants were unaware of the disclosure's meaning. Tessitore and Geuens (2013) did explore the effects of combining a symbolic disclosure and a textual disclosure in their experiments. In other words, participants were exposed to both the symbolic disclosure ("PP") and a textual disclosure ("*This program is sponsored by [BRAND]*"). Combining the disclosures could thus be a third disclosure category in upcoming studies.

Additionally, the sample in this study consisted mostly of women, who seemed persuaded more instead less by the symbolic and textual disclosure after depletion of their self-control. This could however be due to the fact that women were shown to follow influencers more often than men on Instagram. In this case, women could have been more able to imagine the scenario (i.e., following the influencer via their Instagram account), which could have lead to these effects. In upcoming studies it may therefore be wise to have a more equal spread of men and women to check whether these gender differences occur naturally or only in this study.

For marketing professionals, this study indicated that embedding disclosures into sponsored posts could lead to more favorable brand evaluations, especially for women and

consumers who are already familiar with the brand. There is however a drawback to this, which may not be ignored due to ethical reasons. Legislation has been established for product placement in television shows, as it was agreed upon that recognition of persuasive attempts is a consumer's right (Cain, 2011). However, if sponsorship disclosures cause consumers to be persuaded more due to their depleted self-control when reviewing editorial content, it may be wise to reassess the necessities of these legislations due to the contradictory effects shown in this study and a prior study from Janssen et al. (2016). In other words, it could be reconsidered whether there should be legislation for symbolic and textual disclosure in an online environment. It may be that the use of a so-called 'honest opinion' disclosure (where an influencer states that "*This post is sponsored, but all views are my own*") may activate persuasion knowledge of the consumer more than just a symbolic warning (Hwang & Jeong, 2016). The study of Hwang and Jeong (2016) only considered source credibility and message attitude, but it revealed that the negative effects of 'simple' disclosures disappeared when an honest opinion disclosure was given. In short, additional research is necessary to conclude whether legislation on sponsored editorial content is necessary online, and how this should be established.

5.1 Limitations and Recommendations

The set-up of this experiment was controlled through the use of artificial materials that were constructed for this study. Instagram is a social media site that works with a so-called timeline or feed– the posts of the accounts that are followed by the user are shown in a (mostly) chronological order. It is therefore easy to "scroll" through the feed, making it a rather thoughtless process. This study did not make use of the timeline-setting, but exposed the participant only to the sponsored content post. This may have caused difficulties for the participants to comprehend the Instagram setting, which is the main reason why participants who were familiar with the application were sampled for this study. The decision for this setting was made in order to create an uncluttered and 'controllable' experimental design; participants of the study could not be distracted by other content on the feed. In this manner, confounding variables could almost be eliminated, leaving the results to be assigned to the manipulation of disclosure type. Future studies could however take the timeline of Instagram into account, because the effects of the sponsorship disclosures may be neutralized when users have other content to pay attention to as well. The effect of a disclosure, namely that of a warning signal, could then vanish due to the clutter of content in the timeline. Then, an experimental survey could be combined with an eye-tracking experiment, giving insight in the

parts of the sponsored post users pay attention to. This may be relevant, as it has not been studied to which parts of sponsored editorial content users pay attention. It may be the case that users only evaluate the image or video and ignore the hashtags or comment section. More insights are necessary to create more natural material and in the extension thereof, more valid results.

In addition, Instagram is officially a social networking site. This means that you see content posted by your friends and/or the accounts that the user follows. Even though participants were instructed to pretend the post appeared in their timeline, it remains a fictitious scenario. The reason why marketers employ sponsoring of influencers is because followers identify themselves with an influencer (Jin & Phua, 2014; Talavera, 2015). This identification is the main incentive for Instagram users to follow influencer accounts. This may be a rather crucial element in the research on sponsorship disclosures on social media, as this identification cannot be imagined. An experiment in which participants self-report how they experience sponsored editorial content and why they do or do not follow certain accounts may provide us with crucial insights in how sponsorship disclosures could work in online contexts.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has shed its light on a rather novel research field in the area of sponsorship disclosures, namely social media. Both this study as the previous study of Janssen et al. (2016), have shown contradictive effects of sponsorship disclosures through the lens of an important factor: self-control or self-regulation. Moreover, women appear to be more sensitive to these effects after self-control depletion according to this study. Women's persuasion knowledge became more activated after exposure to a symbolic disclosure whilst being depleted of their self-control, but also reported more favorable brand attitudes after exposure to any disclosure as compared to no disclosure. Additionally, consumers who are already familiar with a brand seem to have more favorable brand attitudes and purchase intentions when being depleted of their self-control. In conclusion, this study shows that some consumers may be more susceptible to the effects of sponsorship disclosures on social media, resulting in a more pressing demand for more extensive research on the implementation and legislation of sponsored editorial content online.

6. References

- Audiovisual Media Services Directive (2010). Directive 2010/13/EU of the European parliament and of the council. Via <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/LSU?uri=CELEX:32010L0013>
- Balasubramanian, S. K. (1994). Beyond advertising and publicity: Hybrid messages and public policy concerns. *Journal of Advertising*, 23, 29-46. DOI: 10.1080/00913367.1943.10673457
- Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Muraven, M. & Tice, D. M. (1998). Ego depletion: Is the active self a limited resource? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 1252-1265.
- Becker-Olsen, K. L. (2003). And now, a word from our sponsor--a look at the effects of sponsored content and banner advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 32(2), 17-32. DOI: 10.1080/00913367.2003.10639130
- Blackshaw, P., & Nazzaro, M. (2006). Consumer-generated media (CGM) 101: Word-of-mouth in the age of the web-fortified consumer. *New York: Nielsen BuzzMetrics*.
- Boerman, S. C., Van Reijmersdal, E. A., & Neijens, P. C. (2012). Sponsorship disclosure: Effects of duration on persuasion knowledge and brand responses. *Journal of Communication*, 62, 1047-1064. DOI: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01677.x
- Boerman, S. C., Van Reijmersdal, E. A., & Neijens, P. C. (2014a). Effects of sponsorship disclosure timing on the processing of sponsored content: A study on the effectiveness of European disclosure regulations. *Psychology & Marketing*, 31, 214-224. DOI: 10.1002/mar.20688
- Boerman, S. C., Van Reijmersdal, E. A., & Neijens, P. C. (2015). Using eye tracking to understand the effects of brand placement disclosure types in television programs. *Journal of Advertising*, 44(3), 196-207. DOI: 10.1080/00913367.2014.967423
- Bruns, A., & Burgess, J. E. (2011, August). The use of Twitter hashtags in the formation of ad hoc publics. In *Proceedings of the 6th European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) General Conference 2011*.
- Cain, R. M. (2011). Embedded advertising on television: Disclosure, deception and free speech rights. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 13, 228-238. DOI: 10.1509/jppm.30.2.226
- Calfee, J. & Ringold, D. (1994). The seventy percent majority: Enduring consumer beliefs about advertising. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 13, 228-238.

- Campbell, M. C. & Mohr, G. S. & Verlegh, P. W. J. (2013). Can disclosures lead consumers to resist covert persuasion? The important roles of disclosure timing and type of response. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 23, 483-495.
- Chia, A. (2012). Welcome to Me-Mart: The politics of user-generated content in personal blogs. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 56(4), 421-438.
- De Andrade, M., Hastings, G., & Angusargue, K. (2014). Promotion of electronic cigarettes: Tobacco marketing reinvented. *BMJ*, 348, 15-17. DOI: 10.1136/bmj.f7473
- Dekker, K. & Van Reijmersdal, E. A. (2013). Brand placement disclosures to mitigate persuasion: The role of celebrity endorsement and disclosure type. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 19 224-240.
- Friestad, M., & Wright, P. (1994). The persuasion knowledge model: How people cope with persuasion attempts. *Journal of consumer research*, 21(1), 1-31. DOI: 10.1086/209380
- Ham, C. D., Nelson, M. R., & Das, S. (2015). How to measure persuasion knowledge. *International Journal of Advertising*, 34(1), 17-53. DOI: 10.1080/02650487.2014.994730
- Hwang, Y., & Jeong, S. H. (2016). “This is a sponsored blog post, but all opinions are my own”: The effects of sponsorship disclosure on responses to sponsored blog posts. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 62, 528-535. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2016.04.026
- Instagram (2016). FAQ. Via <https://www.instagram.com/about/faq/?hl=nl>
- Janssen, L., Fennis, B. M., & Pruyn, T. H. (2010). Forewarned is forearmed: Conserving self-control strength to resist self-control. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 46, 911-921. DOI: 10.1016/j.jesp.2010.06.008
- Janssen, L., Fransen, M. L., Wulff, R. & Van Reijmersdal, E. A. (2016). Brand placement disclosure effects on persuasion: The moderating role of consumer self-control. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*. DOI: 10.1002/cb.1587
- Jin, A. S-A., & Phua, J. (2014). Following celebrities’ tweets about brands: The impact of Twitter-based electronic word-of-mouth on consumers’ source credibility perception, buying intention, and social identification with celebrities. *Journal of Advertising*, 143, 181-195. DOI: 10.1080/00913367.2013.827606
- Kaikati, A. M. & Kaikati, J. G. (2004). Stealth marketing: How to reach consumer surreptitiously. *California Management Review*, 46(4), 6-22. DOI: 10.2307/41166272
- Kaye, B. K. (1998). Uses and gratifications of the World Wide Web: From couch potato to Web potato. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 6(1), 21-40. DOI: 10.1080/15456879809367333

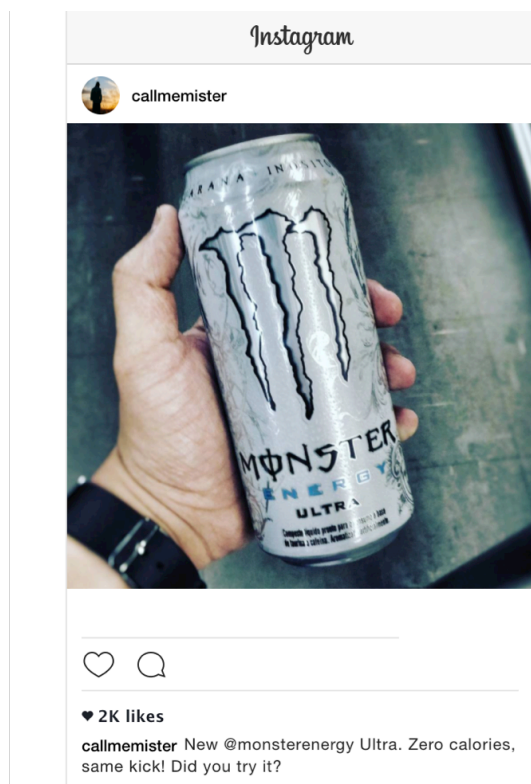
- Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B. S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business Horizons*, 54(3), 241-251. DOI: 10.1016/j.bushor.2011.01.005
- Law, S., & Braun, K. A. (2000). I'll have what she's having: gauging the impact of product placements on viewers. *Psychology and Marketing*, 17, 1059-1075.
- Mediakix (2016). What marketers must know about sponsored posts on social. Via <http://mediakix.com/2016/06/sponsored-posts-social-media-marketing-must-know/#gs.1hNBldY>
- Meenaghan, T. (2001). Understanding sponsorship effects. *Psychology & Marketing*, 18(2), 95-122.
- Moore, J. J., & Rodgers, S. L. (2005, January). An examination of advertising credibility and skepticism in five different media using the persuasion knowledge model. In *American Academy of Advertising, Conference Proceedings* (p. 10).
- Nebenzahl, I. D. & Jaffe, E. D. (1998). Ethical dimensions of advertising executions. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 17, 805-815. DOI: 10.1023/A:1005850812845
- Obermiller, C. & Spangenberg, E. R. (2000). On the origin and distinctness of skepticism toward advertising. *Marketing Letters*, 11(4), 311-322. DOI: 10.1023/A:1008181028040
- Obermiller, C., Spangenberg, E. R. & MacLachlan, D. L. (2005). Ad skepticism: The consequences of disbelief. *Journal of Advertising*, 34(3), 7-18. DOI: 10.1080/00913367.2005.10639199
- Petty, R. D., & Andrews, J. C. (2008). Covert marketing unmasked: A legal and regulatory guide for practices that mask marketing messages. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 27(1), 7-18. DOI: 10.1509/jppm.27.1.7
- Pollit, C. (2015, January 20). Everything you need to know about sponsored content [Web log post]. Retrieved from <https://moz.com/blog/everything-you-need-to-know-about-sponsored-content>
- Rozendaal, E., Lapierre, M. A., Van Reijmersdal, E. A., & Buijzen, M. (2011). Reconsidering advertising literacy as a defense against advertising effects. *Media Psychology*, 14(4), 333-354. DOI: 10.1080/15213269.2011.620540.
- Russell, C. A. (2002). Investigating the effectiveness of product placements in television shows: The motivations and mechanisms of resistance to persuasion. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29, 306-318. DOI: 10.1086/344432

- Smit, E. G., Van Reijmersdal, E. A. & Neijens, P. C. (2009). Today's practice of brand placement and the industry behind it. *International Journal of Advertising*, 28, 761-782. DOI: 10.2501/S0265048709200898
- Talavera, M. (July 14, 2015). 10 reasons why influencer marketing is the next big thing (Blog post). Retrieved from: <http://www.adweek.com/digital/10-reasons-why-influencer-marketing-is-the-next-bigthing/>
- Tangney, J. P., Baumeister, R. F., & Boone, A. L. (2004). High self-control predicts good adjustment, less pathology, better grades, and interpersonal success. *Journal of Personality*, 72(2), 271-322. DOI: 10.1111/j.0022-3506.2004.00263.x
- Tessitore, T. & Geuens, M. (2013). PP for 'product placement' or 'puzzled public'? The effectiveness of symbols as warnings of product placement and the moderating role of brand recall. *International Journal of Advertising*, 32(3), 419-442. DOI: 10.2501/IJA-32-3-419-442
- Thomas, K. J., & Akdere, M. (2013). Social media as collaborative media in workplace learning. *Human Resource Development Review*, 12(3), 329-344.
- Van Reijmersdal, E. A., Neijens, P. C., & Smit, E. G. (2007). Effects of television brand placement on brand image. *Psychology and Marketing*, 24, 403-420. DOI: 10.1002/mar.20166
- Van Reijmersdal, E. A., Fransen, M. L., Van Noort, G., Oprea, S. J., Vandeberg, L., Reusch, S., Van Lieshout, F., & Boerman, S. C. (2016). Effects of disclosing sponsored content in blogs how the use of resistance strategies mediates effects on persuasion. *American Behavioral Scientist*, DOI: 0002764216660141.
- Vohs, K. D., & Heatherton, T. F. (2000). Self-regulatory failure: A resource-depletion approach. *Psychological Science*, 11, 249-254.
- Wei, M., Ficher, E., & Main, K. J. (2008). An examination of the effects of activating persuasion knowledge on consumer response to brands engaging in covert marketing. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 27(1), 34-44. DOI: 10.1509/jppm.27.1.34.
- Whiting, A., & Williams, D. (2013). Why people use social media: a uses and gratifications approach. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 16(4), 362-369. DOI 10.1108/QMR-06-2013-0041
- Wojdyski, B. W., & Evans, N. J. (2016). Going native: Effects of disclosure position and language on the recognition and evaluation of online native advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 45(2), 157-168. DOI: 10.1080/00913367.2015.1115380

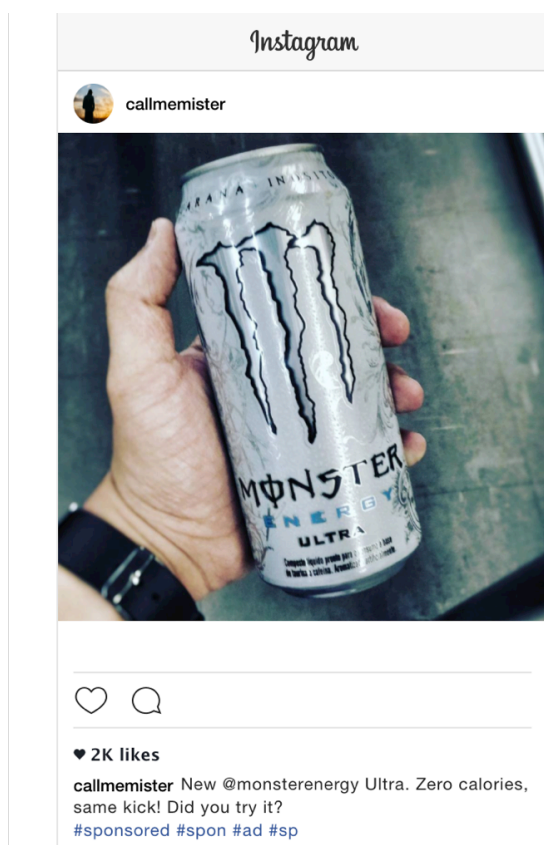
- Wong, K. (2014). The explosive growth of influencer marketing and what it means for you. Retrieved from: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kylewong/2014/09/10/the-explosive-growth-of-influencer-marketing-and-what-it-means-for-you/#6f600796595f>
- Wood, W., & Quinn, J. M. (2003). Forewarned or forearmed? Two meta-analytic syntheses of forewarnings of influence appeals. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129, 119-138. DOI: 10.1037/0033-2909.129.1.119
- Yang, M., & Roskos-Ewoldsen, D. R. (2007). The effectiveness of brand placements in the movies: Levels of placements, explicit and implicit memory, and brand-choice behavior. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 469-489. DOI: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2007.00353.x

7. Appendix

A: Instagram Posts

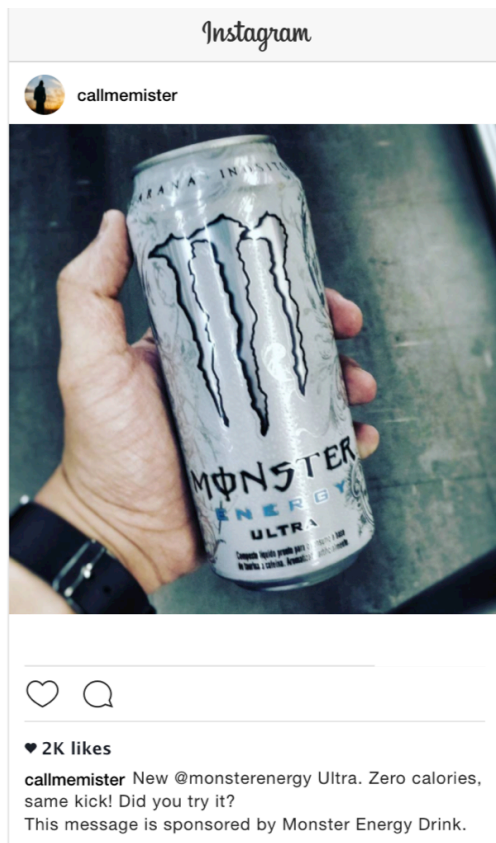


Instagram post for men without a sponsorship disclosure



Instagram post for men with a symbolic sponsorship disclosure

SPONSORSHIP DISCLOSURE EFFECTS ON PERSUASION IN ONLINE MEDIA.

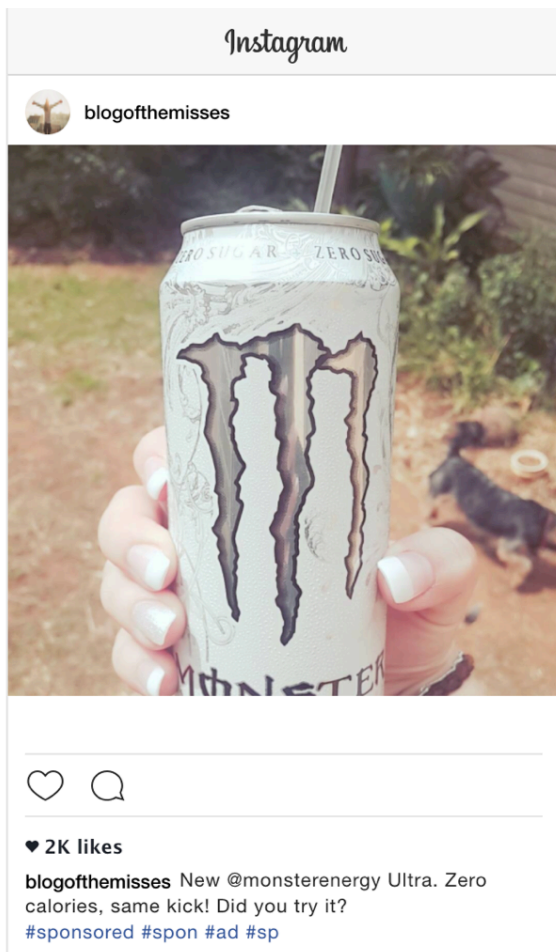


Instagram post for men with a textual sponsorship disclosure

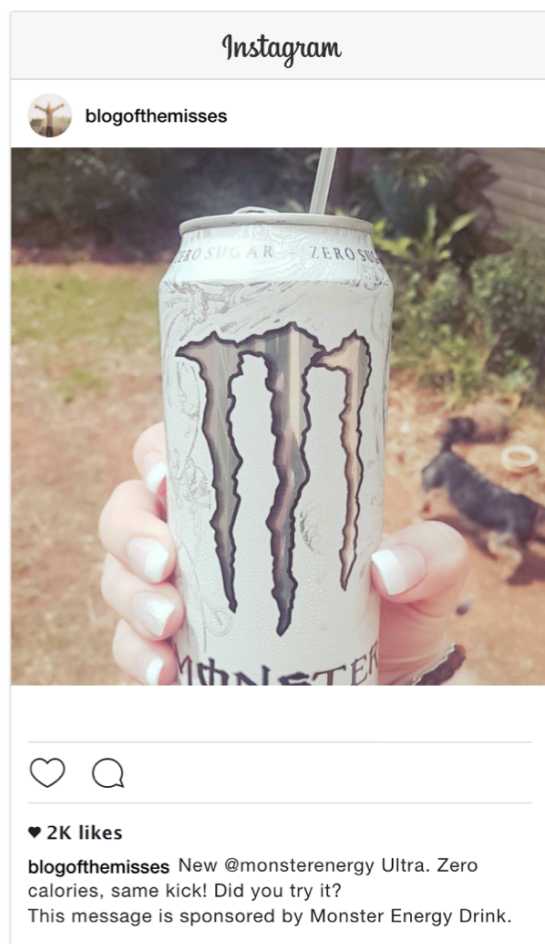


Instagram post for women without a sponsorship disclosure

SPONSORSHIP DISCLOSURE EFFECTS ON PERSUASION IN ONLINE MEDIA.



Instagram post for women with a symbolic sponsorship disclosure



Instagram post for women with a textual sponsorship disclosure

B: Self-control Task

1. Self-control task for depleted participants

“Je begint nu met de taaltest.

Hieronder vind je meerdere Nederlandse spreekwoorden en gezegden. Het is jouw taak om deze incomplete zinnen aan te vullen zodat een complete zin ontstaat. Maar **LET OP**: je mag daarbij alleen woorden gebruiken die **geen 'e'** bevatten.

Bijvoorbeeld: "Met de ... op stok gaan" wordt eigenlijk aangevuld met 'kippen', maar in jouw geval gebruik je een ander woord waar geen letter 'e' in voorkomt, zoals 'schildpad'.

Gebruik je wel een woord met de letter 'e', dan kan je deelname niet gebruikt worden voor het experiment. “

- 1 Na _____ komt zonneshijn.
- 2 _____ stinkt niet.
- 3 Door de _____ het bos niet meer zien.
- 4 In _____ leggen alle vogels een ei.
- 5 Een _____ voor de dorst.
- 6 Zo _____ als gras.
- 7 _____ duurt het langst.
- 8 Melk is goed voor _____.
- 9 De _____ buiten zetten.
- 10 Zo gek als een _____.
- 11 Snoep gezond, _____ een appel!
- 12 Meedoen is belangrijker dan _____.
- 13 Als er één schaap over de dam is, volgen er _____.
- 14 De aanval is de beste _____.
- 15 De pot verwijt de _____ dat hij zwart ziet.

2. Self-control task for not depleted participants

“Je begint nu met de taaltest.

Hieronder vind je meerdere Nederlandse spreekwoorden en gezegden. Het is jouw taak om deze incomplete zinnen aan te vullen zodat het juiste spreekwoord of gezegde ontstaat.

- 1 Na _____ komt zonneschijn.
- 2 _____ stinkt niet.
- 3 Door de _____ het bos niet meer zien.
- 4 In _____ leggen alle vogels een ei.
- 5 Een _____ voor de dorst.
- 6 Zo _____ als gras.
- 7 _____ duurt het langst.
- 8 Melk is goed voor _____.
- 9 De _____ buiten zetten.
- 10 Zo gek als een _____.
- 11 Snoep gezond, _____ een appel!
- 12 Meedoen is belangrijker dan _____.
- 13 Als er één schaap over de dam is, volgen er _____.
- 14 De aanval is de beste _____.
- 15 De pot verwijt de _____ dat hij zwart ziet.

C: Questionnaire

Introduction

“Beste deelnemer,

Bedankt voor je deelname aan dit onderzoek in het kader van mijn masterscriptie aan de Universiteit van Tilburg. Tijdens dit onderzoek begin je met een korte taaltest. Daarna krijg je een Instagram post te zien. Ik wil je vragen om de post te bekijken alsof deze in jouw eigen tijdlijn voorbij zou komen. Daarna zal je gevraagd worden om enkele vragen over de post te beantwoorden.

Bovenaan de pagina vind je een voortgangsbalk - op deze manier kun je zien hoe ver je al bent in het onderzoek. Deelname duurt tussen de 10-15 minuten.

Alle gegevens worden strikt vertrouwelijk behandeld en zullen alleen voor onderzoeksdoeleinden gebruikt worden. Deelnemers maken kans op een Bol.com cadeaukaart t.w.v. €10,-. Wil je hier kans op maken, vul dan aan het einde van het onderzoek je emailadres in. Nogmaals bedankt voor je deelname!

Manon Meylemans

Universiteit van Tilburg

MSc Communicatie- en Informatiewetenschappen

Bedrijfscommunicatie en Digitale Media”

Demographics

Hoe oud ben je? _____

Ik ben een...

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Vrouw

Mijn hoogst genoten opleiding of de opleiding waar ik nu mee bezig ben is...

- ☐ Middelbare school
- ☐ MBO
- ☐ HBO
- ☐ WO (bachelor/master/PhD/etc.)
- ☐ Anders, namelijk _____

Ben je bekend met het social media platform Instagram?

SPONSORSHIP DISCLOSURE EFFECTS ON PERSUASION IN ONLINE MEDIA.

- Ja
- Nee

Heb je zelf een account op het social media platform Instagram?

- Ja
- Nee

Hoe vaak gebruik je het social media platform Instagram gemiddeld (bv. openen van de applicatie op je telefoon of desktop, foto's en video's uploaden, scrollen door de tijdlijn)?

- Meerdere keren per dag
- Eens per dag
- Eens per week
- Eens per maand
- Ik ben geen actieve gebruiker

Self-control task

See Appendix B for the self-control tasks.

Mood

Geef aan hoe je je nu, op dit moment, voelt:

Heel erg negatief						Heel erg positief
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Instagram posts

“Op de volgende pagina zul je een Instagram-post te zien krijgen van @callmemister/@blogofthemisses. Hij/zij is een lifestyle blogger die regelmatig bericht over zijn dagelijkse activiteiten en zijn ervaringen deelt met zijn volgers. Voor deelname aan deze enquête wil ik je vragen om de post te bekijken alsof je hem in je eigen tijdlijn voorbij zou zien komen. Op de pagina zit een timer, na 15 seconden kun je doorklikken naar de volgende pagina.”

See Appendix A for the Instagram posts per condition.

SPONSORSHIP DISCLOSURE EFFECTS ON PERSUASION IN ONLINE MEDIA.

Brand attitude

Beantwoord nu de volgende vragen over het product dat getoond werd door de lifestyle blogger in de Instagram post.

Ik vind Monster Energy Drink...

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
slecht:goed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
niet aantrekkelijk:aantrekkelijk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
niet interessant:interessant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
negatief:positief	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
niet leuk:wel leuk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
van lage kwaliteit:van hoge kwaliteit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Purchase intention

Ik zou Monster Energy Drink graag eens willen proberen.

Helemaal mee oneens	Erg mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Erg mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Ik zal Monster Energy Drink mogelijk eens gaan kopen.

Heel erg onwaarschijnlijk	Erg onwaarschijnlijk	Onwaarschijnlijk	Neutraal	Waarschijnlijk	Erg waarschijnlijk	Heel erg waarschijnlijk
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Intention to like

Als deze post in mijn tijdlijn voorbij zou komen, zou ik deze liken.

Heel erg onwaarschijnlijk	Erg onwaarschijnlijk	Onwaarschijnlijk	Neutraal	Waarschijnlijk	Erg waarschijnlijk	Heel erg waarschijnlijk
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Brand familiarity

Was je bekend met het merk Monster Energy Drink voor deelname aan dit onderzoek?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nee

SPONSORSHIP DISCLOSURE EFFECTS ON PERSUASION IN ONLINE MEDIA.

Heb je Monster Energy Drink zelf al eens gedronken?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nee

Persuasion knowledge

Geef aan in hoeverre je het eens bent met de volgende stellingen gebaseerd op de Instagram post die je hebt gezien.

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Beetje mee oneens	Neutraal	Beetje mee eens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
In de Instagram post werd door de blogger reclame gemaakt. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Het tonen van Monster Energy Drink door de blogger is reclame. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Geef aan in hoeverre je het eens bent met de volgende stellingen.

Monster Energy Drink werd door de blogger getoond in de Instagram post om...

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Beetje mee oneens	Neutraal	Beetje mee eens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
... de consument te informeren. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... Monster Energy Drink te verkopen. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... de consument Monster Energy Drink leuk te laten vinden. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... de consument te vermaken. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... de verkoop van Monster Energy Drink te stimuleren (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... de consument te beïnvloeden. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SPONSORSHIP DISCLOSURE EFFECTS ON PERSUASION IN ONLINE MEDIA.

Geef aan in hoeverre je het eens bent met de volgende stellingen gebaseerd op de Instagram post die je hebt gezien. Ik vind de post van de blogger over Monster Energy Drink...

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
onbetrouwbaar:betrouwbaar (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
niet overtuigend:overtuigend (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
oneerlijk:eerlijk (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
niet manipulatief:manipulatief (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
niet leuk:leuk (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
ongeloofwaardig:geloofwaardig (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
niet vermakelijk:vermakelijk (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
niet misleidend:misleidend (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
onacceptabel:acceptabel (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
niet irritant:irritant (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
afleidend:niet afleidend (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Disclosure recall

Heb je onder de Instagram post een melding zien staan dat de post werd gesponsord?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nee
- ☐ Weet ik niet meer

Welke melding heb je gezien?

- ☐ This message is sponsored by Monster Energy Drink.
- ☐ #sponsored #spon #ad #sp
- ☐ Weet ik niet meer

Demographic variables

Volg je influencers op Instagram? **NB.** Influencers zijn populaire bloggers die veel volgers hebben (bv. beauty-, fashion- en foodbloggers), modellen, acteurs/actrices, muzikanten, etc.

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nee

SPONSORSHIP DISCLOSURE EFFECTS ON PERSUASION IN ONLINE MEDIA.

Self-control personality trait

Geef aan in hoeverre je het over het algemeen eens bent met de volgende stellingen.

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Ik kan verleiding goed weerstaan. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik vind het moeilijk om slechte gewoontes af te leren. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mensen zeggen dat ik een ijzeren zelfdiscipline heb. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zeg dingen die ongepast zijn. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik doe bepaalde dingen die slecht voor me zijn, als ze leuk zijn. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik zou willen dat ik meer zelfdiscipline had. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik ben lui. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Plezier en lol houden me soms van het werk af. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik vind het moeilijk om me te concentreren (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik kan effectief werken aan lange termijn doelen. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Soms kan ik mezelf niet stoppen iets te doen, ook al weet ik dat het verkeerd is. (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik handel vaak zonder over alle alternatieven na te denken. (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ik weiger dingen die slecht voor me zijn. (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SPONSORSHIP DISCLOSURE EFFECTS ON PERSUASION IN ONLINE MEDIA.

Manipulation check for self-control task

De volgende vragen gaan over de spreekwoordentaak die je aan het begin van dit onderzoek hebt uitgevoerd. Geef aan in hoeverre je het eens bent met de volgende stellingen:

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Een beetje mee oneens	Neutraal	Een beetje mee eens	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Ik vond de taak moeilijk. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
De taak kostte me veel inspanning. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tijdens de taak moest ik een automatische respons onderdrukken. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tijdens de taak moest ik de controle over mezelf uitoefenen. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of survey

“Bedankt voor je deelname aan mijn onderzoek!

Mocht je nog vragen hebben over je deelname, of interesse hebben in de reden achter het onderzoek, stuur dan een mailtje naar

Onder de winnaars verloot ik een waardebon van Bol.com van €10. Om kans te maken, kun je hieronder je emailadres invullen. Vergeet niet om op het pijltje rechtsonder te drukken om je deelname compleet te maken!”