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and Message Appeal on Consumer Responses“

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#influencermarketing on Instagram – Product Placement and The Effects of Placement

Prominence and Message Appeal on Consumer Responses

Nowadays, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Snapchat are playing an important role in our everyday life: They enable us to communicate and share messages, videos and photos not only with family and friends, but also with strangers all over the world. The latest Global Digital Statshot from *We Are Social* and *Hootsuite* published in August 2017 revealed that there are more than three billion social media users worldwide – this means that almost half of the world's population is active on social media and numbers are expected to rise even further (The Next Web, 2017). One feature that makes social media so attractive is the fact that social media platforms are highly interactive in nature and users are not only passive consumers, but they also have the possibility to become active by sharing, creating, discussing and modifying user-generated content (Kietzmann, Hermkens & McCarthy, 2011). But social media has not only received attention and interest among private users: Marketers and brands became aware of the power that social media have on our everyday life and are increasingly using social media platforms for their advertising purposes. In the past years, social media have become an important marketing tool for companies and brands to reach potential and existing consumers online, for example through brand pages, sponsored content or electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Evans, Phua, Lim & Jun, 2017).

With more than 700 million active users worldwide, *Instagram* is the largest and fastest growing mobile photo- and video-sharing social media platform (Instagram, April 2017). The idea behind Instagram is that by sharing photos or videos and through features, such as stories or live videos, people can share their experiences, express themselves, strengthen their connections to friends and feel closer to what matters to them (Instagram, April 2017). But Instagram is not only about posting pictures and videos in order to get attention from and admiration by other users – Instagram became also one of the most important social media

platforms for eWOM. eWOM can be understood as “any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet” (Hennig-Thurnau, Gwinner, Walsh & Gremler, 2004, p. 39). Typically, eWOM is unpaid, organic communication where consumers create and disseminate brand- and product-related information in their established social networks (Evans et al., 2017; Chu & Kim, 2011). However, brands and marketers are increasingly relying on paid eWOM where opinion leaders – so called influencers – spread brand messages through their social networks. This process is referred to as “influencer marketing” (Scott, 2015). There are several ways how brands and influencers are working together in social media, such as product placements, sharing sponsored content, reporting about events or experiences related to the brand or participating in events (Evans et al., 2017).

Statistics have revealed that in 2016, almost ten million posts have been sponsored by brands on Instagram and advertisers spent more than one billion US-Dollars on influencers. In the coming years, this advertising market is expected to grow enormously: By 2020, influencer marketing on Instagram is expected to be a \$5–10 billion market with more than 32 million sponsored posts (Mediakix, May 2017). Probably the most common technique in influencer marketing is product placement. Thereby, influencers incorporate sponsored products in their posts and also devote the post’s caption to the product and/or brand. When promoting products in their posts, influencers have to decide on how to incorporate the product in the post. One aspect that has to be considered is how the product should be placed in the picture. In obviously sponsored Instagram posts, the product and/or the brand name is usually in the focus of the post so that it draws immediate attention of the viewer. Research has shown that such obvious placements are considered as being persistent and often lead to rather negative consumer responses (e.g Van Reijmersdal, Neijens & Smit, 2009; Cowley & Barron, 2008). Furthermore, the language used on social media to convey their messages is of big importance and could lead to different consumer responses: While rational appeals present the product attributes as

consumer benefits, emotional appeals elicit emotions which could arouse purchase willingness (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). Given the growing importance and the expected rise of influencer marketing on Instagram, the interest of this study is to examine the effect that different set-ups of product placements have on consumer responses. By comparing prominent and subtle placements as well as rational and emotional message appeals, this study aims to understand which placement and language appeals are more effective in evoking favorable consumer responses.

Literature Review

Influencer Marketing and Product Placement on Instagram

The general concept of influencer marketing is not new: Endorsements, testimonials and product placements have been used for many years in marketing and advertising. Even though these techniques have been adapted to the online environment with the rise of social media, the basic marketing approaches behind have not fundamentally changed (Econtent, September 2016). Influencer marketing on social media can be seen as modern form of celebrity endorsement, in which social media influencers promote products and brands on their social media channels. The rationale behind influencer marketing lies in the Two-Step Flow Theory (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955) which states that “certain people recognized as opinion leaders interpret media information they received and then pass it to others, thus increasing its influence” (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014, p. 592). This assumes that mass mediated messages do not always affect the public directly, but the transmission of information is mediated through opinion leaders. In traditional media, celebrities – such as actors, musicians or sport athletes – have typically functioned as influencer. With the rise of social media, a new type of celebrities has emerged: micro-celebrities or micro-influencer. Micro-influencer can be understood as “any YouTuber, Instagrammer, Snapchatter, or blogger with a relatively small (less than 100,000) follower-base of highly-engaged, extremely attentive social media users” (Mediakix,

June 2016). Marwick (2013) defines micro-celebrities as influencers who are “famous to a niche group of people” and who strategically construct their presentation to appeal to others and sustain their popularity (Marwick, 2013, p. 114). At the same time, they are perceived as more authentic than real-life celebrities because people perceive them as more credible and they can relate to them more easily compared to celebrities (Djafarova & Rusworth, 2017).

One common technique to promote products and/or brands with influencers on social media is product placements. Product placement is the “paid inclusion of branded products or brand identifiers, through audio and/or visual means” (Fennis & Stroebe, 2016, p. 417). In contrast to regular advertising, product placements are not marked as advertising, but the product and/or brand is incorporated in the storyline in a natural way. Therefore, it is more difficult for the user to identify product placement as a persuasion attempt (Bhatnagar, Aksoy & Malkoc, 2004). Instagram provides great potential for product placements: Famous ‘Instagrammers’ get paid to post photos and videos of a product and/or the brand on their Instagram-profile and to – directly or indirectly – recommend the product to their huge follower base. This allows companies to reach directly to a huge and specific target group in a relatively inexpensive way (Phua, Jin & Kim, 2017). As product placements have become an important tool for influencer marketing on Instagram, it is of relevance for marketers and brands to understand how and when product placements are effective and have the intended effects on the consumers. As previous research dealing with influencer marketing in social media is still very limited and has mainly investigated the effects of sponsorship disclosure (e.g. Evans et al., 2017; Wojdyski & Evans, 2016) and the type of influencer used (e.g. Djafarova & Rusworth, 2017; Jin & Phua, 2014), this study will focus on the set-up of the post and the product itself: This includes prominence of the product placement as well as the message appeal applied to promote the product and/or the brand in a sponsored post on Instagram. While much research on endorsements and product placement in the traditional media environment has been done,

there is still little research on how users respond to product placements on social media, especially Instagram. Therefore, following research question should be addressed:

Research Question 1: How do prominence of product placement and message appeal influence consumer responses?

Consumer Responses

As in traditional advertising and marketing, marketers' and brands' main goal of influencer marketing is to evoke favorable consumer responses which in turn will motivate the consumer to purchase the product. In this study, four different consumer responses have been taken into consideration: message credibility, brand recall, brand attitude and purchase intention.

Based on reviewed literature, Appelman and Sundar (2016) define message credibility as "an individual's judgement of the veracity of the content of communication" (Appelman & Sundar, 2016, p. 63). Previous research has shown that message credibility has a great impact on the effectiveness and the persuasiveness of advertising and how consumers will respond to it: Advertisement will be only effective and motivate the consumer to purchase the advertised products, when it is considered as being credible and trustworthy by the consumers (Cheung, Luo, Sia & Chen, 2009). When comparing WOM – the traditional, offline form of eWOM – and traditional media, studies have revealed that consumers perceive WOM as more persuasive and trustworthy than corporate communication or traditional media communication (e.g. Wu & Wang, 2011; Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Highly credible product placements have also proven to help consumers to form positive attitudes and influence their purchase intentions (Adis et al., 2015).

Brand recall is one of the two components that constitute brand awareness. Brand awareness is related to "the strength of the brand node or trace in memory" and refers to consumers' abilities to identify the brand (Keller, 1993, p. 3). In this context, brand recall then can be understood as the "consumers' ability to retrieve the brand when given the product

category, the needs fulfilled by the category, or some other type of probe as a cue” (Keller, 1993, p. 3). In other words, brand recall means that consumers are able to correctly elicit the brand from memory.

Brand attitude is a more complex concept. In general, attitudes are “a person’s enduring favorable or unfavorable evaluations, emotional feelings, and action tendencies toward some object or idea” (Kotler, 2000, p. 96). Spears and Singh (2004) define brand attitude as “a relatively enduring, unidimensional summary evaluation of the brand that presumably energizes behavior” (p. 55). Brand attitude is an important concept in marketing and advertising as attitudes often form the basis for consumer behavior (Keller, 1993). They can either be related to beliefs about product-related attributes and its functional benefits (Keller, 1993) or to non-product-related attributes and symbolic benefits (Rossiter & Percy, 1987). Research has suggested that brand attitudes are not only formed through thoughtful decision making, but also according to simple heuristics and/or decision rules, such as the color or the shape of the product (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

The fourth consumer response, purchase intention, can be described as “an individual’s conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand” (Spears & Singh, 2004, p. 56). Miniard, Obermiller & Page (1983) have identified purchase intention as an intervening psychological variable between attitudes and actual behavior and previous studies have found that purchase intention is positively influenced by brand attitudes (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). This can be explained with the theory of planned behavior: When consumers hold more favorable attitudes towards a brand, behavior intentions are higher as people’s beliefs and behavior is linked (Ajzen, 2012). Especially eWOM can have an important influence on consumers’ purchase intention as statistics have revealed: 70 percent of consumers visit social media sites in order to get information regarding a brand, product or company and 49 percent of them make their purchase decisions based on the information they have found on social media (DEI Worldwide, 2008). As this survey has been published in 2008 and social media has become of

even greater importance in the last ten years, it can be expected that nowadays, social media have even greater influence on the purchasing process.

Prominence of Product Placement

When promoting a product in a sponsored post on Instagram, the product can be incorporated in the picture in two different ways: It can either be prominently or subtly placed. According to Gupta and Lord (1998), prominent placements are those in which the product is “highly visible by virtue of size and/or position on the screen or its centrality to the action in the scene”. Subtle placements in contrast are “those in which the brand is not shown prominently (e.g. small in size, a background prop outside of the main field of visual focus, lost in an array of multiple product or objects, low time of exposure)” (Gupta & Lord, 1998, p. 49). Previous research has mainly focused on the effects of product placements in traditional media, such as television, radio or magazines, and has found that the extent to which a product is prominently placed plays a role. Several studies have shown that prominent and obvious placements evoke more negative consumer reactions (e.g. Van Reijmersdal, Neijens & Smit, 2009; Cowley & Barron, 2008). Nevertheless, when it comes to brand awareness, a prominent placement has a higher recall than a subtle placement (Law & Braun, 2000). In her study, Homer (2009) found that vivid and prominent product placements lead to higher brand impressions, while subtle placements resulted in more positive consumers’ attitudes towards the advertising. Positive attitudes towards the advertising will elicit more positive evaluations of the product and brand and – according to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 2012) – will lead to higher purchase intention. Given these results of previous studies, following hypotheses will be tested in the context of product placements on Instagram:

H1a: Prominent product placements lead to a higher level of brand recall compared to subtle placements.

H1b: Subtle product placements lead to a higher level of (1) perceived message credibility, (2) brand attitude and (3) purchase intention compared to prominent placements.

Advertising Message Appeal

When it comes to sponsored advertising on Instagram, not only the positioning of the product in the post should be considered, but also the text message which is communicated right next to the picture. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2012), when conveying persuasive messages, three different text appeals can be applied: A rational, emotional or moral appeal. Rational appeals relate to the product's benefits, such as quality, value or performance. Emotional appeals in contrast, attempt to elicit positive or negative emotions. Emotions will attract more attention and create belief in the advertisement and brand which, as a result, will motivate consumers to purchase the product. The third appeal, moral appeal, concerns people's sense of what is "right" and "proper" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012, p. 417). Moral appeals are mostly used to convey social causes. As social causes are not the interest and purpose of this study, only rational and emotional message appeals will be taken into consideration.

Applied to product placement on Instagram, either rational or emotional message appeals can be applied when promoting products and/or brands. Various studies have dealt with message appeals in advertising: In the context of TV commercials, Goldberg and Gorn (1987) have found that emotional commercials outperform their informational counterparts as participants evaluated them as more effective – participants felt happier after watching them and showed a higher intention to purchase the products. However, participants could remember more points in the informational commercials than in the emotional condition (Goldberg & Gorn, 1987). Flora and Maibach (1990) examined rational and emotional text appeals in public service announcements related to AIDS and found that the emotional appeal led to a higher desire to learn more about AIDS. As rational appeals are defined as the straightforward presentation of factual information and can be characterized by objectivity (Zhang, Sun, Liu & Knight, 2014), it is hypothesized in this study that they will be perceived as being more credible. Therefore, the following hypotheses are stated:

H2a: Emotional text appeals lead to higher (a) brand attitude as well as higher (b) purchase intention compared to rational text appeals.

H2b: Rational text appeals lead to higher (a) perceived message credibility and better (b) brand recall compared to emotional text appeals.

The Interplay of Message Appeal and Product Involvement

However, to fully understand how consumer process different information, one has to look into consumer psychology. One model that provides a general framework for understanding the persuasion process is the *Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)* (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The ELM suggests that information can be processed through two different routes: The central and the peripheral route. The central route is activated when elaboration is relatively high, which involves issue-relevant thinking and arguments. Persuasion through the central route occurs through the careful examination of relevant arguments. In contrast, the peripheral route is activated when elaboration is relatively low, which commonly occurs when the consumer uses peripheral cues to process information. Persuasion through the peripheral route occurs through mental short-cuts and heuristics rather than through careful examination of issue-relevant arguments (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; O’Keefe, 2012). The ELM can also be applied to the different text appeals: While rational messages are processed through the central route and lead to thoughtful and cognitive responses, emotional messages are processed through the peripheral route and encourage affective responses.

One important variable that influences message responses is motivation and the level of involvement which can be also understood as the personal relevance of the message and/or the product. Product involvement is defined as “a consumer’s enduring perceptions of the importance of the product category based on the consumer’s inherent needs, values, and interests” (Bian & Moutinho, 2011, p. 195). The level of involvement determines the depth, complexity and extensiveness of the consumer’s cognitive and behavioral processes: Information regarding high involvement products will be processed and evaluated through the

central route, while information regarding low involvement products will be processed through the peripheral route and consumers will pay more attention to non-product-related cues (Bian & Moutinho, 2011; Park & Lee, 2008).

Wu and Wang (2011) examined the effects of rational and emotional text appeals on brand attitude, depending on whether a high involvement product or a low involvement product has been used. For the low involvement product, no significantly different effects on brand attitude depending on the text appeal could be observed. However, when applied for the high involvement product, results have shown that the rational text appeal has led to better brand attitude compared to the emotional appeal. When applying emotional and rational advertising appeals to public service announcements related to AIDS, Flora & Maibach (1990) found an interaction between the text appeal applied and the degree of issue involvement: When involvement was low, emotional messages were more memorable compared to rational messages. When involvement was high, both types of messages were recalled equally (Flora & Maibach, 1990). Based on these results, the following hypotheses in the context of product involvement as moderator will be tested:

H3a: The higher the level of product involvement, the higher the (a) perceived message credibility (b) brand recall, (c) brand attitude as well as (d) purchase intention in the rational message appeal compared to the emotional message appeal.

H3b: The lower the level of product involvement, the higher the (a) perceived message credibility (b) brand recall, (c) brand attitude as well as (d) purchase intention in the emotional message appeal compared to the rational message appeal.

Method

To address all aspects of the research question and to test the hypotheses, an online survey experiment has been conducted. Even though being criticized for low external validity and generalizability, experiments are the most appropriate research design to address causal

relationships while having full control over the experimental stimuli (Wilson, Aronson & Carlsmith, 2010). An online approach has been chosen as it is one of the most appropriate ways to reach a large number of participants in a relatively short time with acceptable costs. To measure the dependent variables – message credibility, brand recall, brand attitude and purchase intention – a 2 (prominent vs. subtle placement) x 2 (rational vs. emotional text appeal) design has been applied. Furthermore, one control group which will not be exposed to the experimental stimulus material existed.

Pretest

To ensure that already existing brand attitudes do not impact the effects on the above mentioned consumer responses, a brand has been chosen that is relatively unknown und elicits neutral brand attitudes. Furthermore, as the sample consisted of female Instagram users, (natural) cosmetics has been chosen as product category because it can be seen as a typical female product category. As a brand for the experiment, the natural cosmetics brand *Acaraa* has been chosen – a Munich-based cosmetics brand that has been recently established and entered the market in the beginning of 2017. To test how well known the chosen brand is, a pretest has been conducted. The results revealed that out of the 66 participants who have successfully completed the pretest only three people (= 4.55 percent) have ever heard of the brand *Acaraa*. In addition, a fictitious Instagram account named *niikolettas_world*¹ has been created in order to prevent that participants already know the influencer used for the study which would lead to either positive or negative attitudes towards her or him. By showing participants a screenshot of the Instagram account *niikolettas_world*¹, the account has been tested for authenticity and familiarity. None of the 66 participants completing the pretest have stated that they know the Instagram account *niikolettas_world*. Furthermore, participants have

¹ See Appendix A for the screenshot of *niikolettas_world* Instagram-account.

stated that they rather like the account (Mean = 3.19, S.D. = 1.021) and think it is rather sympathetic (Mean = 3.27, S.D. = 1.059)².

Sample

The sample consisted of German speaking, female Instagram users. A female sample has been chosen as females are the largest user group on Instagram (Mediakix, September 2016). Participants have been recruited through snowball sampling via personal contact, social networks or online survey platforms such as SurveyCircle. After cleaning the dataset³, 212 participants have successfully completed the survey. The participants' average age was 24.87 years (SD = 5.49, Median = 24 years) with the youngest participants being 18 years and the oldest participants being 68 years old. Most of the participants (86.3 percent) were from Germany, while 9.4 percent were from Austria. Almost half of the participants (46.7 percent) hold a Bachelor's degree, followed by the German (Fach-)Abitur (35.8 percent) and the Master's degree (11.3 percent). When asked about their Instagram usage behavior, 91 percent of the participants use Instagram at least once a day. Furthermore, 66 percent of all participants are following at least one influencer on Instagram and they are rather interested in influencers on Instagram (Mean = 3.05, S.D. = 1.33⁴). In sum, the sample consisted of highly educated, young female Germans who are using Instagram quite intensively.

Procedure

All participants have been randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions or the control condition. Before receiving the stimulus material, respondents answered questions measuring several control variables such as sociodemographics (e.g. gender, age and education) as well as questions regarding their Instagram behavior⁵. Respondents who were not

² The items have been measured on a 5-point-Likert scale ranging from 1 (= I do not agree at all) to 5 (= I totally agree).

³ In total, 51 cases have been deleted as participants have not answered the control question ("Please tick 5 (= I totally agree)") correctly.

⁴ The question has been measured on a 5-point-Likert scale ranging from 1 (= I do not agree at all) to 5 (= I totally agree).

⁵ The entire questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

female or did not use Instagram were not able to continue with the survey and the questionnaire ended automatically. After answering these questions, participants were exposed to the stimulus material. In a third part, questions measuring message credibility, brand recall, brand attitude as well as purchase intention have been asked. At the end of the survey, participants were debriefed about the purpose of this study.

Stimulus Material⁶

The stimulus material consisted of a screenshot of the Instagram account of *niikolettas_world* as well as four posts with captions that have been posted by *niikolettas_world* on Instagram. In the experimental condition, out of the four posts, two included products from the sponsored brand *Acaraa* and have been manipulated for each of the experimental condition. In one posting, three *Acaraa* products have been included – the body oil, the hair oil and the face serum – while the second posting only included the *Acaraa* body oil. The two other posts consisted of typical blogger-posts which have been taken from the existing Instagram accounts of the bloggers *xeniaoverdose* and *verena_ahmann*. They were not of main relevance for this study and have been the same for each of the five conditions. Participants in the control condition did not receive any Instagram-posts featuring any *Acaraa* products, but instead received in addition to the two blogger posts, a short information text introducing the brand *Acaraa*.

Placement Prominence. To choose the final posts, the pretest being conducted measured the perceived prominence of the *Acaraa* products in the postings. Therefore, Instagram postings with five different motives have been created. For each motive, two versions existed in which the products are positioned differently – they were either placed prominently or subtly in the posting. For each posting, participants were asked to rate three statements regarding the positioning of the product in the pictures on a scale ranging from 1 (= strongly

⁶ The stimulus material for each condition can be found in Appendix A.

disagree) to 5 (= strongly agree): *The product is clearly visible in the post*, *The brand name Acaraa is clearly recognizable in the post* as well as *The product is the first thing that catches my eyes*. Furthermore, participants were asked to rate on a 5-point-Likert scale whether they perceived the product in the *background* or in the *foreground*. The two motives in which the placement in one version has been perceived as most prominently and in the other version as most subtly placed and for which the results between the prominent and subtle posting versions were significantly different have been chosen as stimulus motives.

Text Appeal. In addition to placement prominence, the final wordings have also been chosen based on the results from the pretest which measured the perceived rationality and emotionality of the different wordings examples. In total, five text examples have been written and for each, two versions existed – either using an emotional or a rational text appeal. The wordings have been created using text elements from real Instagram postings which were about the brand *Acaraa* and its products. Participants should then rate two statements – *The text includes relevant information regarding the product* as well as *The text reveals the personal opinion and experience of the blogger with the product* – on a scale ranging from 1 (= strongly disagree) to 5 (= strongly agree). Furthermore, they were asked to rate on a 5-point-Likert scale whether they perceived the text as *very emotional* or *very rational*. The two wordings for which one version has been perceived as the most emotional and the other version as most rational and for which the results between the emotional and rational posting versions were significantly different have been chosen.

Measurements

Message Credibility. Perceived message credibility has been measured by implementing a 5-point Likert-scale with twelve items which have been partly adapted from the TV advertising believability scale by Beltramini (1982). Thereby, participants were given a statement (*“The sponsored Instagram posts were...”*) which they had to complete for each item. The items which respondents had to rate on a scale from 1 (= strongly disagree) to 5 (=

strongly agree) include items such as the following: *not informative/informative*, *not emotional/emotional*, *not convincing/convincing*, *dishonest/honest*, *untrustworthy/trustworthy*, *not credible/credible* or *unlikely/likely*. An index ($\alpha = .887$) consisting of seven items has been created which measured overall message credibility (Mean = 2.93, S.D. = .81).

Brand Recall. To measure participants' brand recall, participants have been asked whether they have recognized any sponsored content in the postings. Furthermore, through an open-ended question they were asked whether they can remember the brand which the Instagram-blogger *niikolettas_world* was advertising for. Thereby, the option to tick "*I don't remember*" has been given. The answers were analyzed and coded with 0 (= not correct) and 1 (= correct).

Brand Attitude. To measure brand attitude, Spears & Singh (2004) have reviewed several different scales and items from previous literature measuring brand attitude. From the 31 identified items by Spears & Singh (2004), several have been chosen for this study, such as: *unappealing/appealing*, *low quality/high quality brand*, *untrustworthy/not trustworthy*, *unfavorable/favorable*, *uninteresting/interesting* or *unlikeable/likeable*. For each item, participants were given a statement ("*I think Acaraa is ...*") which they had to complete on a Likert-scale ranging from 1 (= strongly disagree) to 5 (= strongly agree). Furthermore, participants have been given several statements – such as *Acaraa products are appealing to me*, *The Acaraa body oil is a product of high quality* or *Acaraa is a good brand* – which they had to rate on a 5-point-Likert scale. An index ($\alpha = .937$) consisting of six items has been created which measured participants' overall brand attitude (Mean = 3.02, S.D. = .79).

Purchase Intention. To measure purchase intention, participants were asked to rate several statements, such as the following: "*I would like to try Acaraa products*", "*I would like to have more information on the brand Acaraa*", "*I would buy the brand the next time I need a new body oil*" or "*I would buy Acaraa products if I want to buy natural cosmetics products*", on a scale from 1 (= strongly disagree) to 5 (= strongly agree). An index ($\alpha = .950$) consisting

of eight statements has been created which indicates participants' overall purchase intention (Mean = 2.56, S.D. = 1.10). Furthermore, participants were asked in an open-ended question how much they would be willing to pay for the *Acaraa* body oil. As a last question of the questionnaire, a fictitious raffle has been created in which participants were given five body oils from five different brands – among them also the *Acaraa* body oil – from which they had to choose one as reward.

Product Involvement. To measure participants' degree of relevance of natural cosmetics, several statements which should measure product involvement, such as "*I am interested in natural cosmetics*", "*Natural cosmetics is a relevant topic to me*", "*I prefer buying natural cosmetics products instead of ordinary cosmetics brand*" or "*I am willing to pay more for natural cosmetics products*", have been given to the participants. An index out of five items ($\alpha = .938$) measuring overall product involvement has been created which has been used in a moderated regression analysis as a moderating variable (Mean = 3.01, S.D. = 1.18).

Control Variables. Even though it is not of main interest for this study, various control variables regarding participants' Instagram behavior, such as frequency and motives of usage, have been included as they are expected to have influence on the dependent variables. People who are using Instagram very frequently may show different reactions to the Instagram postings than people who use it less frequently as they could be more familiar with product placements and sponsored content. Furthermore, participants who are using Instagram to search for the latest trends or product information may react differently than participants who are using Instagram to follow their friends and/or family. Also, the fact whether participants are interested in influencers on Instagram and whether they follow any influencers, may influence their responses. Therefore, for each analysis of the dependent variables, regression models have been created that include apart from the key independent variables also the above-mentioned control variables.

Results

Manipulation Check

In order to see whether the manipulation of the stimulus material has been successful, various manipulation checks for placement prominence and message appeal have been conducted using ANOVA. The results showed statistical significant differences in perceiving the given messages as being informative ($F(3, 171) = 2.751, p = .044$): A LSD post-hoc test showed that participants in condition 4 (prominent + emotional) perceived the text as less informative (Mean = 2.84, S.D. = .987) compared to participants in condition 1 (subtle + rational) (Mean = 3.39, S.D. = 1.201) or participants in condition 3 (prominent + rational) (Mean = 3.43, S.D. = 1.016). Furthermore, the differences in perception between condition 2 (subtle + emotional) and condition 4 (prominent + emotional) as well as condition 1 (subtle + rational) and condition 3 (prominent + rational) were not significant.

The ANOVA analysis also revealed statistical significant results for placements prominence ($F(3, 171) = 2.581, p = .050$): A LSD post-hoc test showed that participants in condition 1 (subtle + rational) perceived the brand *Acaraa* less in the foreground (Mean = 3.91, S.D. = 1.170) compared to participants in condition 3 (prominent + rational) (Mean = 4.33, S.D. = 1.028) or participants in condition 4 (prominent + emotional) (Mean = 4.39, S.D. = .784). As with condition 1, the same goes with condition 2 (subtle + emotional): The brand *Acaraa* is perceived less prominently (Mean = 3.98, S.D. = .913) compared to condition 3 or condition 4. In addition, the differences between condition 1 and condition 2 were not significant. Based on the results from the two ANOVA analyses, the manipulation of the stimulus material can be seen as successful.

Message Credibility

To test the perceived message credibility depending on the experimental condition, an ANOVA revealed no statistical significant differences between the different conditions ($p = .127$). This indicates that the positing of the brand *Acaraa* as well as the text appeal applied had

no influence on the perceived message credibility. In a next step, multiple regression models have been created as they allow to control for confounding variables such as frequency of Instagram usage, motives for using Instagram as well as the question whether participants are following influencers and whether they are interested in influencers. When taking condition 1 (subtle + rational) as reference group, the regression analysis⁷ showed statistical significant results for condition 3 (rational + prominent): Participants who received the Instagram posting with a rational text appeal and prominent placement perceived the message as less credible compared to participants with a rational text appeal and subtle placement, $b = -.385$, $S.E. = .175$, $p = .029$. This indicates that when applying a rational message appeal, people in the subtle placement condition perceived the message as more credible compared to people with a prominent placement. However, none of the tested control variables proved to have a statistical significant effect on the outcome variable.

Furthermore, to test whether product involvement had a moderating effect on message credibility, a moderated regression model has been created. The results revealed that the relevance of natural cosmetics in participants' life functions as a moderator for overall message credibility: The more relevant natural cosmetics was for participants in the rational text appeal and prominent placement condition, the lower the level of perceived message credibility compared to participants who received an emotional text appeal and subtle placement, $b = -.397$, $S.E. = .145$, $p = .007$. As this is contrary to the expected hypotheses, **H2b**, **H3a** as well as **H3b** with regard to message credibility have to be rejected. **H1b** can only be supported when taking placement prominence in combination with a rational text appeal, but not with an emotional text appeal.

⁷ All tables of the relevant regression models that will be discussed in the results section can be found in Appendix C.

Brand Recall

A descriptive analysis of the questions measuring brand recall revealed that 96.0 percent of the participants in the four experimental conditions stated that they have recognized sponsored content in the postings. Furthermore, 53.1 percent of all participants could name the sponsored brand *Acaraa* correctly. However, when testing whether there are differences between the four conditions, an ANOVA analysis showed no statistical significant results ($p = .782$). In addition, binary regression models including the control variables have been created to check whether the experimental condition had an effect on correctly identifying the brand name as *Acaraa*. None of the results have been statistically significant ($p > .05$). Furthermore, when taking the relevance that natural cosmetics plays in participants' life as a moderator, a moderated regression analysis revealed no statistical significant results ($p > .05$). As none of the ANOVA or regression analyses showed any statistical significant results, **H1a**, **H2b**, **H3a** as well as **H3b** have to be rejected with regard to brand recall.

Brand Attitude

When testing whether the condition had a statistical significant effect on participants' overall brand attitude, an ANOVA revealed no significant results ($p = .554$). As these findings are contrary to previous research (e.g. Van Reijmersdal, Neijens & Smit, 2009; Cowley & Barron, 2008) an additional ANOVA has been run which took as dependent variable the single items measuring brand attitude instead of the index measuring overall brand attitude. However, none of the results were statistically significant ($p > .05$). This indicates that the placement of *Acaraa* products as well as the message appeal applied had no effect on peoples' attitudes towards the brand *Acaraa*. Also, the analysis of multiple linear regression models including the control variables did not show any statistical significant results ($p > .05$). Furthermore, it was hypothesized that the relevance that natural cosmetics has in participants' life moderates the effects on brand attitude. However, the moderated regression analysis did not show any

statistical significant results ($p > .05$). Therefore, **H1b**, **H2a**, **H3a** and **H3b** in terms of brand attitude have to be rejected as well.

Purchase Intention

An ANOVA measuring participants' overall purchase intention depending on the condition revealed no statistical significant results ($p = .580$). Furthermore, multiple linear regression models including the control variables as well as the moderated regression models taking the relevance of natural cosmetics as moderator did not show any significant results ($p > .05$). These results indicate that the experimental condition had no influence on how likely the participants were to purchase *Acaraa* products.

In addition to the index measuring overall purchase intention, participants were asked to write down how much money they would be willing to pay for the *Acaraa* body oil (Mean = 9.08, S.D. = 6.330). When testing whether there are differences in the willingness to pay depending on the conditions, an ANOVA did not show any significant results ($p = .389$). Furthermore, the created multiple linear regression models including the control variables as well as the moderated regression models including product involvement as moderator were not significant ($p > .05$).

As a last question, participants had to choose in a fictitious raffle from five different body oils. 41.7 percent of all participants have chosen the *Acaraa* body oil. When looking at the different conditions, an ANOVA revealed that there are differences depending on the experimental condition whether *Acaraa* has been chosen or not ($F(3, 164) = 3.939$, $p = .010$): As homogeneity of variance was significant, a Dunnett T3 post-hoc test revealed that there were significant differences between the prominent + emotional and subtle + emotional condition as well as between the prominent + emotional and prominent + rational condition. Participants in the prominent + emotional condition have chosen the *Acaraa* body oil more often (Mean = .57, S.D. = .50) compared to participants in the subtle + emotional (Mean = .29, S.D. = .46) and participants in the prominent + rational condition (Mean = .29, S.D. = .46). Furthermore, binary

regression models have been created which included the control variables and showed significant results for the emotional + prominent condition: Participants in the emotional + prominent condition were more likely to choose the *Acaraa* body oil compared to participants in the emotional + subtle condition ($b = 1.043$, $S.E. = .480$, $Wald = 4.720$, $p = .030$). This indicates that when having an emotional text appeal, a prominent placement led to a higher likelihood to choose the brand *Acaraa* in a fictitious raffle compared to a subtle placement. However, none of the control variables had a significant influence on the outcome. The moderated regression models taking the relevance of natural cosmetics as moderator also showed significant results for the emotional + prominent condition: The more relevant natural cosmetics was for the participants in the emotional + prominent condition, the more likely they were choosing the *Acaraa* body oil compared to participants in the emotional + subtle condition ($b = .853$, $S.E. = .433$, $Wald = 3.875$, $p = .049$). All the other regression models did not show any significant results ($p > .05$). As a result, **H3a** as well as **H3b** with regard to purchase intention have to be rejected. **H1b** and **H2a** can only be partially supported and only when looking at whether people would choose the *Acaraa* body oil over other brands in a fictitious raffle: H1b only when looking at differences in placement prominence in the emotional text appeal condition and H2a only when looking at text appeal differences in combination with prominent product placement.

The Interplay of Consumer Responses

Previous research suggests that the different consumer responses are not independent from each other but can be rather seen as a process in which the different components are interconnected and influence each other (Adis et al., 2015; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). Therefore, different mediation analyses using the SPSS macro PROCESS have been conducted per condition to see whether the level of perceived message credibility had an indirect effect on brand attitude and purchase intention. In addition, brand attitude has also been used as mediator for purchase intention. The mediation analysis revealed that indeed *message credibility*

functions as mediator for brand attitude and purchase intention in *condition 1* (rational text appeal and subtle placement): Exposure to subtly placed *Acaraa* products with a rational text appeal had a positive effect on *message credibility* ($b = .2946$, $S.E. = .1374$, $p = .0335$), which was positively related to more favorable *brand attitudes* ($b = .5215$, $S.E. = .0642$, $p = .0000$) as well as a higher level of *purchase intention* ($b = .5692$, $S.E. = .0951$, $p = .0000$) compared to all the other experimental conditions.⁸ This indicates that a rational text appeal together with a subtle placement leads to a higher level of message credibility which in turn positively influences participants' brand attitude as well as purchase intention. However, these indirect effects can only be observed in the subtle placement and rational text appeal condition compared to all the other conditions, but not when taking the other conditions as reference.

Conclusion and Discussion

How social media users perceive and respond to sponsored content in social media is not least influenced by the way how the brand and/or the products are presented in the postings. This study examined in the context of the social media platform Instagram whether users respond differently to sponsored postings depending on how the *Acaraa* products were positioned in the picture as well as on the message appeal applied in the text underneath the picture. The results show that this is only partially the case and only for perceived message credibility as well as for choosing the *Acaraa* body oil in a fictitious raffle: When having a rational text appeal, participants with a prominent placement of the brand *Acaraa* perceived the message as less credible compared to participants with a subtle placement. These findings are in line with previous research (e.g. Van Reijmersdal, Neijens & Smit, 2009; Cowley & Barron, 2008; Homer, 2009). However, it could only be confirmed when having a rational text appeal, but not for an emotional text appeal. Therefore, H1b in the context of message credibility can

⁸ The significant mediation models on brand attitude and purchase intention can be found in Appendix D.

only be supported when looking at placement prominence in combination with rational text appeals.

Furthermore, when looking at the likelihood to choose the *Acaraa* body oil in the fictitious raffle, the results show that participants in the emotional text appeal and prominent placement condition were more likely to choose *Acaraa* over the other brands compared to participants in the emotional text appeal and subtle placement as well as rational text appeal and prominent placement condition. One explanation why for rational appeals the prominent placement worked better might be that when the sponsored brand and the products are placed prominently in the posting, the brand is more present to the participants and they have a more concrete picture of it in their heads compared to when the brand and the products are only displayed smaller in size in the background.

The results have also shown that product involvement – meaning the degree of how relevant natural cosmetics is for participants – partly functions as a moderator for message credibility and for choosing the *Acaraa* body oil in a fictitious raffle: The more relevant natural cosmetics is for participants in the rational text appeal and prominent placement condition, the lower the level of overall message credibility compared to participants in the emotional text appeal and subtle placement condition. Furthermore, the higher the relevance of natural cosmetics for participants in the emotional text appeal and prominent placement condition, the more likely they were choosing the *Acaraa* body oil out of five brands in the fictitious raffle compared to participants in the emotional text appeal and subtle placement condition.

However, contrary to previous research (e.g. Adis et al., 2015; Homer, 2009; Goldberg & Gorn, 1987, Wu & Wang, 2011), this study could not confirm previous findings regarding brand recall, brand attitude or general purchase intention: Placement prominence and text appeal had no influence on brand recall, brand attitudes and general purchase intention, which is why all the hypotheses have to be rejected with regard to these three consumer responses. In addition, product involvement proved to partly function as moderator, but only when it comes

to placement prominence and not with regard to different text appeals as previous studies have found (e.g. Wu & Wang, 2011; Flora & Maibach, 1990). Another interesting observation concerns the finding that none of the included control variables had a significant influence on the outcome variables in the tested regression models. However, this might be due to the fact that the sample was pretty homogenous in their Instagram behavior which was characterized by frequent usage – 91 percent of participants were using Instagram at least once a day – and general greater interest in influencer on Instagram.

Regarding methodological aspects, it has to be admitted that experiments do have low external validity and generalizability. Nevertheless, it is the best approach to study consumer responses right after exposure to the stimulus material (Wilson, Aronson & Carlsmith, 2010). Furthermore, participants were recruited through snowball sampling mainly among university students. As it is a form of non-probability sampling, the results of this study cannot be applied to the whole society. Also, the recruited participants were pretty homogenous in terms of education – 94 percent of participants had at least the German (Fach-)Abitur – as well as in terms of frequency of Instagram usage. Future studies should try to get more diverse samples as this may lead to slightly different results. Furthermore, the study environment was not a realistic Instagram situation. Participants were not able to scroll through their newsfeed or through *niikolettas_world*'s Instagram profile as they would do in real life. Future studies should keep this limitation in mind and try to implement a more realistic situation in which participants will be able to explore the Instagram profile individually and for example have a closer look to posts they are interested in and be able to scroll through the whole Instagram profile of the influencer.

Despite all these limitations, this study contributes to research on product placement in influencer marketing on Instagram – a field which is, despite its growing importance in advertising, still understudied in Communication Science research. Even though no significant results could be achieved for brand recall, brand attitude and general purchase intention, the

study gave interesting insight into how credible people perceived the messages that are communicated. Furthermore, this study could prove that the consumer responses should not be seen as independent from each other but rather as an interconnected process: The rational text appeal and subtle placement condition led to higher perceived message credibility which in turn led to a better brand attitude and higher purchase intention compared to all the other conditions. Therefore, achieving high message credibility should be an important goal for marketers and advertisers as it is – as the mediation analysis has shown at least for one of the experimental conditions – a consumer response that indirectly influences participants' brand attitude and purchase intention.

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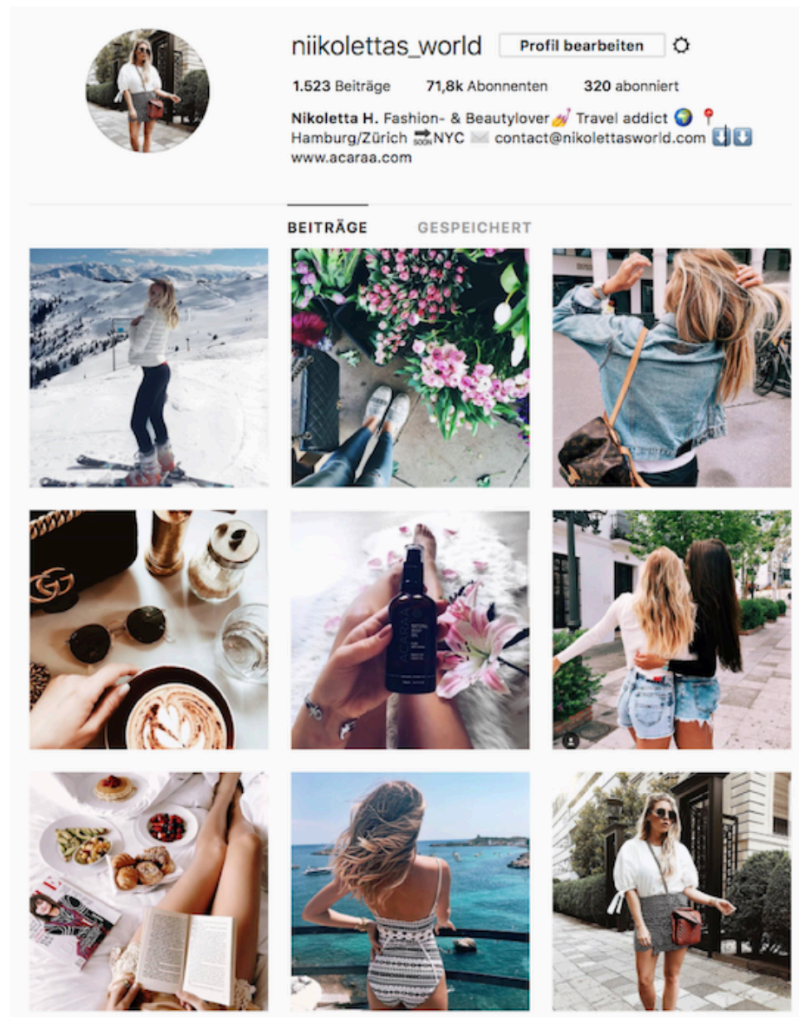
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Appendix A

Stimulus Material

Introduction of Instagram-Account of Beauty and Fashion Blogger *niikolettas_world*

niikolettas_world ist der Instagram-Account der 25-jährigen deutschen Instagram-Bloggerin Nikoletta H., welche sowohl in Hamburg als auch in Zürich lebt und sich auf der ganzen Welt zuhause fühlt. Ihre mehr als 70.000 Instagram-Follower gibt sie mehrmals täglich Einblick in ihr aufregendes Leben und teilt die neusten Trends in Sachen Fashion, Beauty und Lifestyle.



Two Additional Instagram Postings (in all five conditions the same)





Condition 1 (Subtle Placement + Rational Text Appeal)

 niikolettas_world



♥ 💬 📌

Gefällt 3.521 Mal

niikolettas_world Guten Abend ihr Lieben 💕 Nach einem langen und stressigen Tag in der Arbeit braucht unser Körper etwas Ruhe. Mir helfen dabei die Produkte von @acaraa, weil sie dem Körper Energie zurückgeben und voller wichtige Vitamine sind.

Alle Acaraa Produkte wurden von Hautärzten entwickelt und werden ohne chemische Zusatzstoffe, Parabene, Silikone und mineralische Öle hergestellt. Alle Inhaltsstoffe werden nachhaltig eingekauft, in Deutschland verarbeitet und zertifiziert. Die recyclebaren Glasflaschen machen die Produkte außerdem besonders haltbar 🥰

#acaraa #naturalcosmetics #relax #timeforyou #beauty #sponsored #werbung

Alle 95 Kommentare anzeigen

VOR 6 TAGEN



Condition 2 (Subtle Placement + Emotional Text Appeal)

 niikolettas_world



♥ 💬 📌

Gefällt 3.521 Mal

niikolettas_world Guten Abend ihr Lieben 💕 Nach einem langen und stressigen Tag in der Arbeit braucht unser Körper etwas Ruhe. Mir helfen dabei die Produkte von @acaraa, weil sie dem Körper Energie zurückgeben und voller wichtige Vitamine sind.

Alle Acaraa Produkte sind dank der darin enthaltenen Öle wahre Anti-Aging Waffen. Die ölige Textur der Produkte versorgt die Haut mit genügend Feuchtigkeit, zieht super schnell ein und macht die Haut ganz angenehm weich. Außerdem riechen die Produkte soo gut! Am liebsten würde ich den ganzen Tag an mir selber schnuppern 😊

#acaraa #naturalcosmetics #relax #timeforyou
#beauty #sponsored #werbung

Alle 95 Kommentare anzeigen

VOR 6 TAGEN

niikolettas_world







Gefällt 3.529 Mal

niikolettas_world It's gettin cozy! Bei diesen Temperaturen möchte ich mich einfach nur noch zuhause einkuscheln und wohlfühlen. Eine gesunde Pflege für den Körper gehört da dazu. Ich will euch deshalb das tolle Bodyöl von @acaraa vorstellen, das ich seit einigen Wochen benutze und absolut liebe 😍 Das Bodyöl duftet so unglaublich gut nach Zitrone, sodass man keinen Duft mehr benötigt. Außerdem kann man es durch den Sprühknopf ganz dezent dosiert auf die Haut sprühen. Es zieht super schnell ein und man hat nicht das typische Gefühl so ölig zu sein und kann sich sofort danach anziehen - ein absoluter Traum 🤗 Wer sich die Produkte mal genauer anschauen mag, der direkte Link zur Acaraa-Website ist in meiner Bio.

#acaraa #bodyoil #natural #cosmetics #sponsored #werbung

Alle 83 Kommentare anzeigen

VOR 2 TAGEN • ÜBERSETZUNG ANZEIGEN

Condition 3 (Prominent Placement + Rational Text Appeal)





Condition 4 (Prominent Placement + Emotional Text Appeal)



An Instagram post from the user 'niikolettas_world'. The image shows a hand holding a dark glass bottle of 'NATURAL BODY OIL' by 'NATURAL COSMETICS'. The bottle has a black spray nozzle and a label that reads 'NATURAL BODY OIL', 'CLEAN SKIN CARE', and 'WITH CACAO OIL'. In the background, there is a white fur rug, a wooden floor, and a magazine with a woman's face on the cover. The magazine has text like '16 TÄSCHEN DIE SCHÖNHEIT WACHSEN' and 'Die Natur'. Below the image are icons for heart, comment, share, and bookmark. The text below the image says 'Gefällt 3.529 Mal' and a paragraph of German text. At the bottom, there are hashtags: '#acaraa #bodyoil #natural #cosmetics #sponsored #werbung'. Below the hashtags, it says 'Alle 83 Kommentare anzeigen' and 'VOR 2 TAGEN • ÜBERSETZUNG ANZEIGEN'.

niikolettas_world

Gefällt 3.529 Mal

niikolettas_world It's gettin cozy! Bei diesen Temperaturen möchte ich mich einfach nur noch zuhause einkuscheln und wohlfühlen. Eine gesunde Pflege für den Körper gehört da dazu. Ich will euch deshalb das tolle Bodyöl von @acaraa vorstellen, das ich seit einigen Wochen benutze und absolut liebe 😍 Das Bodyöl duftet so unglaublich gut nach Zitrone, sodass man keinen Duft mehr benötigt. Außerdem kann man es durch den Sprühknopf ganz dezent dosiert auf die Haut sprühen. Es zieht super schnell ein und man hat nicht das typische Gefühl so ölig zu sein und kann sich sofort danach anziehen - ein absoluter Traum 🤗 Wer sich die Produkte mal genauer anschauen mag, der direkte Link zur Acaraa-Website ist in meiner Bio.

#acaraa #bodyoil #natural #cosmetics #sponsored #werbung

Alle 83 Kommentare anzeigen

VOR 2 TAGEN • ÜBERSETZUNG ANZEIGEN

Condition 5 (Control Condition): *Acaraa* Information



Nun möchten wir Ihnen gerne die Naturkosmetikmarke **Acaraa** vorstellen:

Acaraa steht für hochwertige und luxuriöse Kosmetikprodukte zur Gesichts-, Körper- und Haarpflege und ist zu 100 % Naturkosmetik. Alle Produkte werden ohne chemische Zusatzstoffe und ohne Verwendung von Tierversuchen getestet.



Appendix B

Questionnaire



Herzlich Willkommen und vielen Dank, dass Sie an der Umfrage für meine Masterarbeit teilnehmen. Die folgende Studie beschäftigt sich mit dem Thema Instagram und hat zum Ziel herauszufinden, wie Instagram-Nutzer verschiedene Beiträge ("Posts") wahrnehmen. Dazu werden jedem Nutzer einige Instagram-Beiträge gezeigt. Wir bitten Sie, sich die Posts jeweils sorgfältig und aufmerksam anzuschauen, einzuprägen und im Anschluss einige Fragen dazu zu beantworten.

WICHTIG: Diese Studie richtet sich lediglich an weibliche Instagram-Nutzerinnen - d.h. Männer sowie Teilnehmer, die kein Instagram-Profil haben, werden automatisch von der Umfrage ausgeschlossen. **Nehmen Sie daher bitte nur an dieser Studie teil, wenn Sie weiblich sind und einen Instagram-Account besitzen!**

Drei Teilnehmerinnen haben außerdem die Möglichkeit, jeweils ein Kosmetikprodukt zu gewinnen.

Es wird geraten, die Umfrage am Laptop bzw. PC zu beantworten, da die Antworten ansonsten verzerrt sein könnten!

Bevor wir mit der Studie beginnen, möchten wir Sie gerne darauf hinweisen, dass alle Angaben, die Sie machen, absolut anonym und streng vertraulich behandelt werden. Durch das Klicken der „Weiter“-Taste auf dieser Seite stimmen Sie der Teilnahme zu. Die Teilnahme an dieser Studie ist selbstverständlich freiwillig und Sie können die Studie jederzeit abbrechen.

Bitte lesen Sie sich die Fragestellung genau durch und beantworten Sie die Fragen ehrlich und selbstständig. Sie können dabei keine Fehler machen, uns interessiert lediglich Ihre persönliche Einschätzung und Meinung. Mit der „Weiter“-Taste kommen Sie jeweils zur nächsten Seite. Bitte benutzen Sie während der gesamten Studie nicht die „Zurück“-Taste Ihres Browsers, da so Daten verloren gehen könnten.

Weiter



Zu Beginn bitten wir Sie um einige demographische Angaben.

Welchem Geschlecht fühlen Sie sich zugehörig?

- ☐ Weiblich
- ☐ Männlich
- ☐ Weder noch

Wie alt sind Sie?

Jahre

Bitte geben Sie Ihre Staatsbürgerschaft an:

- ☐ Deutschland
- ☐ Österreich
- ☐ Schweiz
- ☐ Sonstige

Was ist Ihr höchster Bildungsabschluss?

- ☐ Pflichtschul-/Hauptschulabschluss
- ☐ Mittlere Reife/Realschulabschluss
- ☐ (Fach)Abitur/Matura
- ☐ Bachelor
- ☐ Master
- ☐ Staatsexamen
- ☐ Doktorat/PhD
- ☐ Habilitation
- ☐ Sonstige:

Weiter



Nun möchten wir Ihnen gerne einige Fragen zur Social Media-Plattform **Instagram** stellen.

Haben Sie einen Instagram-Account?

- ☐ Ja
☐ Nein

Wie regelmäßig nutzen Sie Instagram?

- ☐ Mehrmals täglich
☐ Einmal am Tag
☐ Mehrmals die Woche
☐ Einmal die Woche
☐ Mehrmals im Monat
☐ Seltener
☐ Gar nicht

Für welche Zwecke nutzen Sie Instagram?

Mehrfachnennungen sind möglich.

- ☐ Um mit der Familie und Freunden in Kontakt zu bleiben.
☐ Um mich über aktuelle Trends zu informieren.
☐ Um mich über Produkte vor dem Kauf zu informieren.
☐ Sonstige:

Weiter



Influencer auf Instagram

Influencer sind digitale Internetpersönlichkeiten mit einer hohen Reichweite auf ihren sozialen Plattformen. Sie genießen in ihrer Community eine hohe Anerkennung und werden dort als Experten wahrgenommen. Influencer finden sich in vielen Themengebieten, zu den wichtigsten zählen Fashion, Beauty, Food oder Fitness.

Zu den erfolgreichsten deutschen Influencern gehören unter anderen: BibisBeautyPalace, Julien Bam, Caro Daur oder Toni Mahfud.



Folgen Sie Influencern auf Instagram?

- ☐ Ja, ich folge mindestens einem Influencer auf Instagram.
- ☐ Nein, ich folge keinem Influencer auf Instagram.
- ☐ Weiß ich nicht

Inwieweit stimmen Sie den folgenden Aussagen zu?

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu	Stimme voll und ganz zu
Influencer interessieren mich.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Influencer sind mir wichtig.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	

1. Sind Sie schon einmal über soziale Plattformen – wie Instagram, Facebook oder YouTube – auf ein Produkt und/oder eine Dienstleistung aufmerksam geworden, welches bzw. welche von einem Influencer beworben wurde?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nein
- ☐ Weiß ich nicht

Haben Sie schon einmal ein Produkt und/oder eine Dienstleistung gekauft, nur weil es von einem Influencer auf sozialen Plattformen – wie Instagram, Facebook oder YouTube – beworben wurde?

- ☐ Ja, einmal
- ☐ Ja, schon öfters
- ☐ Nein
- ☐ Weiß ich nicht

Weiter



Bevor Sie nun gleich zum Instagram-Profil und den Beiträgen weitergeleitet werden, interessiert uns noch Ihre Einstellung zu Kosmetikprodukten. Geben Sie dazu bitte an, inwieweit Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu.	Stimme voll und ganz zu.
Ich interessiere mich für Kosmetik.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Ich interessiere mich für Naturkosmetik.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Kosmetik ist ein wichtiges Thema für mich.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Naturkosmetik ist relevant für mich.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Beim Kauf von Kosmetikprodukten achte ich darauf, dass es sich um Naturkosmetikprodukte handelt.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Beim Kauf von Kosmetikprodukten achte ich darauf, dass diese günstig sind.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Ich bin bereit mehr Geld für Naturkosmetik auszugeben.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Ich benutze Naturkosmetikprodukte.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	

Wie viel Geld geben Sie im Monat durchschnittlich für Kosmetikprodukte zur Gesichts-, Körper- und Haarpflege – nicht aber Schminke und Make-Up – aus?

- ☐ 0 € - 10 €
- ☐ 10 € - 20 €
- ☐ 20 € - 50 €
- ☐ 50 € - 100 €
- ☐ Mehr als 100 €
- ☐ Weiß ich nicht

Beauty-Blogger bzw. Beauty-Influencer sind auf Instagram besonders präsent. Sie nutzen Instagram dazu, ihren Follower Kosmetikprodukte und die aktuellsten Make-Up-Trends zu präsentieren. Folgen auch Sie Influencern aus dem Beautybereich auf Instagram?

- ☐ Ja, ich folge mindestens einem Influencern zum Thema Beauty.
- ☐ Nein, ich folge keinem Influencer zum Thema Beauty.
- ☐ Weiß ich nicht

Weiter



Sind Ihnen werbliche/gesponserte Inhalte unter den Beiträgen, die wir Ihnen gezeigt haben, aufgefallen?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nein
- ☐ Weiß ich nicht

Hatten Sie den Eindruck, dass Nikoletta H. in den gezeigten Beiträgen für ein bestimmtes Produkt und/oder eine bestimmte Marke geworben hat? Wenn ja, um welche Marke handelt es sich?

☐ Ja, nämlich:

- ☐ Nein
- ☐ Weiß ich nicht

Weiter



In zwei der gezeigten Beiträgen stellte Nikoletta H. Produkte der Marke Acaraa vor. Wenn Sie nochmal an diese beiden Beiträge zurückdenken, wie bewerten Sie diese insgesamt?

Unnatürlich	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Natürlich
Langweilig	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Spannend
Nicht informativ	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Informativ
Nicht überzeugend	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Überzeugend
Schlecht gemacht	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Gut gemacht
Aufgesetzt	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Aufrichtig
Verlogen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Ehrlich
Unzuverlässig	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Zuverlässig
Unseriös	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Seriös
Unglaubwürdig	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Glaubwürdig
Negativ	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Positiv
Nicht emotional	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Emotional

Die nachfolgenden Fragen beziehen sich explizit auf die Bildunterschriften der Beiträge. Bitte geben Sie an, inwiefern Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu	Stimme voll und ganz zu
Der Text bietet eine gute Quelle für Informationen.	☐	☐
Der Text gibt relevante Produktinformationen.	☐	☐
Der Text stellt die persönliche Erfahrung von Nikoletta H. mit den Produkten in den Vordergrund.	☐	☐

Weiter



Inwieweit stimmen Sie den folgenden Aussagen zu?		
	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu	Stimme voll und ganz zu
Die Produkte von Acaraa finde ich ansprechend.	☐	☐
Der Beitrag war für mich informativ.	☐	☐
Bitte geben Sie hier „Stimme voll und ganz zu“ als Antwort.	☐	☐
Der Beitrag war für mich hilfreich.	☐	☐
Ich kann mich mit der Marke Acaraa identifizieren.	☐	☐

Bitte bewerten Sie nun anhand der Ihnen gezeigten Beiträge die Marke Acaraa und Ihre Produkte nach folgenden Kriterien:		
Nicht ansprechend	☐	Ansprachend
Minderwertig	☐	Hochwertig
Unglaubwürdig	☐	Glaubwürdig
Nachteilig	☐	Nützlich
Nicht vertrauenswürdig	☐	Vertrauenswürdig
Sinnlos	☐	Praktisch

Insgesamt empfinde ich die Marke Acaraa als ...		
... negativ	☐	... positiv
... schlecht	☐	... gut

Die Marke Acaraa ...		
... gefällt mir nicht	☐	... gefällt mir

Weiter



Bitte geben Sie an, inwieweit Sie den folgenden Aussagen zu Acaraa und den Produkten zustimmen.	
	Stimme überhaupt nicht Stimme voll und ganz zu
Ich würde Produkte von Acaraa gerne ausprobieren.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Ich könnte mir vorstellen Produkte der Marke Acaraa zu kaufen.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Ich würde gerne mehr Informationen über die Marke Acaraa und ihre Produkte erhalten.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Ich werde im Internet nach weiteren Informationen zu Acaraa und den Produkten suchen.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Ich werde mich informieren, wo ich Produkte der Marke Acaraa kaufen kann.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Wie sehr können Sie sich vorstellen, Produkte der Marke Acaara zu kaufen?					
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Überhaupt nicht vorstellbar	2	3	4	Sehr gut vorstellbar	Ich habe bereits Produkte der Marke Acaraa gekauft.

Weiter



Denken Sie nun nochmal an das im Beitrag vorgestellte Bodyöl von Acaraa zurück. Uns interessiert nun, wie sie das Produkt wahrnehmen. Bitte geben Sie dazu an, inwieweit Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen.

	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu	Stimme voll und ganz zu
Ich finde, das Bodyöl von Acaraa ist ein hochwertiges Produkt.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Ich finde, das Bodyöl von Acaraa ist ein gutes Produkt.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Ich finde, das Bodyöl von Acaraa ansprechend.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Ich finde, das Bodyöl von Acaraa ist ein empfehlenswertes Produkt.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Ich würde es in Erwägung ziehen das Bodyöl zu kaufen.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Ich könnte mir vorstellen, dass ich die Marke Acaraa kaufe, wenn ich ein neues Bodyöl brauche.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	
Wenn ich auf der Suche nach Naturkosmetikprodukten wäre, würde ich in Erwägung ziehen, Produkte der Marke Acaraa zu kaufen.	☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐	

Wie viel Geld wären Sie bereit für das Bodyöl von Acaraa auszugeben?

€

Weiter



Zum Abschluss möchten wir Ihnen noch gerne einige Fragen zu der beworbenen Marke 'Acaraa' stellen.

Acaraa steht für hochwertige und luxuriöse Kosmetikprodukte zur Gesichts-, Körper- und Haarpflege und ist zu 100 % Naturkosmetik. Alle Produkte werden ohne chemische Zusatzstoffe und ohne Verwendung von Tierversuchen getestet.

Bitte beantworten Sie folgenden Fragen zur Marke Acaraa.			
	Ja	Nein	Weiß ich nicht
Ich habe von der Marke Acaraa schon einmal gehört.	☐	☐	☐
Ich habe schon einmal ein Produkt der Marke Acaraa gekauft.	☐	☐	☐

Wie sehr könnten Sie sich vorstellen, Produkte der Marke Acaraa zu benutzen?					
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Überhaupt nicht vorstellbar	2	3	4	Sehr gut vorstellbar	Ich benutze bereits Produkte der Marke Acaraa.

Nun interessiert uns, wie Sie den Beitrag wahrgenommen haben. Geben Sie dazu bitte an, inwiefern Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen.		
	Stimme überhaupt nicht zu	Stimme voll und ganz zu
Die Posts wurden nur für das Produkt verfasst.	☐	☐
In den Posts war der Markenname Acaraa deutlich zu erkennen.	☐	☐
In den Posts wurde auf die Marke Acaraa bzw. Produkte von Acaraa hingewiesen.	☐	☐
Die Marke Acaraa war insgesamt sehr präsent in den Posts.	☐	☐
In den Bildunterschriften wurde der Markenname Acaraa genannt.	☐	☐
Während ich mir die Beiträge von niikolettas_world angesehen habe, habe ich sie innerlich kritisiert.	☐	☐
Ich war skeptisch gegenüber der Marke Acaraa als ich die Posts sah.	☐	☐
Die Empfehlungen von niikolettas_world im Beitrag veranlassen mich dazu, die gezeigten Produkte nicht zu beachten.	☐	☐
Es störte mich, dass niikolettas_world Produkte von Acaraa empfiehlt.	☐	☐

Weiter



Unter allen Teilnehmerinnen, welche die Umfrage erfolgreich abgeschlossen haben, verlosen wir dreimal jeweils ein Naturkosmetikprodukt. Dabei haben Sie die Möglichkeit ein Körperöl aus den folgenden fünf Produktbeispielen zu wählen.

Bitte geben Sie an, für welches der fünf Produkte Sie sich entscheiden würden.

Körperöl von Primavera



Körperöl von Ahava



Bodyöl von Oliveda



Bodyöl von Acaraa



Körperöl von Logona



Weiter



Mit der vorherigen Frage wollten wir lediglich testen, für welche Marke Sie sich entscheiden würden. Dennoch können Sie nach erfolgreichem Abschluss der Umfrage etwas gewinnen: Unter allen Teilnehmerinnen verlosen wir dreimal jeweils ein Produkt von Acaraa - einmal das Bodyöl, das Haaröl sowie einmal das Gesichtsserum.

Möchten Sie an der Verlosung teilnehmen?

Falls nicht, klicken bitte einfach auf ‚Weiter‘.

- ☐ Ich will am **Gewinnspiel** teilnehmen. Ich bin damit einverstanden, dass meine E-Mail-Adresse bis zur Ziehung der Gewinner gespeichert wird. Meine Angaben in dieser Befragung bleiben weiterhin anonym, meine E-Mail-Adresse wird nicht an Dritte weitergegeben.

Weiter

B.A. Nicole Materne, Universität Wien – 2018

90% ausgefüllt



Nun haben Sie es geschafft! Vielen Dank, dass Sie sich Zeit genommen haben und an der Studie teilgenommen haben.

Die Masterarbeit dient herauszufinden wie Frauen gesponserte Beiträge auf Instagram wahrnehmen. Für weitere Informationen oder Fragen zur Studie, können Sie sich gerne an Nicole Materne wenden (E-Mail: nicole-materne@gmx.de).

Abschließend möchten wir Sie noch gerne darüber aufklären, dass der Instagram-Account "niikolettas_world" lediglich zum Zwecke dieser Studie erstellt wurde und nach Beendigung dieser Umfrage wieder gelöscht wird. Die beiden Beiträge zur Marke Acaraa wurden von uns erstellt. Die zwei übrigen Beiträgen, die wir Ihnen gezeigt haben, wurden von den Instagram-Accounts von **xeniaoverdose** (<https://www.instagram.com/xeniaoverdose/>) sowie **verena_ahmann** (https://www.instagram.com/verena_ahmann/) übernommen.

Weiter

B.A. Nicole Materne, Universität Wien – 2018

95% ausgefüllt

Appendix C

Table C.1 Multiple Linear Regression Model predicting participants' overall message credibility

Participants' overall message credibility¹

Variable	Unstand. Coefficients		Stand. Coefficients	
	B	S.E.	B	p
Constant	2.996	.552		.000
Rational + Prominent ²	-.385	.175	-.204	.029
Emotional + Subtle ³	-.253	.174	-.135	.148
Emotional + Prominent ⁴	-.219	.171	-.118	.203
Instagram Usage Frequency ⁵	-.036	.058	-.050	.534
Motive: Contact ⁶	-.051	.127	-.031	.686
Motive: Trends ⁷	-.091	.163	-.048	.578
Motive: Product Information ⁸	.012	.164	.006	.942
Following Influencer ⁹	.077	.146	.054	.601
Interest in Influencer ¹⁰	.104	.063	.172	.100

Note. N = 174. 1. Participants' overall message credibility measured as index ($\alpha = .887$) of the following statements to rate on a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 = fully to 5 = not at all: *unnatural, not convincing, artificial, dishonest, untrustworthy, not serious* as well as *not credible*, 2. Predictor variable, dummy coded with 1 = rational text + prominent placement condition and 0 = all three other experimental conditions, 3. Predictor variable, dummy coded with 1 = emotional text + subtle placement condition and 0 = all three other experimental conditions, 4. Predictor variable, dummy coded with 1 = emotional text + prominent placement condition and 0 = all three other experimental conditions, 5. Control variable, following question "How frequently are you using Instagram?" measured from 1 = "several times a day" to 6 = "less than once a month" as well as 7 = "not at all", 6. Control Variable, following question "I use Instagram to stay in contact with my family and friends" measured with 1 = "Yes" and 2 = "No", 7. Control Variable, following question "I use Instagram to inform myself about current trends" measured with 1 = "Yes" and 2 = "No", 8. Control variable, following question "I use Instagram to inform myself about product before purchasing them" measured with 1 = "Yes" and 2 = "No", 9. Control variable, following question "Are you following influencer on Instagram?" measured as 1 = "Yes, I follow at least one influencer on Instagram" and 2 = "No, I do not follow any influencer on Instagram", 10. Control variable, following statement "I am interested in influencer" measured from 1 = "I do not agree at all" to 5 = "I totally agree".

Table C.2 Moderated Regression Model predicting participants' overall message credibility

Variable	<i>Participants' overall message credibility¹</i>			
	Unstand. Coefficients B	S.E.	Stand. Coefficients B	p
Constant	2.799	.122		.000
Rational + Prominent ²	-.084	.174	-.044	.632
Rational + Subtle ³	.301	.177	.164	.091
Emotional + Prominent ⁴	.177	.175	.095	.314
Product Involvement ⁵	.302	.103	.451	.004
Rat. + Prom. * Moderator ⁶	-.397	.145	-.293	.007
Rat. + Sub. * Moderator ⁷	-.221	.145	-.171	.130
Emo. + Prom. * Moderator ⁸	-.178	.150	-.126	.236

Note. N = 174. 1. Participants' overall message credibility measured as index ($\alpha = .887$) of the following statements to rate on a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 = fully to 5 = not at all: *unnatural, not convincing, artificial, dishonest, untrustworthy, not serious* as well as *not credible*, 2. Predictor variable, dummy coded with 1 = rational text + prominent placement condition and 0 = all three other experimental conditions, 3. Predictor variable, dummy coded with 1 = rational text + subtle placement condition and 0 = all three other experimental conditions, 4. Predictor variable, dummy coded with 1 = emotional text + prominent placement condition and 0 = all three other experimental conditions, 5. Moderating variable, mean-centered, *Relevance that natural cosmetics has in participants' life*, index ($\alpha = .938$) of the following statements *"I am interested in natural cosmetics"*, *"Natural cosmetics is relevant to me"*, *"When buying cosmetics, I pay attention that is is natural cosmetics"*, *"I am willing to spend more money on natural cosmetics compared to ordinary cosmetics"* as well as *"I am using natural cosmetics"*, measured as 1 = "I do not agree at all" to 5 = "I totally agree", 6. Interaction Term 1, rational text + prominent placement condition (dummy coded) * Moderator (product involvement, mean-centered), 7. Interaction Term 2, rational text + subtle placement condition (dummy coded) * Moderator (product involvement, mean-centered), 8. Interaction Term 3, emotional text + prominent placement condition (dummy coded) * Moderator (product involvement, mean-centered).

Table C.3 Binary Logistic Regression Model predicting choosing the *Acaraa* body oil in the fictitious raffle

Variable	<i>Choosing the Acraraa body oil in the fictitious raffle¹</i>					
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	p	Exp(B)
Constant	- 1.681	1.558	1.165	1	.280	.186
Rational + Prominent ²	- .041	.498	.007	1	.934	.960
Rational + Subtle ³	.820	.475	2.988	1	.084	2.271
Emotional + Prominent ⁴	1.043	.480	4.720	1	.030	2.837
Instagram Usage Freq. ⁵	- .058	.173	.112	1	.738	.944
Motive: Contact ⁶	.451	.351	1.651	1	.199	1.570
Motive: Trends ⁷	.445	.461	.930	1	.335	1.560
Motive: Product Info. ⁸	- .490	.439	1.246	1	.264	.612
Following Influencer ⁹	- .302	.405	.558	1	.455	.739
Interest in Influencer ¹⁰	.140	.170	.679	1	.410	1.150

Note. N = 169. 1. Dummy variable with 1 = *Acaraa* body oil chosen as price in the fictitious raffle and 0 = *Acaraa* body oil not chosen as price in the fictitious raffle, 2. Predictor variable, dummy coded with 1 = rational text + prominent placement condition and 0 = all three other experimental conditions, 3. Predictor variable, dummy coded with 1 = rational text + subtle placement condition and 0 = all three other experimental conditions, 4. Predictor variable, dummy coded with 1 = emotional text + prominent placement condition and 0 = all three other experimental conditions, 5. Control variable, following question “How frequently are you using Instagram?” measured from 1 = “several times a day” to 6 = “less than once a month” as well as 7 = “not at all”, 6. Control Variable, following question “I use Instagram to stay in contact with my family and friends” measured with 1 = “Yes” and 2 = “No”, 7. Control Variable, following question “I use Instagram to inform myself about current trends” measured with 1 = “Yes” and 2 = “No”, 8. Control variable, following question “I use Instagram to inform myself about product before purchasing them” measured with 1 = “Yes” and 2 = “No”, 9. Control variable, following question “Are you following influencer on Instagram?” measured as 1 = “Yes, I follow at least one influencer on Instagram” and 2 = “No, I do not follow any influencer on Instagram”, 10. Control variable, following statement “I am interested in influencer” measured from 1 = “I do not agree at all” to 5 = “I totally agree”.

Table C.4 Moderated Binary Logistic Regression Model predicting choosing the *Acaraa* body oil in the fictitious raffle

Variable	<i>Choosing the Acraraa body oil in the fictitious raffle¹</i>					
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	p	Exp(B)
Constant	-.876	.346	6.428	1	.011	.416
Rational + Prominent ²	-.003	.492	.000	1	.122	.997
Rational + Subtle ³	.754	.488	2.388	1	.122	2.126
Emotional + Prominent ⁴	1.415	.499	8.049	1	.005	4.117
Product Involvement ⁵	-.225	.290	.600	1	.439	.799
Rat. + Prom * Moderator ⁶	.238	.410	.336	1	.562	1.268
Rat. + Sub. * Moderator ⁷	.549	.410	1.794	1	.180	1.732
Emo. + Prom. * Moderator ⁸	.853	.433	3.875	1	.049	2.346

Note. N = 169. 1. Dummy variable with 1 = *Acaraa* body oil chosen as price in the fictitious raffle and 0 = *Acaraa* body oil not chosen as price in the fictitious raffle, 2. Predictor variable, dummy coded with 1 = rational text + prominent placement condition and 0 = all three other experimental conditions, 3. Predictor variable, dummy coded with 1 = rational text + subtle placement condition and 0 = all three other experimental conditions, 4. Predictor variable, dummy coded with 1 = emotional text + prominent placement condition and 0 = all three other experimental conditions, 5. Moderating variable, mean-centered, *Relevance that natural cosmetics has in participants' life*, index ($\alpha = .938$) of the following statements "I am interested in natural cosmetics", "Natural cosmetics is relevant to me", "When buying cosmetics, I pay attention that is is natural cosmetics", "I am willing to spend more money on natural cosmetics compared to ordinary cosmetics" as well as "I am using natural cosmetics", measured as 1 = "I do not agree at all" to 5 = "I totally agree", 6. Interaction Term 1, rational text + prominent placement condition (dummy coded) * Moderator (product involvement, mean-centered), 7. Interaction Term 2, rational text + subtle placement condition (dummy coded) * Moderator (product involvement, mean-centered), 8. Interaction Term 3, emotional text + prominent placement condition (dummy coded) * Moderator (product involvement, mean-centered).

Table C.5 Indirect Effect of Rational Text Appeal and Subtle Placement on Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention via Message Credibility

Multiple Indirect Effects	Effect	Boot S.E.	BC 1,000 BOOT	
			LL95	UL95
Brand Attitude	.1536	.0764	.0192	.3190
Purchase Intention	.1677	.0883	.0186	.3656

Note. The table only shows statistical significant effects determined by the 95% BCa CI which does not contain a 0. Unstandardized effect sizes. Conditions coded as 0 = other conditions and 1 = respective condition. 95% BCA CI = 95% bias-corrected accelerated confidence interval.

Appendix D

Figure D.1 Mediation Model for the Rational Text Appeal and Subtle Placement Condition on Brand Attitude.

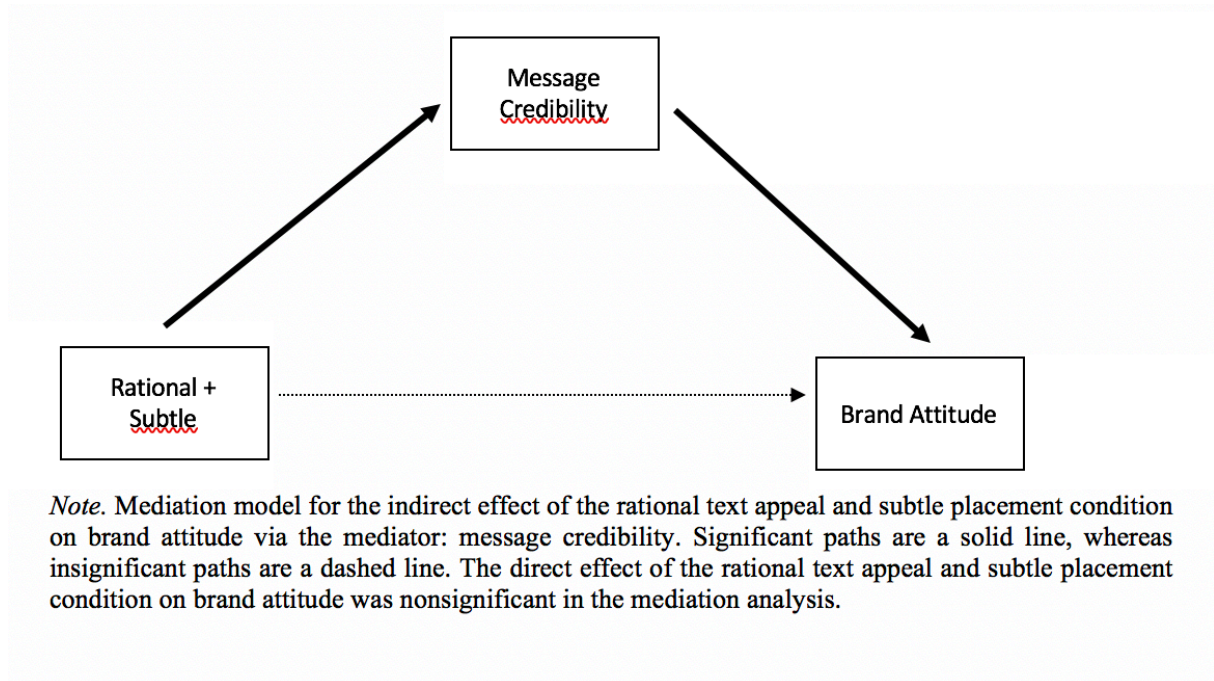
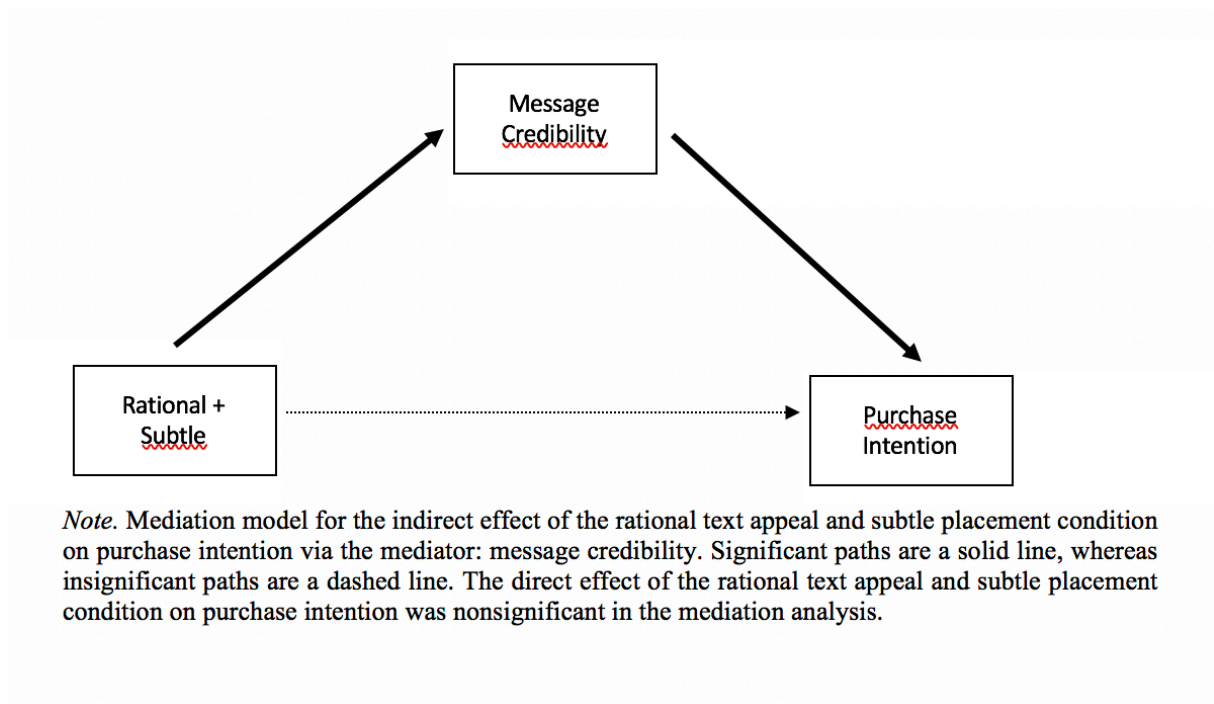


Figure D.2 Mediation Model for the Rational Text Appeal and Subtle Placement Condition on Purchase Intention.



Abstract

Social media platforms such as Instagram are not only becoming increasingly important for personal communication, but also for marketing purposes. Product placement is a common technique in influencer marketing where Instagram influencers reach thousands of users by incorporating and promoting brands and/or products in their postings. This study investigates through an online survey experiment which effects placement prominence and message appeal have on perceived message credibility, brand recall, brand attitude and purchase intention. The results indicate that when having a rational message appeal, subtle placement lead to higher message credibility compared to prominent placement. Furthermore, product involvement proved to partly function as a moderator. However, contrary to the hypotheses, no effects on brand recall, brand attitude and purchase intention could be found.

Keywords: Influencer marketing, Instagram, product placement, message appeal, product involvement, consumer responses

Zusammenfassung

Social Media Plattformen wie Instagram gewinnen immer mehr an Bedeutung – nicht nur für die persönliche Kommunikation, sondern auch für Marketingzwecke. Dabei sind Produktplatzierungen eine gängige Technik im Influencer Marketing, mit der Instagram Influencer tausende Nutzer erreichen, indem Sie Marken und/oder Produkte in ihren Beiträgen einbinden und bewerben. Diese Studie untersucht in einem Online Umfrageexperiment die Wirkung der Platzierung der Produkte und Textbotschaften auf die wahrgenommene Glaubwürdigkeit der Aussagen, Markenerinnerung, Markeneinstellung und Kaufabsichten. Die Ergebnisse der Studie zeigen, dass eine subtile Platzierung verglichen mit einer auffälligen Platzierung bei rationalen Botschaften zu einer höheren Glaubwürdigkeit führt. Darüber hinaus erwies sich die persönliche Bedeutung der Produktkategorie für die Teilnehmer teilweise als Moderator. Entgegen der Hypothesen konnten jedoch keine Auswirkungen auf die

Markenerinnerung, die Einstellungen gegenüber der Marke oder die Kaufabsichten beobachtet werden.

Schlüsselwörter: Influencer Marketing, Instagram, Produktplatzierung, Textbotschaft, Anordnung der Produkte, Reaktion der Konsumenten