

The Role of Influencer Marketing on Consumer-Based Brand Equity

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Abstract

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Kelly-Anne Lemay

In the current competitive market, businesses explore every possible option to differentiate their brand. They aim to establish a connection between their customers and their brand to build enduring consumer-based brand equity (CBBE). Instead of conventional celebrity endorsements, businesses are often turning to social media influencers for their marketing initiatives. Currently, it is unknown how successful influencer endorsements are compared to more conventional celebrity endorsements. The purpose of this paper was to investigate the impact of celebrity marketing, influencer marketing, and the control marketing on overall brand equity and on the four dimensions of CBBE, namely brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand associations and perceived quality. A randomized 3 (type of endorsement: celebrity vs. influencer vs. control) x 3 (gender: female vs. male vs. control) between-subjects design (n = 253) was conducted. The results indicated that there were no significant differences between all three groups regarding any of the variables of interest. Despite failing to produce the anticipated results, this study still provides a strong foundation for subsequent studies in the field.

Keywords: Social Media, Influencers, Brand Equity, Spokesperson, Brand Loyalty, Brand Awareness, Brand Associations, Perceived Quality

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Introduction

In today's competitive market, companies investigate every possible avenue to make their brand stand out. Their goal is to create a connection between their consumers and their brand to create long-lasting consumer-based brand equity (CBBE). Online marketing has been of great interest recently as it has been demonstrated to have immense potential in generating positive relationships with consumers (Kiang et al., 2000). In fact, previous research has evaluated the role of spokespeople on CBBE and found that spokespeople had positive effects on all four dimensions of brand equity (brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand associations, and perceived quality) and in turn leads to higher customer acquisition, retention, and profit margins (Stahl et al., 2012; Zoghaib, 2017). More recently, with the rise of social media, a new category of spokespeople was created, namely social media influencers (Pentina et al., 2013).

According to Ries and Trout (1972), the increasing volume of advertising causes consumers to block out a major portion of the promotions they are exposed to on a regular basis. This is primarily due to information overload, which occurs when too much information is available leading to issues in decision making. In fact, a significant number of today's Internet users have installed ad-blocking software. As a result, marketers have begun to rely on customers' willingness to engage in voluntary marketing and advertising (Rosengren & Dahlén, 2015). Influencer marketing is one common option that marketers have turned to as consumers are able to be selective to the advertising they are exposed to.

Although influencers can positively affect consumers, such as an increase in purchase intention and higher willingness to pay (Chetioui et al., 2020; Li & Peng, 2021; Trivedi & Sama, 2020), previous research has often overlooked at its effects on consumer-based brand equity (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Schouten et al., 2019). Further, the current literature lacks an

explanation on how influencers differ from celebrities in regard to each dimension of CBBE (Hughes et al., 2019; Jun & Yi, 2020). A review (see Table 1) of the literature on endorser marketing, notably influencer and celebrity marketing, revealed key findings regarding the pathways in which endorsements effectively impact brand equity (Breeves et al., 2019; Dwivedi et al., 2015; Jin et al., 2018; Schouten et al., 2019; Shan et al., 2019; Wellman et al., 2020), the personal characteristics of the endorser that influence brand equity (De Veirman et al., 2017; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Jun & Yi, 2020; Lampeitl & Aberg, 2017; Wiedmann & Mettenheim, 2021; Zhou et al., 2020), and the types of ads that use endorsements (De Jans et al., 2020; Grave and Bartsch, 2021).

Table 1

Summarized Results Table of the Current Literature.

Authors & Year	Title	Celebrity or Influencer	Key Findings
Breves et al. (2019)	The perceived fit between Instagram influencers and the endorsed brand how influencer–brand fit affects source credibility and persuasive effectiveness	Influencer	Influencer–brand fit had a positive impact on the image of the influencer and on the effectiveness of advertising, especially for followers with low levels of parasocial relationships.
De Jans et al. (2020)	#Sponsored! How the recognition of sponsoring on Instagram posts affects adolescents’ brand evaluations through source evaluations	Influencer & Brands	The results reveal that influencer posts lead to higher brand liking, whereas brand posts lead to higher brand awareness. Furthermore, influencers are more greatly admired, whereas brands are perceived as more credible (when advertising recognition is high).
De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders (2017)	Marketing through Instagram influencers: the impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude	Celebrity	Findings of two experimental studies show that Instagram influencers with high numbers of followers are found more likeable, partly because they are considered more popular. Important, only in limited cases, perceptions of popularity induced by the influencer's number of followers increase the influencer's perceived opinion

			leadership. However, if the influencer follows very few accounts him-/herself, this can negatively impact popular influencers' likeability. Also, cooperating with influencers with high numbers of followers might not be the best marketing choice for promoting divergent products, as this decreases the brand's perceived uniqueness and consequently brand attitudes.
Djafarova & Rushworth (2017)	Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users	Influencer & Celebrity	The research findings show that celebrities on Instagram are influential in the purchase behaviour of young female users. However, non-traditional celebrities such as bloggers, YouTube personalities and 'Instafamous' profiles are more powerful, as participants regard them as more credible and are able to relate to these, rather than more traditional, celebrities. Female users are perceptively aware and prefer to follow Instagram profiles that intentionally portray positive images and provide encouraging reviews.
Dwivedi, Johnson & McDonald (2015)	Celebrity endorsement, self-brand connection and consumer-based brand equity	Celebrity	Celebrity endorsements impact endorsed brand equity via two pathways. First, a direct effect of endorser credibility on endorsed brand equity was observed, which is positively moderated by the degree of consumer-perceived endorser-brand congruence. Second, self-brand connection partly mediates the effect of endorser credibility on endorsed brand equity, supporting an indirect mechanism of brand equity enhancement.
Grave & Bartsch (2021)	#Instafame: exploring the endorsement effectiveness of influencers compared to celebrities	Influencer & Celebrity	The results show that influencer endorsements in social media need to be subtle to achieve greater effectiveness than celebrity endorsements. In contrast, intrusive advertising in social media is more efficient when done in collaboration with celebrities. No significant differences emerge for endorsements in regular ad formats, though endorsements may benefit from higher awareness levels of celebrities.
Jin, Muqaddam & Ryu (2019)	Instafamous and social media influencer marketing.	Influencer	The results indicate that consumers exposed to Instagram celebrity's brand posts perceive the source to be more trustworthy, show more positive attitude toward the

			endorsed brand, feel stronger social presence and feel more envious of the source than those consumers exposed to traditional celebrity's brand posts. Structural equation modeling (Mplus 8.0) and bootstrap confidence intervals indicate that social presence mediates the causal effects of celebrity type on trustworthiness, brand attitude and envy. Multiple regression analyses reveal the moderating effects of appearance-related actual–ideal self-discrepancy.
Jun & Yi (2020)	What makes followers loyal? The role of influencer interactivity in building influencer brand equity	Influencer	The findings show that influencer interactivity is positively related to influencer authenticity and emotional attachment. Influencer authenticity mediates the effect of interactivity on emotional attachment and directly affects brand trust. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that followers' emotional attachment to influencer brands increases brand loyalty through brand trust.
Lampeitl & Åberg (2017)	The role of influencers in generating customer-based brand equity & brand-promoting user-generated content	Influencer	A significantly larger effect for influencer marketing compared to paid social media advertising was found on five out of eight customer-based brand equity dimensions. Influencer marketing also has a significantly higher effect on customers' willingness to post brand-promoting user-generated content, compared to paid social media advertising.
Schouten, Janssen & Verspaget (2019)	Celebrity vs. Influencer endorsements in advertising: the role of identification, credibility, and Product-Endorser fit	Influencer & Celebrity	The results showed that participants identify more with influencers than celebrities, feel more similar to influencers than celebrities, and trust influencers more than celebrities. In terms of advertising effectiveness, similarity, wishful identification, and trust mediate the relationship between type of endorser and advertising effectiveness. Product-endorser did not explain the relationship between type of endorser and any of the mediating and dependent variables.
Shan, Chen & Lin (2019)	When social media influencers endorse brands: the effects of self-	Influencer	The results of this study suggest that a high degree of congruence between the image of a social media influencer and the

	influencer congruence, parasocial identification, and perceived endorser motive		consumer's ideal self-image leads to effective endorsement outcomes. Parasocial identification was found to mediate the relationship between self-influencer congruence and endorsement outcomes while perceived endorser motive was found to moderate the effects of self-influencer congruence on such outcomes through parasocial identification.
Wellman et al. (2020)	Ethics of authenticity: social media influencers and the production of sponsored content	Influencer	The findings demonstrate that influencers use the concept of authenticity as an ethical framework when producing sponsored content. This ethics of authenticity is premised on two central tenets: being true to one's self and brand and being true to one's audience. This framework puts the influencers' brand identity and relationship with their audience at the forefront while simultaneously allowing them to profit from content designed to benefit brands and destinations.
Wiedmann & Mettenheim (2021)	Attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise – social influencers' winning formula?	Influencer	The results show that the most important requirement is trustworthiness, followed by attractiveness; surprisingly, the relevance of expertise is virtually nil.
Zhou et al. (2020)	How does consumers' Perception of Sports Stars' Personal Brand Promote Consumers' brand love? A mediation model of global brand equity	Celebrity	The results revealed that the use of sports stars' personal brand (attractiveness, expertise, and congruence) was positively related to global brand equity and brand love. Belief in global brand citizenship has a full mediating effect between attractiveness and brand love but a partial mediating effect between expertise, congruence and brand love. Product quality partially mediates the relationship between expertise and brand love. These findings suggest that it is appropriate to use sports stars' personal brand to build global brand equity and increase consumers' brand love.

The literature has nonetheless overlooked the effectiveness of influencer marketing on the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity and if these effects differ from celebrity endorsements. Additionally, previous research on influencer endorsement has mostly focused on

the “source credibility of social media influencers” (Shan et al., 2019, p. 605), with findings indicating that influencers are viewed as more trustworthy and similar to oneself than traditional celebrities (Lyons & Henderson 2005; Gräve 2017). This paper aims to identify and explore some of the differences between these two types of endorsers and whether these vary from traditional marketing. The goal of this paper is to fill the gaps in the literature by answering the following question: To what extent does influencer marketing affect the dimensions of consumer-based brand equity and does this differ from traditional celebrities?

The current study will help provide a theoretical framework for explaining the impact of social media influencers by demonstrating whether consumers view traditional celebrities and social media influencers differently. This study stresses the usefulness of using Instagram influencers in marketing initiatives and emphasises the value of social media as a source of information and inspiration for marketing strategy. Celebrities and social media influencers are paid millions of dollars each year to promote companies. However, the advantages related to endorsements do not always emerge as predicted (Johansen & Guldvik, 2017; Till, 1998), raising doubts regarding their usefulness as brand equity boosters. Testing the efficacy of influencer marketing is crucial to justify the use of a limited marketing budget for social media advertising. The conclusions of this study therefore could have applications for any company that makes use of social media advertising.

Further, previous research has shown the importance of brand equity on customer acquisition, retention, and profitability (Stahl et al., 2012). As a result, more extensive research is needed to learn more about how consumer-based brand equity (CBBE), which has a substantial positive impact on customer behaviour, is affected by the endorsements of social media influencers. Therefore, the research question has implications for explaining how

influencers affect CBBE and how brands should choose between celebrities and influencers to endorse their brand.

Theoretical Background

Consumer-Based Brand Equity

Although there are several different definitions of brand equity, the most commonly accepted is based on the Aaker (1991) developed model. It states that brand equity is the “collection of brand assets and liabilities associated with a brand, its name, and symbol that either contributes or detracts from the value that the product or service provides” (p.27). Similarly, consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) defines brand equity from the perspective of the consumer, specifically that the value of the brand can only be obtained when the brand is pertinent to the consumer (Pappu et al., 2005). Positive CBBE can result in several benefits, including increased consumer preferences and purchase intentions. This leads to the development of competitive advantages and the enhancement of the financial performance of the company (Stahl et. al 2012; Zoghaib, 2017). While there exist two widely known theoretical frameworks of CBBE, that is, Aaker (1991) CBBE model and Keller (1993) CBBE theory, both frameworks are generally composed of the same four dimensions, namely brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand associations, and perceived quality (Gill & Dawra, 2010; Washburn & Plank, 2015).

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to whether the consumer can remember, can identify, or are familiar with a brand (Grassl, 2000). It is created by constant visibility, increased familiarity, and associations with other related buying experiences (Keller, 2003). Keller (1993) explains that brand awareness plays a critical role in marketing. First, as consumers get more familiar with a

brand, their awareness grows simultaneously. Then, with the increase of brand awareness, consumers generally tend to think about the brand more often, leading to higher purchase intent. Finally, consumers are more likely to trust high-awareness brands' products or services than low-awareness brands. As a result, brand awareness is acknowledged as a necessity for brand loyalty (Aaker 1991). Consumers recognize, buy and buy again from a well-known brand's goods, establishing a process that fosters loyalty. Thus, in general, high brand awareness is better than low brand awareness, particularly regarding purchase intentions and overall evaluation of the brand (Simonin & Ruth, 1998).

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is explained as a consumer's emotional commitment to a brand (Aaker, 1991). It has also been defined as “consumers attitudes towards the brand in general or attitudes towards the suggestions of switching brands, consumer’s tendency to buy the brand over others and consumer’s tendency to be prepared to pay more for the brand is brand loyalty” (Farooq & Jabbar, 2014, p.26444). It determines whether a consumer will continuously return to that brand. Recurrent transactions and customer satisfaction tends to reduce marketing expenses, making loyalty a cost-effective strategy to create brand equity. Additionally, past research has shown that brand loyalty has a significant beneficial influence on a company's profits and consequently, brand loyalty formation is essential to the growth of a company (Shugan, 2005).

Brand Associations/Images

Next, brand associations, also known as brand image, are the attitudes, thoughts, and feelings that a consumer associates with the brand (Severi & Ling, 2013). Past research has supported the idea that clients who have a positive image of a brand will more often than not have a greater disposition toward the brand's items and, hence, towards the brand's quality

(Andreassen and Lindestad, 1998; Bloemer et al., 1998; Burton et al., 2001). According to Tepeci (1999), brand image is a critical factor in establishing brand loyalty. Customers' brand choice and loyalty are frequently simply based on image.

Perceived Quality

Finally, perceived quality is not only a dimension of brand equity; but it also an essential component in evaluating brand equity. It is defined as the overall perception of customers about the quality or superiority of the product or service in comparison to the competitive offerings (Sanyal & Datta, 2011). In simpler terms, it is the brand's value proposition. It is also related to the consumers' judgement about whether the product or service successfully supports or surpasses their product or service expectations. This dimension adds value by supporting and motivating customers to purchase their product or service, distinguishing the brands from others, laying the groundwork for brand extensions, attracting merchants to sell and distribute, and finally, justifying a higher price for their product or service (Farquhar, 1989). Overall, building and maintaining the dimensions of brand equity are central themes of marketing as all four dimensions are affected by different types of marketing and advertising.

Influencer Marketing

Social media is the fastest-growing marketing communication channel worldwide (Pentina et al., 2013). People are changing the ways in which they gather information about products and services. Whereas once advertising and marketing were done mostly in person, in stores, or in commercials, now it is mostly done on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and more recently TikTok. Because of this, marketers have turned towards individuals that are called "social media influencers." Social media influencers are normal people who have some sort of expertise in a field, such as travel, fashion, makeup, health,

or cuisine, and shares material or content on social media about this. More specifically, Lou and Yuan (2019) define social media influencers as “first and foremost a content generator: one who has a status of expertise in a specific area, who has cultivated a sizable number of captive followers— who are of marketing value to brands—by regularly producing valuable content via social media” (p. 59).

Influencer marketing is explained as a digital marketing method in which brand managers collaborate with well-known influencers in their target market to promote their brand (Jin et al., 2019). Influencers may operate as successful marketing agents if they've built up a large fan following. They attempt to establish a relationship with their followers by sharing their everyday life, expertise, and information on social media, as well as engaging in dialogues with others. Consequently, by providing frequent and valuable content on social media for brand endorsement and maintaining a reliable relationship with their follower, social media influencers can potential become the most successful type of endorsers (Liu, 2021). Through the standpoint of the followers, the majority of social media influencer marketing communication originates from content generation. Influencers promote the product or services by creating personalised content, such as publishing their own experiences with the brands' items on their social media platforms (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Because of their strong, intimate bonds with their communities, influencers are appealing advertising platforms for companies looking to foster consumer-brand connections (Gräve & Bartsch, 2021). On these platforms, engagement between audiences and influencers improves the influencers perceived approachability, credibility, and trustworthiness (Men & Tsai, 2016).

Explaining Influencer Marketing

How exactly does a spokesperson make such an impactful effect on the consumer?

Previous research has focused on associative-network memory theory, parasocial relationships and self-brand connections. The associative-network memory theory explains that a brand is represented as a schema of stored information nodes in the consumers' memory (Keller, 1993). Whenever a node is activated, it spreads by association with other nodes. Regarding celebrity spokesperson, the celebrity and the brand both represent of a set of nodes and the respective associations in the consumers' mind. Once a connection between the two is made, the activation of the celebrity node will lead to an activation of the brand node. This has been shown to increase the dimensions of brand equity, namely brand awareness, brand associations, brand loyalty, and perceived quality (Dwivedi et al., 2015).

A second explanation is explained through parasocial relationships, which is the false impression of having an intimate connection with a media figure (Boerman & Van Reijmersdal, 2020). A parasocial relationship can take time to build since it necessitates interaction with the online person, getting to know them, developing attitudes about them, and experiencing emotions of intimacy. This long-term interaction, while taking place through the media, mimics the evolution of a genuine relationship (Russell et al., 2006). A similar theory is explained by self-brand connections, personal identity, and the transfer of the self. Self-brand connections refer to the relationship between a brand and a consumers' self-identity (Escalas, 2004). Thus, the more likely the consumer is to incorporate the brand into their self-concept, the more likely the brand is to be profitable. Similarly and more specifically to spokespersons, the endorsement of a celebrity enables a transfer of the celebrities' personality onto the product, which, in turn, motivates the consumer to desire the product to refine their personal identities (Zhou et al.,

2020). Celebrities are aspirational reference groups and hence, some consumers will try a product simply to be just a little bit more like the celebrity. Once the consumer's self-identity transfer occurs, research has shown that there is a positive relationship between self-brand connection and brand equity (Dwivedi et al., 2015). It is assumed that these theories would hold true to social media influencers.

Traditional Celebrity or Social Media Influencer

The literature sometimes confuses social media influencers with celebrities. The reach of influencers can range from a few thousand (micro influencers) to several million (macro influencers) (Gräve & Bartsch, 2021). These figures are equivalent or similar to 'regular' celebrity audiences. The distinctions between influencers and celebrities have faded, raising the question of whether influencers and celebrities are interchangeable.

While social media influencers and traditional celebrities seem to have some similarities, there are a few clear distinctions (Agnihotri & Bhattacharya, 2021; Gräve, 2017; Thornton, 2018). Although a celebrity can be viewed as an influencer, their main “role” is not the same as a social media influencer, in that celebrities are famous for other reasons than simply being on social media. Influencers and celebrities differ greatly in terms of their professional paths (McQuarrie et al., 2013). Influencers have often risen to prominence without any type of institutional assistance. Previous research has indicated that the general population often views influencers as “passionate individuals who have earned their followers through relationship building” (Gräve & Bartsch, 2021, p. 5). Influencers provide domain-relevant experience in their industries, which boosts their trust with the target audience. In fact, as previously mentioned, influencers usually cater to a specific niche and because their followers can readily connect to the content of the influencer, they are more interested in and open to endorsements that cater to

this niche. Further, research has indicated that influencers are more likely to appear genuine, personable and relatable than traditional celebrities (Audrezet et al., 2020; De Veirman et al., 2017; Wiedmann & Von Mettenheim, 2020; Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014).

On the other hand, regular celebrities who have attained fame through some type of institutional assistance, are frequently seen as aspirational figures by their supporters (Hung, 2014). Their success as actresses, musicians or models supplies them with lavish lifestyles that contrast from the normal persons, and occupations that are frequently associated with social status and prestige. Both features are desirable, but for many average customers, they are unattainable life objectives. Celebrities are appropriate for endorsement because of their fame and lifestyle variances; nevertheless, these same characteristics make them less relevant to the typical customer (Boon & Lomere, 2001; Cowan & Hunt, 2018)

In the hopes of building favourable CBBE, advertisers link their brands to celebrities or influencers that have desirable features. Previous literature has looked specifically at celebrity endorsements, which are defined as any person who is well-known in the public eye and who exploits that fame to promote a consumer product by participating in advertisements with it (McCracken, 1989). Many factors are considered for effective endorsements, including the spokespersons trustworthiness, credibility and expertise, attractiveness and likeability, and their congruence with the brand (Kamins & Gupta, 1994). Trustworthiness is defined as the honesty, integrity, and the amount of confidence related to the spokesperson. Research has demonstrated that when an endorser is deemed untrustworthy, the information presented by that person is less likely to be accepted. In contrast, a more trustworthy endorser will lead to a quick acceptance of information (Priester & Petty, 1995). Further, according to Ohanian (1991), an endorser will be more effective in generating purchase if the endorser is seen as a trustworthy messaging source.

In turn, the more credible an endorsement is seen to be, the more successful the advertisement becomes.

Moreover, congruence deals with whether the endorser and the brand are perceived to fit together. Researchers Misra and Beatty (1990) suggest that consumers will be more likely to believe an endorsement is true when the endorsement is made by an individual that is congruent with the brand. For instance, if a sports brand hires Tom Brady, the most popular quarterback in NFL history, that would lead to a more positive reaction from consumers than if the company were to hire Kim Kardashian, an American media personality and actress with no association to sports. This can also be explained by the celebrities expertise, namely their perceived knowledge and experience that the endorser has with the product. Kumar and Ramana (2019) conducted a literature review on the factors that affect the relationship between celebrity endorsement and CBBE; their results are summarized in table 2.

Table 2

Summarized Results Table from Kumar and Ramana (2019).

Authors	Observation	Variables
Dwivedi, Johnson, McDonald (2015)	CE qualities attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise has significant effect on CBBE.	Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, Expertise
Erdogan (1999)	Explained pros and cons of CE strategies in this article.	Attractiveness, Likeability, Trustworthiness
Ogunsiji, Sola (2012)	Credibility of celebrity is very important. It is very important aspect of celebrity. In a brand building process, celebrity plays key role. It can be replaced.	Celebrity credibility, Personality, Popularity, Communication
Sivesan (2013)	CE and BE are positively correlated. Cosmetic companies need celebrity for endorsement to increase brand equity.	Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, Expertise
Spry, Pappu, Bettina Cornwell (2011)	CE has effect on CBBE. Celebrity Endorser credibility must be perceived based on qualities like attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise. Study indicated that CE has positive effect on brand credibility (BC) and brand equity (BE).	Attractiveness, Trustworthiness, Expertise

These same factors are assumed to play a role on the relationship between influencers and CBBE. For instance, as previously mentioned, to increase the credibility of the influencer, one should choose an individual that has a reputation that is congruent with the brand (Misra & Beatty, 1990). The endorsement is more likely to be viewed as authentic if the influencer is being true to oneself, to the brand, and to the influencer's audience (Wellman et al., 2020). For instance, a gym enthusiast that becomes an influencer is more likely to start promoting supplements, while a beauty influencer is more likely to promote a variety of beauty products. Not only has this been shown to increase profit sales, but it has been shown to increase product engagement, brand awareness and brand loyalty (Hughes et al., 2019; Jun & Yi, 2020). Previous research has found that social media influencers are viewed as more credible, trustworthy, and knowledgeable in comparison to celebrity influencers (Booth & Matic, 2011). This is often attributed to the fact that influencers do not promote unattainable goals (Hall, 2015).

In sum, this paper will first aim to answer the question regarding the extent to which social media influencers affect all four dimensions of consumer-based brand equity and compare the results with the two other marketing types, i.e., celebrity marketing and the control marketing.

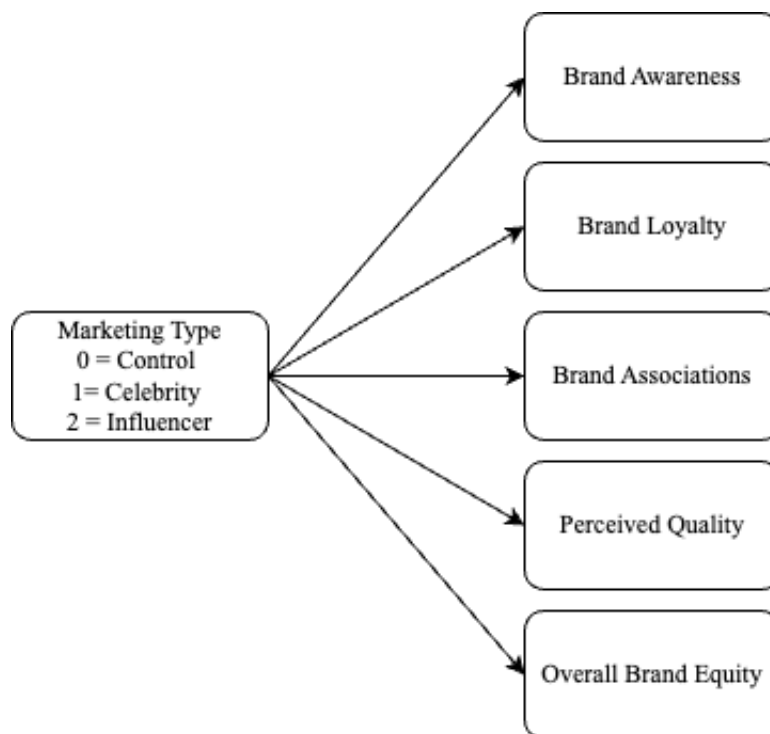
Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Based on the previous research mentioned above, the framework for this paper will be as follows. The research question will be answered by comparing how the type of marketing affects all four dimensions of consumer-based brand equity. Participants will be divided into three equal groups, namely the celebrity endorsement group, the influencer endorsement group, and the control group. Type of endorsement will be manipulated by generating advertisements for each

group. More specifically, the influencer group will be shown two advertisements (one female, one male) with an influencer endorser, the celebrity group will be shown the same ads but with a celebrity as the endorser and the control group will have neither a celebrity or an influencer. The advertisements will be created in a pretest (see below). The results will be compared between groups. It is hypothesized that the advertisement that include a social media influencer will be associated with greater brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand association, and perceived quality than the control group, but would be similar to that of the advertisement with the celebrity.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Previous research by Andreani et al. (2021) found that social media influencers make a positive and significant influence on brand awareness. On the other hand, research also suggest that celebrity endorsers positively influence brand awareness (Ateke & Onwujiariri, 2016;

Ningrat, & Yasa, 2019; Ndlela & Chuchu, 2016). However, research has not yet explored how social media influencers and celebrity endorsers might differ in their effects on brand awareness, but it is likely that both would lead to an increase in brand awareness, in comparison to a no-endorsement control. This leads to the first hypothesis:

H1: An advertisement including a social media influencer is associated with greater brand awareness than the control advertisement but will yield similar results for the advertisement with a celebrity endorser.

Previous research by Saini et al. (2021) found that there are both secondary pathways through brand image and direct pathways that lead celebrity endorsements and social media influencers to positively influence brand loyalty. Other studies have found similar results in terms of social media influencer (Pinto & Paramita, 2021) and celebrity endorsements (Audi et al., 2015; Baniya, 2017; Chaudhary & Asthana, 2015; Kim et al., 2018; Sharma & Kumar, 2013). Although research on the differences between the effects of social media influencers and celebrity endorsers on brand loyalty is lacking, it is anticipated that both would improve brand loyalty when compared to a no-endorsement control. This leads for the second hypothesis:

H2: An advertisement including a social media influencer is associated with greater brand loyalty than the control advertisement but will yield similar results for the advertisement with a celebrity endorser.

The direct effects of social media endorsements on brand associations have not been widely looked at in the current literature. However, the few researchers that have evaluated this relationship have found that social media influencers can create strong and positive brand associations (Hermanda et al., 2019; Juhlin & Soini, 2018). On the other hand, several researchers have evaluated the relationship between celebrity endorsements and brand

associations and found that the results are generally positive, except for endorsements made by celebrities with bad reputation (Chan et al., 2013; Erdogan, 1999; Kumar & Ramana, 2019; Sabunwala, 2013). Like with the previous hypotheses, there has been no research to date that looked at the different effects of social media influencers and celebrity endorsers on brand associations, but it is hypothesized that both these types of endorsements will improve brand associations in comparison to a no-endorsement control. This leads to the third hypothesis:

H3: An advertisement including a social media influencer is associated with greater brand associations than the control advertisement but will yield similar results for the advertisement with a celebrity endorser.

The direct relationship between endorsers and perceived quality is often omitted.

Following the logic of the three previous hypotheses, the few researchers who have looked at this relationship found that social media influencers have a positive effect on perceived quality (He, 2022). However, the literature regarding the relationship between celebrity endorsements and perceived quality is mixed. For instance, research by Sharma (2016) found that there was no significant relationship, while research by Kumar and Ramana (2019) and Sharma (2015) found that there was a significant positive relationship between the two variables of interest. It is hypothesized that both these endorsers would be more likely to improve perceived quality in comparison to a no-endorsement control. This leads to the fourth hypothesis:

H4: An advertisement including a social media influencer is associated with greater perceived quality than no marketing but will yield similar results for the advertisement with a celebrity endorser.

It is hypothesized that if social media influencers and celebrity endorsements effect all four dimensions of brand equity in a positive manner, then it will yield similar results on overall

brand equity. In fact, research by Ali & Alqudah (2022) and Smith et al. (2021) found that influencer marketing directly positively influenced overall brand equity. Similarly, research by Spry et al. (2011), Dwivedi et al. (2015) and Sivesan (2013) found that celebrity endorsements positively impact brand equity. Even though there isn't enough data to compare the different effects of celebrity and social media influencer endorsements on overall brand equity, it is expected that both will increase brand loyalty when compared to a no-endorsement control. This leads to the fifth and final hypothesis:

H5: An advertisement including a social media influencer is associated with greater overall brand equity than no marketing but will yield similar results for the advertisement with a celebrity endorser.

Method

Participants

The participants were recruited through Amazon MTurk with a minimum of 50 participants per condition, adding to a total of 253 participants. The participants included 134 males and 119 females ranging between the ages of 18 to 50, with more of the participants falling between the ages of 18-30 (See Table 3). Additionally, the sample was predominantly Caucasian individuals. The criteria for participation included English speakers above the age of 18 and a brief knowledge of social media influencers. This knowledge was measured by presenting participants with several definitions that could describe social media influencers and participants who choose the correct definition were be deemed to have a satisfactory knowledge of influencers. Of the total participants, 241 answered this question correctly.

Table 3

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants.

Descriptive Statistics	n	%
Gender		
Female	119	47.0
Male	134	53.0
Age		
18-30	123	48.6
31-45	90	35.6
45+	40	15.8
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	193	76.3
African American	15	5.9

Latino or Hispanic	7	2.8
Asian	23	9.1
Native American	14	5.5
Marital Status		
Single	40	15.8
Married	208	82.2
Divorced/Seperated	2	0.8
Prefer Not to Say	2	0.4
Highest Level of Education		
Some High School	1	0.4
High School	20	7.9
Cegep	2	0.8
Bachelor's Degree	177	70.0
Master's Degree	51	20.2
Ph.D or Higher	1	0.4
Trade School	1	0.4
Employment		
Employed Full-Time	244	96.4
Employed Part-Time	5	2.0
Seeking Opportunities	3	1.2
Annual Household Income		
Less than \$25,000	26	10.3
\$25,000 - \$50,000	70	27.7
\$50,000 - \$100,000	112	44.3
\$100,000 - \$200,000	39	15.4
More than \$200,000	5	2.0
Prefer not to say	1	0.4

Note. N = 253

Design & Manipulation

This study implemented a 3 (type of endorsement: celebrity vs. influencer vs. control) x 3 (gender: female vs. male vs. control) between-subjects design. The manipulated advertisements were selected through a pre-test. It was identified that the best-fit advertisements were with fitness products, more specifically a well-known protein powder (Whey Protein). The celebrity endorsement conditions consisted of either an advertisement of Sidney Crosby, a famous Canadian hockey player, or an advertisement of Adriana Lima, a famous Victoria Secret model. In turn, the influencer conditions consisted of either an advertisement with Bret Contreras or Jen Selter. Bret Contreras is a fitness influencer with over a million followers, most known for inventing the hip thrust exercise and is often called “The Glute Guy.” On the other hand, Jen Selter began receiving a significant amount of media attention due to her toned backside and has now over 13.5 million followers.

Pretest

A pretest was conducted to determine the best type of product (i.e., beauty or fitness) along with their corresponding best fit endorser in each category (i.e., social media influencers and celebrity). Based on Dwivedi et al. (2015), the most noteworthy and popular product categories are “soft drinks, athletic gear and equipment, sports drinks, automobiles, acne care and weight loss programs” (p.453). Thus, to choose the product for the main study, I created a variety of fitness and beauty advertisements with well-known celebrities and social media influencers in those respective categories (See Appendix A). Regarding the endorsers, they were chosen based on a study conducted by Schouten et al. (2019), a Google search for commonly known influencers and celebrities in the categories of interest and my current knowledge of famous influencers and celebrities.

Participants ($n = 52$) were recruited through Amazon MTurk. The sample included 31 males and 21 females with most of the participants being between the ages of 30 to 45 and over 73% of the sample were Caucasian. Participants were presented with the names and the pictures of thirty-two endorsers and then asked a set of questions after each picture. To control for gender effects, participants were shown four male endorsers and four female endorsers for each category (i.e. 4 female beauty influencers, 4 female beauty celebrities, 4 male beauty influencers, 4 male beauty celebrities, 4 female fitness influencers, 4 female fitness celebrities, 4 male fitness influencers, 4 male fitness celebrities). Participants were asked to rate the perceived fit between the endorser and the product, the likeability of the endorser and the participants familiarity with the endorser on a seven-point scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 7(strongly agree).

We began by running ANOVAs on the three variables of interest (likeability, familiarity, congruence) within each product category. The first set of two-way ANOVAs were conducted to examine the effects of endorser gender and endorser type on familiarity within each product category. The results of the beauty category indicated that there was no significant main effect of endorser gender ($F(1, 51) = 1.559, p = .212$), no significant interaction effect ($F(1, 51) = 0.567, p = .495$), but there was a main effect of endorser type ($F(1, 51) = 78.684, p = .000$). Similar results were found for the fitness product category. In fact, the results showed no significant main effect of endorser gender ($F(1, 51) = 1.782, p = .182$), no significant interaction effect ($F(1, 51) = 32.023, p = .555$), but there was a main effect of endorser type ($F(1, 51) = 32.023, p = .000$).

The next set of ANOVAs were conducted to examine the effects of endorser gender and endorser type on likeability within each product category. The results of the beauty category indicated that there was a significant main effect of endorser gender ($F(1, 51) = 36.675, p =$

.000), a significant main effect of endorser type ($F(1, 51) = 16.705, p = .000$) and a significant interaction ($F(1, 51) = 5.452, p = .000$). However, within the fitness category, the results indicate that there was no significant main effect of endorser gender ($F(1, 51) = 2.015, p = .156$), no significant main effect of endorser type ($F(1, 51) = 0.264, p = .608$) and no significant interaction ($F(1, 51) = 2.372, p = .124$).

The third set of ANOVAs were conducted to examine the effects of endorser gender and endorser type on congruence within each product category. The results of the beauty category indicated that there was a significant main effect of endorser gender ($F(1, 51) = 27.519, p = .000$), but there was no significant main effect of endorser type ($F(1, 51) = 2.451, p = .118$) and no significant interaction ($F(1, 51) = 0.127, p = .722$). However, within the fitness category, the results indicated that there was no significant main effect of endorser gender ($F(1, 51) = 0.675, p = .412$), no significant main effect of endorser type ($F(1, 51) = 0.268, p = .605$) and no interaction effect ($F(1, 51) = 0.779, p = .378$).

Based on these results, we deducted that the fitness product had more reliable results in comparison to the beauty product in terms of what we wanted. Following this, we proceeded to choose the best fit male and female endorsers. The endorsers we chose had to be similar in terms of their likeability, familiarity, and congruence (See Table 4). Thus, as mentioned earlier, the female endorsers were Jen Seltzer (Influencer) and Adriana Lima (Celebrity) while the male endorser were Bret Contreras (Influencer) and Sidney Crosby (Celebrity).

Table 4

Names of the Endorsers, their Product Category and Endorser Type, and the Corresponding Means for the Variables of Interest (Congruence, Likeability, Familiarity).

Name	Product Category	Endorser Type	Congruence	Likeability	Familiarity
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Jen Seltzer	Fitness	Influencer	5.42	5.60	4.30
Kayla Itsines	Fitness	Influencer	5.55	5.75	3.91
Tammy Hembrow	Fitness	Influencer	5.60	5.64	3.94
Michelle Lewin	Fitness	Influencer	5.70	5.94	4.06
Adriana Lima	Fitness	Celebrity	5.66	5.64	4.26
Jessica Biel	Fitness	Celebrity	5.45	5.74	5.08
Kate Hudson	Fitness	Celebrity	5.68	5.55	5.77
Christine Sinclair	Fitness	Celebrity	5.57	5.40	3.94
Bradley Martyn	Fitness	Influencer	5.75	5.62	4.55
Simeon Panda	Fitness	Influencer	5.75	5.62	4.08
Joey Swoll	Fitness	Influencer	5.75	5.45	4.08
Bret Contreras	Fitness	Influencer	5.55	5.29	4.08
Mark Wahlberg	Fitness	Celebrity	5.68	5.79	5.68
Dwayne Johnson	Fitness	Celebrity	5.98	6.15	6.28
Sidney Crosby	Fitness	Celebrity	5.25	5.36	4.19
Carey Price	Fitness	Celebrity	5.45	5.00	3.92
Huda Kattan	Beauty	Influencer	5.62	5.96	4.11
Jaclyn Hill	Beauty	Influencer	5.62	5.85	4.23
Nikkie de Jager	Beauty	Influencer	5.08	5.15	4.02
(NikkieTutorials)					
Serena Verbon	Beauty	Influencer	5.62	5.64	4.00
Jennifer Lopez	Beauty	Celebrity	5.72	5.81	5.70
Kate Moss	Beauty	Celebrity	5.26	5.21	5.34

Selena Gomez	Beauty	Celebrity	5.70	5.87	6.08
Shay Mitchell	Beauty	Celebrity	5.49	5.63	4.55
Bretman Rock	Beauty	Influencer	5.02	4.98	3.87
Gabriel Zamora	Beauty	Influencer	4.74	4.58	3.68
Hiram Yarbo	Beauty	Influencer	5.13	5.32	4.00
Manuel Gutierrez	Beauty	Influencer	4.72	4.40	3.70
(Manny MUA)					
Harry Styles	Beauty	Celebrity	5.15	5.21	5.40
John Stamos	Beauty	Celebrity	4.92	5.45	5.11
Karamo Brown	Beauty	Celebrity	4.87	5.30	4.13
Nick Jonas	Beauty	Celebrity	5.38	5.57	5.66

Procedure

In the main experiment, data was gathered using a cross-sectional design in which participants were administered a self-report questionnaire at one point in time. Participants were asked if they would be interested in participating in a study that aims to identify whether social media influencers and celebrities play a role in consumer-based brand equity. If they accepted, they were directed to a set of online questionnaires. Before filling out the questionnaire, the participants read and signed a consent form that outlines the study and its research goals. If the participant did not consent, the page closed, and no data was taken. Once the consent form is completed, the participants were re-directed to a new page in order to begin the study.

Type of endorsement was manipulated by generating an advertisement with no endorser, one with a celebrity and one with a social media influencer. In each advertisement, the endorser was shown beside a fitness product, namely a protein powder by the name of “Whey Protein.”

Thus, participants were separated into one of three conditions and in turn, were shown either the control advertisement or one of the manipulated advertisements. Additionally, within each of the manipulated conditions, an advertisement with each gender was created and thus, participants in the manipulated groups were shown one advertisement either displaying a female endorser or a male endorser. If the participants were in either the celebrity or influencer condition, the endorser's name was displayed to ensure that participants can still rate the ads even if they do not recognise the endorser. Those in the control group viewed the same advertisement but without an endorser. In total, there were five groups of participants, namely two per manipulated conditions and one control group.

Once the participants viewed the advertisement, they were asked to answer a set of questions, including the CBBE scales (OBE & MBE) and their purchase intentions. Then, the participant in the endorser groups answered a brief set of questions regarding the credibility and trustworthiness of the endorser, the attractiveness of the endorser, the perceived fit between endorser-advertisement, and their attitude toward the brand. To end the questionnaire, all participants answered the demographic questionnaire. It took approximately five to ten minutes for the participants to complete the questionnaires in the online format. They were free to exit the survey whenever if they did not feel comfortable answering the questions. Upon completion, participants' responses were recorded, and they were thanked for their participation.

Measures

Participants filled out a battery of self-report questionnaires, including a demographics form, Yoo and Donthu's (2001) brand equity questionnaires (MBE, OBE), Ohanian's (1990) credibility scale, Spears and Singh (2004) brand attitude scale and a set of control questions (See Appendix B). The demographic form provided background information on the participants, such

as their age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, education level, and marital status. This helped to have a complete understanding of the participants.

This research paper utilized previously validated measures from the existing literature to operationalize the constructs. As with previous studies (Dwivedi et al., 2015; Spry et al., 2011), consumer-based brand equity was operationalized as a higher-order construct, including four dimensions, namely brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. All items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). The items came from the work of Yoo and Donthu (2001), whose purpose was to examine Aaker's (1991) and Keller's (1993) conceptualizations of brand equity to produce a “psychologically sound and cross-culturally generalizable measure of brand equity” (p.11). Yoo and Donthu (2001) developed two different consumer-based brand equity measures, namely the OBE, and MBE. The validity and reliability of these scales have been empirically tested and proven to be acceptable (Washburn & Plank, 2002).

Following this questionnaire, participants were asked a set of questions to control for their feelings towards the endorser, either celebrity or social media influencers credibility. Ohanian (1990) developed a scale to assess celebrity endorsers' efficacy by establishing their credibility. Thus, based on a similar study by Schouten et al. (2019), this study utilized Ohanian (1990) trustworthiness, attractiveness and expertise subscales of the credibility scale. Each of the dimensions was measured using a seven-point semantic differential scale, with five pairs of description words for each dimension. Trustworthiness was measured by undependable – dependable, dishonest – honest, unreliable – reliable, insincere – sincere, and untrustworthy – trustworthy. Expertise was measured by not an expert – expert, inexperienced – experienced, unknowledgeable – knowledgeable, unqualified – qualified, and unskilled – skilled. Finally,

attractiveness was measured by unattractive-attractive, not classy-classy, ugly-beautiful, plain-elegant, not sexy-sexy. Therefore, a high mean suggests a high credibility rating as higher values indicate more positive options.

Following this, the participants' attitude towards the brand was assessed with the use of a single item from Spears and Singh (2004). Participants answered "please describe your overall feelings about the brand shown in the ab above" on a seven-point semantic differential scale: unappealing – appealing, bad – good, unpleasant – pleasant, unfavorable – favorable, and unlikable – likable. As with the credibility scale, a higher mean indicates a more favorable attitude toward the brand.

Finally, to establish the validity of the product-endorser fit, participants were asked to rate the fit between the two on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Similarly, to assess the participants familiarity with the social media influencer or celebrity, participants were asked "I know [name endorser]" on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). Finally, participants were asked to rate their purchase intention on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (extremely unlikely) to 7 (extremely likely).

Results

Manipulation Checks

A factor analysis was conducted on the variables of interest to ensure that all items loaded on their respective scale. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was above the recommended value of .6 and the Barlette's test of sphericity was significant for all five variables.

Following the factor analyses, internal reliability of the variables of interest was investigated using Cronbach's alpha. First, the two brand equity scales were evaluated and found to have good internal consistency, more specifically the MBE scale consisting of 14 items reported an alpha of .82 and the OBE scale consisting of 4 items reported an alpha of .86. The next four variables of interest had 10 items each and reported good internal consistency, namely the brand attitude scale ($\alpha = .85$), the trustworthiness subscale ($\alpha = .82$), the expertise subscale ($\alpha = .81$) and finally the attractiveness scale ($\alpha = .77$). See Table 5 for a detailed recap of the items of the scales, their items and their corresponding alpha coefficients.

Table 5

Measures and their Corresponding Alpha Coefficient.

Scale and Items	α
MBE	.815
Awareness	.637
I can recognize Whey Protein among other competing brands.	
I am aware of Whey Protein.	
Loyalty	.820
I consider myself to be loyal to Whey Protein.	
Whey Protein would be my first choice.	
I will not buy other brands if Whey Protein is available at the store.	
Associations	.440
Some characteristics of Whey Protein come to mind quickly	
I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Whey Protein.	
I have difficulty in imagining Whey Protein in my mind.	
Quality	.570

Whey Protein is of high quality.
 The likely quality of Whey Protein is extremely high.
 The likelihood that Whey Protein would be functional is very high.
 The likelihood that Whey Protein is reliable is very high.
 Whey Protein must be of very good quality.
 Whey Protein appears to be of very poor quality.

OBE .859

It makes sense to buy Whey Protein instead of any other brand, even if they are the same.
 Even if another brand has the same features as Whey Protein, I would prefer to buy Whey Protein.
 If there is another brand as good as Whey Protein, I prefer to buy Whey Protein.
 If another brand is not different from Whey Protein in any way, it seems smarter to purchase Whey Protein.

Brand Attitude .849

The advertisement is appealing.
 The advertisement is good.
 The advertisement is pleasant.
 The advertisement is favorable.
 The advertisement is likeable.
 The advertisement is unappealing.
 The advertisement is bad.
 The advertisement is unpleasant.
 The advertisement is unfavorable.
 The advertisement is unlikeable.

Trustworthiness .820

The endorser is dependable.
 The endorser is honest.
 The endorser is reliable.
 The endorser is sincere.
 The endorser is trustworthy.
 The endorser is undependable.
 The endorser is dishonest.
 The endorser is unreliable.
 The endorser is insincere.
 The endorser is untrustworthy.

Expertise .806

The endorser is an expert.
 The endorser is experienced.
 The endorser is knowledgeable.
 The endorser is qualified.
 The endorser is skilled.
 The endorser is not an expert.
 The endorser is inexperienced.
 The endorser is unknowledgeable.
 The endorser is unqualified.

The endorser is unskilled.

Attractiveness

.772

The endorser is attractive.

The endorser is classy.

The endorser is beautiful.

The endorser is elegant.

The endorser is sexy.

The endorser is unattractive.

The endorser is not classy.

The endorser is ugly.

The endorser is plain.

The endorser is not sexy.

Finally, a correlation matrix between the variables of interest was conducted and found

that most of the variables had moderate positive relationships to one another (See Table 6).

Table 6

Correlation Matrix with the Variables of Interest (Perceived Quality, Brand Awareness, Brand Associations, Perceived Loyalty, OBE).

	Quality	Awareness	Associations	Loyalty	OBE
Quality	1				
Awareness	.584**	1			
Associations	.514**	.485**	1		
Loyalty	.494**	.536**	.342**	1	
OBE	.528**	.595**	.362**	.853**	1

Note. ** indicates $p < .01$

Hypothesis 1 – The Effects of Endorser Gender and Type on Brand Awareness

To test the hypotheses of interest, five two-way ANOVAs were conducted. The first two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of endorser gender and endorser type on brand awareness. The results indicated that there were no significant main effects of endorser gender ($F(1, 248) = 3.351, p = .068$), no significant main effect of endorser type ($F(1, 248) = 0.004, p = .947$) and no significant interaction effect ($F(1, 248) = 0.240, p = .624$). Thus, there was no evidence to support the first hypothesis.

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations for Brand Awareness as a Function of a 3(Endorser Type) x 2(Endorser Gender) Design.

Endorser Type	Endorser Gender	M	SD	N
Celebrity	Male	5.3621	1.12494	52
	Female	5.6700	.73962	50
	Total	5.5130	.96350	102
Influencer	Male	5.4184	.90914	49
	Female	5.5962	.77988	52
	Total	5.5099	.84552	101
Control	Control	5.5534	1.10006	50
	Total	5.5534	1.10006	50
Total	Male	5.3894	1.02124	101
	Female	5.6324	.75756	102
	Control	5.5534	1.10006	50
	Total	5.5198	.94411	253

Hypothesis 2 – The Effects of Endorser Gender and Type on Brand Loyalty

A second two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of endorser gender and endorser type on brand loyalty. The results indicated that there were no significant main effects of endorser gender ($F(1, 248) = 1.707, p = .193$), no significant main effect of endorser type ($F(1, 248) = 0.817, p = .367$) and no significant interaction effect ($F(1, 248) = 0.014, p = .906$). Like with the first hypothesis, there was no evidence to support the second hypothesis.

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations for Brand Loyalty as a Function of a 3(Endorser Type) x 2(Endorser Gender) Design.

Endorser Type	Endorser Gender	M	SD	N
Celebrity	Male	5.2981	.65374	52
	Female	5.2500	.65746	50
	Total	5.2745	.65276	102
Influencer	Male	5.0476	.71450	49
	Female	5.2725	.69172	52
	Total	5.1634	.70840	101
Control	Control	5.2600	.63546	50
	Total	5.2600	.63546	50
Total	Male	5.1765	.69199	101
	Female	5.2615	.67189	102
	Control	5.2600	.63546	50
	Total	5.2273	.67171	253

Hypothesis 3 – The Effects of Endorser Gender and Type on Brand Associations

A third two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of endorser gender and endorser type on brand associations. The results indicated that there were no significant main effects of endorser gender ($F(1, 248) = 2.568, p = .110$), no significant main effect of endorser type ($F(1, 248) = 0.191, p = .662$) and no significant interaction effect ($F(1, 248) = 0.071, p = .791$). This indicates that there is no support for the third hypothesis.

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations for Brand Associations as a Function of a 3(Endorser Type) x 2(Endorser Gender) Design.

Endorser Type	Endorser Gender	M	SD	N
Celebrity	Male	4.5640	.85944	52
	Female	4.7800	.81819	50
	Total	4.6699	.84233	102
Influencer	Male	4.5442	.75291	49
	Female	4.6987	.59504	52
	Total	4.6238	.67727	101
Control	Control	4.6733	1.03288	50
	Total	4.6733	1.03288	50
Total	Male	4.5544	.80554	101
	Female	4.7386	.71080	102
	Control	4.6733	1.03288	50
	Total	4.6522	.82120	253

Hypothesis 4 – The Effects of Endorser Gender and Type on Perceived Quality

A fourth two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of endorser gender and endorser type on perceived quality. The results indicated that there were no significant main effects of endorser gender ($F(1, 248) = 0.881, p = .349$), no significant main effect of endorser type ($F(1, 248) = 1.464, p = .227$) and no significant interaction effect ($F(1, 248) = 2.099, p = .149$). Thus, there was no evidence to support the fourth hypothesis.

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations for Perceived Quality as a Function of a 3(Endorser Type) x 2(Endorser Gender) Design.

Endorser Type	Endorser Gender	M	SD	N
Celebrity	Male	5.0833	1.28656	52
	Female	5.2866	1.01017	50
	Total	5.1830	1.15815	102
Influencer	Male	5.2177	1.25009	49
	Female	5.4615	1.07892	52
	Total	5.3432	1.16567	101
Control	Control	5.2999	1.42420	50
	Total	5.2999	1.42420	50
Total	Male	5.1485	1.26445	101
	Female	5.3758	1.04431	102
	Control	5.2999	1.42420	50
	Total	5.2701	1.21515	253

Hypothesis 5 – The Effects of Endorser Gender and Type on Overall Brand Equity

The final two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of endorser gender and endorser type on overall brand equity. The results indicated that there were no significant main effects of endorser gender ($F(1, 248) = 0.598, p = .440$), no significant main effect of endorser type ($F(1, 248) = 0.491, p = .484$) and no significant interaction effect ($F(1, 248) = 0.421, p = .517$). Thus, there was no evidence to support the fifth hypothesis.

Table 11

Means and Standard Deviations for Overall Brand Equity as a Function of a 3(Endorser Type) x 2(Endorser Gender) Design.

Endorser Type	Endorser Gender	M	SD	N
Celebrity	Male	5.2067	1.10338	52
	Female	5.2250	.84099	50
	Total	5.2157	.97876	102
Influencer	Male	5.2143	1.07529	49
	Female	5.4231	.99821	52
	Total	5.3218	1.03642	101
Control	Control	5.2859	1.17804	50
	Total	5.2850	1.17804	50
Total	Male	5.2104	1.08440	101
	Female	5.3260	.92530	102
	Control	5.2850	1.17804	50
	Total	5.2717	1.04037	253

Control Variables

Upon realizing that there were little to no significance in any of the previous ANOVAs, we decided to evaluate whether any of the control variables made a significant impact on the results. Only one control variable made a noteworthy difference, that is, the attractiveness variable. The results indicated that there were no significant main effects of endorser gender ($F(1, 203) = 1.395, p = .239$), no significant interaction effect ($F(1, 203) = 0.833, p = .362$), but there was a significant main effect of endorser type ($F(1, 203) = 4.561, p = .034$).

Table 12

Means and Standard Deviations for Attractiveness as a Function of a 3(Endorser Type) x 2(Endorser Gender) Design.

Endorser Type	Endorser Gender	M	SD	N
Celebrity	Male	4.8788	1.00710	52
	Female	4.9140	.97646	50
	Total	4.8961	.98744	102
Influencer	Male	4.4796	.79581	49
	Female	4.7538	.93985	52
	Total	4.6208	.87514	101
Total	Male	4.6851	.92405	101
	Female	4.8324	.95660	102
	Total	4.7591	.94111	203

Discussion

In the current social media age, celebrities and social media influencers are both commonly utilized in advertising, but studies comparing their relative effectiveness are uncommon. The purpose of this paper was to explore the effect of celebrity marketing, influencer marketing and the control marketing on of the four dimensions of consumer-based brand equity as well as overall brand equity.

General Discussion and Implications

The results did not show any statistically significant differences between the three types of marketing. To attempt to understand why there was no difference, we looked deeper into some of the control variables, including the attractiveness, credibility and trustworthiness of the endorser, the perceived fit between endorser-advertisement, the participants' attitude toward the brand and the endorser. Several ANOVAs were conducted, but only one led to significant differences between influencers and celebrities, namely the attractiveness of the endorser. The means of the female endorsers for both categories were very similar; however, there was a noticeable distinction between the two male endorsers. The male celebrity (Sidney Crosby) was found to be significantly more attractive than the male social media influencer (Bret Contreras). Previous research suggest that the attractiveness of endorsers increases their cultural and societal acceptability (DeShields et al., 1996). As a result, a consumer is more likely to accept information from an appealing source (Kelman, 1961). Additionally, attractiveness has been found to influences brand attitudes and a consumer's desire to make a purchase (Erdogan, 1999; Wang & Scheinbaum, 2018). Consequently, this might have played a role in our results.

Another factor that could have influenced the results of this paper was culture. This paper did not consider whether there were cultural differences in the acceptance of social media

influencers and the corresponding marketing types. While it may seem counterintuitive, previous research has found that consumers in collectivistic cultures in the East have more fully incorporated social media into their daily lives than customers in Western cultures (Goodrich & De Mooij, 2014; Zhang et al. 2012). This could lead to a more prominent role for influencers and social media relationships among consumers in these countries, which might greatly lower consumer scepticism of influencer marketing and online ad content. To explore these cultural variations and pinpoint successful influencer marketing tactics, further research is advised.

Alternatively, the results might be indicating that there is no longer a large difference between traditional celebrities and social media influencers. While it is conceivable to make broad generalizations about the distinctions between celebrities and influencers, it is still hard to draw a sharp distinction between the two groups and make definitive judgements. Researchers Schouten et al. (2020) explained that “numerous cases are known of successful social media influencers transgressing into more ‘traditional’ celebrities, pursuing a career as talk show presenter or fashion model and making their way to the general public and mass media. On the other hand, many traditional celebrities have become popular influencers on social media” (p.277). Plus, as previously mentioned, it has become unclear whether these types of endorsers can be used interchangeably. According to Boon and Lomore (2001) and Cowan and Hunt (2018), celebrities are suitable for endorsement due to their notoriety and diverse lifestyles, yet these same qualities render them less relevant to the average consumer. The same phenomena might be occurring to social media influencers. While they were once viewed as relatable, they may have lost some of their appeal and relatability.

Previous research has mixed results; some indicating that the two endorser types absolutely need to be distinguished when planning advertising endorsements (Gräve, 2017) while others

have found that influencer endorsement has a similar impact to celebrity endorsement (Schouten et al., 2020). Influencer marketing has been found to have many advantages over celebrity endorsements, including improved cost effectiveness, precision targeting, and a more sincere appeal (Guruge, 2018; Kapitan et al., 2022). Collaborating with influencers who request lower fees than celebrities or providing them with complimentary items, reduced prices, or a percentage of sales for their promotional efforts are viable strategies. Thus, if influencers can provide similar outreach as celebrities at a lower cost, this can lead to several marketing strategies.

This paper is one of the earliest studies to offer information on the effectiveness of influencers in conventional advertising. Grave and Bartsch (2021) claim that the rise of influencers and the increasing popularity of social media platforms has led to the professionalization and commercialization of these platforms. This has resulted in the most prominent influencers being comparable to traditional celebrities in terms of their level of fame, their capacity to connect and to reach their target audience (Schouten et al., 2020). In other words, Schouten et al. (2020) explained that since macro influencers have amassed fan bases equivalent to those of celebrities and have started to gain support in institutional contexts, it is getting harder to tell influencers apart from celebrities. As a result, influencers might be more suited to conventional advertising formats. The finding of this paper highlights the growing recognition of influencers as a part of the consumer environment and provides marketers with several strategic options. Future studies ought to examine various conventional advertising channels in an influencer context.

Finally, it was assumed that the theories behind how a spokesperson makes an impact on the consumer would hold true to the new category of spokespeople. However, some of these theories

mention that long-term interactions might be better to create a parasocial relationship between the endorser and the consumer, which in term would lead to increase the dimensions of brand equity. The participants in our study may not have previously known the endorsers in the photographs and this would have made it difficult for them to create a relationship with the endorser in one short questionnaire. Future research should dig deeper into the mechanisms behind the relationship between consumer and social media influencers.

Limitations

The limitations imposed by the research design decisions should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results reported in this paper. In this way, our findings provide a foundation for future studies. For instance, we could have done a better job of presenting the endorsements to the participants. Our stimuli featured an image of a product (Whey Protein Shake) next to an endorser for each condition, much like a typical advertisement layout. Although previous research (Kapitan & Silvera, 2016) notes that this enables a scientifically sound comparison of the three conditions, this is not how social media influencers ordinarily interact with a brand. Usually, a social media post will include integrate the endorsed item, but not always in an obvious manner. Theory on product placement explains that how successfully a product is incorporated into a narrative in a visually appealing fashion is positively correlated with the effectiveness of an endorsement (Russell, 1998). Therefore, we advise future research to examine different social media endorsements with diverse degrees of product engagement.

On a similar note, our stimuli included a photo of a very specific product from one brand. This could have either positively or negatively impacted the results. For instance, when participants were asked “I am aware of Whey Protein,” slightly over 20% of participants

somewhat disagreed to strongly disagreed. This could have played a significant role on the results as the participants who were not aware of the brand could have skewed the entire distribution. A future study should investigate the same research question, but with both a different product category and a different brand.

Next, our demographic dealt primarily with one type of consumers and was not as diverse as initially hoped for. Past research often focused primarily on young female users and perhaps, this paper should have continued this focus (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). In fact, according to earlier research, women are typically more receptive and open to social influence than men. Additionally, women typically mimic the behaviour of those whose thoughts they highly respect or whose style of life they aspire to. (Bearden et al., 1990; Wilcox & Stephen, 2013).

Women Instagram users have been found to be more inclined to purchase goods that their favourite celebrities either use or promote (Khan and Dhar, 2006, Wilcox & Stephen, 2013, Wilcox et al., 2011). Future research should investigate the differences between men and women regarding influencer marketing.

Finally, as previously mentioned, according to this and related research, it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between influencers and celebrities. This begs the questions of what kind of influencers are the most effective endorsers and what are the underlying mechanisms or variables that account for these differences. In our experiments, we utilised influencers with a sizable fan base, although less well-known influencers may be even more powerful brand advocates. Previous research by Schouten et al. (2020) acknowledges that 'micro-influencers' may be seen as more relatable to their followers than more well-known influencers because they interact with their community more and specialise in a more specialised

area (De Veirman et al. 2017; Grave 2017). Future research should look into replicating this study with micro-influencers.

In conclusion, the current study investigated whether the extent to which social media influencers influences the four dimensions of consumer-based brand equity and whether these effects differ between influencers, celebrities, and traditional marketing. In sum, the results indicated that there were no significant differences between any of the three groups. While this research did not show what it hoped to, it is a good base for future research.

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Appendix A



Appendix B

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Study Title: The Role of Influencer Marketing on Customer-Based Brand Equity

Researcher: Kelly-Anne Lemay

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Faculty Supervisor: Bianca Grohmann Faculty Supervisor's

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You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to investigate the effects of influencer marketing on customer-based brand equity and to determine whether these differ from celebrity endorsements.

B. PROCEDURES

If you participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire with questions about endorsers, celebrities, products, and brands. In total, participating in this study will take between five to ten minutes.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

There are no risks involved in this research. Potential benefits include gaining a better understanding of social media influencers.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

We will gather the following information as part of this research: Your perceptions of endorsers, celebrities, products and brands, as well as demographic information. We will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research. We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form. The information gathered will be anonymized. That means that it will not be possible to make a link between you and the information you provide. We will protect the information by keeping the results anonymized. The research team will not be able to link the information provided to the participant's real identity. We will destroy the information five years after the end of the study.

E. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time by simply closing your browser. Once the questionnaire is submitted, the data cannot be withdrawn because the data will be anonymized and there will be no way to identify participants. As a compensatory indemnity for participating in this research, you will receive a sum from Amazon MTurk. If you withdraw before the end of the research, you will not receive the compensation. There are no negative consequences for not participating or stopping in the middle.

G. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

- ☐ I consent (1)
- ☐ I do not consent (2)

End of Block: Consent

Start of Block: Advertisement - Female

We will now show you an advertisement and ask you for your evaluation of the brand, the spokesperson and the advertisement itself. There are no right or wrong answers, we are interested in your opinion of the advertisement.

The next time you are looking to purchase a protein powder, how likely are you to purchase this product?

- ☐ Extremely unlikely (1)
 - ☐ Moderately unlikely (2)
 - ☐ Slightly unlikely (3)
 - ☐ Neither likely nor unlikely (4)
 - ☐ Slightly likely (5)
 - ☐ Moderately likely (6)
 - ☐ Extremely likely (7)
-

I consider myself to be loyal to Whey protein.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

Whey protein would be my first choice

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

I will not buy other brands if Whey protein is available at the store.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

Whey protein is of high quality.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

The likely quality of Whey protein is extremely high.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

The likelihood that Whey protein would be functional is very high.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

The likelihood that Whey protein is reliable is very high.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

Whey protein must be of very good quality.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

Whey protein appears to be of very poor quality.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

I can recognize Whey protein among other competing brands.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

I am aware of Whey protein.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

Some characteristics of Whey protein come to mind quickly.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Whey protein.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

I have difficulty in imagining Whey protein in my mind.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

It makes sense to buy Whey protein instead of any other brand, even if they are the same.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

Even if another brand has the same features as Whey protein, I would prefer to buy Whey protein.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

If there is another brand as good as Whey protein, I prefer to buy Whey protein.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

If another brand is not different from Whey protein in any way, it seems smarter to purchase Whey protein.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

The advertisement is...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Neither Agree or Disagree (4)	Slightly Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
Appealing (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pleasant (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Favorable (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Likeable (5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unappealing (6)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bad (7)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unpleasant (8)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unfavorable (9)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unlikeable (10)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The endorser is...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Slightly Disagree (3)	Neither Agree or Disagree (4)	Slightly Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
Dependable (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Honest (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reliable (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sincere (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trustworthy (5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
An Expert (6)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Experienced (7)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Knowledgeable (8)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Qualified (9)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Skilled (10)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attractive (11)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Classy (12)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Beautiful (13)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Elegant (14)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Sexy (15)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unattractive (16)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not Classy (17)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ugly (18)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Plain (19)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not Sexy (20)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Undependable (21)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dishonest (22)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unreliable (23)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Insincere (24)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Untrustworthy (25)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not an Expert (26)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Inexperienced (27)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unknowledgeable (28)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unqualified (29)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unskilled (30)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

The product and the endorser are congruent.

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
 - ☐ Disagree (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
 - ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
 - ☐ Agree (6)
 - ☐ Strongly agree (7)
-

I know “ENDORSER NAME.”

- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)
- ☐ Disagree (2)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
- ☐ Agree (6)
- ☐ Strongly agree (7)

End of Block: Advertisement - Female

Start of Block: Demographics

What gender do you identify as?

- ☐ Male (1)
 - ☐ Female (2)
 - ☐ Non-binary / third gender (3)
 - ☐ Prefer not to say (4)
-

What is your age?

- ☐ 0-15 years old (1)
 - ☐ 15-30 years old (2)
 - ☐ 30-45 years old (3)
 - ☐ 45+ (4)
 - ☐ Prefer not to say (5)
-

Please specify your ethnicity

- ☐ Caucasian (1)
 - ☐ African-American (2)
 - ☐ Latino or Hispanic (3)
 - ☐ Asian (4)
 - ☐ Native American (5)
 - ☐ Other (6)
 - ☐ Prefer not to say (7)
-

What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?

- ☐ Some High School (1)
 - ☐ High School (2)
 - ☐ Cegep (3)
 - ☐ Bachelor's Degree (4)
 - ☐ Master's Degree (5)
 - ☐ Ph.D. or Higher (6)
 - ☐ Trade School (7)
 - ☐ Prefer not to say (8)
-

What is your marital status?

- ☐ Married (1)
 - ☐ Divorced (2)
 - ☐ Separated (3)
 - ☐ Single (4)
 - ☐ Prefer not to say (5)
-

What is your annual household income?

- ☐ Less than \$25,000 (1)
 - ☐ \$25,000 - \$50,000 (2)
 - ☐ \$50,000 - \$100,000 (3)
 - ☐ \$100,000 - \$200,000 (4)
 - ☐ More than \$200,000 (5)
 - ☐ Prefer not to say (6)
-

What is your current employment status?

- ☐ Employed Full-Time (1)
 - ☐ Employed Part-Time (2)
 - ☐ Seeking opportunities (3)
 - ☐ Retired (4)
 - ☐ Prefer not to say (5)
-

Please select the correct definition of social media influencer.

- ☐ A content generator: one who has a status of expertise in a specific area, who has cultivated a sizable number of captive followers— who are of marketing value to brands—by regularly producing valuable content via social media. (1)
- ☐ A person who is well known and gets lots of public attention, or attention from other people. (2)
- ☐ Any individual who enjoys favorable public recognition, which s/he uses on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement. (3)

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: Block 6

Here is your ID: \${e://Field/RandomID}

Copy this value to paste into MTurk.

When you have copied this ID, please click the next button to submit your survey.

End of Block: Block 6

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.

Your response has been recorded.