

# **Awareness**

*What creates Advertisement & Sponsorship Awareness in Influencer Audiences?  
A Narrative Inquiry.*

By

Ademir Alijagic



**Master Thesis**

Centre for Entrepreneurship

Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences

University of Oslo

May 22, 2018

Page left intentionally blank.

© Ademir Alijagic

2018

What creates Advertisement & Sponsorship Awareness in Influencer Audiences?

Author: Ademir Alijagic

<http://www.duo.uio.no/>

Universitetet i Oslo

## **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Influencers have become the new go-to marketing strategy, with a personal touch and a persuasion ability that is hard to beat by traditional advertisement. Their success is largely due to effective combination of their own original content with advertisement and sponsorship. A strategy which has been highly interesting to consumers, but also vague with advertisement disclosure. The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that create advertisement awareness for consumers of influencer content.

**Methods:** Nine semi-structured interviews were held with experts within the industry and influencer-audiences, which were combined into a common narrative or story, and later tested on the thirty most popular English speaking Youtubers.

**Results:** This resulted in a five-factor model describing the antecedents of awareness, consisting of; 1) Disclosure, 2) Divide, 3) Authenticity, 4) Relevancy and 5) Ability. Where disclosure and divide helped create awareness, authenticity and relevance hindered it, and ability could do both.

**Conclusion:** Further investigation is needed to verify the proposed model and the factors within it. Suggestions for further research is discussed.

### **Keywords**

Influencer, Personal Brand, Social Media, Advertisement, Sponsorship, Disclosure, Audience, Authenticity, Youtube & Narrative Inquiry.

## **PREFACE**

I would like to thank my supervisor Nicolai S. Løvdal for his guidance and support during this process.

I also want to thank all the interview respondents, without whose cooperation I would not have been able to conduct this thesis.

Appreciations also to my fellow students whom I've exchanged ideas with and the occasional late-night writing session.

Lastly, thanks to fellow students Shahabaz Basheer and Bastian Marenbach for their patience and cooperation during our thesis writing and simultaneous work in our start-up, Streets of Oslo.

### *Reading guide:*

The footnotes in chapter eleven explain various terminology that occur within the paper.

The interview subjects have been anonymized but can be disclosed for grading purposes.

Chapter four is comprised of summarized but still lengthy interview narratives. The more important interpretation of the narratives is discussed in chapter five. Chapter four can therefore be skipped if wanted for easier reading. The full transcript can be found in chapter ten, subsection five.

Apart from chapter four the reader is recommended to read the paper chronologically for the best reading experience.

# TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Objective.....	1
1.2	Relevance.....	1
1.3	Opportunity.....	4
1.4	Research Question .....	4
<b>2</b>	<b>Literature Review .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	What is a Brand?.....	5
2.2	What are Personal Brands?.....	6
2.3	Who are Social Media Influencers?.....	7
2.4	What is Transparent? .....	10
2.5	What is Authentic? .....	11
2.6	What is Legal? .....	12
2.7	What is Disclosure & Persuasion?.....	14
2.8	Efforts to Measure Advertisement Perception.....	17
2.9	Summary.....	18
<b>3</b>	<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>21</b>
3.1	Research Strategy .....	21
3.2	Literature Review .....	22
3.3	Reliability & Validity .....	22
3.4	Data Collection & Analysis .....	24
<b>4</b>	<b>Findings.....</b>	<b>25</b>
4.1	Narrators .....	26
4.2	Awareness.....	27
4.3	Grey Area .....	30
4.4	Audience.....	32
4.5	Influencer.....	34
4.6	Regulator .....	38
<b>5</b>	<b>Discussion.....</b>	<b>41</b>
5.1	Interpreted Narrative.....	41
5.2	Proposed Awareness Model .....	43

5.3	Initial Model Test .....	44
5.4	Results & Implications .....	48
<b>6</b>	<b>Limitations &amp; Future Research .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>References .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Figures and Tables .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>53</b>
10.1	Sponsorship Transparency Scale .....	53
10.2	Disclosure, Divide & Ability .....	54
10.3	Search Words .....	55
10.4	Semi Structured Interview Sheet .....	56
10.5	Interview Transcripts .....	57
<b>11</b>	<b>Foot Notes.....</b>	<b>102</b>

# 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the purpose and relevancy of this research paper to marketing practitioners and academia. It concludes in a research opportunity and question.

## 1.1 Objective

This study's objective was to explore the state of social media influencers and their relationship to sponsorship<sup>1</sup> and advertisement<sup>2</sup>. This was done through research of the influencer industry's history and initial findings uncovered varying rules and regulation regarding the industry. Influencer sponsorship seemed a difficult task to regulate due to the newness of the industry, the country origin of the influencer, the local laws, the type of media channel the influencer uses, and the difficulty of enforcing the laws (Gilmore, 2018).

The initial research found that 'transparent advertisement'<sup>3</sup> is often in conflict with lucrative 'opaque advertisement'<sup>4</sup> (Abidin & Ots, 2015) (Evans, Phua, Lim, & Jun, 2017). This discovery led to a grey area where some influencers were found to sway their audiences<sup>5</sup> with ads<sup>6</sup> hidden in plain sight as organic content<sup>7</sup>. Could this influencer/sponsor relationship become more transparent? Was that necessary? Was that even important? If so, how? These were the initial observations and questions for study.

## 1.2 Relevance

When researching influencers, there were certain terms that kept showing up like; branding, social media, personal brands, advertisement, sponsorship, persuasion, disclosure, and transparency/opaqueness. The history and definitions of these and more terms will be described in the next chapter, but to convey this thesis' relevance to society one term is explained here, '*the influencer*'.

Influencers are usually individuals whom have gained a large online following and advertise through a digital word-of-mouth<sup>8</sup>. Their entrepreneurial business model consists of acting as spokespeople for brands and products and they are paid in return (Steven, 2016). In other words, they promote a lifestyle toward their followers. The grey area mentioned previously stems from this business model's revenue stream, which is sponsorship and advertisement. There are ethical and legal implications because the content the influencers produce are often bound by the same

rules as traditional media, but they are hard to enforce across the vast decentralized industry (Simon, 2014). While TV-ads e.g. are highly regulated and ‘easy’ to enforce, the internet paved way for a bigger and less clear environment for advertisement (Gashi, 2017). Everybody could in theory become an influencer, and if the influencer wishes to hide their sponsorship deals, for whatever reason, it is difficult to deception. The conflicting views for this grey area can further be understood as the following statements, which describes the push and pull of an influencer regarding sponsorship transparency vs opaqueness;

- Influencers that are candid and transparent with their audience are rewarded with long-term trust, which in turn reward the influencers with monetary gains (Steven, 2016).
- The opposite view argues that an audience that is less aware of being advertised toward, will more likely be convinced to buy products. This rewards the opaque influencer, because they presumably can sell more of their sponsors products (Philippa, Lou, & Iris, 2017).

Openness gets rewarded with trust and monetary gains in the first statement, while in the second disclosure language<sup>9</sup> decreases an influencers revenue and should be used as little as possible.

As of writing this paper there was an ongoing discussion from several influencers in Norway about the state of advertisement practices in the industry (Falck, 2018). The Actress and blogger Ulrikke Falck withdrew her candidacy in January 2018 for the Vixen Influencer Award, according to her due to the hypocrisy of the candidates. Paraphrased she writes that ‘some nominees were ingenuine about their personal brand’, as well as ‘glamorizing plastic surgery and promoting an unrealistic beauty ideal toward a young audience’. This ‘ingenuity’ will be explored in forthcoming chapters.

Literature search revealed that the relationship between an influencer and her/his audience is from the audience’ perspective like a friendship. Archer, Pettigrew, and Harrigan (2014) state that psychologically this relationship feels personal This is opposite to the way traditional marketing channels and brands have relationships with their consumers, where a more formal relationship occurs. From the audience’s point of view, the influencer reviews products and shares it with them as a personal recommendation, like e.g. when a friend recommends a product (Chin-Lung, Judy, & Hsiu-Sen, 2013). The audience in this regard are also consumers which are easier persuaded to buy products in contrast to using a more formal marketing approach. It is then understandable why some influencers and their sponsors might see the value of obscuring the advertising nature of the influencers.



In 2018, Anniken Jørgensen and Martine Lunde, two Norwegian bloggers were disqualified for the Vixen Influencer Award. The reason was poorly disclosing advertisements on their channels. The influencers disagreed with the judgement as they argued the rules for the industry were vague, hard or unrealistic to always abide by. The disqualification was soon later revoked by the Vixen jury as they sided with the bloggers explanation of bad legal guidelines. The bloggers were still legally required to be reprimanded and possible fined by ‘Forbrukertilsynet‘ (Ertesvåg & Flaarønning, 2018).

Why is any of this important? For one, the influencer industry is a huge market and rapidly growing. Statista (2018) estimates the global Instagram influencer market size to be worth 1,6 billion USD in 2018 and will grow to 2,38 billion USD by 2019. The projected increase in market size is 48% from 2018 to 2019. Simply put, there is an immense market growth in social media influencers. The industry is also maturing out of its lawless infancy, but nobody knows the destination and quite what the rules will be (Distaso & McCorkindale, 2014). Considering that over 2 billion people have a facebook account, 1,3 billion people watch Youtube, and Instagram has 500 million daily active users this growth is predicted to continue (Brandwatch, 2017), (Fortunelords, 2018).

Influencers should be concerned about how their advertisement practices effects their own trade and their audience, both for business and ethical purposes’. Their audience/consumers should be better informed that they *are* being influenced, *how*, and *to what degree*. It is also important to note how young and impressionable an influencers audience can be (Distaso & McCorkindale, 2014).

Law givers and policy makers should also be better informed to better navigate advertisement transparency and the evolving influencer industry (Gashi, 2017).

From a company perspective it is useful to chart the ethical implications of their advertisement through influencers. A company might pride themselves in being transparent in their advertisement but might be unable to differentiate which influencers they use are.

In academic circles it is interesting to know how the growing entrepreneurial trend of influencing effects society. For marketing executives, it is relevant to make useful and proactive marketing campaigns using influencers that best suit their ambitions.

### **1.3 Opportunity**

The power of influencing is massive with today's technology. Serial-entrepreneurs like Elon Musk use twitter to push their company's agenda, or politicians like Barack Obama use social media to win an election. It is all influencing.

For a commercial influencer, it would seem it has become a challenge to self-regulate one's own advertisement transparency when theory and practice would suggest there may be more to gain, by disclosing less (Reijmersdal, Fransen, Noort, Opre, Vandenberg, Reusch et al., 2016).

The laws in the US, UK, and Norway all agree that there should not be grey areas regarding online advertisement. The audience should always be informed by the nature of online content, and there should not be room for misinformation (Philippa et al., 2017).

Influencers today are stuck between two competing motives; profit and hard-to-enforce laws on one side, and transparency and morals on the other. Despite laws stating the correct choice this conflict of motive seems to create shades of grey.

There is opportunity in observing how these laws and practises are followed and to interview industry actors, the consumers, the influencers, and the law regulators<sup>10</sup>. To learn what makes influencer advertisement 'good' and what makes it 'bad', and where society is heading regarding law and practise?

This work builds on the knowledge that the practises of advertisement disclosure in influencing can lead consumers to be unaware of the content's advertorial nature (Evans et al., 2017). But exactly what 'awareness' is or how it emerges seems to be vague. Hence this paper intends to explore what creates or hinders awareness<sup>11</sup> of advertisement in influencer audiences.

### **1.4 Research Question**

*What creates Advertisement & Sponsorship Awareness for Influencer Audiences?*

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand what creates awareness this chapter explores several key themes in literature. Brands, social media and influencers are explained first, followed by an exploration of laws, practises and theory regarding them. A summary concludes the literature review.

### 2.1 What is a Brand?

The word 'Brand' is 1500 years old and first found in the Germanic language that evolved into old English. It appeared as a noun ca 1000 AD in the epic poem Beowulf, as a synonym for a sword (Heaney 2002). It was used as a verb ca 1400 AD in Wycliffe's religious tract 'An Apology for Lollard Doctrines (Todd 1842). The first 'new' use of 'brand' was in 1922 in the book 'brand names<sup>12</sup> on menus'. B. Stern (2006) writes it is a term so over-defined that its meanings are variable. Researchers may be studying different things with the same name, the same thing with different names, or a combination of them (Stern at el.). During the 15th century 'brand' or 'to brand' symbolized to mark or burn marks on cattle, symbolizing ownership. By the 19th century the term had expanded to include visual-verbal mark, a symbol of quality and trademark. When brand is used as a verb it can have positive connotations (to signal proof of ownership, as a sign of quality), and negative ones (to mark or stamp with infamy, to stigmatize). Historically branding can be broken down into metaphoric, literal, and integrative meaning (B. Stern, 2006: 221). Fournier (1998) describes a brand as 'defined as a consumers' collection of perceptions' but is uncertain whether brand applies to a corporate entity, a public perception, a repository of information, a financial outcome, or all at once. Furthermore, the meaning of brand varies between managers in the same organization. The American Marketing Association's definition of brand is a 'name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or service of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors'. This widely accepted definition has the problem of being too similar a trademark (de Chernatony, 2009). The most holistic and accurate definition is arguably from the fittingly titled paper 'Towards the holy grail of defining 'Brand'' (de Chernatony, 2009):

*"Brand can be defined as a cluster of values that enables a promise to be made about a unique and welcomed experience. "*

This captures the way emphasis may initially be placed on functional oriented values, which then become augmented with emotional oriented values.

## 2.2 What are Personal Brands?

According to Rampersad (2008) a personal brand is an important asset in today's online, virtual and individual age. Everyone has a personal brand, but not everyone is managing theirs strategically. Personal branding is essentially the ongoing process of establishing an image<sup>13</sup> or impression in the mind of others about an individual (Los, 2009). Landau (2013) defines the personal brand in this way: *"Your brand is a perception or emotion, maintained by somebody other than you, that describes the total experience of having a relationship with you."* Despite being virtual, social media and online identity<sup>14</sup> can affect the real world. Because Individuals want to portray themselves a certain way to their social circle, they may work to maintain a certain image on their social media sites. As a result, social media enables the creation of an online identity that may not be completely true to the real self. Today, added emphasis is placed on personal branding, especially in the online world. Employers are now increasingly using social media tools to vet applicants before offering them interviews (Lair, 2005; Landau, 2013). Providing online personas or resumes like a LinkedIn page give job-seekers better odds of being noticed by potential employers. Because of these professional networks, self-branding is useful in finding a job or improving one's professional standing. Personal branding focuses on 'self-packaging,' where *"success is not determined by individuals' internal sets of skills, motivations, and interests but, rather, by how effectively they are...branded"*; According to Lair (2005) aside from professional aspirations, personal branding can also be used on personal-level social networks to flare popularity. The ex-president of the United States of America, Barack Obama owed a good deal of his success to his efficient use of social media. *"One of his most retweeted posts was a photo with his wife Michelle after winning his second term, which was retweeted nearly a million times"* (Devumi, 2017). CEO's like Elon Musk have also had great success leveraging the power of the personal brand. *"On January 28, Elon Musk sparked off the first in a series of intriguing tweets about flamethrowers and zombies. In under a week, he had attracted a third of a million likes and 90.000 retweets, all promoting his private tunnel building initiative, the 'Boring' Company. Musk's public popularity arguably has a greater impact on his company than that of any other business leader. He is bigger than his brand with 19.7 million Twitter followers, compared with Tesla at 2.5 million. Among CEOs, only Bill Gates has more, with 44.2 million - but he gets substantially less engagement"*. The online self is used

as a marketing and promotional tool to brand an individual as a type of person; success on the virtual platforms then becomes *"online social value (that could transform) to real rewards in the offline world."* According to Dijck (2013) the trend of using online personalities as product endorsers started in the mid- 2000s on blogging platforms and has gradually transferred to social media, mainly Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram (Abidin, 2016). Today, buying the power of online influencers has become one of the hottest marketing trends (Hershman, 2017) (Neal, 2017).

### **2.3 Who are Social Media Influencers?**

As social media platforms expand and evolve, the advertising industry has had to change and adapt to continue reaching consumers. The number of social media users has sustained growth with approximately two billion internet users currently using social networks. Not only is the audience becoming larger in size, the time spent on social media is also increasing year over year. According to the Global Web Index, users are spending 1.72 hours per day on social platforms, which makes up 28% of all online activity (Bennett 2015). While the audience is certainly there, the power of influence is too, with 74% of consumers relying on social media to influence their purchasing decisions (Bennett 2014). *"You log onto Instagram and a celebrity confesses their love of Chipotle with a burrito in their hand. Later you are scrolling through Twitter and one of your friends tweets an image with their Starbucks Frappuccino"* – (Steven, 2016). Both are examples of influencer marketing, the only difference being the first one is paid by advertisers and the second is not. These blurred lines between what is a genuine endorsement and what is paid through content-rich platforms is what makes influencer marketing so powerful. Influencer marketing is a digital word-of-mouth, and consumers are much more likely to positively perceive and react to a message that comes from a trusted friend or persona over a sponsored post that comes from a company. According to Nielsen, 92% of consumers believe recommendations from friends and family over all forms of advertising (Whitler 2014). According to Eagar and Dann (2016), Instagram users compose their own self-brand by posting different types of pictures painting them in their desired lifestyle. Many "Instafamous"<sup>15</sup> users use these techniques to position themselves between a celebrity and an everyday person and to assert themselves as credible sources to their followers. They post "autobiography" selfies, pictures portraying mundane, everyday events like grocery shopping or lounging on the couch, to appear relatable to their followers. In contrast, they post "propaganda" selfies with their makeup and hair perfectly done, typically retouched with flattering lighting and camera angles,

to remind us of their physical attractiveness and elevated status. To build up their position as an expert or role model in their online circles, they post “self-help” selfies depicting their mastery of a skill. In combination, these posts construct the influencer’s image as elite, but down-to-earth, attractive, but not without flaws, and as a source of valuable information for followers who want to be more like them (Steven, 2016) (Neal, 2017). It is important to note that most professional influencers are not celebrities in the traditional sense. They have gained elevated status by building their personal brand, in contrast to celebrities who become famous for acting, sports endeavours or similar.

A way to measure an influencers success is through their impressions and engagement. Impressions are the number of people who view a post and engagement is the number of interactions with a post such as likes or shares. Most people have negative associations when forced to view advertisements (Evans et al., 2017). However, when the advertiser’s message comes through an influencer, it is liked and shared (Cho, Huh, & Faber, 2014). An influencer’s followers already have a positive association with that influencer, or otherwise they would not be following them. By utilizing the influencer for their audience and voice, an otherwise ignored advertisement can become a favorable notion for a brand. If an influencer amasses enough of a following and leverages this to advertisers in the form of a beneficial partnership, it can often become their day job. But if caught not disclosing a partnership with an influencer, the consequences in the US are a \$250,000 fine by the Federal Trade Commission and potentially the distrust from consumers for misleading them (Rodriguez 2015). Even though a follower is aware the influencer is being compensated due to the Federal Trade Commission requiring a disclosure in every paid post, followers still view them as authentic. A good influencer is one that has built up the trust with their audience to where a paid product placement in a post seems authentic even though they are receiving compensation. By consistently creating content and building a relationship with their followers, influencers gain the trust and confidence of those who follow them. The application of a product into a ‘real-life’ situation also entices followers to view the product favorably, especially if it is used by someone they admire and trust (Cho et al., 2014). There are potential ethical and legal implications associated with influencer marketing. An ethical dilemma would be that an influencer does not believe in or use the product, but they still post a positive review because they are getting paid. This would be misleading to consumers (P. Goodman & Wajert, 2017).

Influencers communicate a paid endorsement varyingly, in English it is usually by including words or hashtags such as #ad or #sponsored in the post. There are many creative ways to

disclose the paid relationship, however these two are the most common (Steven, 2016). Central to the success of influencers is the management and growth of their personal brands. Studies have shown how they carefully aim at building awareness and audience growth, but also that central to their success is the deep and intimate relationships between their personal brands and their followers (Marlow 2006) (Abidin & Thompson, 2012). It has been noted how some influencers are counting followers in the millions making their reach comparable to traditional media. At the time of writing this paper the singer Selena Gomez was the most followed person on Instagram with 137 million followers.

Stephanie (2015) suggests that non-brand endorsed YouTubers possess higher-rated expertise and trustworthiness. While viewership did not make a difference in perceived expertise, it did result in higher-rated trustworthiness when a YouTuber possessed lower viewership. In addition, there was no interaction effect between endorsement and viewership regarding trustworthiness and expertise. Studies by De Veirman, Cauberghe, and Hudders (2016) show that Instagram influencers with high numbers of followers are found more likable, partly because they are considered more popular. Influencers with large audiences appear as more credible and therefore more persuasive than smaller influencers. Therefore, businesses should consider an SMIs' audience size not only as a metric of their potential reach but also as an indicator of their persuasiveness. However, the difference with 1.5 million of followers and with 150.000 followers can be considered as rather small. This reasoning emphasizes the idea of the power of the middle influencer, which is widespread in online blogs and business magazines. (Granjon & Benedic, 2017)

Social media influencers who promote a lifestyle brand are most successful interacting with consumers when they are authentic, confident, and interactive in their content. Before the rise of social media influencers, advertising to brand consumers was one-sided. Before social media, a consumer could only see a product through print advertisements, billboards, radio ads, and television commercials (Morgan, 2017). In situations where brand messages are passed along by friends and family members, trust may prove to be a more useful construct than credibility, the latter of which has typically been much more common in the advertising literature (Cho et al., 2014). The results by Chin-Lung et al. (2013) indicated that perceived usefulness of bloggers' recommendations and trust had significant influential effect on blog users' attitude toward and intention to shop online.

## 2.4 What is Transparent?

Transparency in general is a topic that regularly appears in both trade and academic publications relating to social media. Rawlins (2009) defined transparency as: *“The deliberate attempt to make all legally releasable information - whether positive or negative in nature - in a manner that is accurate, timely, balanced, and unequivocal, to enhance the reasoning ability of publics and holding organizations accountable for their actions, policies, and practices.”* Rawlins contended that simply disclosing information does not constitute transparency, because it requires stakeholder participation as well as organizational accountability. Transparency was most often associated with three tenets: Being open and honest, reporting the bad with the good, and providing information in a timely manner (Distaso & McCorkindale, 2014).

According to Schnackenberg and Tomlinson (2016) transparency is operating in such a way that it is easy for others to see what actions are performed. It has been defined as the *“quality of intentionally sharing information”*. Transparency in companies result in returns of monetary payoffs, better relationships, quality, cost management, and innovation (Don Tapscott & Ticoll, 2003). Brands must stay true to what they are to be transparent, especially when in crisis. The internet allows consumers to share their personal experiences with products and services, and consumers trust transparent brands (Johan & John, 2006). According to Don Tapscott and Ticoll (2003) opacity is the opposite of transparency and exists to secure personal data and company secrets. Opacity is doomed to fail when trying to hide shady financial deals and sub-par products, sooner or later. Transparency is a significant and powerful antecedent of trust and attitudes (Hustvedt & Kang, 2013). As a thought-experiment one can combine the definitions of ‘Transparency’ with that of a ‘Brand’ mentioned in chapter two, subsection one, resulting in what a ‘transparent brand’ or what a transparent influencer could be thought of as:

*A cluster of values that enables a promise to be made about a unique and welcomed experience (Brand), which operates in intentionally sharing information (Transparency).*

Today’s challenge using the internet and social media is not to communicate that you are transparent, which is popular, but rather to incorporate it into the company culture and encourage and enhance it (Eggers, O’Dwyer, Kraus, Vallaster, & Guldenberg, 2013). *“So, why is transparency less of a ‘remedy for everything’ than you might expect? Because we don’t always pay attention to what’s put in front of us. Sometimes, we don’t have much choice in the*



*matter*" - Jeffrey (2014). In many markets, the absence of choice renders transparency essentially useless. We rationalize decisions that serve our interests instead.

In the US, stealth marketing on blogs has been called 'blogola' (Cammaerts 2008; Jensen 2011). Blogola is a reference to and play on the term of 'payola' – practices originally found in the music industry as far back as the 1950s, where DJs and radio stations were paid to play and provide favorable comment on specific music (Cammaerts 2008). According to Cammaerts (2008), the practice of blogola is becoming commonplace in the blogosphere. *"Far too many YouTubers are dancing around the topic,"* says Simon (2014). *"They do the bare minimum to disclose the nature of these relationships or won't disclose at all. What's important is that it happens in the daylight and is not hidden away."* Indeed, the solution to the problem is disarmingly straightforward. *"People must be clearly notified when they are watching sponsored content,"* says Simon (2014). *"It's as simple as that."*

## **2.5 What is Authentic?**

According to Peterson (2005) authenticity is a social construct and not an attribute called authentic. Benjamin (1969) argues that authenticity rose out of the industrial revolution. That the 'lost works of art' due to mass manufacturing gave rise to the symbol of authenticity by being a stamp of certificate to replace the handmade style of the past (Peterson, 2005). Johan and John (2006) state that consumers identify with brands that are portrayed as 'real' and truthful and that authenticity is important in the fashion industry, as the deciding factor for consumers choosing between many similar clothes and options. Kim et al. (2011) suggests that consumers perceive authenticity when an identity is communicated clearly or in a way that fits with the consumer own viewpoints or "*truths*". Dimara and Skuras (2003) also note that the country of origin is an important deciding factor on the definition of authenticity (Gilmore and Pine, 2007) (Choi, Ko, Young Kim, & Mattila, 2014) (Eggers et al., 2013). Thompson (2000) states that consumers are good at recognizing and producing their version of authentic and that they do not struggle to differentiate real from fake (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) (Spiggle, T. Nguyen, & Caravella, 2012).

Even though authenticity is often considered interchangeable with transparency, it is important to investigate these concepts independently. In fact, Wakefield and Walton (2010) argued that authenticity may be more important than transparency. Authenticity is typically described as something that is real, original, genuine, sincere, and not fake (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). An

individual's authenticity as defined by a survey of Twitter users included revealing private information and was reported to be in direct opposition to strategic self-promotion (Marwick & Boyd, 2010). According to Beverland (2005), Distaso and McCorkindale (2014) branding research has found one of the challenges relating to authenticity is that a commercial focus may not be the best strategy for brand managers.

Gustafsson (2006) writes that trust has been closely linked to both transparency and authenticity. Even though the concept of authenticity has been explored in detail, little research has applied authenticity as it is represented on social media. Authenticity on social media sites may include ensuring the brand is represented accurately and using a human voice as opposed to a faceless, institutional voice. Using a human voice on social media has been found to promote more positive relationships with audiences as well as positive word-of-mouth communication (Park & Lee, 2011) (Distaso & McCorkindale, 2014).

## **2.6 What is Legal?**

Wojdyski, Evans, and Hoy (2018) write that the American Federal Trade Commission considers false advertising that which is "*misleading in a material respect.*" The 1983 FTC Policy Statement on Deception is based on the following three elements:

- (1) There must be a representation, omission, or practice that is likely to mislead the consumer.
- (2) The act or practice must be considered from the perspective of the reasonable consumer.
- (3) The representation, omission, or practice must be material.

Moriarty et al. (2015) says "*given that advertising is a 'paid form of persuasive communication that uses mass and interactive media to reach broad audiences to connect an identified sponsor with buyers', tactics and practices that hinder consumers' ability to identify advertising and its sponsor as such fall within the category of misleading.*"

The Advertising Standards Authority in the United Kingdom has received numerous complaints about advertisements not being properly identified as such, particularly when it comes to subtler methods of advertising via social media, online videos, and blog posts (Mondaq, 2018). The Committee of Advertising Practice published advertising guidance specifically for vloggers and bloggers which has, according to the committee, resulted in an improvement in the way that advertorial content is drawn to the attention of the audience. The Advertising Standards Authority has, however, identified that the difference between sponsorship and an

advertisement does not seem to be 100% clear to all advertisers and influencers and has issued new guides.

The test for content being classed as ‘advertorial<sup>16</sup>’ is twofold. Firstly, there must be payment which does not necessarily have to be money and could be for example complimentary products. Secondly, the business must have control over the editorial content of the blog post, tweet, or vlog<sup>17</sup> entry. When the company behind the product can exercise control over the content of the message it is likely to be considered an advertisement.

When it comes to sponsorship, the influencer may receive payment in the form of money or gifts but there is no surrender of editorial control. The influencer will have complete control over any content or review posted about the product. The Committee of Advertising Practice does not recognize this as advertorial content and it would not have to be identified as such.

Companies and influencers must ensure all advertorials are clearly labelled and acknowledged as such. The substance of the ad is the responsibility of the influencer as well as the company behind the product. The Advertising Standards Authority recommends that those advertising on social media always label their advertisements. There is no specific wording that must be used and common labels that are used within the industry are ‘ad’ and ‘advertisement feature’. Phrases such as ‘in partnership with’ and ‘thanks to our friends at...’, are misleading and should be avoided altogether.

According to Katrina (2016) YouTube marketing is trending and effective but urgently needs transparency. Companies and YouTube content creators are subject to disclosure requirements under US Federal law if the content is an endorsement as defined by the Federal Trade Commission. Pervasive issues with disclosure on YouTube include inconsistency as to how content creators disclose as well as the lack of clarity for disclosures buried in description boxes. The paper proposes that there is an urgent need to increase transparency for YouTube endorsement marketing and that YouTube should promote a uniform standard of disclosure. Contrary to the argument that disclosure undermines the effectiveness of marketing, Katrina (2016) argues that proper disclosure will not only foster viewers’ trust in content creators but will also promote consumer goodwill.

The Broadcasting Act or ‘Kringkastingsloven’ in Norway states that you must disclose if you are profiting or getting services in return for a video post. Your viewers should be informed that they are being influenced to buy something and the rules apply to all social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat (Forbrukertilsynet, 2018).

Hidden advertisement is forbidden in Norway according to the marketing act (Forbrukertilsynet, 2018). The law states that marketing must be made and presented in a way that clearly displays it as marketing. This also applies to channels where non-marketing material is shared like in social media. A clear divide between marketing and organic content is mandatory. Clear advertisement and sponsorship disclosure shall be used in all media and advertorial posts must be marked every time it is exposed to an audience. This included forwarding a post from one channel to another, e.g. sharing a blogpost to facebook. Norwegian law prohibits making any person open advertisement without their knowledge of its marketing purpose.

Influencers are free to decide how to disclose marketing content providing the nature is clear to anyone watching, regardless if they are followers or happened upon the content. The content needs to specify whom the advertising is for. The placement and markings of the disclosure needs to be unhidden, in noticeable writing and big enough font size. Phrases such as '*in cooperation with*', '*competition*', '*Recommendation for*' and '*affiliate links*' does not explain the advertorial nature of the content. There also needs to be consistency with the terms used regarding disclosure as using different terms which have the same meaning and purpose may hinder the clearness of the advertorial message. Norwegian content needs to be disclosed in Norwegian.

The marketing law is strict regarding children. Children and youth are active on social media and have a hard time differentiating organic content from advertisement. This means that influencers with followers under the age of 18 must pay extra attention to what kind of disclosure they use and use a language that children would understand.

## **2.7 What is Disclosure & Persuasion?**

Studies consistently find a negative effect of advertising disclosures showing lower perceived credibility<sup>18</sup> of the blog and the blogger, more negative attitudes toward the blog, and decreased readers' intentions to engage in electronic word-of-mouth (Colliander & Erlandsson, 2015) (Liljander et al., 2015). Importantly, disclosing the sponsored nature of a blog also affects perceptions of the advertised brand. Some studies showed negative effects of disclosing sponsoring in blogs on consumers' attitudes toward the brand, top-of-mind brand awareness (Campbell et al., 2013), and purchase intentions (Liljander et al., 2015). However, other studies showed positive effects of disclosures on brand attitude and purchase intentions (Colliander &

Erlandsson, 2015). These conflicting findings may be caused by the differences between the sources of the disclosures (i.e., an outsider, for example, a tabloid article vs. the blogger himself; see also Carr & Hayes, 2014).

According to the 'Persuasion Knowledge Model' people use their knowledge about a persuasion attempt to either be persuaded or to resist the persuasion (Friestad & Wright, 1994). However, reactance theory posits that, in general, people want to maintain their freedom of choice and do not want to be manipulated (Brehm & Brehm, 1981). Therefore, it is assumed that people tend to resist persuasion attempts when they recognize them as such (Petty & Cacioppo, 1977; Wei et al., 2008; Wood & Quinn, 2003). When blog readers realize that a message has as persuasive goal, this may be experienced as a threat to their freedom of choice, which may evoke resistance strategies to cope with the unwanted persuasion attempt. Since resistance can be both cognitive and affective (Knowles & Linn, 2004), Reijmersdal et al. (2016) propose that the activation of persuasion knowledge can evoke both cognitive and affective resistance responses, and that these strategies may explain the influence of blog disclosures on the advertising's persuasive outcomes. For advertisers, the findings of their study may seem negative. Adding bloggers to the communication mix seems a promising tool to reach potential consumers for many reasons. The advantages of using blogs for advertising are plenty, such as reaching a relevant audience and increased impact because of the hidden nature of this advertising format. Yet, social media guidelines seem to stand in the way of positive outcomes of 'blogvertising'<sup>19</sup>. Reijmersdal et al. (2016) clearly demonstrate that disclosures negatively influence brand responses. However, transparency might be appreciated and recognized in the long run and in the end might soften their resistance. Though their study demonstrates short-term negative effects of disclosures for brands, long-term effects are not examined and could be positive (Reijmersdal et al., 2016).

Social media has been described as the 'Wild West', rich in opportunity but with many dangers (Fertik and Thompson 2010). A major finding was that bloggers go through an evolutionary process as they become more experienced and this process influences their willingness to work with advertisers. Bloggers' attitude to payment for posts are limited but it is suggested that bloggers at times find themselves placed in an ethical quandary and some viewed advertisers as tricksters and charlatans (Archer et al., 2014). Philippa et al. (2017) found strong support for the hypothesis that incentive disclosure has a negative effect on persuasion. For a manager, this implies that using paid reviews will not be as persuasive. As the law is continuously being rewritten, companies are required to disclose the nature of their relationship with influencers.

From the influencer's standpoint, it is worth mentioning that there is no difference in persuasion when one does not disclose anything or discloses that one is unpaid. Furthermore, Philippa et al. (2017) show that source credibility affects authenticity and that influencers should take measures to improve how their followers perceive them, such as combining personal and business posts to show their personalities are many-sided. This is done by incorporating their personal lives into paid posts.

Distaso and McCorkindale (2014) at The Institute of Business Ethics conducted a study with senior business leaders and employees from large organizations in the UK which resulted in an approach to identify a set of ethical guidelines: "*Be fair and prudent,*" "*Avoid deception,*" "*maintain dignity and respect,*" and "*eschew secrecy.*" The guidelines proved a solid ethical framework for users of both social and traditional media, indicating that the rules for disclosure had not really changed instead; it was the actions along the way that had changed.

Brison et al. (2016) found that sponsored posts had fewer likes and comments than organic posts and contained fewer positive sentiments about the influencers. While not statistically significant, the frequency of negative sentiments about the influencers was also higher on sponsored posts. This suggested that followers preferred when their favorite Instagram celebrities posted personal, genuine, spontaneous content as opposed to content that had been incentivized by a brand (Neal, 2017). A study by Evans et al. (2017) indicated that the presence of disclosure, regardless of the variation in language, produced more advertisement recognition compared to no disclosure. While profitable and popular, there exists criticism that much of 'influencer marketing's' success is not because the content is inherently better but because consumers do not understand its advertisement.

Key findings from a study by Lisichkova and Othman (2017) reveal that perceived authenticity, together with trustworthiness, credibility, legitimacy<sup>20</sup>, influencer expertise and their honesty are the main features that have an impact on consumers and their online purchase intent. While influencers that protect their privacy are perceived as uninteresting, a wide majority agrees on transparency being the most important characteristics of an influencer. Organic posts with less focus on promotion are appreciated by followers, as well as an impression that the influencer would use the product freely without any sponsorship agreements (Brorsson & Plotnikova, 2017).

## 2.8 Efforts to Measure Advertisement Perception

Efforts that have examined individuals' ability to distinguish between advertisement and organic content have predominantly relied on Friestad and Wright's (1994) Persuasion Knowledge Model as a theoretical framework. However, Evans et al. 2016 continue to question assumptions of the model as it applies to adults' recognition of advertising in a media environment with an increasingly blurred distinction between advertising and editorial content that features covert advertising tactics (Wojdynski et al., 2018). Online advertisement has evolved to include sponsored content in formats as diverse as blog posts, search engine results, social media posts, and news articles has created a media landscape in which one can no longer assume that adults will recognize advertisement and its persuasion tactics (Wojdynski et al., 2018).

Experimental research on covert formats have largely focused on assessing the advertisers' persuasion motive, which assumes some level of sponsor transparency. Research focused on covert marketing usually *"measures consumers persuasion knowledge when covertness was disclosed, a covert cue was presented, or a different sponsorship motive was perceived"* (Ham et al. 2015). Boerman et al. (2015) and Carlson (2015) claim that *"efforts to assess participants' advertising recognition have generally used a single measure, and that it is becoming increasingly evident that consumers often struggle to identify advertising for what it is: paid-for communication with an identifiable sponsor"* (Wojdynski et al., 2018). Sponsor identification which is an inherent component of advertising (Moriarty et al. 2015).

Although there is agreement that being transparent is vital to non-misleading advertisement we know little about what consumers perceive as being transparent or clear. *"One-size-fits-all disclosure guidelines about how ads should be labelled are likely to be ineffective, because of the wide variety of formats that covert advertising and its disclosures may take online"* (Wojdynski 2016). Using a Multi-Study Scale Development method based on established practices Wojdynski et al. (2018) presents the Sponsorship Transparency scale, which measures consumers' perceptions of the sponsorship transparency in advertising. It defines sponsorship transparency as *"The extent to which a sponsored communication message makes noticeable to the consumer its paid nature and the identity of the sponsor"* and is conceptually adjacent to the Persuasion Knowledge Model. The study resulted in an equal-weight scale consisting of statements to be evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale<sup>21</sup> as can be seen in chapter ten, subsection one, a common format used in marketing.

## 2.9 Summary

*“Brand can be defined as a cluster of values that enables a promise to be made about a unique and welcomed experience. “ (de Chernatony, 2009). Personal Brands are as McNally and Speak define it; “A perception or emotion, maintained by somebody other than you, that describes the total experience of having a relationship with you” (David & Karl, 2012). An influencer is a personal brand that shares a ‘virtual word-of-mouth’ through social media, and consumers are more likely to positively perceive and react to a message from an influencer over a traditional brand<sup>22</sup>. Transparency has been defined as “the quality of intentionally sharing information”, while authenticity is typically described as something that is “real, original, genuine, sincere, and not fake” (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016) (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). Both are important factors for a successful influencer.*

The UK’s Advertising Standards Authority says that influencers must ensure all advertorials are clearly labelled and acknowledged as such. There is no specific wording that must be used but misleading phrases such as *“in partnership with”* are best avoided. The USA’s Federal Trade Commission have similar rules; *“Clearly disclose when you have a financial or family relationship with a brand. Don’t assume that using a platform’s disclosure tool is sufficient. Avoid ambiguous disclosures like ‘collab’ and don’t rely on disclosure placed after a link or in easy-to-miss locations”* (Commision, 2017). The ‘Norwegian Broadcasting Act’, and ‘Marketing Act’ which are regulated and enforced by the Norwegian Consumer Ombudsman (Forbrukertilsynet) and the Marketing Council (Markedsrådet) agree with both English and American formulations; *“if you are profiting or getting services in return for a video post, you are obliged to disclose this.”* Viewers shall be informed that they are being persuaded to buy something and the rules apply to all social media (Forbrukertilsynet, 2018).

The concept of authenticity has been explored in detail, but little research has applied authenticity as it is represented on social media (Park & Lee, 2011) (Distaso & McCorkindale, 2014). Studies consistently find a negative effect of advertising disclosures showing lower perceived credibility<sup>23</sup> (Colliander & Erlandsson, 2015) (Liljander et al., 2015). Some studies showed negative effects of disclosing sponsoring in blogs on consumers’ attitudes toward the brand (Campbell et al., 2013), and purchase intentions (Liljander et al., 2015). Other studies showed positive effects of disclosures on brand attitude and purchase intentions (Colliander & Erlandsson, 2015).



The advantages of using blogs for advertising are plenty, such as reaching a relevant audience and increased impact because of the hidden nature of this advertising format (Fertik and Thompson 2010). It is suggested that bloggers at times find themselves placed in an ethical quandary and some viewed advertisers as tricksters and charlatans (Archer et al., 2014). Philippa et al. (2017) found strong support for the hypothesis that incentive disclosure has a negative effect on persuasion. Brison et al. (2016) found that sponsored posts had fewer likes and comments than organic posts and contained fewer positive sentiments about the influencers (Neal, 2017). A study by Evans et al. (2017) indicated that the presence of disclosure, regardless of the variation in language, produced more advertisement recognition compared to no disclosure. ‘Influencer marketing’s’ success is often criticized for consumers not understanding its advertisement nature. Experimental research on covert formats have largely focused on assessing the advertisers’ persuasion motive, which assumes some level of sponsor transparency (Ham et al. 2015). Boerman et al. (2015) and Carlson (2015) claim that *“efforts to assess participants’ advertising recognition have generally used a single measure, and that it is becoming increasingly evident that consumers often struggle to identify advertising for what it is: paid-for communication with an identifiable sponsor”* (Wojdyski et al., 2018) (Moriarty et al. 2015).

The ‘Persuasion Knowledge Model’ developed by Friestad & Wright (1994) describes how people cope with persuasion attempts. Reactance theory posits that in general, people want to maintain their freedom of choice and do not want to be manipulated (Brehm & Brehm, 1981). Therefore, it is assumed that people tend to resist persuasion attempts when they recognize them as such (Petty & Cacioppo, 1977; Wei et al., 2008; Wood & Quinn, 2003). Evans et al. 2016 continue to question assumptions of the model as it applies to adults’ recognition of advertising in a media environment, with an increasingly blurred distinction between advertising and editorial content that features covert advertising tactics (Wojdyski et al., 2018).

A study by Wojdyski et al. (2018) created a 7-point scale for measuring transparent sponsorship in influencer content. It was called the Sponsorship Transparency Scale, and can be found in chapter ten, subsection one.

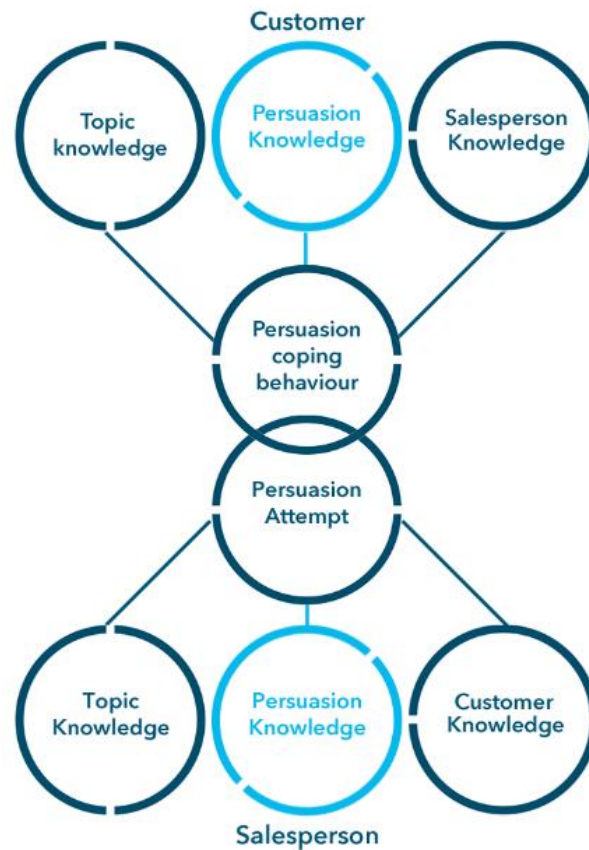


Figure 1, Persuasion Knowledge Model.

<b>Reactance Theory</b>
<b>Reactance Theory:</b> Prevention of actions leads to action (To prove control).
<b>Description:</b> When people feel that their freedom to choose an action is threatened they get an unpleasant feeling called 'reactance'. This also motivates them to perform the threatened behaviour, thus proving that their free will has not been compromised.
<b>Research:</b> Pannabaker and Sanders (1976). Put one of two signs on college bathroom walls. One reads 'Do not write on these walls under any circumstance' whilst the other reads 'Please don't write on these walls'. A couple of weeks later the former had far more graffiti on them.
<b>Example:</b> When persuading my children, I have to be careful because I know that if I push too hard they will do what I have told them not to do, just to show me who is really in charge.
<b>Use:</b> Beware of persuading too overtly or too much. If people get wind that they are being railroaded, they will leap right off the tracks.

Figure 2, Reactance Theory.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methods used during the study, including the literature review, research strategy, data collection, and selection of primary data. ‘Research Methods for Business Students’ by Robert Barcik (2016) was used as a framework.

#### 3.1 Research Strategy

This paper has been completed by doing mostly basic research, with some applied research characteristics. The social media influencer marketing field is young and fast changing, so an exploratory approach was chosen to gather data faster as opposed to explanatory research nature. The research question is phrased in a (*what?*) form, compared to descriptive which is usually stated in (*how?*), and explanatory in (*why?*). An ‘inductive’ research approach was chosen as ‘deductive’ is arguably more suited for quantitative research, and the ‘abductive’ approach was excluded due to its extensive time span. Qualitative research design, which examines relationships among entities was chosen. Influencers, regulators and audiences were the entities in this study. Combining quantitative and qualitative design was avoided as much as possible, although a small quantitative observation was done where Youtube influencers were categorized and sorted by variables as can be read in chapter five, subsection three.

Narrative inquiry<sup>24</sup> was chosen as the research strategy and the main data source was collected through interviews, and the collective experience from each interview provided the findings. Doing a case study was excluded as the generalisability was perceived as difficult when choosing influencers as use-cases. Researcher bias when choosing influencers would also have been a threat. One important challenge with narrative inquiry is that information is susceptible for subjective views, so triangulation was important. This was done through multiple narratives describing the same topic as well as different backgrounds and expertise in the interviewees/narrators. Later this narrative was compared to literature.

Two units of analysis were chosen, influencer audiences and law regulators. The population was influencer audiences and the elements were a single person of an audience. A cross sectional study was chosen as it fit well with the changing trends and use of social media.

### **3.2 Literature Review**

Due to the wide/general definitions within marketing literary search was confined to marketing and business journals. Below are the rules and practices used when researching and gathering articles:

- Always checked the 20 most relevant hits if there were that many.
- Searched the same keywords across platforms and the words needed to be in the abstract or title, which can be found in chapter ten, subsection three.
- Read paper abstracts and conclusions, then saved the relevant ones.
- Used several different journals through ‘journal hub sites’. The journals used were based on google search results when searching marketing terms, the journals that did not show good results were excluded. The four journal and search hubs used were; Sage, Science direct, Google Scholar, and JSTOR.

More journal engines were planned but the searches were getting diminishing results, as the same papers started to reappear. The other planned sites were; Elsevier, Oria, Microsoft academics, SSRN, Springer, and IDEAS search. Two rounds of literature searches were done, the first in winter 2017 and the second in February 2018. Searches were done in the same order and type formatting. 225 research papers were narrowed down to 25 that seemed to be highly relevant and were used for the initial literature review. A thematic structure<sup>25</sup> was chosen for the literature review to naturally explore influencer marketing.

### **3.3 Reliability & Validity**

#### *Threats to research reliability and counter measures*

Participant error<sup>26</sup>: Questions were asked in the same manner and form to all interview subjects. There is always a threat to reliability with unstructured or semi structured interviews which was combated by several narrator perspectives on the same topic.

Participant bias<sup>27</sup>: The interviews were recorded but were kept confidential. This was also explained to the narrators to ensure better unfiltered responses.

Research error<sup>28</sup>: The interviews were scheduled roughly at the same time of the day, around noon. There was only one interview held each day to ensure the researcher was equally prepared and rested before each interview.

Research bias<sup>29</sup>: Recordings of the interviews were kept for transcription later. This ensured the wording and tonal meaning was kept. Norwegians were interviewed in Norwegian so that that the interview had a more candid and natural progression. One narrator was English, and the interview was as well. The Norwegian interviews were transcribed in Norwegian and later translated into English which can induce bias, convolute the message or simply translate badly. Special care was taken when translating specific marketing terminology to insure the meaning was not lost. The transcripts have therefore been kept in chapter ten, subsection five, in addition to the translated narratives in chapter four.

#### *Threats to research validity and counter measures*

Construct validity<sup>30</sup>: By using a semi structured interview form the responses and the thoughts of the narrators are more open ended and possibly honest, which should provide a wider understanding than by using more structured interview methods. Fitting for a research question using a (*what?*) formulation.

Internal validity<sup>31</sup>: What creates advertisement and sponsorship awareness is revealed by triangulating the answers from the narrators with each other, as well as with theory and observation. Any discrepancies were checked against the other data sources and the more reliable or frequent answers were chosen.

External validity<sup>32</sup>: The results can be generalized to western and English-speaking influencers and their audiences because they have similar legal structures and practises in place for producing, consuming, and enforcing influencer content. Norwegian culture and influencing profession is similar enough to bigger markets such as the American or British that the findings can be generalized to them. The sample size and the specific narrators need to be considered. E.g. are the interviewees who were willing to join biased in their opinion compared to someone who did not want to join. No influencer was willing to do a recorded interview. Two were initially scheduled only to be cancelled later. In contrast, all the non-influencer narrators contacted, including high-ranking and busy experts within the marketing fields and government agreed to an interview. As a result, this paper lacks in the direct narration of what influencers believe their audience can perceive of advertisement and sponsorship. Two informal talks were however had with influencers and a lecture regarding influencing was attended. Speculations as to why influencers did not want to comment on a paper exploring their advertisement disclosure practices are left to the reader.

### **3.4 Data Collection & Analysis**

The data sources were split in two, primary data via interviews and secondary data via observation of influencer channels. Planning and conducting interviews was time extensive and was the biggest limitation. Tertiary data was used in the form of online indexes when observing influencers. A lecture held by Louise Fuchs, the COO of the influencer agency United Influencers was also used as an additional data source, as well as informal talks with influencers.

9 narrators in total were interviewed, excluding the influencers. An indication that the sample size was sufficient was that the data started becoming satirized, and further interviews would have yielded less new data. A heterogeneous purposive sampling technique was used, where the population was chosen based on the assumption they would give the best data and help answer the research question. To make the data gathered more generalizable, efforts were made to include variation in the personalities of the audience interviewees, as well as gender and interests. The observation was done as a complete observer through social media channels.

Semi structured interviews were chosen to explore the research topic in a wide manner and a list of themes and key questions were written based on literature. The interview guide can be found in chapter ten, subsection four. A test interview was held, and the interview guide was slightly altered to ensure a more natural interview progression.

Narrators were either not given any knowledge on advertisement theory at all, or in some cases given knowledge after fully exploring the interviewees previous understanding, to gather as much unbiased data as possible.

The purpose of the interviews was explained and then the interview subjects were encouraged to speak as much as possible.

A list of the interview subjects can be found in chapter four, subsection one.

## 4 FINDINGS

This chapter shows the translated and summarized nine narratives given by the interviewees and divides them into five main themes:

- 1) Awareness                      Explores what advertisement awareness is and how it is created.
- 2) Grey Area                      Explores the conflict of awareness in the influencer industry.
- 3) Audience                      Explores the underlying behavior of audiences.
- 4) Influencer                      Explores the underlying behavior of influencers.
- 5) Regulator                      Explores the underlying behavior of regulators.

The interview narratives were distributed based on which theme it related to best. Some themes and topics overlap. The interpretation of the narratives is discussed in the next chapter to have a clear separation between the interview transcript and the thematic meaning behind them.

As findings are objective data from a study, the choice was made to leave a significant part of the ‘raw’ transcripts in the findings. These are later summarized in the discussion, chapter five. Introducing the summarized version sooner would entail interpretation of the findings.

It is important for the reader to be able to see the objective narrative before the interpreted. It is not necessary however to read the following chapter in its entirety because it can be lengthy and repetitive, as several narratives adhere to multiple themes.

The reader is therefore encouraged to skip ahead to chapter five where the interviews have been shortened to interpretations and refer to the origin narrator in chapter four. The anonymized interview subjects are presented on the next page followed by the narratives thematically sorted.

The full transcripts can be found in chapter ten, subsection five.

## 4.1 Narrators

- Mariel** Associate Professor in Digital Marketing, with a PhD in Cognitive Psychology and a wide background in Psychology, Journalism, and Experimental Research.
- Nils** Advisor at Mediatilsynet, or ‘The Norwegian Media Authority’ is a Norwegian administrative agency under the Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs charged with various tasks relating to Broadcasting, Newspapers, and Films. Nils works with regulating Video Advertisement.
- Vivian** Author and Professor of Psychology, as well as high-ranking member of the department of psychology at the University of Oslo. Specialist in clinical psychology. Personal interests in negative media exposure, internet-based therapy and communication and leadership.
- Thea** Senior Legal Advisor at Forbrukertilsynet, or ‘The Norwegian Consumer Ombudsman’, which is a government-appointed administrative agency in Norway for consumer affairs and regulate the marketing of goods and services is done in accordance with marketing law.
- Jenny** Social Scientist and Senior Advisor at ‘Datatilsynet’, or ‘The Norwegian Data Protection Authority’, The national data protection authority for Norway. An independent administrative body under the Ministry of Government Administration and Reform.
- Adrian** Male audience member in his late-20’s. Medium social media use, mainly Snapchat, Instagram and Youtube, with personal interests in video games, technology and comedy. Follows some influencers.
- Stig** Male audience member in his late-20’s. Low social media use, mainly Youtube and Facebook, with personal interests in video games, technology, motorsports and sports. Follows few influencers.
- Malin** Female audience member in her early-20’s. High social media use, Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook, with personal interests in beauty, lifestyle and fashion. Follows many influencers.
- Filip** Male audience member in his early-20’s. Low social media use, Facebook. personal interests in travel, hiking, and sports. Follows few influencers.
- Julia** Female audience member in her late-20’s. High social media use. Instagram and Snapchat with personal interests in travel. Follows many influencers.



## 4.2 Awareness

*When discussing how influencers operate:*

***Thea's narrative:*** Influencers want to be law abiding. We disagree on what advertisement and what 'good enough' ad disclosure is. Influencers disagree as well on this point. Some influencers have no trouble abiding the rules, while others don't e.g. want to use English disclosure words or don't want to be too commercial. We perceive influencers as thinking their credibility is hurt by stating too much advertisement. We have no reason to conclude however that explicitly stating commercial intent, or ad disclosing will diminish your credibility. We think it is the opposite, if you are honest with your readers it will make you credible. They feel it doesn't represent how they feel, it is not 'being real' for them. There is a lot of good disclosure out there though, especially with the big influencers. There is varied practice in disclosure between the big influencers and the medium to small, and down to the follower size of you and me. It gets complicated with social media because you must disclose ads across platforms. Each platform needs to individually state disclosure.

***Vivian's narrative:*** Sharing intimate knowledge is the currency of influencers. That's how they become famous. Traditional public figures and leaders don't need to share as much and often take great care in separating their public and personal life. Credibility is the grey area in influencing. Sharing about your nice party, things and food. Then your readers might not know that's all paid for. If you lose credibility you lose your biggest relationship factor with your audience. Credible means there is coherence between what you say and what you do, a large part of who you are as a person. If you depict yourself in a certain way, you're credible if that depiction is true. It hurts for influencers to be discovered to have lied. Influencer pretend to be authentic all the time, and it works if they don't get caught. Authenticity is a duality term, meaning you need to appear authentic, but few of us are on social media. It's stylized and polished. We try to present ourselves in a better image. But it is deeply human. There are grey areas when you have gone too far. Influencers are dependent on being perceived as authentic.

***Julia's narrative:*** Negative side for me is that I become influenced. I see them traveling to places I don't want to travel to, but they make it seem cool like Dubai. Influencers are paid to portray an amazing time. But it's not like that. It's their job to get paid for portraying Dubai in a good light and that's fine. What's not fine is when they portray e.g. intimate deodorant which I know they don't use. The laws regulating influencing is probably being followed but I see a lot of violation.

**Adrian's narrative:** Influencing is positive if you are promoting mental health or something similar. I don't see anything positive in promoting general brands unless they give half their money to charity.

**Filip's narrative:** I haven't noticed if Influencers follow laws or not though, I never click on ads. At least on facebook it doesn't say promotion the times I've seen it.

*When discussing what creates Awareness:*

**Thea's narrative:** A good enough disclosure on Instagram would be stating 'annonse' or 'reklame' in the 'marking' of the content and in the first available line of text.

**Nils' narrative:** We sat down with Forbrukertilsynet and looked how the problems with advertisement in influencing could best be solved. There is an issue when you're dealing with young influencers, and us regulators have different approaches. We both creating an online guide that is similar and conveys the same message, there needs to be a divide between commercial and editorial content. Influencer's content is known for being a mix of commercial and editorial, from their own lives and from the advertiser they have been paid to integrate. Making the divide clear is a problem.

**Julia's narrative:** On Instagram you can spot influencers clearly. Young people might not realize they are paid. I think the kids have trouble separating what's original. I think they think blogging is an online diary for fun and not a business. My sister recommending me something is different from an influencer recommending me something, she does not have an agenda. Its clearest when something is an ad when its written. Hidden ads are when they don't write or state it. Harder to know when they're in a collaboration and e.g. getting clothes. They don't necessarily post anything specific, but still wear sponsored clothes.

**Malin & Stig's narrative:** We don't like commercials, they are uninteresting to me. Malin notices ads on Instagram easiest with many famous influencers selling products. I sometimes think about how they can defend their ad. Do they think it's a great product or is it just to make money? I think that's scary. It's easier to sell when you put a face to a product. We would probably sell more if we used an influencer, but I don't want people to buy products for reasons other than they like it. When seeing an influencer backing something you think they got paid.

**Adrian's narrative:** I notice ads all the time, there so much of it popping up, especially on facebook. It feels pushed on me. I think it's apparent when the ads have been 'staged'. If it feels more natural I don't notice it as much. It's just become a natural thing, sponsorship. I remember

seeing a TV-show and everyone was drink Voss water. That really stuck out. You can sense if an ad is fake. You get a better feeling when a commercial manages to hit right. I think it often easy to spot ads. It's about the approach of the people in it. And in social media you have headers and titles and such. If it were someone I knew, and a product suddenly popped up on their page it 'be harder. Clear writing makes it easier and I'm used to direct my view toward any potential advertiser behind the post. If I don't know the brand from before it may be more difficult. I feel like the range from 18-20 years old people are good at spotting it. But younger children maybe don't and usually don't know ethical and correct ways to use social media while old people are maybe more naïve don't understand that it's a commercial I've clicked one of Kevin Harts' post several times thinking it's a funny video, and then later realizing its an ad. I think he should have a little mark telling people it's an ad.

**Filip's narrative:** I occasionally notice someone in my feed saying e.g "You have to check out this soap, and it changed my life". Did someone pay you to say that or what? They don't say they do it for money, but it makes you wonder when they post something so out of character. I notice sponsorship when listening to podcasts, during breaks in it where they state who is sponsoring them. In some videos they talk for a while and then a product pops up and they talk about how it changed their life. I notice ads on facebook messenger, it's not relevant to me and is obnoxious. I don't think you have to be good at spotting ads, I think their pretty obvious. Seeing a person post about the same e.g. soap and linking to the site with a story how it changed their life is not very convincing. I'm like "This is not your doing, I know who you are".

*When discussing who influencers are:*

**Vivian's narrative:** Social media has lowered the bar for people to get publicity. People whom may have never got the chance to be in the public eye, because they would not pass all the traditional filters in traditional media. They have a large control of the depiction of themselves. They build a role, build a façade. It will vary how self-exposing they are, and how much they 'play' a part. 'Pilotfrue's blog became popular after sharing very intimate details of her struggles becoming pregnant. It's dependant on becoming close to you as a person, and it's important to share intimate information.

**Julia's narrative:** An influencer is a person who has influence on other people though social media. Somebody often with a lot of followers and a lot of impact.

**Malin & Stig's narrative:** I do get influenced, not necessarily by influencers but more by experiences of professional people and their recommendations. The influencers are probably professional as well, but they don't know enough about the products, still they are selling it.

**Adrian's narrative:** Influencing seems cynical. Sometimes a bit desperate as they get instructed to make money, not unlike most jobs when I think about it. But it's more apparent when you're an influencer and the focus is on you as a person. I guess you lose credibility if you take on too many jobs.

### 4.3 Grey Area

*When asked about their thoughts on social media and influencing:*

**Jenny's narrative:** The personal data industry is highly complex. The system is tailored vague, it's easy and user friendly. People who realize negative sides of data collection and profiling can experience the 'Chilling Effect', which means users stop using services for fear of being profiled. A recent master's thesis noticed it in minority teenagers in Norway. They experienced feeling 'watched' and felt they could not say certain things.

**Filip's narrative:** A positive with influencing is that people you might otherwise not have heard from are being heard from. But that's also the negative side, like anti-science, anti-vaccines. So, I can see both the good and the bad to it. Alternate ideas are more likely to be accepted online than in the 'real world', and you can find people who agree with them. With money into the equation I think you accentuate the pros and cons I talked about earlier.

**Vivian's narrative:** Influencers pretend to be authentic all the time, and it works if they don't get caught. Authenticity is a duality term, meaning you need to appear authentic, but few of us are on social media. It's all stylized and polished. We try to present ourselves in a better image. There is no absolute authentic and it's is deeply human. There are grey areas for when you have gone too far. Influencers are dependent on being perceived as authentic.

**Adrian's narrative:** There is a very clear divide between an original post and a sales post. It's obvious to me.

*When asked about the laws regarding influencing:*

**Jenny's narrative:** To not affect the subconsciousness of people is a law within TV and 'kringkastningsforskriftene'. I believe if that law were applied to targeted marketing it would violate the law, because they are "inside" the mind.

**Thea's narrative:** We're tipped a lot about Instagram channels and blogs for not disclosing properly. There's a lot of grey numbers regarding small influencers. A lot of advertisers send out products to small influencers without any guidelines regarding disclosure.

**Nils' narrative:** The 'affect subconscious law' derives from a period where people experimented adding a 1/10 sec picture in movies to influence people in secret. The law was to prevent that, but I don't think it's that relevant today, and how would you prove someone had been influenced subconsciously? We don't use that law, no. One of the areas we focus on regulating is children watching Youtube. Even though advertisement targeted directly at children is not allowed in Norway. Forbrukertilsynet are mainly concerned with that however. We want children to be able to clearly distinguish advertisement from organic content. But to what extent they understand it is another question. Should the school be more involved in teaching critical media understanding? We try to target parents with our guides because of this. We sat down with forbrukertilsynet and looked how the problems with advertisement in influencing could best be solved. An issue arises when you're dealing with young influencers if us regulators have different approaches. We both created an online guide that is similar and conveys the same message. There needs to be a divide between commercial and editorial content. Influencer content is a mix of commercial and organic/editorial content from their own lives and from the advertisement they have been paid to integrate. A clear divide is problematic.

*When asked about their experiences being influenced and from ads online:*

**Julia's narrative:** It's hard to think about a time I have been influenced, but I'm sure I have been. It's probably more subconscious choices. Its clearest to me when something is an ad when its written, since I use Instagram most. And hidden ads would be when they don't write it. It's hard to know when they are in a collaboration and getting clothes, but not necessarily to post anything specific, so they still feature their clothes in posts but don't mention it.

**Malin & Stig's narrative:** I think if ads were not targeted it wouldn't affect me, it 'be less interesting though. I think it's better with targeted ads. But it does lead to buying pressure, when seeing others. I understand the ads pay for the service were using. Young girls can have additional pressure with beauty standards and I think they're more affected. Ads also becomes

so hidden, I want to know if something is an ad or not. You could be ‘fooled’ and it could be a bad influence like with the influencers that advertise for plastic surgery and think that’s fine.

*Adrian’s narrative:* I think Kevin Hart should have a little mark telling people it’s an ad. Older people have a different relationship to ads I think. More naïve and understand less it’s a commercial.

#### 4.4 Audience

*When asked about Social Media:*

*Thea’s narrative:* Traditional media makes it very clear you are watching an ad, whether walking past a billboard or seeing a commercial on TV. But in social media you take advantage of people’s innate goodwill on SoMe, that they share a lot of themselves. It becomes a ‘relationship’ with the influencer, you feel you know them. It’s smart marketing to introduce commercial products into that ‘personal format’ where influencers have built a ‘relationship’ with their followers. Social media also made it easy to target an audience through influencers, you know who they are.

*Vivian’s narrative:* Humans are group animals and we tend to copy whatever our reference group says and does. The bar is lowered to become a person of influence with social media. It’s also easier to share taboo subjects like mental health, sickness, and information in general. It is however a platform for entertainment and maybe not good channels for deeper conversation or a forum for science. People want easy stories by interesting people.

*Julia’s narrative:* The positive side of social media is inspiration. Inspiration for when I’m bored.

*When asked about Influencers:*

*Mariel’s narrative:* That we’re influenced by people with credibility is nothing new. We look to people with expertise within an area. We have seen that in marketing for ages, that we use spokespeople to back a product. What’s new is the interaction with these influential people with social media and blogs. I don’t know how aware the audience is of this. Many people actively seek influential people, they want advice, they want guides they can follow. I think it then becomes irrelevant if the content is an ad. They’re after a product, routine, or way of doing things. I think they see that advertisement as recommendations. The divide between organic and commercial is being less clear with influencers. I think if you follow an influencer you

regard them as a good source of information. Most people are aware that they promote products on their channel, but they accept it because they also get advice. I don't think they always know what's an ad or not though. I do think people seeking influencers clearly see difference between traditional marketing and social media influencer marketing.

***Julia's narrative:*** I stand by my choice of buying Kiley Jenner's lip kit. I would have bought it anyways as you could not try it without buying it. It was a risk, but I just needed to try it because everyone was talking about it.

***Malin & Stig's narrative:*** Most people with a lot of followers make a living of advertising for stuff. But they do have a lot of personal content as well. I think a lot of the things they wear is probably sponsored. That's okay, it's their job like any other sales job. But it's not all positive, because people don't necessarily want to see ads.

*When asked about advertisement and data collection:*

***Vivian's narrative:*** Most people are irritated by advertisement and want to avoid it. You experience it as a disturbance and try to skip it as much as possible.

***Mariel's narrative:*** People tend to appreciate relevant content, so people generally like advertisement tailored/targeted to their likes and dislikes. The social cost of not being on e.g. facebook to not be exposed to targeted ads is too great for most people, at least young people.

***Jenny's narrative:*** Commercial industry earns money from gathering and selling data. Profiling is very common in the advertisement industry. You have little control over how your profile is gathered and made. Until recently advertisers (e.g. Coop) have had services that collect people's data, in this case a customer card. We believe if the service functions without data collection, that the collection should be optional. The Commercial side was/is hesitant to comply with these rules because they believe customers (audience) would just 'unsubscribe' from data collection. Customers however are usually more than willing to share data because the tailored experience is wanted. E.g. buy a lot of caviar and get a coupon for caviar.

***Malin & Stig's narrative:*** Stig notices a lot of targeted ads on Youtube. I think targeted ads is helpful overall because you get offers, but I also feel a bit forced. There's pros and cons to ads. I think it's okay with offers, but it can lead you to spend more money. I think that if the ads were not targeted it would not affect me, I would be less interesting though. It does lead to pressure of buying stuff you see others have. Young girls can have the additional pressure of beauty standards and I think they become more affected. Some ads don't work because their

uninteresting, like most of the stuff in the mail, it just gets thrown out. You don't want to spent time on it. On Youtube all kinds of ads pop up that are uninteresting to me. I sometimes think about how they can defend backing a product. Do they think it's a great product or is it just to make money? I think that's scary. I've seen influencers not be able to answer why they are advertising a product over another. The ads become so hidden, I want to know if something is an ad or not. You could be 'fooled' and it could be a bad influence like with the influencers that advertise for plastic surgery and think that's fine.

***Adrian's narrative:*** I would like to not have ads. Facebook seems more targeted, while Instagram is maybe more varied, and brand focused. I think it's apparent that the ads have been 'staged'. If it feels more naturally I don't think about it as much. Other times I don't really think about it, it has just become a natural thing. I saw an American TV-show, and everyone was drink Voss water. That really stuck out. I think it's easy to spot Kevin Harts promotion from the rest of his content. Because of his being, he kind of breathes in before promoting. And he has a certain way of saying it, like 'make sure to subscribe and buy my stuff at www...'. It's his body language. But in the still image and the context its very casual, every day, then when you start playing the video and he starts talking you figure out it's promotion.

***Filip's narrative:*** I did not ask for it, I don't want it. It would be worse if it was targeted at me. I think if the ads were targeted it would be equally annoying, but more terrifying. I don't like buying stuff, its stressful to me. I don't get much enjoyment from it and don't want to be a part of it. I don't think you have to be good at spotting ads, I think their pretty obvious. Seeing a person post about the same e.g. soap and linking to the site with a story how it changed their life is not very convincing. I'm like "This is not your doing, I know who you are", and then I block them. I don't think you have to be good to notice these things.

## **4.5 Influencer**

*When asked about targeted and hidden ads:*

***Jenny's narrative:*** Customers however are usually more than willing to share data because the tailored experience is wanted. E.g. buy a lot of caviar and get a coupon for caviar.

***Thea's narrative:*** There is a lot of hidden advertisement out there. Instagram is a good example of random people promoting a product, without any disclosure or not good enough disclosure. We experience that influencers generally want to be law abiding. They have the same starting



point. We disagree on the definition of advertisement and what ‘good enough’ ad disclosure is. There is a lot of variance within the influencers on this point. Some influencers have no trouble abiding the rules, while others don’t e.g. want to use English disclosure words or don’t want to be too commercial. We have no reason to conclude however that stating commercial intent, or ad disclosing will diminish your credibility. We think it’s the opposite, if you are honest with your readers it will make you credible. There is a big difference in the practices of influencers, because there is a lot of good disclosure out there, especially with the big influencers. It gets complicated with social media because you must disclose across platform. Each platform needs to individually state disclosure. Then there is increasingly varied practice in disclosure between the big influencers and the medium to small and down to the follower size of you and me. We have been focusing on the influencers however and punishing them, because it is easier to punish the person who created the content, and not good enough disclosure. We are looking into how to change the focus onto the advertisers. Advertisers need to become clearer toward their influencers with guidelines to the content. Influencers have a varied agenda. We have heard of influencers getting paid more for not specifying that something is an ad. We have not seen this ourselves however. I personally don’t know how aware the influencers are that they are in fact doing marketing, and how much of it is bad intent to misinform and earn more, and how much is just ‘didn’t know better’ and thought they had done enough. It’s more tempting to write the disclosure at the end for them. Some people might not know it should be at the top, especially if you haven’t read our guideline. Others are afraid to be perceived as commercial posters, especially non ‘traditional’ influencers like athletes and celebrities. They’re a bit reserved regarding disclosure language. They often disagree that they are advertising at all. That’s often the problem, that we disagree on what’s advertisement and to what extent consumers should be able to realize that something is. Athletes/celebrities don’t feel ‘bought’ you could say, they feel they do this because they want to, and they feel like they’re not a blogger. A parallel to traditional media houses like newspapers feel the same way often. “We are not bought to think this way, we’re journalists”, but then we need to remind them that they have been paid, so it is advertisement and needs to be appropriately disclosed.

***Nils’ narrative:*** There’s an issue when you’re dealing with young influencers, and us regulators have different approaches. We created an online guide that is similar and conveys the same message, there needs to be a divide between commercial and editorial content. Influencers create content as a mix of commercial and organic/editorial content. There’s a problem with making the divide clear. Consumer have the right to know who’s behind the content. It’s

problematic with influencers who almost dangerously mix what they themselves want to report of their own life and what the advertiser/sponsor wants. There's become a lot of influencer agencies and networks. We are active with the agencies, we talk a lot with them and try to get them to teach their influencers. That makes our job easier. It's important that this becomes the learning package when signing with agencies so that this info is conveyed from the start. We speculate among ourselves that the blog world and the more established actors within the influencer industry have kept an old reluctance to disclose properly. While our experience is that the younger influencers are more okay with it and learn it from the start. With them we haven't met the same reluctance and argument that they lose credibility with disclosure. We argue that they get credibility as an influencer from being honest, credibility is your currency. On Youtube we feel this is becoming an accepted view. I don't think they have lost anything on being honest with their ad/sponsorship. Before our guide launch we investigated the top influencer on Youtube and the disclosure as horrible, like three or four were following the rules, from a pool of 30-40. After the launch about two thirds were OK disclosed. A quick effect. Product placement is a rising trend the recent years. Incorporating organic content with commercial content has got a boost the recent years. Integrating it with organic to make it more credible. Traditional ads have become increasingly easy to skip or ignore. I think this kind of advertisement will surely grow, also because the influencers have a big influencing power, and have a target segment ready for advertisers. It's important we don't allow practise that encourage hidden ads to become common. PFU, pressens faglige utvalg have a lot of cases recently regarding the mix of editorial and commercial content, they are very concerned with this.

***Vivian's narrative:*** Advertisers normally then want to camouflage advertisement as organic content. They also want to eliminate non-relevant ads, so it's more appealing.

***Julia's narrative:*** Influencer like to break the law though. Norwegian influencers are probably better at disclosing than American. Probably because the Norwegians have been caught.

***Malin & Stig's narrative:*** I think on Instagram and on blogs influencers are honest with their ads. I think when advertising or sponsoring a product as an influencer you should clearly state that this is not your product, but they are selling it for someone.

***Adrian's narrative:*** There becomes this very clear divide between the content.

**Filip's narrative:** I have become aware of ads after starting to watch content before. They talk for a while and then a product pops up and they talk about how it changed their life. I notice ads on facebook messenger all the time, and it has nothing to do with me and is obnoxious.

*When asked about who influencers are:*

**Vivian's narrative:** It's really dependant on becoming close to your person, and it's important to share intimate information. It's the currency of influencers to share intimate knowledge about themselves. That's how they become famous. Credibility is the grey area in influencing. Sharing about your nice party, and your nice things and nice food. Then your readers might not know that's all paid for. If you lose our credibility you lose your biggest factor with your relationship with your audience. Credible means that there is a coherence between what you say and what you do, a very large part of whom you are as a person. If you depict yourself in a certain way, you're your credible if that depiction is true. That's why it hurts for influencers to be discovered to have hidden ads, your readers think of you as a personal relationship, but they discover you're really a commercial relationship. The bar is lowered to become a person of influence with social media. It's also easier to share taboo subjects like mental health, sickness, and information in general. It is however a platform for entertainment, and not for example the best channels for deeper conversation or a forum for science. People want easy stories by interesting people.

**Julia's narrative:** I think they try to be more genuine than they are.

*When asked about influencing:*

**Julia's narrative:** It's hard to think about a time I have been influenced, but I'm sure I have been. It's probably more subconscious choices. Half influencers are people who have a large following but can't live of it. I think the main business for influencers is marketing. Advertisers want them to promote a product because it seems more genuine than commercials on TV. Probably because it's a bit of trickery. It seems more genuine because it comes from a private person. I think at least younger people might believe it's a recommendation from a private person, and not realize they have been paid a lot of money for it.

**Malin & Stig's narrative:** It's more credible if the message is from someone I know, than from someone I know is a salesperson. Our word-of-mouth is our best marketing practise. Especially when accounting for age difference and not everyone being as active on social media. But we do get a lot of good feedback from our social media channels.

***Adrian's narrative:*** I think influencers are financially motivated. Pretty straight forward that they get money in return for backing an advertiser's product. They get told what to say and do. It's just a business deal really.

***Filip's narrative:*** Influencer is to me a vague amorphous term, but essentially means someone with a power to make a change. Maybe someone with a large audience or a way of making decisions. The positive with influencing is that people you might otherwise not have heard from are being heard from.

## **4.6 Regulator**

*When asked about consumer targeting:*

***Jenny's narrative:*** Google and facebook, and similar data gatherers have an agenda to earn money through data and sell that data. Data gatherers are not a neutral party, and tailor their service toward financial gain. We don't want to crack down on audiences, they think they should be able to share their data. But we feel that discussing the potential negative sides are important, even if the commercial side focuses on the positive aspects of sharing data. So even if individually, data collection and targeting may only seem like a nuisance, in large scales and with big data you can really influence a population or target segment in a direction. Influence base on our personalities and our vulnerabilities. The Cambridge Analytica case comes to mind. The people who control all this data sit on immense power. There are moral and ethical questions then who should have this power. This is the reason that the most powerful companies today are the ones sitting with most data. Data to influence.

*When asked about Regulator practice:*

***Thea's narrative:*** It's part of our job to follow trends, shifting platforms and services the consumers use. This can demand large resources. We each have our own specialities within industry. We try to be proactive and talk allot with the commercial side, preferably before they make a product/service. We try to be easy to contact, so that the industry can prevent breaking any laws. And so that we can avoid chasing down and punishing them afterwards. We have been focusing on the influencers however and punishing them, because it is easier to punish the person who created the content, and not good enough disclosure. We are however looking into how we can change the focus onto the advertisers. Advertisers need to become clearer toward their influencers with guidelines to the content.

**Nils' narrative:** We sat down with Forbrukertilsynet and looked how the problems with advertisement in influencing could best be solved. We both creating an online guide that is similar and conveys the same message, there needs to be a divide between commercial and editorial content. There is a problem with making the divide clear. We are active and pre-emptive with the agencies, we talk allot with them and try to get them to teach their influencers. That makes our job easier. We argue that they get credibility as an influencer from being honest, credibility is your currency. Before our guide launch we investigated the top influencer on Youtube and the disclosure as horrible, like 3 or 4 were not breaking the rules, from a pool of 30-40. After the launch about two thirds were OK disclosed. A quick effect. For us authorities it's a challenge staying updated with changing trends and technologies. This is one of the reasons we also try to work through the networks and agencies, so we don't need to police the whole internet. If we successfully target the biggest influencers as well this will positively affect the industry and set some standards for the rising influencers learning from their peers. We did this with PrebzOgDennis, which had a very good effect on others. Norwegian rules only apply to those based in Norway, so there is a problem regulating an industry which works across countries and different laws and regulations. But Norway has been relatively early regulating this area, so other Europeans countries are looking to Norway when they are trying to regulate themselves. But it is a big problem.

*When asked about disclosure language and advertisement:*

**Thea's narrative:** Good enough disclosure is hard to define. As the rules regarding that is 'totalharmonisert' across the EU which means it's the same for each country within EU and should be interpreted the same. This means that each ad must be evaluated separately if it's meant to confuse the consumer, regarding the commercial agenda of the advertiser. Forbrukertilsynet experience that influencers generally want to be law abiding. We think if you are honest with your readers it will make you credible. We try to keep a track of which influencers break the law, and which advertisers are behind it as well. It's ultimately the advertiser's responsibility that the content is disclosed properly. We think you should be allowed to advertise yourself on any channel, if you clearly state that you are advertising. People should be informed and be able to decline your marketing efforts and scroll past. If social media were created today, we would be faster to create a common framework for influencer and all actors to abide by. It would have been less case by case then. I think the future of hidden ads will be; that people will realize that your credibility depends on you being clear on which advertisers you are working with. And that you can use your channel to proudly advertise for

brands you can justifiably promote. I would like that consumers would demand clearer disclosure, but doubt that will happen. I think hidden ads have come to stay, but I hope we can get a shift in attitude for advertisers, influencers, readers, and followers.

**Nils' narrative:** There are different rules that apply depending on which channels you influence on. That mostly depends of what type of media it is, is it text and pictures then its 'Forbrukertilsynet' and if it's video then its' us, Mediatilsynet. 'markedsføringsloven' applies to Forbrukertilsynet and Kringkastingsloven applies to Mediatilsynet. The problems we face today are like previous problems with TV and radio. It's the ethical consideration that people should be aware if content is organically produced or advertorial in nature. When you mix these types of content there is a necessary demand that the consumer can understand where the information they are getting is coming from, and that that information is reliable. Reliability in information, that's super relevant now! Consumer have the right to know who is behind the content they are consuming on all different platforms. It's problematic with influencers who almost dangerously mix what they themselves want to report of their own life and what the advertiser/sponsor wants. There's become a lot of influencer agencies and networks. I think the future of influencing is that the industry wants rule and regulations, they don't want to break the law. That's my impression, they want to be taken seriously and credible. I think the "wild west" lawless time has passed us. We have an important task as authorities to justly regulate and insure that everyone is treated equally.

**Julia's narrative:** I think it's easy to see what's advertisement and what's not. Norwegian law is strict. It's hard to think about a time I have been influenced, but I'm sure I have been. It's probably more subconscious choices. All commercials need to be disclosed properly according to Norwegian law. But people don't follow it.

**Malin & Stig's narrative:** I have maybe seen something on Youtube where I did not realize it was an ad up front. It has become strict with hidden ads though, where you must write 'spons', 'reklame' etc. at least on Instagram. I think when advertising or sponsoring a product as an influencer you should clearly state that this is not your product, but they are selling it for someone. Not in small writing which has been done in the past. I did come across a news article where that was the case. You read the whole article 'You would not believe what this man did' and then at the end it says the guy won 'so and so' much money from a betting site, at which point you figure out it was an ad. That was not easy to spot, and it was a bit of trickery. Probably a lot of people would think it was a genuine story.

## 5 DISCUSSION

The interpreted narrative is discussed in this chapter, followed by a hypothesized model that attempt to answer the research question and an observation which tests the model. The results and implications are then discussed followed by additional findings in the end.

### 5.1 Interpreted Narrative

1. Influencers think of themselves as personal brands and are generally not seen to exhibit intent to misinform in their marketing or earn more by ‘fooling’ their audience, at least consciously (Thea) (Nils). (Neal, 2017) (Marlow 2006) (Abidin & Thompson, 2012).
2. Influencers generally want to follow laws and popular influencers tend to follow rules more than smaller influencers (Nils) (Thea), even though the laws within the industry can be vague and hard to regulate (Nils) (Distaso & McCorkindale, 2014).
3. As a personal brand, influencers rely on being perceived as authentic to build credibility and they do this by sharing intimate information about themselves (Vivian) (Marlow 2006) (Abidin & Thompson, 2012).
4. They can be ‘fake’ providing they appear authentic and some would argue that social media is a platform for inauthenticity since one usually shares ‘polished’ versions of one selves, hence authenticity is a relevant term (Vivian). Influencers pretend to be authentic all the time (Vivian) (Gilmore & Pine, 2007).
5. Influencers and regulators tend to disagree on what classifies as advertisement and influencers think their credibility is hurt by being commercial while regulators think the opposite (Thea) (Nils) (Colliander & Erlandsson, 2015) (Liljander et al., 2015) (Philippa et al., 2017) (Abidin & Ots, 2015) (Evans et al., 2017).
6. Regulators think influencers need to realize credibility depends on being honest about their ads and that influencers should chose deals they can stand behind (Thea) (Distaso & McCorkindale, 2014).
7. The newer influencers seem to be more willing to follow the rules which indicates the industry is maturing (Nils) although audiences still think commercial content makes influencers less credible. The audience in other words agree with the influencers notion of credibility (Adrian) (Julia) (Malin & Stig) (Steven, 2016) (Neal, 2017).
8. Regulators have started to cooperate with each other, and with influencer agencies/networks to establish common advertisement practices. They also began

enforcing stricter laws which has quickly made changes in the industry practices. Regulating the industry is however still difficult as many influencer channels have international audiences but laws are enforced locally.

9. It is nothing new that we look to people with expertise and are influenced by people with credibility, but social media has changed how we interact with influential people (Mariel) (De Veirman et al., 2016).
10. Many actively seek influencers and their content for inspiration and recommendations. Influencers then mix their organic content with commercial content, so it is seen as more authentic and interesting. It has become a rising problem separating commercial and organic content for consumers who have the lawful right to be aware of advertisement (Nils) (Mariel) (Nils) (Cho et al., 2014).
11. By mixing the content, influencers are regularly breaking the law (Thea) (Katrina, 2016).
12. It is irrelevant for the consumers if the content is an ad or not. They see these ads as personal recommendations and they see the influencers as credible information sources (Mariel) Chin-Lung et al. (2013). Influencer marketing works better than traditional ads because of this (Thea).
13. Consumers are not always aware what is advertisement, but they clearly see difference between social media marketing and traditional marketing which is less interesting to them (Mariel)(Julia) (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) (Spiggle et al., 2012).
14. People accept social media marketing to some extent as part of the rest of the channel (Mariel), while they try to avoid traditional marketing (Malin & Stig) (Cho et al., 2014).
15. The audience members all felt it was easy to spot advertisement in social media (Julia), while children and elders would have a harder time differentiating commercial from organic content (Julia) (Adrian) (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) (Spiggle et al., 2012).
16. Written and spoken disclosure was the clearest way to convey an advertisement agenda for the audience and was considered by regulators to be good enough (Adrian) (Julia) (Filip) (Malin & Stig) (Thea). Good enough disclosure is however non-defined and is a case by case decisions according to the regulators (Thea) (Evans et al., 2017).
17. Advertisement was generally seen as unwanted but if they were getting ads anyway, then having them relevant was more interesting (Adrian) (Malin & Stig) (Mariel) (Friestad & Wright, 1994).
18. Despite feeling that they could spot ads easily most of the audience members had experienced being 'fooled' and interacted with content they originally thought was



organic but turned out to be commercial, which supports that camouflaging commercial content works (Adrian) (Malin & Stig) (Filip) Reijmersdal et al. (2016).

19. What does not work is creating unauthentic content which engages consumers to exhibit ‘persuasion coping behavior’ (Adrian) (Filip). ‘Fakeness’ and irrelevancy is easily spotted (Adrian) (Filip) (Malin & Stig) and leads to non-credible (Malin & Stig) (Spiggle et al., 2012).

## 5.2 Proposed Awareness Model

Based on the interpreted narrative, five factors have been categorized as creating advertisement awareness. The first two positively affect awareness and are arguably objective. The second two negatively affect awareness and are personal perceptions of the content in question, and therefore arguably subjective. The last factor can positively or negatively affect awareness and is arguably a personal trait but could be objectively measured. *Awareness is then created by:*

1) Disclosure - Clear disclosure language, a non-defined notion which demands continuous evaluation by law enforcers, but usually is comprised of clear disclosure writing but can also be a variation of audio-visual signals such as disclosure markings and speech.

2) Divide - Having a clear divide in the influencer channel between organic and commercial content. E.g. purposefully creating the content different from each other by using video posts on Instagram only for commercial content and pictures only for organic content.

3) Authenticity – Not having content that is perceived authentic. It is whether the audience perceives the influencer as a personal or as a commercial brand that makes it subjective. Authentic is to be uncorrupted from the original. From an audience perception, showing commercial intent can symbolizes inauthenticity, a disconnect between who you are (personal) and what you do (commercial). Credibility is not an independent factor as authenticity is arguably its antecedent.

4) Relevancy – Not having subjective relevant content for the consumer. Relevancy is a key deciding factor in all advertisement, and the more relevant to the audience the more likely they are to withhold persuasion coping behaviour, which is realizing something is an ad.

5) Ability – Having cognitive abilities that makes an individual more/less aware of advertisement and sponsorship, such as difficulties recognizing commercial content on social media as a child/elderly person. Being a young adult is suggested to positively affect your ability. Ability also includes cognitive disabilities which may hinder persuasion coping behaviour.

Summarized then, audiences become aware of advertisement and sponsorship by content that has clear disclosure language and a clear divide continuously between organic and paid content. The audience become less aware by content that is perceived authentic, and content that is perceived relevant. The audience’s own subjective mental ability may also increase or decrease their awareness. The model has been visualized as a formula below.

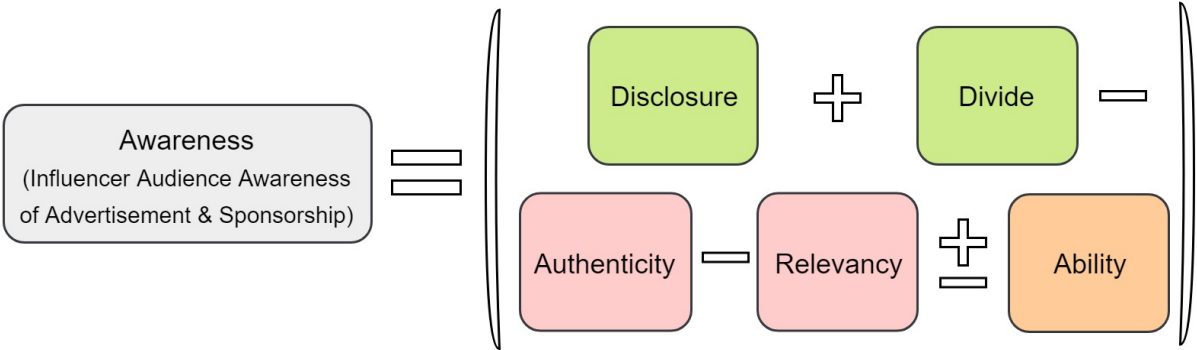


Figure 3, Awareness Model

**5.3 Initial Model Test**

The 30 top English-speaking Youtube influencers were measured to test the model. The most subscribed influencers were chosen because this population yields the largest audience size and has variation in the channel categories. and therefore one could generalize the results to a larger audience.

As firmly stated in theory, the less aware your audience is to persuasion, the more likely they are to be persuaded (Friestad & Wright, 1994) (Brehm & Brehm, 1981) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1977; Wei et al., 2008; Wood & Quinn, 2003) (Philippa et al., 2017).Evans et al. 2016 continue to question assumptions of the model as it applies to adults’ recognition of advertising in a media environment, with an increasingly blurred distinction between advertising and editorial content that features covert advertising tactics (Wojdynski et al., 2018). It is then logical to assume that the Influencers who scored lower on awareness would on average earn more, even though influencers have several revenue sources and advertisement/sponsorship.

It is important to note that this would suggest a correlation and not necessarily a causation. Estimated yearly income is readily available online at the website Socialblade (2018). Choosing income as a variable is also natural due to the literature’s repeated mention of it

possibly being the source of vague disclosure (Simon, 2014) (P. Goodman & Wajert, 2017) (Colliander & Erlandsson, 2015) (Liljander et al., 2015) (Petty & Cacioppo, 1977; Wei et al., 2008; Wood & Quinn, 2003).

The second variable Awareness is more difficult to estimate because of the subjective nature of the factors Authenticity and Relevancy, as anyone actively following an influencer would supposedly find them both authentic and relevant, and any researcher measuring would be susceptible to their own bias regarding these factors. Authenticity and Relevancy were therefore excluded from the test at this time.

It is highly recommended to objectively measure the two exclusions in future research, possibly through surveys. This will be discussed further in forthcoming subsection five. Disclosure, Divide and Ability however could be measured by grading the influencers on a bell curve or normative distribution, meaning they would be graded in comparison to their peers.

The definitions used to grade the three factors were collected from interviews for Divide and Ability and from theory regarding disclosure. The influencers were given scores in each of the three factors from 1 to 10, where 5 was the mean value, and the content graded was their three recent videos. The definition sheet used for grading can be found below and in chapter ten, subsection two. A chart and graph of the results can be seen on the next two pages.

### Definition

Disclosure	<p>Translated and according to «Kringkastingsloven» in Norway, if you are making money or getting services in return for a video post, you are obliged to disclose this. Your viewers should be informed that they are being influenced to buy something. The rules apply to all social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat (Forbrukertilsynet, 2018). Hidden advertisement is forbidden. The law states that marketing shall be made and presented in a way that clearly demonstrates it as such. This also applies to channels where non-marketing material is shared. There is to be a clear divide between what is marketing material and what is not. Clear advertisement/sponsorship disclosure shall be used in all media.</p>
Divide	<p>Nils: There needs to be a divide between commercial and editorial content. Influencer's content is known for being a mix of commercial and editorial, from their own lives and from the advertiser they have been paid to integrate. Making the divide clear is a problem. Adrian: There is a very clear divide between an original post and a sales post. It's obvious to me. Mariel: The divide between organic and commercial is being less clear with influencers. I think if you follow an influencer you regard them as a good source of information. Most people are aware that they promote products on their channel, but they accept it because they also get advice. I don't think they always know what's an ad or not though. I do think people seeking influencers clearly see difference between traditional marketing and SoMe influencer marketing.</p>
Ability	<p>Children and elders would have a harder time differentiating commercial from organic content (Julia) (Adrian). One of the areas we focus on regulating is children watching Youtube. Even though advertisement targeted directly at children is not allowed in Norway. Forbrukertilsynet are mainly concerned with that however. We want children to be able to clearly distinguish advertisement from organic content. But to what extent they understand it is another question. Should the school be more involved in teaching critical media understanding? We try to target parents with our guides because of this (Nils).</p>

Youtube Influencers							
Rank	Username	Est. Annual Earnings (mi \$)	Disclosure Score	Divide Score	Ability Score	Ability Mean = 0	Awareness Score
1	PewDiePie	3,1	6	8,05	3,3	-3,4	10,7
2	Smosh	1,7	4	8,05	5,5	1,0	13,1
3	VanossGaming	3,6	4	3,45	3,3	-3,4	4,1
4	nigahiga	0,4	6	6,9	5,5	1,0	13,9
5	Markiplier	3,6	6	5,75	7,7	5,4	17,2
6	KSI	3,6	3	3,45	5,5	1,0	7,5
7	jacksepticeye	4,7	5	2,3	2,2	-5,6	1,7
8	DanTDM	5,0	4	2,3	4,4	-1,2	5,1
9	JennaMarbles	0,6	4	3,45	9,9	9,8	17,3
10	Logan Paul Vlogs	4,7	4	8,05	3,3	-3,4	8,7
11	RomanAtwoodBlogs	1,4	5	6,9	7,7	5,4	17,3
12	Jake Paul	4,4	2	3,45	3,3	-3,4	2,1
13	Liza Koshy	1,3	6	6,9	4,4	-1,2	11,7
14	IISuperwomanII	1,1	6	8,05	6,6	3,2	17,3
15	Vsauce	0,4	10	11,5	7,7	5,4	26,9
16	Rclbeauty101	1,4	10	2,3	3,3	-3,4	8,9
17	Ryan ToysReview	19,7	1	1,15	1,1	-7,8	-5,7
18	shane	2,2	7	5,75	6,6	3,2	16,0
19	Zoella	0,2	9	2,3	7,7	5,4	16,7
20	W2S	1,0	2	1,15	3,3	-3,4	-0,3
21	Adam	0,1	5	5,75	3,3	-3,4	7,4
22	Ali-A	4,0	3	3,45	3,3	-3,4	3,1
23	RomanAtwood	0,2	6	3,45	4,4	-1,2	8,3
24	Wengie	0,6	5	9,2	3,3	-3,4	10,8
25	Bethany Mota	0,1	5	4,6	4,4	-1,2	8,4
26	Collins Key	2,5	3	5,75	3,3	-3,4	5,4
27	CrazyRussianHacker	0,4	2	3,45	5,5	1,0	6,5
28	Jesse	0,3	6	3,45	9,9	9,8	19,3
29	CaptainSparklez	0,5	7	5,75	6,6	3,2	16,0
30	RiceGum	1,1	4	5,75	3,3	-3,4	6,4
	Mean Grade		5	5	5	0	10

Figure 4. Awareness & Income chart.

Number 17, Ryan ToysReview was excluded the annual income was not representative. It would have enhanced the results, with the highest income and lowest awareness score. Number 17 has recently been under investigation for hidden advertisement (Asrcreviews, 2017). Ability was given a positive or negative score depending on its proximity to the mean 5. A lower score than five would result in a negative number, equal to the distance to 5 multiplied by 2 for the ability factor to hold a similar weight as the other two factors. E.g. the first influencer PewDiePie's ability score;  $((\text{mean}) - (\text{ability})) * 2 = -3,4$ . The awareness score is then calculated from the awareness model;  $(\text{disclosure}) + (\text{divide}) - (\text{ability, mean}) = 10,7$ .

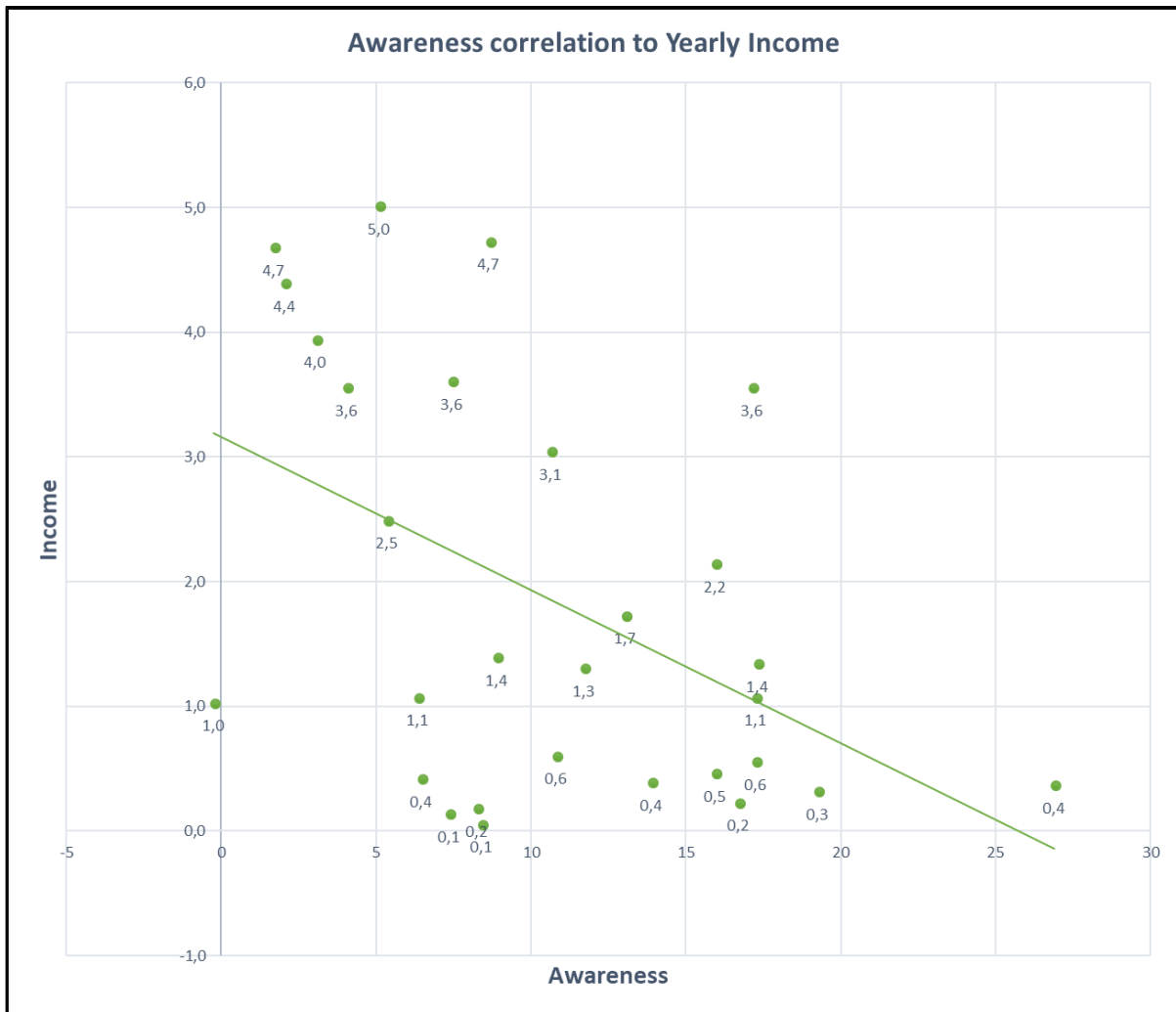


Figure 5, Awareness & Income Graph

The above graph depicts the two variables measured against each other in a simple but affective illustration. The linear line shows the average decrease in yearly income when awareness is increased. The exact amount increased is not important nor accurate due to the small sample and unweighted factors, but the declining trend is.

It shows that all the Youtubers who earned at least 3,6 million USD except for one, were all bellow the medium score (around 13) for awareness. It shows that most of the lower income Youtubers were consistently scoring higher on Awareness and were generally located on both sides of the medium awareness score. There are however exceptions like number 5, Markiplier who earned 3,6 million USD, and had an awareness score of 17,2 and W2S that ‘only’ earned 1 million USD while having the lowest awareness score. This suggests that there are other factors playing a part of an influencers income than awareness and coincides with this graph showing correlation and not causation, and also that further testing is needed.

## 5.4 Results & Implications

It is again necessary to state that these results suggest the validity of a proposed model and further examinations of the factors and their relation to each other is necessary, as well as a substantially larger population size to confirm that the model is valid and generalizable.

The results suggest that influencer audience advertisement awareness is created by a combination of the five factors explained in chapter five, subsection two. There could be other factors playing a part in awareness but these five were the factors discovered through the narrative inquiry and literature. The illustrations on the previous pages show there is correlation between the estimated annual income of a Youtube influencer and their awareness score. This coincides with persuasion knowledge theory and the narratives that suggest that audience awareness does in fact lower income, and that the three factors tested are relevant in predicting awareness (Reijmersdal et al., 2016). The test does not confirm the validity of the two yet untested factors Authenticity and Relevancy, but they are still relevant as the interpreted narrative shows.

Accounting for the Authenticity and Relevancy factors could increase the correlation as the 'low awareness' influencers would further decrease their audience's awareness, or the factors would decrease the steepness of the line by providing less awareness to the 'high awareness' influencers. It could also equally 'help' all influencers and would then not affect the line angle, but simply shift its location.

Disclosure is most prevalent as the deciding factor for awareness in marketing literature as it is the direct purpose of disclosure. Laws and regulators are therefore mostly concerned about this factor, together with Divide which is also noticeably mentioned in literature (Marlow 2006) (Abidin & Thompson, 2012) (Colliander & Erlandsson, 2015) (Liljander et al., 2015) (Philippa et al., 2017) (Abidin & Ots, 2015) (Evans et al., 2017). The finding to this study seems to agree with previous literature in that they are important factors.

This study also agrees with theory that Authenticity and Relevancy are opposite forces for awareness (Gilmore & Pine, 2007) (Marlow 2006) (Abidin & Thompson, 2012) (Cho et al., 2014). Both factors however are usually mentioned separately in literature, and mostly as beneficial success factors for influencers, and usually only indirectly as negative antecedents for audience awareness. Together with the Ability factor which can be either positive or negative, the complete awareness model made in this study combines previously known and

less known factors into a model previously not explored. Its newness lies in the combination of factors as direct causes for and against awareness in audience perception of advertisement and sponsorship when viewing influencer content. Where previous models are mostly concerned with ‘how to persuade consumers to buy’, or ‘how persuasion is combated’, and thereby assume consumers notice persuasion, this proposed Awareness Model is measuring audience’s perception, their awareness or unawareness of an ad or sponsor, preceding persuasion. This model is then closely adjacent to the Persuasion Knowledge Model, Reactance Theory and Sponsorship Transparency Scale, but still different enough in that it does not assume audience persuasion perception. The reason for previous models not tackling this specific problem may be that advertisement has traditionally been more apparent, and therefore one could assume consumers would recognize them. In the cases it was hidden advertisement and exposed, it was also ‘clearly hidden’ and therefore ‘clearly illegal. It is only recently that incorporated or ‘inorganic’ marketing has become infused within most media, creating a highly blurred line between organic and paid content.

The proposed Awareness Model suggests a mildly controversial claim. That the negative awareness factors; Authenticity, Relevancy and sometimes Ability hinder the audience’s initial perception of a persuasion attempt, and subsequent coping behaviour. This contradicts the notion which is often stated by regulators; that authenticity ‘lessens the blow of disclosure’. It may in fact hinder disclosure outright. This is not especially controversial regarding the Ability factor as there is no debate that children understand advertisement as well as adults, but it has implications for the Authenticity and Relevancy factors. And it would support the reasoning of influencers vague disclosure practises.

If this proposition is true, and it needs further research to confirm, it would suggest that influencers that create relevant and authentic content are consciously or unconsciously submerging the audience’s capability to understand whether that content is advertisement or not. This suggests that being a ‘likable advertisement’ in the form of an influencer, is not only making the audience like you, but can also make them not realize you are an ad.

Technically this would be considered illegal in the UK, USA and in Norway as it would be against their rules stating advertisement shall not be hidden. The question then remains to what extent can a personal brand be held accountable for being ‘likable’? And how much of influencer content is really being ‘hidden’ compared to simply being ‘accepted’ as likable ads? It seems a popular statement for both influencer and regulator that; ‘transparency, honesty and disclosure with consumers are best practises.’ Even though research often contradicts this as it

finds hidden commercial content to be quite effective, and these practises reward the vague influencer, at least in financial rewards (Philippa et al., 2017).

Regulators are mostly concerned with the two first two factors, disclosure language and divide. They may not be aware of the negative outcomes of authenticity and relevancy and they might not want to start policing authenticity of influencers or their relevancy to their audience, and it would most likely be a difficult and maybe an unethical task. But if these ‘extra factors’ are proven to play a role in hindering audience capability to recognize advertisement and sponsorship, how long can they be left unregulated?

The awareness model leads to one possible explanation as to why influencers, when unregulated by an external authority, seem to disclose advertisement poorly, or be inauthentic from the regulators perspective. The model agrees with most literature that disclosing poorly may be an antecedent to earning more, but that may not be the only motive, conscious, or not (Philippa et al., 2017). The additional finding suggests that authenticity is relative depending on brand-type. The findings suggest that influencers view themselves as a different kind of brand, and subsequently a different form of advertisement, and finally therefore adhere to a different standard of authenticity than regulators. This can be seen in the illustration below.

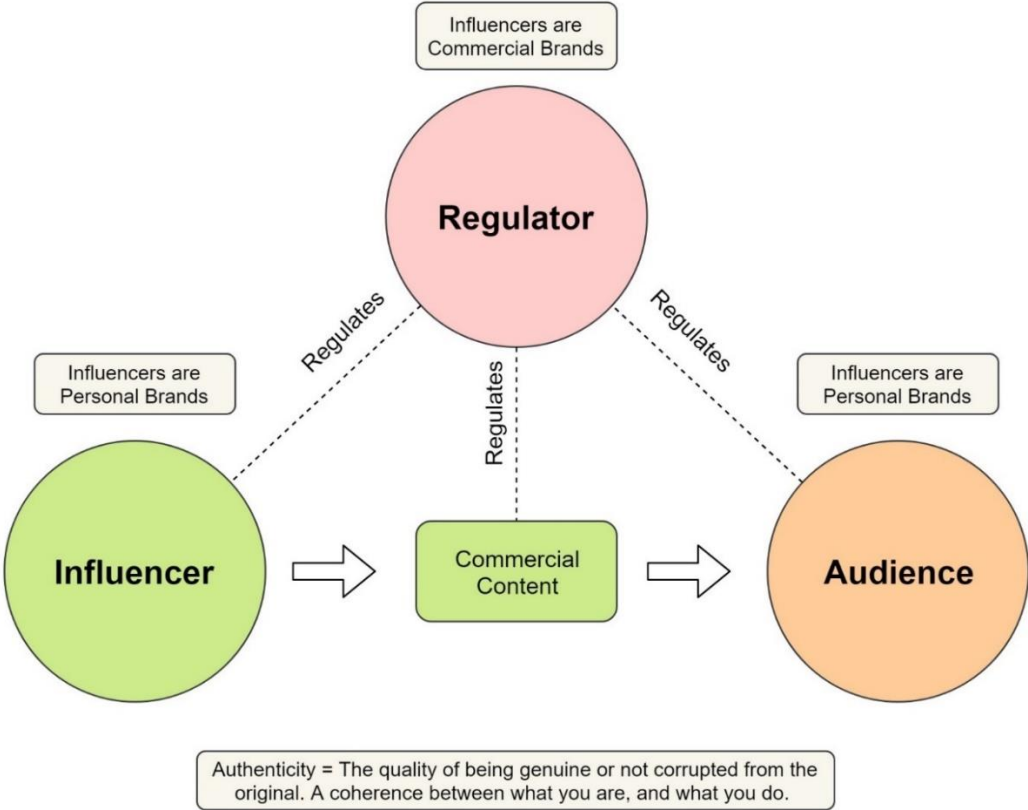


Figure 6, Different Authenticity Definition



From the regulators perspective influencing is marketing, and therefor influencers are commercial brands. From the definition of authenticity; for a commercial brand to be authentic it needs to show that it is commercial, e.g. disclose commercial intent with disclosure language. When influencers agree it seems they are more likely to accept advertisement rules.

The opposite view is the one influencers generally believe in, that primarily they see themselves as personal brands, and for personal brands to be authentic they need to appear personal.

Disclosing commercial intent would be impersonal and be an incoherence between what they are and what they do, which would in turn be inauthentic. Even though the influencer is sharing commercial content as seen in the illustration below, it is not perceived as commercial by the audience until explicitly stated by the influencer.

The additional finding suggests that financial gain is not the only reason for bad disclosure among influencers. A key reason may also be a fundamental different definition of what an influencer is, a personal or a commercial brand.

These additional finding would be well suited to explore in future descriptive and/or explanatory studies.

## **6 LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study lead to some interesting results although further research is needed to fully conclude and validate them. Additional data triangulation would be the first recommended action for further research.

This could be done by continuing with structured interviews with more experts, audience members and with influencers themselves who have been noticeably hesitant to answer or partake in this study. Although more influencers were contacted than other interviewees, with the same interview request, only two agreed to be interviewed, one working with the influencer agencies United Influencers and the other with Splay. Both later cancelled for unknown reasons. This may be due to the inquisitive nature of advertisement in the study.

Future research should combat this seeming reluctance in influencers by reaching out to far more influencers. The proposed awareness model needs to be further tested both on if the factors measure what they intent to measure, and that they do indeed collectively create awareness. The correlation to income also needs more verification as well as other potential variables. The

effects of not testing the authenticity and relevancy factor is also a limitation of the model, as it the factors are still only theoretical.

Testing these is a natural starting point for future research. This could be done in a large survey where the objective would be to measure them in relation to the survey participants and get as close to an objective factor as possible.

Presuming the results have been proven valid with or without modification, it would be natural to continue the study in a quantitative manner. Starting to analyse exactly how each of the five factors relate to the overall awareness by measuring how audience members perceive all five factors subjectively. At this stage the research could possibly objectively measure Authenticity and Relevance of influencer channels through their audience's perception.

It is also recommended that future research expand the influencer population to include those based on Instagram especially, but also those on Snapchat, Twitter, and Facebook. This would further help generalize the study and improve the Awareness Model.

Future studies should also gather primary data on how children and elders perceive social media advertisement, and its effect on the Ability factor. This study could alternatively have been done using case studies with influencer channels as separate cases. This would require more in-depth knowledge about the channels and would most likely require several interviews with each influencer but would provide interesting in-depth insight into the motivation of the influencer as well as practises and definitions of authenticity. This could be a possible future study as well.

The study could also have been done using a single case study following a regulator agency or person in their activity enforcing advertisement laws.

## 7 CONCLUSION

### *What creates Advertisement & Sponsorship Awareness for Influencer Audiences?*

This study suggests that audiences of influencers become aware of advertisement and sponsorship by content that has clear a disclosure language and a clear divide continuously between organic and paid content. The results further suggest that audiences become less aware of advertisement and sponsorship by content that is perceived as authentic and relevant by the audience. The audience's cognitive ability may also either increase or decrease their awareness.

This resulted in the Awareness Model which describes and measures awareness through the above-mentioned factors. An initial test confirmed the logical structure of the model as well as showing a negative correlation between audience awareness' and influencer income, notably that income is decreased when awareness is increased.

An additional finding that needs further exploration shows that influencers and regulators may have different definitions of both what type of brand an influencer is, and what constitutes authenticity for influencers.

Regardless of what brand-type an influencer is they have come to stay. The power and effect of influencers to appeal to an audience bored with traditional marketing is becoming evident to advertisers around the world, and the industry is rapidly flourishing.

Growing pains are to be expected in such a young industry, but influencers have shown a will to mature, and regulators are happy to help them. The two parties are working together, but it seems they still don't quite understand each other.

The questions then become; will influencers be able to keep their personal appeal, while becoming increasingly advertorial transparent and regulated? Or will they become the commercial brand that regulators already think they are?

## 8 REFERENCES

- Abidin, C. & Ots, M. 2015. *The Influencer's dilemma : The shaping of new brand professions between credibility and commerce*. Paper presented at the AEJMC 2015, Annual Conference, San Fransisco, CA, August 6-9.
- Archer, C., Pettigrew, S., & Harrigan, P. 2014. A Tale of Power, Passion and Persuasion: Bloggers, Public Relations and Ethics. *ASIA PACIFIC PUBLIC RELATIONS JOURNAL*, 15(1): 37-54.
- Asrcreviews; <http://www.asrcreviews.org/caru-examines-youtube-channel-ryan-toys-review-recommends-more-prominent-disclosures-of-ad-content/>, 2018.
- B. Stern, B. 2006. *What Does Brand Mean? Historical-Analysis Method and Construct Definition*.
- Barcik, R.; Marketing, Organizational Theory and Business; <https://curious.com/meanthat>.
- Beverland, M. B. & Farrelly, F. J. 2010. The Quest for Authenticity in Consumption: Consumers' Purposive Choice of Authentic Cues to Shape Experienced Outcomes. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36(5): 838-856.
- Brandwatch; 41 Incredible Instagram Statistics; <https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/instagram-stats/>.
- Brorsson, A. & Plotnikova, V. 2017. *Choosing the right social media influencer. : A quasi-experiment to explore the impact of influencers' different characteristics*. Unpublished Student thesis.
- Chin-Lung, H., Judy, C. C. L., & Hsiu-Sen, C. 2013. The effects of blogger recommendations on customers' online shopping intentions. *Internet Research*, 23(1): 69-88.
- Cho, S., Huh, J., & Faber, R. J. 2014. The Influence of Sender Trust and Advertiser Trust on Multistage Effects of Viral Advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 43(1): 100-114.
- Choi, H., Ko, E., Young Kim, E., & Mattila, P. 2014. *The Role of Fashion Brand Authenticity in Product Management: A Holistic Marketing Approach*.
- Commision, F. T. 2017. Updated Guidance for Influencers.
- David, M. & Karl, D. S. 2012. Be Your Own Brand: Achieve More of What You Want by Being More of Who You Are.
- de Chernatony, L. 2009. Towards the holy grail of defining `brand'. *Marketing theory*, 9(1): 101-105.
- De Veirman, M. P. S., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. E. B. P. S. 2016. Marketing through instagram influencers: impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude: 2016.
- Devumi. 2017. Social Media Case Study: How Barack Obama Became President.
- Dijck, J. V. 2013. You Have One Identity': Performing the Self on Facebook and LinkedIn *Media, Culture & Society 35.2 (2013): 199-215*. , Sage Journal. Web. 19 May 2014.
- Distaso, M. & McCorkindale, T. 2014. *The state of social media research: Where are we now, where we were, and what it means for public relations*.
- Don Tapscott & Ticoll, D. 2003. The Naked Corporation. *The wall street journal*: 2.
- Eggers, F., O'Dwyer, M., Kraus, S., Vallaster, C., & Guldenberg, S. 2013. The impact of brand authenticity on brand trust and SME growth: A CEO perspective. *Journal of World Business*, 48(3): 340-348.
- Ertesvåg, O. R. & Flaarønning, G. 2018. Bloggkjendiser kastet ut av Vixen Awards, *NRK*.
- Evans, N. J., Phua, J., Lim, J., & Jun, H. 2017. Disclosing Instagram Influencer Advertising: The Effects of Disclosure Language on Advertising Recognition, Attitudes, and Behavioral Intent. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 17(2): 138-149.
- Falck, U. 2018. Bloggpris, nei takk!, *NRK*.

- Forbrukertilsynet; <https://www.forbrukertilsynet.no/veiledning-reklame-some>.
- Fortunelords; 37 Mind Blowing YouTube Facts, Figures and Statistics – 2018; <https://fortunelords.com/youtube-statistics/>.
- Gashi, L. 2017. *Social media influencers - why we cannot ignore them : An exploratory study about how consumers perceive the influence of social media influencers during the different stages of the purchase decision process*. Unpublished Student thesis.
- Gilmore, G. 2018. US/UK Regulators Agree: Social Media Marketing Must Be Transparent, *Brandquarterly*, vol. 2018.
- Granjon, V. & Benedic, R. 2017. *Instagram's Social Media Influencers: A study of Online Popularity From Source Credibility to Brand Attitude*. Unpublished Student thesis.
- Hustvedt, G. & Kang, J. 2013. Consumer Perceptions of Transparency: A Scale Development and Validation. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 41(3): 299-313.
- Jeffrey, P. 2014. Openness and transparency will not solve our problems. <http://fortune.com>.
- Johan, A. & John, M. 2006. Authenticity and transparency in the advertising industry: An interview with John Morris. *Journal of Management Development*, 25(10): 1021-1023.
- Katrina, W. 2016. YouTube Marketing: Legality of Sponsorship and Endorsement in Advertising. *University of San Diego*.
- Lair, D. J. 2005. Marketization and the Recasting of the Professional Self: The Rhetoric and Ethics of Personal Branding. *Management Communication Quarterly* 18.3 (2005): 307-43, Sage Journals. Web. 20 May 2014.
- Landau, P. 2013. Job applications: social media profiles under scrutiny. [guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk).
- Lisichkova, N. & Othman, Z. 2017. *The Impact of Influencers on Online Purchase Intent*. Unpublished Student thesis.
- Los, E. 2009. Creating Your Personal Brand. Mondaq; <http://www.mondaq.com/uk/x/545142/advertising+marketing+branding/Sponsorship+vs+Advertisement+The+Law>.
- Morgan, G. 2017. The Rise of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Lifestyle Branding: A Case Study of Lucie Fink. *Strategic Communications* *Elon University*.
- Neal, M. 2017. Instagram Influencers: The Effects of Sponsorship on Follower Engagement With Fitness Instagram Celebrities. *Thesis. Rochester Institute of Technology*.
- P. Goodman, E. & Wajert, L. 2017. *The Honest Ads Act Won't End Social Media Disinformation, but It's a Start*.
- Peterson, R. A. 2005. In Search of Authenticity\*. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(5): 1083-1098.
- Philippa, J., Lou, R., & Iris, V. 2017. Are Paid Influencers Bad Influencers? *Student undergraduate research e-journal*, 3.
- Rampersad, H. K. 2008. A new blueprint for powerful and authentic personal branding. *Performance Improvement*, 47(6): 34-37.
- Reijmersdal, E. A. v., Fransen, M. L., Noort, G. v., Opre, S. J., Vandeberg, L., Reusch, S., Lieshout, F. v., & Boerman, S. C. 2016. Effects of Disclosing Sponsored Content in Blogs: How the Use of Resistance Strategies Mediates Effects on Persuasion. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 60(12): 1458-1474.
- Schnackenberg, A. K. & Tomlinson, E. C. 2016. Organizational Transparency: A New Perspective on Managing Trust in Organization-Stakeholder Relationships. *Journal of Management*, 42(7): 1784-1810.
- Simon, P. 2014. Blurred lines: Are YouTubers breaking the law?

From unmarked advertorial to paid social network promotion, Simon Parkin investigates the ethics and legality of YouTube. *eurogamer.net*.  
 Socialblade; Socialblade; <https://socialblade.com/>.  
 Spiggle, S., T. Nguyen, H., & Caravella, M. 2012. *More Than Fit: Brand Extension Authenticity*.  
 Statista; Global Instagram influencer market size from 2017 to 2019 (in billion U.S. dollars); <https://www.statista.com/statistics/748630/global-instagram-influencer-market-value/>.  
 Stephanie, F. 2015. Examining Endorsement and Viewership Effects on the Source Credibility of YouTubers. *University of South Florida Graduate Theses and Dissertations*.  
 Steven, W. 2016. #Sponsored: The Emergence of Influencer Marketing. *University of Tennessee Honors Thesis Projects*.  
 Wojdyski, B. W., Evans, N. J., & Hoy, M. G. 2018. Measuring Sponsorship Transparency in the Age of Native Advertising. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 52(1): 115-137.

## 9 FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1, Persuasion Knowledge Model. ....	20
Figure 2, Reactance Theory.....	20
Figure 3, Awareness Model .....	44
Figure 4, Awareness & Income chart.....	46
Figure 5, Awareness & Income Graph.....	47
Figure 6, Different Authenticity Definition .....	50
Figure 7, Sponsorship Transparency Scale. ....	53
Figure 8, Observation sheet.....	54

## 10 APPENDIX

### 10.1 Sponsorship Transparency Scale

Items ( <i>N</i> = 297)	Std. Reg. Weights	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV
Factor 1: Brand presence		.952	.868	.667	.293
BP1. There was a clear presence of a brand in the [article/game/video]	.967				
BP2. The [article/game/video] was clearly branded	.952				
BP3. The [article/game/video] clearly conveyed the product or service that was being promoted	.874				
Factor 2: Sponsor clarity		.816	.600	.667	.320
SC1. It was unclear who paid for the [article/game/video] (Reversed)	.687				
SC2. It was clear who sponsored this [article/game/video]	.725				
SC3. The [article/game/video] made the name of the advertiser very obvious	.903				
Factor 3: Disclosure		.864	.684	.079	.050
D1. The [article/game/video] said it was an advertisement	.773				
D2. The [article/game/video] said it was sponsored	.727				
D3. The [article/game/video] was labeled as advertising	.597				
Factor 4: Lack of deception		.926	.807	.214	.142
LD1. This [article/game/video] was trying to fool consumers into thinking it was not advertising (Reversed)	.905				
LD2. The advertiser tried to obscure the fact that this was an ad (Reversed)	.926				
LD3. The [article/game/video] tried to deceive the viewer about the fact that it was advertising (Reversed)	.862				

Figure 7, Sponsorship Transparency Scale.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis, 12 Item Scale, Four-Factor Correlated Model.

## 10.2 Disclosure, Divide & Ability

Term	Source	Definition
<b>Disclosure</b>	<b>Definition Law &amp; Theory</b>	Translated and according to «Kringkastingsloven» in Norway, if you are making money or getting services in return for a video post, you are obliged to disclose this. Your viewers should be informed that they are being influenced to buy something. The rules apply to all social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat (Fotbunkertilsynet, 2018). Hidden advertisement is forbidden. The law states that marketing shall be made and presented in a way that clearly demonstrates it as such. This also applies to channels where non-marketing material is shared. There is to be a clear divide between what is marketing material and what is not. Clear advertisement/sponsorship disclosure shall be used in all media.
<b>Divide</b>	<b>Definition Interviews</b>	Nils: There needs to be a divide between commercial and editorial content. Influencer's content is known for being a mix of commercial and editorial, from their own lives and from the advertiser they have been paid to integrate. Making the divide clear is a problem. Adrian: There is a very clear divide between an original post and a sales post. It's obvious to me. Marit: The divide between organic and commercial is being less clear with influencers. I think if you follow an influencer you regard them as a good source of information. Most people are aware that they promote products on their channel, but they accept it because they also get advice. I don't think they always know what's an ad or not though. I do think people seeking influencers clearly see difference between traditional marketing and SoMe influencer marketing.
<b>Ability</b>	<b>Definition Interviews</b>	Children and elders would have a harder time differentiating commercial from organic content (Julia) (Adrian). One of the areas we focus on regulating is children watching Youtube. Even though advertisement targeted directly at children is not allowed in Norway, Fotbunkertilsynet are mainly concerned with that however. We want children to be able to clearly distinguish advertisement from organic content. But to what extent they understand it is another question. Should the school be more involved in teaching critical media understanding? We try to target parents with our guides because of this (Nils).

Figure 8, Observation sheet



### 10.3 Search Words

*Search words for winter 2017:*

- |                               |                         |                                 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Brand authenticity.        | 9. History of brand.    | 18. Brand retail.               |
| 2. Brand definition.          | 10. Branding history.   | 19. Brand trend.                |
| 3. Brand transparency<br>SME. | 11. Brand persona.      | 20. Consumer retail brand.      |
| 4. Brand transparency.        | 12. Luxury branding.    | 21. Virtual brand.              |
| 5. Branding internet.         | 13. Luxury brand trend. | 22. Brand-<br>Entrepreneurship. |
| 6. Personal branding.         | 14. Transparent brand.  | 23. Brand new ventures          |
| 7. Branding trend.            | 15. Celebrity brand.    |                                 |
| 8. Branding.                  | 16. Social media brand. |                                 |
|                               | 17. Connected brand.    |                                 |

*Search words for literature February 2018:*

1. Influencer advertisement transparency social media.
2. Influencer bloggers advertisement transparency social media.
3. Influencers advertisement authenticity.
4. Influencers advertising sponsored.
5. Influencers advertising trust.

## 10.4 Semi Structured Interview Sheet

- 1) Introduce myself.
- 2) Introduce and explain study.
- 3) Explain recording and get consent.
- 4) Ask easy question about their relevant background to this study.

*What creates Advertisement & Sponsorship Awareness for Influencer Audiences?*

<p><i>Influencer Business Model Canvas.</i></p> <p><b>What are influencers?</b></p>	<p>Q1) How would you explain the influencer profession? **</p> <p>Q2) Tell me about the last influencer content you saw? *</p> <p>Q3) What are the positive and negative sides of influencing? ***</p>
<p><i>Persuasion Knowledge Model</i></p> <p><b>Do you notice being influenced?</b></p>	<p>Q4) What is your experience with influencers? *</p> <p>Q5) Have you ever felt influenced? **</p> <p>Q6) What makes it apparent for you that someone is influencing? ***</p>
<p><i>Sponsorship Transparency Scale</i></p> <p><b>When do you notice influencing?</b></p>	<p>Q7) Could you describe a situation where you noticed influencing? ***</p> <p>Q8) What was it that was noteworthy about this experience? **</p> <p>Q9) Would you say this was successful influencing? *</p>
<p><i>Advertisement &amp; Sponsorship Laws</i></p> <p><b>What are the laws of influencing?</b></p>	<p>Q11) Do you know of online advertisement laws? *</p> <p>Q12) Could you describe something you think was illegal? **</p> <p>Q13) Could you describe something you think was unethical? ***</p>

- 1) Extra notes:
- 2) Thank participant!

## 10.5 Interview Transcripts

### Jenny

- Researcher:** Da var den i gang, vi kan jo egentlig bare starte med hva du driver mest med her da.
- Jenny:** Mye av dette med persontilpasning, så der har jeg sett på hvordan annonse og media industrien samler inn og bruker data. Og nå sist hvordan banker og forsikrings selskap begynner å gjøre store endringer i banksektorer nå som vi fristiller alle data i bankene.
- Researcher:** Tjener de noe på det, eller et det fortsatt en investering for Schibsted?
- Jenny:** For når du bruker finn så gir det veldig rike data, på om du ser etter nytt hus, om du ser etter ny jobb, det gir veldig konkrete og gode data man kan selge til markedsføringen.
- Researcher:** Hvis man kulle spekulert. Tror du det er mulig å være helt nøytral?
- Jenny:** Nei, jeg tro ikke det, hverken google eller facebook er nok nøytrale. For dem er det jo det de tjener penger på. Målrettede annonser og innsamling av data. Når de da skrur sammen sine algoritmer, på en måte som gir de største mulig inntjening. Det er oppklart at de gjør det.
- Researcher:** Ja for det er det som er litt interessant med generelt persondata og det miljøet der da. Det er en sånn, man sier man vil være transparent kan man si, fordi det går jo igjen, fordi ellers kan man ikke holde noe skjult. Men så igjen så er det på bekostning av å tjene penger da. Det å være transparent eller gjøre det best mulig for brukeren, er det noe man bare sier fordi man må?
- Jenny:** Tja, jeg tenker jo sånn som vi har vurdert det annonse systemet da, det der real time bidding eller samtidskjøp av annonser, hvordan det hele infrastrukturen der fungerer. Den er så ekstreme sinnsykt kompleks at jeg tror ikke det er mulig å gjøre den åpen så folk forstår. Folk som jobber i bransjen sier jo at selv de skjønner ikke helt til hvordan det fungerer. Annonserer er jo skeptiske fordi de ikke skjønner hvordan å bruke sin, så det er på en måte et system som er det motsatte av åpenhet, så hvordan

skal man på en meningsfull måte forklare brukeren hvordan det fungerer, det tror jeg nesten er umulig. Så det vil jo gjøre internett sånn ubrukelig, hvis det skal poppe opp hele tiden du må lese, data ditt og data der, og godtar du denne pixlene. Ja altså det hadde rett og slett blitt, hvis du måtte samtykke alt og lese opp alt vil du ikke kunne bruke nettet på en funksjonell måte.

**Researcher:** Men sånn helhetlig så er norsk kanskje bedre?

**Jenny:** Ja det vil jeg tro, fordi det er ikke samme retts tradisjonen at du skal sikre deg mot alle mulige eventualiteter, som er jo helt, ja. Ja det blir ikke helt den perverse avtalevilkårene. Men hvordan Schibsted de sier jo de jobber nå med, skal møte med dem om en stund, en sånn privacy dashboard kaller de det. Som går ut på at du som bruker kan du logga deg på dine data sider og så går du inn der så kan du krysse av om du vil dele lokasjons data, hvilke tjenester du vil dele det på, vil du mota målretta markedsføring. Dette er profilene du er puttett inn i, du er puttett inn i profiler for bilinteresserte, etc.

**Researcher:** ja så igjen så har vi, det er jo mulig, du eier jo dataene dine.

**Jenny:** Ja, de vil jo spinne dette, lage det sånn at man opplever det som positivt å dele dataene dine. Og det tenker jeg det kan ikke vi slå ned på. Vi kan ikke si sånn, skal det være sånn på røykpakker at du får kreft av å dele dataene dine. Vi skjønner jo at de vil legge det frem på en måte at det er positivt. Men de kan ikke hjemme det på side 10, bakerst. Det skal være lett å velge det bort da. Det kommer et lovkrav at du kan si nei takk, jeg vil ikke bli profilert. Så det vil vi jo vi se på da.

**Researcher:** Tror du hvis den gjennomsnittlige forbrukeren hadde vist, eller hva er grunnen til at vi ikke tar det så seriøst som forbrukere? Bryr vi oss for lite?

**Jenny:** Det er litt vanskelig å svare på. Jeg tror jo da at det er veldig viktig å bry seg fordi, en ting er jo hva som rammer hver enkelt. Det kan hende jeg kanskje ikke har noe å skjule, jeg har ikke gjort noe galt. Også er det målrettet markedsføring og om jeg blir fulgt av sofa reklamer når jeg har

kjøpt sofa, er det bare irriterende, og ikke noe mer enn det. Men sånn som den Cambridge Analytica saken så viser det jo seg at det har en videre dimensjon også. En konsekvens for samfunnet. Hvilket samfunn for vi, det sitter noen med ekstrem stor makt. De kan liksom dytte befolkningen i en retning vi kanskje ikke er klare over selv. Vi kan bli manipulert basert på disse dataene, og hvordan de kan bruke det veldig spissa. Sårbarheter på vår personlighet, hvem vi er. Så der gir vi noen veldig stor makt tenker jeg da. Så det er viktig, vi må ikke være naive, Det er en grunn til at verdens største selskaper er de selskapene som vet aller mest om oss. Det syns jeg er grunn til ettertanke.

**Jenny:**

Ja, etter hvert så kan få konsekvenser selv om du ikke har noe å skjule. Men alle har noe å skjule. Problemet i dag er at du ikke vet at du har noe å skjule. For når man sammenstiller alle disse dataene på nett, så danner det et bilde av deg som du ikke har kontroll over. Så hvem du er for disse selskapene det vet ikke du. Så da kan du ikke heller kontrollere hvordan de dataen brukes så kan det skape en sånn, vi snakker om nedkjølings effekt. At man kanskje trekker seg unna disse plattformene. Og det har konsekvenser for ytringsfrihet, og kanskje ikke tør å bestille en bok på Amazon, og jeg har de vennene på facebook, og jeg bor på Groruddalen, og i det området, og kanskje det til sammen kan.. ja.. Og da kan du ha folk som trekker seg unna.

**Researcher:**

Ja for det blir liksom spøkt, haha sier du det på facebook så kommer liksom FBI og overvåker deg.

**Jenny:**

Det er en veldig interessant master oppgave som jeg hadde en student som presenterte. Som hadde sett på dette chilling effect på engelsk, eller nedkjølings effekt, og de prøvde å måle det. Så de gikk i våres survey data og så nærmere på det og hadde intervju med folk. Og han så at det var med ungdom med innvandrere bakgrunn, de var reelt. For dem var det en realitet så tenkte de på hva, når de snakka med venner, det her kan jeg ikke snakke om på telefonen. Og når de søker på nett, så tenkte de oj det her kanskje jeg ikke søke på nett. Fordi det kan sånn og sånn.

**Researcher:** Absolutt, og der igjen, er det veldig mye gråsoner, hva er produktplassering. Hvor går grensa? Hva må du egentlig si? Og det er det jeg egentlig prøver å finne ut. Hvor klar er det får forbrukerne at det er reklame? Og hva er det som gjør det klar for dem da? For du har også masse grå soner i lover og regelverk, hvor for eksempel at du ikke kan påvirke underbevisstheten til folk. Men ikke sant hvordan kan du bevise at det har skjedd?

**Jenny:** Ja, det ligger jo i TV, eller kringkastingsforskriftene, mens sånn som de jobber nå med den målretta markedsføringen så er de virkelig inn i hjernene til folk. Altså de ser personlighets trekk og de går veldig nært da, den enkelte.

**Researcher:** Jeg syns jo det det høres ut som, sånn som det burde bli gjort.

**Jenny:** Ja det vi begynte å følge med på, og til og med håndheve. Coop for egentlig noen år siden så vi deres avtale. Så når de begynte å analysere handlekurven, så kunne du ikke velge, skulle du ha det kundekortet så måtte du akseptere at de analyserte handlekurven, og fikk målretta tilbud. Og da vi det at det bør være frivillig da. Du kunne få lov til å få rabatter og bruke det korte, uten også å bli profilert, så da gjorde om det, sånn at du da aktivt måtte si ja til den profileringen. Og da var jo Coop redd for at ingen ville si ja da, men sånn har det ikke vært. For de fleste syns jo det er ok at hvis du kjøper mye kaviar at du får rabatt kuponger på kaviar da.

**Researcher:** Så det er sånn de å en måte, fortsatt dytter forbrukerne til å?

**Jenny:** Ja jeg vet ikke hvordan de 'framer det', men de har hvert fall ikke mista så mange på det. Det tenker jeg med vipps og andre også, hvis de sier liksom gi oss lokasjon så kan vi tipse om ditten og datten i nærheten.

## **Thea**

**Researcher:** Okey, men sånn ny teknologi generelt, føler dere det er vanskelig å holde tritt? Du nevnte jo i den videoen av nye server som Snapchat, og det kommer jo hele tiden.

**Thea:** Ja, det kommer jo med jobben her, de fleste som er ansatt her er jo jurister, men litt av jobben er jo å følge med på sine områder da. Og jeg er jo i den digitale gruppa, og da er det jo jobben vår å følge med på alt nytt som kommer. Og måten vi jobber på da er veldig mye å følge med på sånn fagkrets, følge med på, være på sosiale medier selv, prøve å catche det som er nytt da. Også er det, ofte hvis det kommer nye aktører med nye ideer da, så prøver vi liksom å ta kontakt med dem, og si sånn kan dere komme på et møte, så kan vi snakke liksom om hva dere har lyst til med produktet eller tjenesten. Har dere tenkt på forbrukervern regler og sånne typer ting da. Så særlig er godt et godt eksempel på det er betalings apper som vipps og mCash, så når det begynte å lanseres så var jo vi inne og hadde møter og så på vilkår og sånne ting da.

**Researcher:** Okey, så dere prøver å være litt sånn framme, eller preventive da?

**Thea:** Ja vi prøver å være framover lente, være med på ting, være i forkant. Så da er det også å holde møter, foredrag, gå på konferanser, snakke med folk. Plukke opp mye ting og at det skal være lett å komme i kontakt med oss, eller komme å snakke med oss i forkant før du lanserer, så slipper vi å komme etterpå å si sånn; fin tjeneste men den er i strid med loven. Da for du jo dårlig medieoppslag og.

**Researcher:** Ja selvfølgelig, mhm. Ja det er kanskje vanskeligere med startups og sånn?

**Thea:** Ja, de er litt vanskelige å nå rett og slett altså. Vi har jo blant annet lansert en veileder for avtalevilkår for digitale tjenester, og da er det vanskelig å nå ut til de som lager produktene. Når du lager dette produktet må du tenke på at hele produktet skal være i tråd med loven.

**Researcher:** Ja det er ikke første fokus kanskje?

**Thea:** Nei det er ikke nødvendigvis det. Det er ikke alltid de vet det finnes regler før etterpå heller. Om man da skal begynne å snakke om compliance da, så handler det liksom å bare kopiere et eller annet fra en app, også legger de ut det. Også tenker de ikke så mye over det liksom. Vårt inntrykk da

er at det ikke er så veldig bevissthet rundt dette på starten da. Men det kommer etter hvert da.

**Researcher:** Så, skjult reklame. Er det mye av det her?

**Thea:** Ja. Det er det masse av. Det er bare å gå inn på Insta det, helt randomly liksom så er det en eller annen som promoterer et produkt gjennom en profil, uten at det nødvendigvis er merka da, eller at det er merka godt nok.

**Researcher:** Ja godt nok, det interesser meg veldig. Hva er godt nok? Man trenger 30+ folk får å definere hva det er. Hvordan gjør man det?

**Thea:** Ja det er jo en utfordring at regelverket et jo et EU regelverk, nor vi kaller et totalharmonisert. Så det er jo likt i hele Europa og skal forstås på samme måte. Og det regelverket innebærer at hver enkelt reklame innlegg må vurderes konkret om det er ment til å villedde forbrukerne eller ikke. Med hensyn til den kommersielle hensikten da fra annonsøren.

**Researcher:** Så hver enkelt?

**Thea:** Hver enkelt, så det finnes ikke noen standard fordi det skal vurderes konkret. Og hvis vi ikke vurderer det konkret vil vi jo ikke på en måte gjøre jobben vår, ikke sant. Fordi det er en utfordring, for på en side har vi reglene og på den andre siden har vi influencerne og nettverket deres som vil vi skal gi så konkrete føringer som mulig. For at det skal være enkelt å følge regelverket og så de skal vite at de ligger innenfor. Så da havner vi litt i skvis ikke sant. Fordi da prøver vi å gjøre det så godt vi kan, og tolke så mye som mulig og si hvis du gjør dette så er det bra nok. Men hvis noen har lyst til å utfordre det så blir det enkelt vurdering, og da kan vi ikke garantere ikke sant, så hvis vi for spørsmål, ja hva hvis vi gjør sånn og sånn, ja mulig det er bra nok. Det må vi gjøre konkret men hvis du gjør dette så vil det hvert fall være bra nok.

**Researcher:** Ja for det er absolutt en, det er så mange måter man kan tolke det på da, som at du må ha annonse skrevet i en blogg innlegg eller hva det måtte være.



**Thea:** Ja så da er det jo blant annet det vi har sagt med ordbruk at annonse og reklame, det er ord som er såpass tydelige at det er lett å forstå. For det vi ser er problemet er at influencerne bruker masse forskjellige ord og samme influencer kan bruke masse forskjellige ord. Og da er det vanskeligere å catche det. For det skal gå ganske fort dette her du driver jo å scroller ikke sant. Og da skal du catche det med en gang, og desto likere det er, desto lettere er det for å oppfatte det rett og slett. Så det er liksom hensynet bak det da Og grunne til at vi sier det da, at det er bra nok.

**Researcher:** Litt på spissen, er det to forskjellige mål, det dere vil og det kanskje influencerne vil?

**Thea:** Det er vanskelig å svare på, fordi dialogen med oss, og dette er en bransje som vi har veldig mye dialog basert liksom saksbehandling eller hva man skal kalle det. Det er veldig mye sånn forebyggende, lage veiledninga, sende det ut, prøve å svare på spørsmål, ha masse møter og foredrag. Og da opplever vi at dem er veldig sånn, vi har lyst til å holde oss innenfor loven. Så det opplever vi de har som utgangspunkt, og det er det samme som vårt utgangspunkt. Men så er vi ofte uenig med hva er det som er markedsføring, hehe, og hva er det som er tydelig merking. Og der er det nok litt variasjon også innad i influencerne. Fordi noen er jo veldig sånn, hvis det er først markedsføring så er det lett på å gjøre tydelig, her står det fra forbrukertilsynet hvordan det skal gjøres så gjøre jeg det sånn. Mens andre er nei jeg vil ikke at det skal stå sånn på min kanal, jeg vil heller bruke engelske ord, eller ja, ødelegger uttrykket. Også er det veldig mange som ikke har lyst til å oppfattes som kjøpt og betalt. Det er jo selvfølgelig noe vi ser. Men vi har jo ingen holdepunkter for å si sånn at man får mindre troverdighet eller mindre kredibilitet av å merke, tvert imot da. At liksom man oppfattes som at man er ærlige med leserne sin da. Så ja jeg tror målet er det samme, men vi er litt uenige med hva som oppfyller det målet det kanskje, det kan være en litt diplomatisk måte å si det på da. Hehe.

- Researcher:** Absolutt, det er fint å være det, hehe. Så de ser det på en måte som et loss på troverdigheten eller autensitetet dems?
- Thea:** Ja vi oppfatter det litt som altså, at der litt red for det, for mye merking. Veldig ofte så har du ofte på deg klær som er sponsa så har du på deg det i hvert innlegg, og da må du merke alt. Og da, tror jeg rett og slett de tror det ikke gjenspeiler det de føler da. For dem prøver å være ekte da, men ja hehe. Det kan man jo være da, men ja.
- Researcher:** Hehe, absolutt, er det noen influencere som har blitt veldig flinke på det, mens andre henger litt etter?
- Thea:** Ja det er nok veldig nivå forskjell, sånn som mange av det store influencere er ganske flink. Rett og slett altså. Så det er jo veldig mye bra merking der ut. Det er det. Men det vi ser er liksom sånn, en ting er å merke blogpost tydelig men så kanskje deler du den på Instagram så burde du kanskje også ha merka Instagram posten som reklame, eller hvis du har story å Insta eller Snapchat story da, at du burde merke hvert enkelt innlegg, sånne typer ting ikke sant. Men det vi ser er jo at en ting er dem, 50 største eller hva som helst 100 største, men det er veldig stort sprik derifra og ned til dem som har sånn kanskje 400 følgere som får et produkt sponsa eller et eller anna greier for å promotere det, så i det sjiktet der da. Der er det jo all slags.
- Researcher:** Ja, mhm, er det mye gråtall der?
- Thea:** Ja, det er det. Absolutt altså, sånn at vi får jo inn ganske mye tips fra folk som bruker Instagram og bloggere som ikke merker og sånn. Så det kommer inn ganske jevnt altså. Så det er jo.
- Researcher:** Hva skjer da?
- Thea:** Hehe, ja vi prøver å holde oversikt da, hvilke influencere er det, og hvilke annonsører er det som går igjen. Fordi det er jo sånn at til syvende og sist er annonsører sitt ansvar å sørge for at dem influencerne som de bruker har merka det godt nok. Sånn at det er i tråd med loven. Og det er jo annonsørens sitt ansvar, egentlig.

- Researcher:** Men ikke i realiteten?
- Thea:** Nei, vi har jo kanskje saksbehandlinga vår rett og slett lagt veldig mye av ansvaret på influencere da. Fordi det er veldig lett å ta dem som utformer merkinga, fordi det er lett å si sånn og sånn må du gjøre det, og sånn må du gjøre på alle dine kommersielle innlegg istedenfor å liksom ta hver enkelt annonsør. Men det er noe vi driver og ser på nå. Hvordan vi kan liksom skifte litt over på å ta annonsøren da. Fordi på Instagram så er det veldig populært nå ikke sant. Og der er det nok mange annonsører som bare sender ut produkt til profiler som de syns har fine bilder som passer inn i sin målgruppe, og sånn der da, her har du masse fine ting du kan vise fram. Uten å sende konkrete beskjeder hvordan de skal annonseres. Så der må de gi klar beskjed at hvis du skal legge det ut på din profil så må du merke. Nå husker jeg ikke spørsmålet men hehe.
- Researcher:** Ja det gjør ikke jeg heller men bra svar, hehe!
- Thea:** Så da er det jo i det sjiktet fra dem største og ned til jeg og deg, liksom, så er det sånn masse annonsører som driver og sender ut ting. Som ikke gir beskjed om at det skal merkes, sånn at ja, masse grå tall og masse å ta tak i.
- Researcher:** Det er bra, hehe, dere har en sikra jobb fremover.
- Thea:** Hehe, ja det er helt sikkert.
- Researcher:** Er det en forskjell nå fra før sosiale medier ble så stort. Var det lettere på en måte?
- Thea:** Ja det som er det spesielle med sosiale media er at hvis du før gikk forbi Boards eller så på TV så vet du at nå kommer det reklame. Også oppfatter du det. Men i sosiale medier så drar man liksom nytte av enkelt personer sin liksom goodwill på sosiale media, det at man deler mye av seg selv, og har følgere som føler at man kjenner dem og har relasjon til dem da. Så er det rett og slett smart markedsføring og prøve å putte sine kommersielle produkter inn i det formatet på den relasjonen som den influencerne allerede har med sine følgere da. Og så i tillegg så er det lettere å finne målgrupper og sånn, sånn at da veit du liksom at den

følgeren her har masse unge gutter eller jenter som følger henne liksom. Dem har vi lyst til å nå med vårt produkt, da kjører vi det in på den sosiale media kontoen og får promotert det der da. Det er noe sosiale media har muliggjort i mye større grad enn før.

**Researcher:** Er det noen som har tatt standpunkt, eller gjør dere det til hvilken grad er det, eller burde det.. Eller hvis sosiale medier ble oppfunnet i dag, hvilket standpunkt ville dere tatt da? Burde det være lov eller er det helt okey?

**Thea:** Det er vanskelig å svare på, men jeg tror vårt utgangspunkt er liksom du skal få lov til å markedsføre, men du må si ifra at du gjør det. Du må gi folk beskjed, og de må kunne velge å se bort, eller scrolle over det, eller vet at de blir utsatt for kommersielt budskap. Så vi er jo veldig åpne for nye ting og nye kanaler og alt sånn der, men det må gjøre på riktig måte da. Så hvis det hadde kommet i dag. Sånn, og vi hadde liksom skjønt tidlig hva det skulle brukes til og sånn, så hadde vi kanskje hatt større sjanse til å lage et rammeverk da. Som alle visste om da. Nå er det liksom case by case da, den annonsøren til å skjønne det og den og den. Så dukker det opp stadig nye.

**Researcher:** Du nevnte jo det her skillet mellom, influencere gjør det jo lett å, det blir mindre skille mellom hva som er annonser og hva som er dems personlig kanaler da. Hvis man spekulerer på influencere sin agenda, kunne det vert å ikke synliggjøre det skillet? Kanskje gjøre alt innhold likt? Hva er erfaring deres med det?

**Thea:** Det er vanskelig å svare på altså. Det tror jeg er veldig forskjellig fra influencer til influencer, men vi har jo hørt om influencere som har sagt liksom sånn, jeg fikk dette og jeg gidder ikke merke det fordi da skulle jeg få bedre betalt. Men det har vi ikke sett eksempel på i praksis da, det er bare sånn vi har hørt da. Og da får man jo plutselig incentiv til å ikke merke da, hvis man for mere penger for det. Men ja, jeg vet ikke om folk, eller om influencere er bevist nok på at det de gjør er markedsføring da. Det er bare spekulasjoner fra min side da, jeg vet ikke hvor mye som er vond vilje eller ønske om å tjene mer penger på plattformen sin og villede leserne sine, men mer sånn jeg trodde ikke dette var reklame eller jeg

hadde merka det godt nok. Det er vanskelig å svare på, det vil sikkert være masse varianter da, og det finnes jo så mange forskjellige influencere også, så vil det jo sikkert variere fra person til person.

**Researcher:** Hehe, hva er det, eller er det sånn håndfaste regler, gjør A og B også er det greit. Er det noen ting som er 'a cross the board', DET fungerer?

**Thea:** Det er det, hvis du har reklame på Instagram da, som er det beste eksempelet for dere er det mye av det. Hvis du bruker annonse eller reklame for å markere at en post er reklame og betalt av en annonsør, også har du det først i teksten, første liksom i kommentar feltet der, så er det egentlig det som er nok.

**Researcher:** Så hvor tror du problemet oppstår når det er så enkelt? Er det at de ikke ser det eller er det at de ser det også velger de å gjøre det annerledes eller?

**Thea:** Jeg tror litt av problemet er at det er, mere fristende å putte det til slutt i teksten, det er en ting. Og en annen ting er at du kanskje ikke vet at det skal stå øverst. Hvis du ikke har lest veiledninga vår vet du kanskje ikke det, at det er greit at det står sist. Også er det jo noen som er redde for å fremstå som reklameplakater da. Og kanskje i særlig i liksom det segmentet som ikke er bloggere eller tradisjonelle influencere da, artister eller idrettsutøvere og sånt. De oppfatter jeg i hvert fall liksom litt tilbakeholdende med å merke som vi sier fordi de er uenige i at de reklamerer. Så ofte trykker jo skoen på det, at vi er uenig på hva som er reklame. Og hva folk skjønner da, ut ifra sammenhengen, om det er betalt eller ikke?

**Researcher:** Er det noe som går igjen, er det noe de sier på hvorfor de ikke tror det er reklame?

**Thea:** Ja, altså de føler seg ikke kjøpt og betalt da, hehe!

**Thea:** Ja de er litt mer sånn, de gjør jo dette fordi de har lyst og, jeg er ingen blogger for eksempel da.

**Researcher:** Jeg har en jobb på en måte?

**Thea:** Ja, ja. Og imaget mitt er liksom ikke at jeg er kjøpt og betalt, jeg er kjendis på noe annet enn det å være kjent eller være influencer. Og det er en samme diskusjonen vi har hatt med mediehusene for eksempel for å dra en parallell til det. For når dem for betalt av Rema 100 eller hvem som helst for å skrive en artikkel så må jo de også merke det som reklame, men da er de liksom, vi er journalister vi er jo ikke kjøpt og betalt liksom. Men da er vi, jo men er det en annonsør som har betalt, så er det reklame og skal merkes.

**Researcher:** Mhm, flott! Jeg har vel et siste spørsmål, hva tro du, og det er litt sånn 'up in the air'. Hva tror du er fremtiden til skjult reklame?

**Thea:** Hehe. Håper jo at man skal komme til et punkt der man innser at troverdigheten sin avhenger av at man er tydelig på hvilke annonsører man samarbeider med, og at man er stolt av at man kan bruke plattformen sin til å reklamere for visse typer merker som man kanskje selv er veldig fornøyd med da. Og at eventuelt at forbrukerne skal gjøre et slag oppgjør da, og kreve merking da. Men jeg tror nok at det har kommet for å bli, ja det tror jeg. Så da er det litt sånt spørsmål om hvordan vi skal prøve, alt det, det er så lett å sette i gang med ikke sant. Det er jo bare på å sende et produkt til en person man syns har en fin konto også er det i gang, hehe. Så det er vanskelig å si noe om, men jeg tror nok bare det vil bre om seg, men at det er lov å håpe om at man får et slags skifte i holdning da, ovenfor annonsører, og influencere og leserne og følgerne da. Mhm.

### Nils

**Researcher:** Jeg har jo forstått det sånn at dere har jo vert borti det her en del kanskje.

**Nils:** Ja for å ta det sånn helt kort på starten, på det feltet her sånn så er det litt to-delt. Hvis vi snakker om å ha kontroll om hvordan reklame på blogger og Youtube og sånt noe skal føres tilsyn med, og hvilke regler som gjelder og sånt. Medietilsynet er jo primært ansvarlig på det som går på levende bilder.

**Researcher:** Ja.

**Nils:** Så når vi lager regler og veiledning til influencerne da, de som på en måte er markedsførerne her sånn, eller kanalene for markedsføring så er det fortrinnsvis Youtube of video innhold som vi har ansvar for. Også er det forbruker ombudet, eller forbruker tilsynet som det heter nå som er ansvarlig for det som er skriftlig innhold da, som for eksempel blogger og sånt noe på nettet. Det er liksom en todelt oppgave, fordi det er to forskjellige regler som regulerer det. Det er kringkastingsloven som gjelder på Youtube og markedsføringsloven som gjelder når du har en skriftlig blogg for eksempel da. Så når det er levende bilder og video innhold så er det plutselig oss på andre siden da.

**Researcher:** Ja, veldig interessant med det her med at dere operer med litt forskjellige lover, er det mye variasjon i det praktiske outcome'ene i de lovene eller?

**Nils:** Tja, akkurat på det feltet her sånn så er det ikke sånn veldig stor forskjell. Det vi gjorde for et par år siden, da vi så hvordan det her lå an sånn rent lovmessig, så har vi samarbeida tett med forbrukertilsynet som det heter fra nyttår. Vi satt oss egentlig sammen og titta vi litt på hvordan det her kunne løses best mulig, fordi det er klart at når en 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 åring som er på Youtube eller har sin egen blogg eller på en annen måte så blir det helt håpløst å forholde seg til disse reglene hvis vi bare kjører på fra hver vår kant. Så vi prøvde liksom å samkjøre der det var mulig, og lagde i å for seg hver vår veileder på hvordan disse influencerne skulle oppføre seg når det gjaldt merking og tydeliggjøring av kommersielle innholdet i videoen og bloggene sine. Og som kom vi da ut i andre ende i å for seg to forskjellige veiledere, men det er ikke noe dramatisk forskjell på dem, dem er jo sånn ganske, budskapet er jo det samme, og budskapet er jo at det skal være et skille mellom kommersielle og redaksjonelt innhold da. Og det som på en måte kjennetegner disse bloggerne og Youtube videoene er jo nettopp at de inneholder en blanding av å rapporter fra sitt eget liv og markedsføring som de har fått betalt for å integrere i stoffet. Så det er jo der utfordringen kommer når det gjelder at folk som skal være oppmerksom på forskjellen.

**Researcher:** Ja, er det liksom et lite Paradox når man må regulere noe som i bunn og grunn, man kan profitere fra å hviske bort det skillet da?

**Nils:** Ja det er klart at, eller om det er et Paradox vet jeg ikke men det er hvert fall, vi kjenner jo igjen fra tradisjonell TV og radio og aviser og sånt noe. Det går akkurat på det samme som de etiske reglene som vær varsomme plakaten uttrykker og sånt noe, nemlig at det skal være åpenhet omkring når noe er på en måte journalistisk begrunna og når det er kommersielt begrunna. Så hvis det er noen er betalt for å få markedsført seg sjøl eller sine produkter eller tjenester, og dette her skal inn i en redaksjonelt flate så er det et grunnleggende krav i alt medieinnhold at alt dette skal publikum ha mulighet til å ha oppmerksomhet på. Sånn at du vet, altså poenget er jo at du skal vite hvilket grunnlag du tilegner deg informasjon på, og at du vet hvis du skal ta et valg, at du vet også om den informasjon som du skal valget på bakgrunn av er pålitelig da. Så det handler jo om pålitelighet i informasjon, og det er jo superaktuelt for tiden.

**Researcher:** Absolutt, absolutt, 'fake news' og alt det der.

**Nils:** Ja ikke sant! Det er veldig mye av samme sak egentlig. Det dreier seg om at forbrukerne skal ha mulighet til å vite hvem er det egentlig som står bak denne informasjonen her sånn. Og så kan jeg ta valget mitt på bakgrunnen av at jeg hvert fall ser det da. Så det er jo liksom for at du skal ha en litt annen overvåkenhet i forhold til den informasjonen som du konsumerer på ulike medie-plattformer. Og derfor så har vi også vert veldig opptatt av at, selvfølgelig er det veldig utfordrende med influencer marketing i den forstand i at det er en farlig blanding av det du sjøl har lyst til å rapportere om dit eget liv og det du har får betalt for å mene eller si, av noen annonsør eller via et sånt nettverk, sånn typ, det er så mange av etter hvert da.

**Researcher:** Jeg har jo lagt merke til at både dere og forbrukertilsynet har jo kommet ganske sånn klare veiledninger da, som det er jo kanskje lettere nå å forholde seg til, en for et par år siden, for en influencer?



**Nils:** Jeg tror det, jeg tror det opplever det, vi har vært ganske aktive ute på tilbudssida med å holde innlegg for sånt som Splay, Nordic Screens og United Influencers, for å få de også med på å videreformidle informasjonen til influencerne da. For det gjør jo jobben litt enklere for oss også, for det begynner jo å bli ganske mange etter hvert, og det er ikke så veldig så veldig lett og når hver enkelt for oss, og det er veldig viktig at vi har med de nettverka på den jobben, sånn at det blir en del av opplæringspakka for nye influencere og sånt noe, som kommer inn i en sånt nettverk for å få med seg den informasjonen fra starten av.

**Researcher:** Ja, føler du de er veldig hjelpelig, og eller har lyst til å samarbeide, de agenturene?

**Nils:** Absolutt, veldig positive respons fra dem og opplever også at, jeg vet ikke om det er noe som bare er noe som vi, innbiller oss eller hva det noe er, men vi så jo når vi hadde lansert de veilederne i fjor sommer, og vi kjørte, vi og forbrukertilsynet kjørte hver vår kontroll på høsten så, så vi jo det at det var en merkbar bedring på Youtube som vi opplevde, som jeg tror forbrukertilsynet ikke opplevde helt den sammen 'boosten' på blogger da.

**Nils:** Hva det kommer av det har vi liksom diskutert litt fram og tilbake oss imellom, det har ikke kommet et svar på det, men vi spekulerer litt i at det kanskje skyldes litt i at den blogg verden er litt mer sånn etablerte greier, som har holdt på en del år og det er kanskje litt eldre aktører som holder på og sånt noe. Mulig at de sitter litt igjen med en gammel motvilje mot å skrive reklame på innleggene sine, mens de litt kanskje mer unge og ferske i Youtuberne har på en måte tatt inn det her sånn. Så det blir litt mer naturlig del, har ikke opplevd den motstanden som vi kanskje tradisjonelt sett har hvor det er kjipt å skrive reklame for du mister troverdighet, det er liksom den klassiske tilnærminga til det. Fordi folk er lei reklame og det har en sånn negativ klang, men på Youtube har vi på en måte opplevd at man synes det er greit å være ærlig, og man har på en måte en, det er på en måte den kapitalen man har som influencer og påvirker ovenfor, da må man ha den tilliten og den verdigheten igjennom

at man profilerer seg veldig på å være så ærlig, så da tror jeg på en måte at den merke biten har. At du har flyttet litt på det er jo rett og slett, særlig på Youtube hvor, det er helt okey å skrive reklame, for ja jeg får betalt for å si det, og det er greit liksom så lenge man er ærlig på det, så tror jeg ikke de har tapt noe på det heller.

**Researcher:** Det var veldig interessant, når var det du sa du merka den forskjellen?

**Nils:** Det var i høst når vi kjørte tilsyn da, for å følge opp hvordan dette hadde resultert vi hadde hatt den lanseringa fra de veilederen og sånt no. Får vi så jo i fjor vår var det vel at vi hadde en liten kartlegging av markedet for å se hvordan merkinga var før vi begynte å lansere disse veilederne, og da var det jo utrolig dårlig. Det var rett og slett nesten, var kanskje med litt godvilje så fant vi vel at et par 3 stykker fra en 30-40 sånne Youtube videoer som vi så på var OK merka. Mens når vi hadde oppfølgingskontrollør i høst så var jo faktisk 2/3 av de videoene som vi fulgte med på, og det var videoer i Youtube kanaler fra de mest populære youtuberne i Norge, da var 2/3 merka helt tilfredsstillende. Så det hadde jo en veldig effekt på kort tid da.

**Researcher:** Tror du generelt trenden eller den reguleringen rundt influencer bransjen, tror du det, hvor tror du det går? Fremover?

**Nils:** Det er ikke godt å si altså, skal jeg være litt forsiktig nå, for jeg er ikke sånn ekspert på markedsføring, vi forholder oss stort sett på å tolke og håndheve regelverket, men jeg har jo hvert fall inntrykket så lang hvert fall, at det er, jeg tror det er ganske sånn god vilje til å, man ønsker å framstå som seriøs, og man ønsker å framstå som troverdig, og jeg tror absolutt den tiden er over hvor det her sånn var helt sånn ville vesten liksom, hvor det var allright. Jeg tror man er ganske positive til å få noen kjøreregler i den bransjen der og. Men så er det jo klart at det stiller jo noen krav til oss som myndighet som skal håndheve det regelverket, for det er jo veldig viktig at det er likt for alle. Eller så blir det jo veldig ugreit, hvis det er sånn at noen slipper unna med å gjøre overtramp mens andre blir tatt så, så det er jo en utfordring som vi har. Som myndigheter at vi kan håndheve de reglene som kommer på en god måte, sånn at man

opplever at både jeg og han og hun, liksom står opp for de samme krava, eller så blir det veldig fort sånn urettferdig, hvis noen slipper unna med å gjøre noe andre for bot på, så en ting er å innføre regler, men en annen er å ha et godt system som sørger for at alle blir fulgt opp og stilt krav til.

**Researcher:** Så hva er da synet deres på, de forskjellige Youtube influencerne har jo forskjellige brukere eller seere også. Hvor går grensa når det gjelder barn og andre seere da, som kanskje har et annerledes forhold til reklame?

**Nils:** Det er jo litt av grunne til at vi har prioriter det området her sånn, for vi ser jo at nødvendigvis reklame ikke er nødvendigvis retta mot barn, og det er jo ikke tillatt i Norge å rette reklame direkte mot barn, ikke sant. Så det er jo et område som forbrukertilsynet har og som forbruker tilsynet følger opp. Bare sånn som et overordna perspektiv på det. Men så vet vi jo fortsatt at det er mange barn som ser på Youtube kanaler med disse populære influencer kanalene, og det er jo også noe av grunne til at vi har valgt å prioritere og få på plass veiledning og enkle kjøreregler sånn at barn også skal hvert fall ha muligheten til å bli gjort oppmerksom på stoff som inneholder reklame og markedsføring da. Også er det selvfølgelig et annet spørsmål om de oppfatter det og forstår det, og i hvilken grad de forholder seg til det. Men det blir jo liksom mer en oppdrager spørsmål, om skolen er godt nok inn i bildet her, for å gi barn og unge god opplæring i kritisk media forståelse. Men det er jo også et felt som vi ønsker å bidra på, så vi har jo også lagd noen veiledere og har jo også en del informasjon ut til foreldre og andre. Vi prøver også å nå den gruppa med kunnskap om kritisk media forståelse, det å forholde seg informasjon på nett på en fornuftig og kritisk måte. Så det er jo absolutt noe vi har med oss når vi prioriterer det feltet her sånn, nettopp fordi det er så mange unger som lever og ånder for Youtube heltene sine.

**Researcher:** Ja, absolutt, mhm, veldig interessant. Så tror du generelt.. Eller for å ta det over på produkt plassering da. Begynner Youtuberne mer og mer å bruke produkt plassering i forhold til, i motsetning til tradisjonell sponsing eller reklame? Blir det mere på en måte skjult?

**Nils:** Hva skal jeg si til det? Det er jo, jeg vet ikke helt hva jeg tror. Men jeg ser jo hvert fall at dette med sånn innholds markedsføring det har jo fått et sånn ganske bra løft de siste åra. Det å prøve liksom på en måte å integrere det kommersielle budskapet i annet innhold for å på en måte gjøre det mer salgbart og mer troverdig? Det er absolutt noe som har fått en veldig boost. I og med at tradisjonell reklame har blitt, det har blitt mye lettere å hoppe over og unngå det en tidligere. Så jeg kan tenke meg at den måten å få formidla det budskapet på helt sikkert kommer til å vokse, og helt sikkert på Youtube også og ikke minst fordi at de som er influencere har jo nettopp den veldig påvirkningskraft på grupper som er veldig interessante å nå for annonsørene da. Så derfor så er jo veldig viktig at den type informasjon blir godt merka, sånn at vi ikke for tilstander hvor skjult reklame for lov til å utvikle seg i hvert fall for stor grad. Så jeg vet ikke om det er noe fornuftig svar.

**Nils:** Jeg ser jo at også det at sånn som PFU, pressens faglige utvalg som generelt følger med på media innhold, dem har jo også bestemmelser på det skillet mellom kommersielt og redaksjonelt innhold og sånt noe. Og jeg ser på dem og at de har en del saker det siste året hvor de er veldig opptatt av det her sånn med innholdsmarkedsføring og ha skikkelig merking når man blander sammen kan du si kommersielt og redaksjonelt. Så det kan jo være et tips å gå inn på siden PFU.no og se litt på saken som PFU har behandle i det siste, for dem er også ganske opptatt av det temaet her.

**Researcher:** Absolutt, men synes du da, er det vanskelig å forholde seg til generelt kanaler som er kanskje så, teknologien forandrer jo seg og det utvikler seg nye kanaler hele tiden, er det vanskelig å forholde seg til?

**Nils:** For oss som myndigheter er det jo vanskelig å ha oversikten, det er jo hvert fall helt sikkert, det er en kjempeutfordring. Vi står jo litt ovenfor det når vi skal prøve å føre tilsyn på for eksempel populære influencer på Youtube. I det ene øyeblikket er det den ene kjempepopulær og så er den en annen som er kjempepopulær også dukker det opp nye segmenter og nye aktører hele tiden. Så det er jo også derfor vi prøver å formidle vårt

budskap gjennom bruk av sånn som disse nettverka. Sånn at vi på en måte skal slippe å nærmest overvåke internett og følge med på enhver som dukker opp. Og så er det jo litt sånn at hvis vi er strategiske litt smarte og prøver å få de store populære flinke med på laget, så tenker vi også at det kanskje har litt smitte effekt på de nyetablert som kanskje ikke er så store enda, men allikevel ser åssen det her gjøre av heltene. Og kanskje det for litt smitte effekt så det blir en grei norm for bransjen å følge. Så det har vi blitt opptatt av, og det har vi absolutt lykkes veldig godt med, vi hadde jo for eksempel PrebzOgDennis for eksempel da, som var veldig populære før dem ga seg nå nylig, de var jo kjempe raskt ute med å merke innlegga sine i bøtter og spann med all slags merking og det hadde en veldig god smitte effekt.

**Researcher:**

Okey! Syns du da det er, jeg har jo fått inntrykk av at det norske, både regel verket og influencerne er litt strengere på det selv, en kanskje internasjonal og engelsk talende influencere. Hvordan da er det å forholde seg til et så stort marked da?

**Nils:**

Ja, det er godt spørsmål vettu, det er selvfølgelig den store utfordringer med hele, vi kan jo holde på som rakkern oppi Norge her og være kjempeflinke, men så er det et annerledes, etablerte i andre land og der har jo ikke vi myndighet. For å si det sånn norske regler gjelder jo bare for de som er etablert i Norge, også har jo Norge vert ganske tidlig ute med å definere Youtube kanaler til å høre innunder den norsk kringkastnings regelverket og så er det sånn at det fins jo i Europa så fins det media myndigheter i alle land og vi ser jo nå at mange av de landa kommer etter, og det er veldig interesse for å høre hva Norge har gjort i internasjonale forumene medietilsynet og sånt som forteller hvordan vi har gjort det i Norge, og vi ser at flere land kommer etter med liknende approach til å sørge for god merking og sånt noe på Youtube. Men det er selvfølgelig en stor utfordring det. Jeg vet ikke hvordan det er i for eksempel USA og sånt noe, hvordan regelverket rundt sånne ting er der sånn. Det er jo helt klart et viktig spørsmål det her da. Vi som forvalter det norske regelverket for jo ikke gjort spå mye mer enn å prøve å gjøre det på best mulig måte ovenfor norske aktører.

**Researcher:** Ja jo mer jo bedre, hehe! Ja jeg har jo et siste punkt her, og det går på det litt filosofisk spørsmål. Det står vel at det ikke er lov i Norge å bruke metoder som påvirker underbevisstheten, så da er jo spørsmålet mitt. Og det er jo derfor det er litt filosofisk, hvor går grensa på hva som påvirker underbevisstheten?

**Nils:** Nei det er jo en formulering som har stått i holdt jeg på si i kringkastningsloven fra tidenes morgen. Jeg tror det at man har tatt inn det i loven egentlig skyldes at det var en periode hvor man eksperimenterte blant annet på kino og sånt med å legge inn et 1/10 dels sekund bilder på skjermen som på en måte skulle stimulere underbevisstheten på en måte du ikke la merke til det. Man holdt på å eksperimentere med teknikker som gjorde at man fikk inn den bestemmelsen inn i loven for å forby det. Så jeg tror rett og slett at det er det det bunner i, og jeg har ikke egentlig noe bedre svar en det altså. For jeg kjenner ikke helt til at den type teknologi er noe særlig aktuelt rett og slett.

**Nils:** Lenger ja. Så og påvirka underbevisstheten, er jo som du sier, hva i all verden er det liksom? Og når kan man slå fast at underbevisstheten er blitt påvirket i strid med loven? Nei den er, vi bruker ikke den så mye her hos oss.

### **Vivian**

**Vivian:** Men sånn via yrkesrollen sin havner på kjøret. Så kan du si jeg har jo noen tilleggs grupper som ligner mere på det du er opptatt av og det er jo profesjonelle politikere og det er tv stjerne altså sånn tv verter sånn som Harald Eia og Fredrik Skavlan og sånne. De er nok mere sånn som har søkt oppmerksomhet og selv valgt en rolle i rampelyset mens majoriteten av mitt material har jo ikke egentlig valgt det. Så fokuset i boken min er jo på en måte at du blir kastet ut i det. Uten å helt være forberedt på det og at det er mye negativt fokus, for at du har gjort noe galt, eller trådt over noe grenser. Så det blir jo igjen veldig annerledes enn når du selv bygger opp en image, du selv ønsker å være i rampelyset.

**Researcher:** Ja. Så vil du si at det er forskjellig personlighet eller er det rett og slett mellom de som ønsker og de som blir kasta ut i det.

**Vivian:** Altså det er jo ikke gjort noen systematisk undersøkelse på å sammenligne det, men hvis man skal spekulere litt rundt det, så kan man jo si at det å bruke sosiale medier, bloggere, type ting der har man jo på en måte senket terskelen veldig for offentlig oppmerksomhet, sånn at her har man en kanal for personer som kanskje aldri ville sluppet gjennom alle filtrene i det redaktør regulerte mediene ikke sant, som her, starte fra scratch, bygge seg opp, og har en veldig sånn høy grad av aktivitet, og høy grad av egenkontroll i fremstillingen av seg selv. Og som vinner oppmerksomhet og for alle disse følgerne sine som de går inn i et samspill med. Så det er klart at både vil man tenke at bakgrunnen situasjonen for eksempel i mitt material var det en overvekt av folk i ledende stillinger, høyt utdannede og sånn. Men bloggerne, du kaller dem influencerne, men for meg er det greit å si sånn, bloggerne. De har jo all verden, ulike typer bakgrunner, ofte er de, har de vel ikke så mye utdannelse, ikke spesielt mye å vifte med i utgangspunktet, så de blir kjent gjennom stilingen sin, eller altså sånn type at er koblet opp mot noe spennende eller noe annet unge ønsker sei. For eksempel å være kona til en kjendis, ikke sant. Hehe

**Vivian:** Sånn at det du gjør i denne rollen, er å bygge deg opp, å lage deg en fasade. Også vil det jo variere litt hvor selvutleverende du skal være og hvor mye du spiller en rolle, altså jeg tenker sånn som hun 'pilotfrue', jeg vet ikke om hun er med i materialet ditt, som jo eksponerer barnløsheten sin, at det var når hun gikk ut om aborter og kjøre veldig på det, og prøverør og hormoner og sånt, det var da hennes blogg tok av.

**Vivian:** Og virkelig ble berømt, og da kan du si de ligger jo veldig veldig tett opp til din egen nærheten, og at du deler veldig intim kunnskap om deg selv til andre.

**Researcher:** Mhm, vil du si at det er en forskjell på de som søker rampelyset, er de mere kanskje, gir de mer av seg selv?

- Vivian:** Altså det er jo det de har, det er jo det som er valutaen deres. Det å dele intimkunnskap om selg selv, det er jo det de blir kjente på.
- Researcher:** Mens de lederne?
- Vivian:** De er mye mer profesjonelle roller, så de trenger jo ikke, og de er ofte veldig opptatt å skille mellom privatlivet og den offentlige rollen sin, og lukker døren til sitt privatliv. Mens disse bloggerne, det er jo valutaen deres å dele privatlivet sitt.
- Researcher:** Absolutt. Har du, nå skriver jeg på engelsk, så jeg vet ikke det norske termet er, men har du noen gang hørt om termet om 'persuasion knowledge'?
- Vivian:** Overtalelseskunnskap?
- Researcher:** Ja, og det sier jo mer eller mindre at jo mer du vet at du bli overtalt til noe, jo mindre sannsynlig er det at du velger å bli overtalt. Eller at du lykkes, hvordan tror du at det spiller inn med influencere som kanskje prøver å selge?
- Vivian:** Altså her tror jeg jo veldig mye er troverdigheten din, altså fordi her har vi jo grå sonene i ganske stor grad, altså dette at du legger ut om den fine festen din og alle de flotte tingene og den gode maten. Også vet ikke leserne at alt dette er betalt av noen sånn at det du bare driver med egentlig er reklame. Altså hvis det blir stor, hvis du mister troverdigheten på budskapet ditt tror jeg at det blir vanskelig. Sånn at troverdigheten din er kanskje den viktigste valutaen du har i forhold til lesekreten din.
- Researcher:** Absolutt, hva vil det egentlig si å være troverdig?
- Vivian:** Det betyr jo at det er overenstemmelse med hva du sier og hva du gjør, i veldig stor grad hvem du er. Altså hvis du fremstiller deg på en måte så er jo troverdigheten din om det stemmer med den du faktisk er. Og derfor er jo noe av sårbarheten å bli avslørt, at du har jukset, at du har drevet reklame, mens leserne dine trodde at det var en personlig greie. Så det er jo her vi, dette området det er vanskelig å vite, og det er lett å trå feil og lett å gå av.



**Researcher:**

**Vivian:** Ja, ikke så mye nettrollene men når det er sånne Twitter stormer, at folk blir tatt for ting på nettet og hva som skjer og hvilke mekanismer det er der. Som kanskje jeg tenker det er mulig som interessant for deg, jeg vet ikke husker du den der storyen om hun som dro til Sør-Afrika som var sånn PR rådgiver i et firma, også twitret hun 'going to Africa, will I get aids? No, I'm white'.

**Vivian:** Også ble hun, ja ikke sant det slo ut for rasisme og greier, hun ble jo ødelagt av det, helt knust, mistet jobben, mistet alt, vedvarende. Og det var for den raseri stormen traff henne.

**Researcher:** Hva er det med oss mennesker som gjør at vi liker å like å dele?

**Vivian:** Ja vi er jo gruppedyr, det er veldig dypt i mennesker at vis skal høre til, så det referanse gruppene våres gjør har vi en tendens å imitere, og ofte ganske sløvt uten å sjekke etter hva er det jeg egentlig deler nå liksom. Og det er jo, sosiale medier er jo skumle med det, for du leser overskriften også tror du du vet hva som står, også klikker du det. Så det blir en sånn lettvinthetsgreie på at du kan slenge deg på hva som helst.

**Researcher:** Det er jo noe av de negative siden ved sosiale medier. Er det noen sider, i så fall hva er det?

**Vivian:** Ja altså det er mange, sosiale medier har jo mye. Disse influencerne er jo på en måte for mange noe positivt. Fordi du slipper til, terskelen er senket, du kan dele ting som tidligere ble ansett som skamfullt. Spiseforstyrrelser, usikkerhet, hverdagsliv, sykdomsproblemer altså på den måten av man for lagt ut ting og man kan dele det med andre og kan få støtte for positivt. Du kan være med å drive folkeopplysning på positivt. Så jeg tenker det her er ikke ensidig negativt, men det er klart at liksom det er en virkelighet i disse sosiale mediene hvor alt går så fort, alt er sp lettvin, det er lett å komplisere, det er lett at det går viralt, det er ikke en kultur for forskning for eksempel, bli jo dumpet der. Fordi man syns ikke det er interessant, man vil heller ha lettvinde personer og

opplevelser, så for meg er ikke det bra og dårlig, det er elementer av både og.

**Researcher:** Mhm, hvordan vil du tro vi mennesker eller forbrukere opplever reklame fra influencere på sosiale medier? Er vi oppmerksomme på det?

**Vivian:** Altså de fleste er irritert over det, og forsøker å slippe unna mest mulig, man opplever jo det som 'disturbances' altså forstyrrelser i det man leser. Og det man prøver er å hoppe over det så godt man kan. Så det er klart at det reklame makerne forsøker er å kamuflere så mye som mulig og late som det er fakta stoff, og den andre biten er at man forsøker å redusere overflødig reklame, og det er jo at du tilpasser målgruppen, sånn at du får reklame som oppleves som relevant. Men det er klart at forbrukerne opplever jo det som stort sett irriterende og vil helst slippe det.

**Researcher:** Mhm, jeg har jo fått et inntrykk av at som du sier på den ene siden så har du jo markedsførerne som vil på en måte skjule reklame, de tjener jo på det. Men på den andre siden så har du jo denne, for å være en influencer så må du være autentisk og du kan på en måte ikke lure forbrukeren din, da blir du hengt ut, hvis det blir funnet ut?

**Vivian:** Hvis det blir funnet ut! Men de driver jo med det hele tiden!

**Researcher:** Ja, så hva er det egentlig som er sannheten der, er det i bunn og grunn at man skal være autentisk, eller kunne man spekulert at det er en 'means to an end'?

**Vivian:** Ja, altså autentisk er jo et tvetydig begrep, altså man må synes autentisk, men virkeligheten er vel at det er svært få av oss som egentlig er autentisk på sosiale medier. Altså hvis du bare ser helt vanlig facebook oppdatering alle driver jo med sånn styla images av seg selv. Se på liksom ungdommen som begynner med Snapchat og, det er ikke som mye men Instagram og, dem holder på en time for en selfie liksom for å få den fin. Så at det ligger jo i oss dette at vi hele tiden forsøker å presentere et forsønnet bilde av oss selv. Så her er det igjen ikke sånn absolutt. Men det er dypt menneskelig og gråsoner med når går du for langt og. Men det er klart at influencere er jo avhengig av å bli oppfattet som autentiske.

**Vivian:** Men om de er det vil jo variere, her er jo folk mer eller mindre flinke til

### **Mariel**

**Mariel:** At vi har blitt påvirket av personer med kredibilitet, det er jo ikke noe nytt. Det at vi ser til noen som har kompetanse innenfor et område. Det har vi jo sett i markedsføringen i en årrekke at man bruker tallpersoner til å stå innenfor et produkt. Så det at innflytelsesrike personer er tilsted er ikke noe nytt, men det er nok en annen interaksjons form som har dukket opp, med blogger og sosiale medier. Det er jo ikke sånn at bloggere bare skriver blogger, de er jo tilsted på tvers av sosiale medier. Jeg er litt nysgjerrig på spørsmålet selv. Jeg er ikke helt sikker på hvor stor bevissthet forbrukerne har. Jeg snakker mye med studentene og de har jo til gjengjeld ganske stor bevissthet rundt dette her. Og mange av de gjør det jo aktivt, de oppsøker blogger, de oppsøker influencers, fordi de vil ha råd, de vil ha tips som de kan ta med seg. Og da tror jeg det er irrelevant om det er reklame eller ikke. De er ute etter enten et produkt, eller rutine, eller måte å gjøre noe på. Så tror jeg de tar alt de får av råd, og hvis noe er reklame så tenker de at de har fått en anbefaling.

**Researcher:** Hmm, så tror du det skillet mellom reklame og tradisjonelle reklame og på en måte original content, organic content. Tror du det blir litt viska bort?

**Mariel:** Det blir nok ikke visket bort, men det blir nok mer uklart. Hvis du følger en person som du anser som en god kilde. Så vil jeg tro at veldig mange er innforstått med at det kommer markedsføring, at de vil promotere produkter, men at de aksepterer det fordi det kommer også andre gode råd. Så det er ikke sikkert det vet alltid hva som er promotert og hva som er en mer oppriktig anbefaling. Så det skillet tror jeg utviskes. Men så tror det skillet mellom den type markedsføring og annen markedsføring, den tror jeg er ganske tydelig, for de som faktisk oppsøker influencers.

**Researcher:** Ja, når hun snakket om facebook. Tror du det er en 'take it or leave it' innstilling? Som er litt mindre, de reklamerer litt, men samtidig får jeg jo tips, jeg liker å følge med?

**Mariel:** Vi snakker jo en del om dette målrettede budskap. Der skiller jeg meg personlig fra veldig mange andre. For jeg synes det er interessant å se reklame jeg ikke er interessert i. Men det er jo veldig mange som setter pris på. Eller veldig mange, jeg har iverfall hørt meninger om at det er folk som setter pris på budskap som er relevante for dem. Og igjen det er jo bevissthet, særlig på facebook. Der er det jo ganske tydelig og kommer frem som annonser. Og sånn som det er i dag så har vi ikke noe valg, enten så er man på facebook og aksepter det eller så er man ikke det. Så det er klart at den kostnaden med å gi slipp på en sosial plattform som er så dominerende er nok for stor for de fleste, i hvert fall for de unge.

### **Julia**

**Researcher:** Mhm. Og Hva er det du bruker mest?

**Julia:** Instagram.

**Researcher:** Det er kanskje der de er mest synlige, bortsett fra på blogger og sånt noe da.

**Julia:** Ja, men det er jo mere oppsøkende tenker jeg, men Instagram er det jo veldig skille ja.

**Researcher:** Ja. Hva for deg, hva er en influencer egentlig?

**Julia:** En influencer er jo en som har innflytelse da på andre mennesker via sosiale medier.

**Julia:** Ja en som har mye følgere og mye påvirkningskraft.

**Researcher:** Så hva er det som får disse her til å ha så stor påvirknings kraft tror du?

**Julia:** Herregud, det vet jeg ikke. Ja de jeg følger da som jeg følger jo mye reisekontoer og sånn. De har jo veldig interessant profiler og sånt da. De reiser mye. Det er spennende å følge med på de.

**Researcher:** Det gjør ikke om du husker noen, men du kan eventuelt forklare en som skiller seg ut?

**Julia:** Okey, skal vi se da, jeg må prøve å tenke på et navn da. Altså de reise kontoene jeg følger heter Eric et eller annet, også er det et eller annet

Costa. De driver jo med videologg da, men mye på Instagram og veldig mange kule bilder. Og de bare reiser egentlig, mye kult, hopper i fallskjerm, surfer og. Men jeg husker ikke hva de heter da.

**Researcher:** Men hva er de positive sidene for deg med å følge de Instagrammerne?

**Julia:** Det er jo inspirasjon da! Jeg reiser jo jeg og, så jeg jeg liker å se hvor det er kult å reise.

**Researcher:** Hvor det er kult å reise, hva du kan gjøre og sånn ting?

**Julia:** Ja, rett og slett inspirasjon når jeg sitter hjemme og kjeder meg på jobb.

**Researcher:** Føler du, er det en sånn kjede, eller er det noe du gjør mellom andre ting som regel?

**Julia:** Hm, ja det er jo litt sånn når man sitter på bussen, det du tenker på?

**Julia:** Ja sånn i løpet av en dag, dødtid.

**Researcher:** Kan du tenke deg noen negative sider ved å følge sånne influencere?

**Julia:** Eh, ja man blir jo påvirka da, selv om man kanskje. Ja for jeg ser jo det at de reiser jo til steder hvor jeg egentlig vet at jeg ikke kunne reist i det hele tatt. Men så blir man jo påvirka for det ser jo veldig kult ut måten de fremstiller det.

**Researcher:** Det er kult, har du et eksempel på det?

**Julia:** Ja eksempelvis Dubai. Hvor de betaler alle influencer for å ha det dritfett i Dubai men så er det jo ikke sånn det er i på ordentlig. Det er sånn de vil framstille seg.

**Researcher:** Hva tenker du da, når du ser en influencer du liker da, også drar de til Dubai?

**Julia:** De for jo mye penger for det, så selvfølgelig, det er jo jobben dems.

**Researcher:** Ja, det er ikke noe, men ja det er litt sånn negativ baktanke?

**Julia:** Ja, jeg tenker jo mye av det de gjør det jo for de får betalt for det. Ja sånn er det jo. Det er jo det de lever av, greit nok det. Ja det er jo sånn disse norske influencerne driver og skriver om sånne underlivs deodoranter og

sånne ting, de gjør det jo fordi de får penger for det. Hehe, det er jo ingen som bruker det liksom, hehe.

**Researcher:** Hehe, er det noe du ser som du tenker det her står du egentlig ikke for?

**Julia:** Ja.

**Researcher:** Føler du det er et problem?

**Julia:** Jeg føler ikke det er et problem for meg, men for noen som er fjorten kanskje, eller tolv eller sånn.

**Researcher:** Så unge folk som kan kanskje ikke skille det der like bra?

**Julia:** Ja, som ikke skjønner at de får betalt for det.

**Researcher:** Syns du det er generelt lett å se om noen er betalt for eller ikke?

**Julia:** Eh, jeg syns det, men så er jo norske regler ganske strenge på det. Jeg syns det.

**Researcher:** Ja du merker det?

**Julia:** Ja man ser det jo, selv om disse influencere liker å bryte regler, så ofte de kan.

**Researcher:** Syns du det er en gråsone?

**Julia:** Ja jeg tror de prøver å virke mer genuine enn de er når det kommer til et produkt da, sånn som disse underlivsdeodorantene.

**Researcher:** Føler du noen ganger kjøpt noe du har sett fra influencere, en reise eller noe annet?

**Julia:** Hmm, jeg har jo sikkert det. Men det er vanskelig å komme på nå. Ja det kan jo sikkert være noe klær da, det kan det jo lett være. Ja, men ikke som jeg kommer på. Det er nok mer sånne ubeviste valg man tar. Sånn altså hvis du skal velge en av to kjeks i butikken, og ikke har hørt om noen av de, men har sett et bilde av den ene hundre ganger så velger du underbevist den. Men ikke som jeg kommer på, det er ikke noe jeg har sett som jeg har kjøpt.

**Julia:** Jo vet du hva, jeg har kjøpt noe, en Kylie Jenner Lipkit!

**Researcher:** Okey, veldig interessant! Kan du forklare hele prosessen med det her, fra start til slutt, hehe!

**Julia:** Haha, fordi ja det ble plutselig veldig, veldig populært at det ingen fikk jo kjøpt det, ikke sant. Dette var jo når det akkurat kom ut da. Det var sånn, og alle sånne på Instagram og alle influencers og halv influencers kaller jeg det, ååh herregud vi må få tak i denne, åh alle skrøt av den, så jeg bare er den bra eller ikke det. Så da kjøpt jeg den, også var den jævlig bra! Haha, så kjøpte jeg en til! Jeg ble påvirke og det var et bra produkt, hehe!

**Researcher:** Haha, bra Product og du står ved det valget?

**Julia:** Ja altså jeg hadde jo uansett kjøpt den da, det går ikke an å prøve den, man kunne bare kjøpe den på nettet på hennes side. Ja det var jo en risk da, men jeg var sånn jeg måtte vite fordi alle snakka om det.

**Researcher:** Du nevnte noe morsomt her, du kalte det halv influencere, hva mener du med det?

**Julia:** Haha, ja disse som ikke er helt på topp, men som jeg vet ikke, som er litt store på Instagram men jeg tror ikke de lever av det. Hvis du skjønner? Du skjønner jo.

**Researcher:** Tror du det er, du nevnte jo ista ungdommer da. Tror du de har vanskeligheter for å se mye av kanskje pengene som ligger bak.

**Julia:** Ja det tror jeg absolutt, ja. Jeg tror de tror veldig masse av disse bloggerne i Norge hvert fall bare skriver dagbøker på nettet, og ikke skjønner at det de gjør det ikke for moro skyld liksom, nei. Det er ikke dagbok, det er en ja, business.

**Researcher:** En business ja. Hvordan tror du den businessen er for influencere? Hva går det liksom mest ut på tenker du?

**Julia:** Ja, det går jo mest ut på markedsføring da. Ja, folk er interesserte at de skal anbefale et produkt da, for det virker jo mer genuint enn reklame på TV, rett og slett fordi det er litt lureri sikkert.

**Researcher:** Hvorfor virker det mer genuint?

**Julia:** Fordi det kommer av en privat person. Ja jeg tror at yngre folk hvert fall kan tro at det er en anbefaling av en privat person. Så man tenker ikke at den personen har fått ganske mange tusen lapper for å gi den anbefalingen

**Researcher:** Så hvis søsteren din anbefaler deg noe så hadde du liksom ikke, det er ikke noe agenda der?

**Julia:** Nei, hun har ikke noen skjulte agende, men det har jo en influencer som ja, anbefaler deg en underlivs deodorant, hehe!

**Researcher:** Ja du nevnte jo loven, at Norge var ganske strenge på hva som er lov og ikke, kan du forklare litt på det. Hva mener du med det?

**Julia:** Jo, all reklame skal merkes, og det skal stå tydelig hva du reklamerer for da. Sånn som hvis du legger ut t-skjorter du har fått betalt for å legge ut på Instagram så skal det stå før, eller det skal stå reklame for Adidas da, og så hva du tenkte å skrive da. Men folk gjør det jo ikke.

**Researcher:** Nei, du syns ikke det blir fulgt?

**Julia:** Altså, det blir jo sikkert det, men jeg syns det er mye jeg ikke ser som er reklame.

**Researcher:** Hva tror du det kommer av, at de får lov til å holde på?

**Julia:** Ja det er vel vanskelig å ta det på det da, eller jeg vet ikke. Jeg vet ikke hvem som jobber for å sjekke dette, men det er sikkert vanskelig å følge opp.

**Researcher:** Så syns du norske influencere er generelt bedre eller verre en internasjonal til å merke?

**Julia:** Hmm, jeg tror kanskje bedre egentlig, litt bedre fordi Norge er så strenge. Men ja jeg ser jo de i USA og sånn de skriver jo #ad de og da, for så vidt. Men ja jeg vet ikke, jeg tror de norske passer litt mere på det fordi de har blitt tatt.

**Researcher:** Så for deg, hva er det som er mest tydelig sånn praktisk sier til deg at noe er reklame. Hva skriver reklame og hva blir mere skjult?



**Julia:** Ja det er nok mest tydelig når de skriver det, siden jeg bruker Instagram mest hvert fall. Og skjult er jo, ja hva skal man si, når de ikke skriver det, hehe. Eller når det er disse grå sonene da, når de reklamerer for produkter de har fått sponsa men de ikke skriver akkurat der og da. At det ikke er betalt post, men de får betalt for et partnerskap kanskje. Collabs, hehe.

### **Malin & Stig**

**Researcher:** Er du enig? Ser du mer reklame på tv eller ser du mer på SoMe?

**Malin:** Ja vi har jo Apple TV for å slippe reklame egentlig, og ser mest på Via Play og Netflix for det daglig da. Også er det jo Instagram og Snapchat.

**Stig:** Men det blir jo reklame på appene da, for eksempel på Youtube og facebook.

**Researcher:** Legger du merke til det samme?

**Malin:** ja, men spesielt på Instagram, det er det mange kjente influencere som påvirker vil jeg si. Det er veldig mange jenter som selger Venus barberblad og sminke og sånne ting. Bli vakker og blush.

**Researcher:** Får du det du også Stig?

**Stig:** Hehe, jeg får XXL og motorsport reklame ganske ofte. Nesten som det bare følger meg liksom.

**Researcher:** Hva synes dere om det? At du får sminke det som interesser deg, og du for det som interesser deg.

**Stig:** Man føler seg litt pressa ut egentlig. Ja klart det hjelper jo, du for mye tilbud, sånn sett jo hjelper det jo.

**Researcher:** Så du vil se det?

**Malin:** Tja altså nødvendigvis ikke, det kan jo være fordeler og ulemper.

**Researcher:** Så det synes du er negativt?

**Malin:** På en måte ja, men samtidig nei, det er jo greit med tilbud, men man bruker jo mere penger.

- Stig:** Jeg synes det er greit å bli oppmerksom på tilbud, jeg hadde kanskje ikke fått med meg det hvis de ikke hadde gjort det da. Sånt sett er det jo positivt.
- Researcher:** Hadde det blitt verre eller bedre, hvis det var mere likt TV, at det ikke ble liksom tilpasset dere?
- Malin:** Jeg tror ikke det hadde gjort meg noe, men jeg hadde ikke interessert meg noe mer av det da.
- Stig:** Hadde kanskje blitt mer uinteressant, kanskje dratt alt over en kam. Nei det vil jeg hvert fall ikke se på ja.
- Malin:** jeg ville nok sett på det mindre, hvis alt hadde blitt blanda.
- Stig:** Jeg tror det er bedre hvis det er spissa ned.
- Malin:** Men så tenker jeg jo også det jeg sa ista at det kan jo bli et kjøpepress, også blir man jo påvirka av at man ser andre som har noe, også vil man ha det selv, så jeg vil ikke si at det er positivt da. Selv om vi lever jo av reklame, det betaler jo for tjenesten. Gjerne for unge jenter da, det med skjønnhetsidealer, som jeg ser det, selv om jeg ikke blir påvirka i like stor grad da.
- Researcher:** hvor bra er det ja? Men har du kommet over noen gang noe du ikke visste var reklame, noe du i ettertid du liksom, oja, det her var reklame. Noe som ikke var tydelig på starten men det tok litt tid for å innse at var reklame?
- Stig:** Oja, okey. Tja det kan jo kanskje være på Youtubere videoer. Men kanskje ikke noe som jeg har tenkt over, for da har jeg ikke vist at det var reklame haha.
- Malin:** Hehe ja, men nå har det jo blitt ganske strengt også da på akkurat det greiene der, nå er alt som er reklame type skrives er reklame, type spons, hvert fall på Instagram og blogger, så har det blitt veldig strengt.
- Researcher:** Okey, så du føler hvert fall på Instagram og blogger så er folk rimelig ærlig med det da?

**Malin:** Mhm.

**Researcher:** Hvor mye tror dere er reklame og hvor mye er naturlig poster på blogger og Instagram?

**Malin:** Eh, altså de fleste som har mye følger og sånne ting lever jo av å reklamere for ting. Men selvfølgelig har de jo mye innslag som er for sin egen del og. Men mye av det av de som er på toppen er jo sponsinga og reklame de tjener penger, på en måte.

**Stig:** Jeg tenker, ja for jeg ser jo ikke på blogger eller sånne ting så jeg vet likesom ikke så mye om det. Så da ser jeg ikke den reklame biten, men du for jo med deg det, det er jo reklame på alt av produkter du bruker, som om de bruker en sminkeserviett så har de lagt ved det. Så jeg tror jo det er mye av det. Alt av klær de bruker og sånne ting.

**Researcher:** Hva synes du om det?

**Malin:** Ja det er jo jobben hennes. Det er jo som om jeg skulle gjort det. Jeg lever jo av å selge jeg og på en måte. Men det er jo ikke bare positivt heller, det er jo ikke på en måte det folk vil se, bare reklame.

**Stig:** Det er jo aldri reklame jeg er ute etter å se på, det er bare ved siden av ting du er interessert på, så det må jo gi et godt inntrykk.

**Researcher:** Du vil jo gjerne ha det de provider da, Det produktet eller service eller imaget som er de da. Men så får du reklame på kjøpet?

**Stig:** Ja, noes om slår litt bra ut og noe som slår ikke bra ut fordi det er uinteressant, men det er ikke reklame jeg er ute etter å se på. Sånn som i posten, mesteparten av det blir jo kasta før det blir sett på. Du orker liksom ikke å bruke tiden på det.

**Researcher:** Har dere noen gang kommet over noe som ikke egnet seg som å promotere, traff liksom ikke?

**Stig:** Det må vel være sånne Youtubere video, der kommer det alt mulig slags reklame jeg ikke har noe interesse av å se.

**Malin:** Det er vel ikke så mye jeg tenker over egentlig. Jeg tror rett og slett ikke jeg er interessert i reklamen. Men så tenker jeg også noen ganger hva folk liksom, kan man forsvare det man legger ut på en måte? Kan alle de som legger ut den reklamen forsvare det produktet de selger da? Det er det jeg synes er skremmende innimellom da, er det bare for å tjene penger. Jeg har sett intervjuer av bloggere igjen, som reportere har stussa over at de kan legge ut et produkt de mener er så og så bra, som de fremmer så mye på bloggen sin, men så har de ikke noe svar på hvorfor de synes det er så bra. Er det bare for å få penger eller er det liksom?

**Researcher:** Ja, bra poeng. Tenker du sånn om for eksempel Coca cola, eller hennes og Maurits noen gang?

**Researcher:** Ja, hvis man tenker på nye merker også da? For eksempel butikken deres da. Når dere har reklame for det. Hadde det føltes likt ut som å se en blogger? Hva er forskjellen mellom dere som henger en plakate med tilbudet deres, og om det var en blogger som stod for samme budskapet deres. Hva er forskjellen for dere? Er det en forskjell?

**Malin:** Noen kan vel synes det er en forskjell for det er et kjent fjes, hun bruker det sånn og sånn da. Lettere påvirkningskraft da sånt sett å kjøpe det produktet kanskje. Men samtidig så er det jo sånn at jeg selger jo produkter som jeg tror på. Som jeg vet er bra for jeg har brukt det selv, og jeg har mange kunder som bruker det.

**Researcher:** Så hvis bloggeren du bruker tror på det og?

**Malin:** Antageligvis ville det solgt bedre ja. Men så er det kjente merker vi driver med og, sånn som Coca cola som har drevet med det i alle år. Så ja vi hadde jo solgt sikkert bedre hvis det var en kjendis som hadde reklamert for det enn en vanlig mann i gata. Jeg vil ikke at folk skal kjøpe produkt fordi en kjendis liker det, jeg vil bruke min egen kunnskap til å selge produktet fordi at jeg selv har prøv det. Jeg veit da faen hva den bloggeren synes om det produktet egentlig. For at hun skal si her kjøpe dette produktet fordi det er dritbra.

**Stig:** Man tenker jo at en kjendis har fått godt betalt for å stå for det.

- Researcher:** Så når du blir solgt til da, så kan man si at det er litt forskjell på måten det blir gjort på og hvem som står bak?
- Malin:** Ja, altså nå er jeg veldig lite sånn, hva skal jeg si, jeg blir jo påvirket til en viss grad. Med folk som bruker diverse produkter, hårprodukter sånn og sånn. Men det trenger ikke nødvendigvis være en kjent person. Jeg tror kan mer på erfaring og anbefalinger til profesjonelle folk. Altså bloggerne er jo sikkert profesjonelle de og, men de aner jo ikke hva som er i alle produktene. Det er derfor jeg sa det ista, jeg synes det er så skremmende at de kan stå for det. Vet de egentlig hva de selger? De har jo på en måte aldri jobba med det, annet at de selger et produkt, på grunn av fjeset sitt, eller brandet sitt på en måte?
- Stig:** Ja det er jo viktig det ja. Ta bloggerne igjen da
- Researcher:** ja du sa de hadde et rykte å ta vare på Stig?
- Stig:** Ja hvis de får folk til å kjøpe veldig mye dårlig ting, så går det ut over rykte og lesernes dems.
- Malin:** Ja men det er jo så individuelt da, hvis jeg synes det er bra så trenger ikke nødvendigvis du og synes det. Og sånn er det med kjendiser da.
- Stig:** Men igjen da, så hadde jeg hørt på en vanlig mann i gata mer egentlig, sånn som Malin sa.
- Researcher:** Han har liksom ikke en agenda.
- Stig:** Ja! Jeg hadde tatt det mer seriøst hvis en jeg kjenner sier det her er kjempebra, istedenfor en jeg vet selger som jobb da.
- Researcher:** Da regner jeg med at det er noen som er innom kanskje for første gang, også har de en veldig fin opplevelse og sier det videre.
- Malin:** Ja, altså vår muntlige viderefremidling er det beste. Nå er det et høyt språk på aldersforskjellen. Det er ikke alle som er like hissige på sosiale medier som vår generasjon. Så jeg selger jo kanskje mest til de som er aktive brukere av facebook og Instagram, også er det da de muntlig anbefalingen i vår lille by, vi selger mest på. Men selvfølgelig hører vi jo

hele tiden at vi er veldig flinke på det med, legge ut bilder av arbeidet vårt og sånne ting. Og at..

**Researcher:** Tror du noen anbefaler dere, også kanskje de går inn på facebooken deres eller instagrammen deres?

**Malin:** Mhm, ja det er det noen som har gjort. Også hender det at vi legger ut noen tilbud der også kommer det folk innom og sier at de kommer fordi de så det på Instagram. Jeg bruker jo Instagram mest, og der har vi mer følger. Ja sånn som nå da, jeg er sykemeldt og vi har fått inn 2 flinke nye vikarer, og det deler jeg da på Instagram.

**Researcher:** Flott. For å ta det som er lov i sosiale medier, og influencer generelt. Hva tror dere er lov eller ikke når det gjelder reklame?

**Researcher:** Ja, og her er det ikke meninga dere skal vite fasit, men hva dere tror er lov.

**Malin:** Jeg tenker jo alt sånn reklame, da burde man jo uansett skrive, det her er betalt innlegg eller sponsa, og jeg selger dette videre til dere. Dette er ikke hennes eller hans produkt, tenker jeg da.

**Stig:** Ja burde ikke stå med liten skrift da.

**Malin:** Ja det er sånn det har blitt gjort før da, men det har blitt veldig strengt nå da.

**Malin:** Men, det som var på facebook en periode, så ut som det var tatt ut av en avis eller noe. Hvor det står sånn, denne manne gjør et eller annet du ikke skulle trodd, også leser du hele historien, og på slutten så står det at han vant så og så mye penger på rulett eller noe. Det var ikke så lett å se, det var litt lureri tenker jeg. Det er det sikkert mange som bare hadde oj shit, så fin historie liksom, også står det nederst nei han vant så og så mye.

**Researcher:** Her tror du du leser en nyhetsartikkel mer eller mindre også viser det seg å være reklame.

**Malin:** Ja det blir en gråsoner.

**Stig:** Ja, det når du nevner det, så har jeg merka det flere ganger og. Det blir litt feil. Ser jo det med sånne bitcoin reklamer og sånt.

**Researcher:** De nevner jo at det er reklame da?

**Stig:** Ja men det ligger så skjult liksom.

**Malin:** Jeg vil gjerne vite når det er reklame eller ikke.

**Stig:** Ja vil egentlig vite ja!

**Malin:** Ja man kan jo bli lurt, også kan det jo være en dårlig påvirkningskraft da. Det at man vinner masse penger for eksempel, eller sånn som det har vært mye i media at mange bloggere synes det er helt ok å operere seg eller fikse på utseende. Det synes ikke jeg er ok. Å reklamere på at man synes man kan fikse på alt. Det gjør jo noe med skjønnhetsidealet for unge, og egentlig alle. Spesielt da jenter da, som har litt det her på seg da.

### **Adrian**

**Researcher:** Riktig, legger du merke til reklame når du ser det på de kanalene?

**Adrian:** Ja masse, det er mye av det som popper opp så man for det alltid med seg.

**Adrian:** Ja okay, nei mellom linjene på facebook legger man jo merke til diverse ord. Det er vel egentlig der jeg merker det mest.

**Researcher:** Så du føler det bli pusha på deg?

**Adrian:** Ja.

**Researcher:** Du kunne helst vært foruten?

**Adrian:** Ja.

**Researcher:** Okey okey, så Instagram er mer sånn brand heavy?

**Adrian:** Ja kanskje, facebook har man kanskje mer sortert etter preferanse kanskje. Da har de peila inn på det, first available holdt jeg på og si.

**Researcher:** Ja, så hvis du skulle forklart yrket dems, hvordan ville du gjort det?

- Adrian:** Litt direkte kanskje, personlig sett tenker jeg jo litt sånn money grabbers kanskje.
- Adrian:** Ja jeg ser jo kanskje på det litt som money grabbing, hva skal jeg si det er jo en veldig sånn rett fram avtale. Type avtale hvor du har en promotør, eller hva du sa, influencer, også har du aktørene bak med en business deal. De blir jo sponsa rett og slett og så gjøre du sånn og sånn for å promotere så får du penger. Hvis jeg skulle tenkt på det sånn dypt så er det jo bare en avtale.
- Researcher:** Tenker du ofte på det?
- Adrian:** Ja det spørs jo hvor tydelig det er? Det er jo tydelig at det veldig sånn instruks basert.
- Adrian:** Jeg vet ikke, noen ganger så tenker jeg ikke noe særlig over det, er bare en naturlig greie, er bare bli tilfreds med at sånn fungerer det, sponing hele veien.
- Adrian:** Ja det eneste jeg kan huske tilbake til er vel kanskje TV-show, men var vel ikke influencere typisk. Det var noe jeg bemerket meg hvor alle drakk Voss, det var i Amerika hvor alle drakk Voss, og var plasser overalt.
- Researcher:** Interessant, så hvis du skal tenke på noen positive og negative sider ved influenser yrket, hva kan det være? Hva er det i dine anker?
- Adrian:** Hmm, kanskje fra mitt ståsted ville jeg kanskje tenkt på det som litt kynisk kanskje. I noen tilfeller kan det virke desperat, for eksempel, og for en regi og følger det, og får tilbake penger, ikke at det er så forskjellig fra de fleste jobber. Men det er kanskje mer tydelig når man er influenser, da er jo det fokus på den personen som skal influence.
- Adrian:** Ja mister kanskje litt kredibilitet i sitt eget yrke, hvis man tar inn over seg for mange roller som influencer da.
- Researcher:** Ja hmm, så kommer du på noe positive sider ved det? Kan det være noe positive sider ved det?



- Adrian:** Ja eneste jeg kan tenke på er hvis man fremmer en type brand og er positive til psykisk helse for eksempel, eneste jeg kan tenke egentlig. Hvis man tar for eksempel veldig generelle brands kan jeg ikke se noe positiv i deres promotering egentlig. Med mindre de gir halvparten av pengene bort til forskning eller kreft eller noe.
- Researcher:** Så det er ditt syn når de rett og slett selger noe for å selge noe, og spesielt hvis de ikke er relevant.
- Adrian:** Ja, hvis man promotere et produkt som er digestible holdt jeg på og si. Men hvis man selger noe bare for smakens skyld er ikke det helt etter min bok da.
- Researcher:** Okey hmm. Så ifølge markedsføring da, jeg skjønner at det er vanskelig med konkrete eksempler. Men hva tenker du når du kommer over såkalt kynisk influencing?
- Adrian:** Hmm, får kanskje en sånn iffy følelse i magen, altså jeg kom på et eksempel her. Da var det snakk om cheetos eller et eller annet sånt, i serien Impractical Jokers, hvor de lager en type tre minutter lang gimmick hvor de poser en del av programmet hvor de implementerer produktet i sketchen på en måte. Da merker man veldig tydelig forskjell på selve programmet og reklamen.
- Researcher:** Så man merker et skille ja?
- Adrian:** Ja det forsvinner veldig.
- Researcher:**
- Researcher:** Ja, interessant. Men når de promoterer, får å ta flipsiden, når de promoterer psykisk helse, vil du si du legger mindre merke til det skillet?
- Adrian:** Ja, det vil jeg faktisk kanskje si at jeg gjør. Hvis man tar f.eks. de helligdagen hvor man ikke har lov til å sende reklame fra store brands, men det går kun independant eller helsemessige selskap på tv, så legger man jo veldig merke til det. De er veldig direkte eller ærlige.
- Researcher:** Hmm, så ærlighet det er liksom, det varer lengst?

**Adrian:**

**Researcher:** Okey, er det en viss fake'het du kan sense?

**Adrian:** Ja! Det fins ikke troverdig. Ja det blir rett og slett veldig cringe.

**Adrian:** Ja jeg følger liksom det burde følge med til alle som driver med reklame, det er litt den try hard tingen da, hvis man skal legge seg på det «ungdommelige plan» hvor man legger merke til at de som har satt regi av den reklamen er vel over 50 år gamle.

**Researcher:** Hmm interessant, får å ta flipsiden der igjen da? Når det er noen som klarer å lage en skikkelig god reklame som treffer. Føler du da det blir, eller har du den samme fakeheten? Eller når den fakenessen blir borte, og når de treffer, hva tenker du da?

**Adrian:** Ja hva skal man si, man får en bedre følelse. Jeg vil kanskje si at det er en god bruk av tiden man har å lage reklame.

**Researcher:** Ja, sant. Okey så for å ta det litt videre da, når du ser tydelig influencere, eller blogg aktiv person gjerne på Instagram eller hvor som helst, når du ser bildene og contente de legger ut, syns du det er lett eller vanskelig å se om det er reklame eller ikke?

**Adrian:** Nei, jeg syns jo det er ganske lett som oftest, det er vel noe med approach'en til de som er medvirkende i reklamen. Man ser det som oftest fra. For eksempel som i dag i sosiale medier så har man jo alltid headers, og titler. Hvis det hadde stått Anders Johannesen eller Kristian Berg på en eller annen post. Også plutselig kommer opp et produkt, så hadde det ikke vert like lett. Det er det det går på, går mye i headers.

**Researcher:** Syns du det er lettere å legge merke til når det er tekst der hvor det står annonse eller lignende?

**Adrian:** Ja da er det som regel kortere eller merker det mye kjappere sånt sett. Men i sosiale medier er jeg veldig vant til å venne blikket opp mot annonsøren, man ser ganske fort at det er et selskap som er bak det. Men hvis man ikke har forkunnskap i brandet hadde det kanskje vert vanskeligere.

**Researcher:** Hmm, tror du du er flink til å spotte det, mer enn gjennomsnittet?

**Adrian:** Hmm, kanskje. Ja vet ikke kanskje noe med alderen å gjøre. Min generasjon, eller vår generasjon har blitt ganske vant til det.

**Adrian:** I motsetning til, altså jeg føler at kanskje alt fra 18 år til 30 er flinke til det, men kanskje yngre barn ikke er kjent med mediene. De vet jo som oftest ikke helt de etiske og korrekte brukene av medier generelt, jeg vet ikke.

**Adrian:** Ja, de eneste jeg følger der kanskje er muligens Kevin Hart, kanskje.

**Researcher:** Syns du det er lett å spott hans promotering?

**Adrian:** Ja.

**Researcher:** Fra resten av contenten hans?

**Adrian:** Ja.

**Researcher:** Okay, hvorfor?

**Adrian:** Er noe med væremåten hans han puster liksom inn før han begynner.

**Researcher:** Hehe, så det er sånn, «Hello guys»!

**Adrian:** Heh, ja Han gjør liksom; make sure to subscribe and buy my stuff at www... Er noe med kroppsspråket. Det er konteksten som star på et veldig hverdagslige, og man ser et stillbilde av filmen så er de okey, men med en gang han begynner å prate så skjønner man at det er promotering.

**Researcher:** Hmm interessant, så noen ganger må du klikke på det før du skjønner det er reklame.

**Adrian:** Ja, jeg har tatt meg skjøl i å gjøre det flere ganger hvor jeg ser og tror det er noe funny innlegg men så merker jeg med en gang og skjønner at det er promotering.

**Researcher:** Veldig interessant, så for å ta et punkt du nevnte tidligere da. Gjerne også den eldre garden kunne hatt vanskeligheter med å skjønne reklame, tror du noen av de kunne hatt vanskelighet med å skjønne Kevin Harts reklame til og med etter at de klikka?

**Adrian:** Ja, eh på en måte, de burde kanskje hatt et lite merke om at det var reklame. Men jeg tror de ville hatt en annen forhold til det. Jeg tror de er litt mer naive til det og forstår mindre at det er reklame.

### **Filip**

**Filip:** Yes, but I do spend way too much time scrolling through normal facebook.

**Researcher:** It really is. It really is. So have you ever noticed somebody, or do you have anybody on your feed who are kind of commercial if you could say it that way. They are selling or promoting something?

**Filip:** Oh yeah, I don't know for sure, but occasionally somebody will be like, you have to check out this bath products or something, and it changed my life. So, your like did somebody pay you 20 dollars to post this or what?

**Filip:** Yeah, they don't say their doing for money, but you gotta wonder, when they post something so out of character.

**Researcher:** No, that's fine. Have you seen any people doing that professionally? And who say so as well, I'm being paid for this.

**Filip:** So, ive listen to quite a few podcasts, not sure if that's what your talking about, but they often have breaks where they say, we are sponsored by X, Y an Z.

**Researcher:** Hmm, have you heard the term before I mentioned it?

**Filip:** I have heard it before, but I always thought it was like, we have a term in the US its like a decision maker, it's a very vague amorphous term, but it essentially means somebody has power to make a change. So that's what I think of when I think influencer, somebody who maybe has a large audience or a way of making decisions.

**Researcher:** That exactly what it is. Its kind been molded into the Social Media world. So when I say influencer it's someone who has an online presence. So now a professional influencer is someone who makes a living on social

media basically. SO that's kind of the audience I'm examining, the people who follow, and happen to cross over influencers content. So could you think of any positive and negative sides of such influencers like people being professional influencers?

**Filip:** Yeah, I mean its interesting you see like, in the US you see that there are a lot of people with huge deal of influence who like, when I was thinking about vaccines I think about Jennifer McCarthy. She's an actress and has huge influence over people who don't believe in vaccines. But no qualifications for thinking that. So there is positives for certain people who are intellectual like Malcolm Gladwell, but not really qualified to talk about what he talks about. But its very interesting and though provoking and really positive influence over my life. So that's the positive, people you might otherwise have heard from are being heard from. But that's also the negative side, like anti-science, anti-vaccines. So, I can see both the good and the bad to it.

**Filip:** Yeah I guess the thing is if you have a though process or an idea which is not very popular, its positive for you because you will find other people who you might not normally associated with in the real world, or if you will in the physical world, who you could easily find on the internet. So things like that, sometime alternative ideas are really best express on the internet like that.

**Researcher:** So what do you think if you were to collect all the people in the world. And right in the middle you have your Jenny McCarthy and Malcolm Gladwell and then you kind of put in money into the equation. What do you think happens then?

**Filip:** Yeah, again. I think you can have positive influences and I think you can have negative influences. Ones you have made a marked for this kind of profession. I think you in some way you have elevated the status to something it wasn't before, and when you do that I think there's positive and negatives. Again like what I said before I think you accentuate the problems of this kind of influence, but also accentuate the positives. So if somebody in a room talking to a videocam they have a

certain influence, but when you start paying people it becomes more professional, so you have selected certain people and made their influence much greater. So the real question is how does somebody select these people. And some of the things I think are ridiculous.

**Researcher:** Oh no, I understand. Have you ever experienced some of these channels trying, or like watching Youtube you kind of get exposed to some advertisement which you weren't really aware of?

**Filip:** Yeah sometimes you see that. Talking talking talking and then its like, oh here is this whatever its really changed my life! And then your like, what! So yeah, I've seen that. It had to be sponsored. On like facebook messenger even, my number doesn't transfer internationally so I'm always on facebook messenger to talk to my friend back home. And occasionally they have started to throw in a message that's actually an ad for something.

**Filip:** Facebook, and its super frustrating! Yeah like once a month I just get this message for some product, and has nothing to do with me, and its really obnoxious.

**Researcher:** So the ad doesn't even suit you, its like diapers or something?

**Filip:** Yeah its odd, its just buy this thing, buy this thing! I did not ask for it, I did not want it. Not that it would be better if it was targeted at me. That would be scary.

**Researcher:** Yeah that was my next question! Would it be less annoying?

**Filip:** Yeah no, equally annoying, but way more terrifying! Haha.

**Researcher:** Haha, I'm gonna have to quote you one that one.

**Filip:** Yeah haha! Yeah I just how it is, like I don't like buying stuff. Maybe Im strange in that way but its stressful for me. I don't get much enjoyment from it, and then you have all this buy this buy this. And I don't want to be a part of it.

**Researcher:** Yeah probably true. So do you are good at noticing advertisement, I know that's a weird question, but from these soap sellers on facebook that try to hide it?

**Filip:** Haha, you don't have to be good to notice it, its obvious I think. Its not like a finesse question, when your one person that posts three or four times of this is the best body soap I have ever seen, and here is the link and it changed my life. Yeah its not like your doing, I know who you are. And then you just block them, haha!

**Filip:** Its funny, I don't think you have to be good to notice these things.

**Researcher:** Haha, cool. Okey so talking about laws and regulation on advertisement. What do you think the laws are? There is no reason you should know this, I'm just curious.

**Filip:** Yeah okey so I don't know about Norway, but in America I am under the impression that if you have a sponsor you are required to say they are your sponsor in some way, I'm not sure if that's true, but that's my.. You don't know every single law, but you get the feeling that something is illegal. I think their supposed to say like paid promotion.

**Researcher:** Do you think they do it?

**Filip:** Well, I haven't noticed it that much, I never click on it. At least on the facebook posts it doesn't say promotion. Some of the laws, there are some specific laws I know about like in Vermont you can't have billboards we call them, like on the side of the road like big signs. You can't have them there. And their certain products like tobacco and alcohol that are regulated where you can advertise I think.

## 11 FOOT NOTES

---

- <sup>1</sup> Sponsorship - A person, firm, organization, etc., that finances and buys the time to broadcast a radio or television program to advertise a product, a political party, etc.
- <sup>2</sup> Advertisement - A paid announcement, as of goods for sale, in newspapers or magazines, on radio or television, etc.
- <sup>3</sup> Transparent Advertisement – Advertisement which is easily recognizable as advertisement.
- <sup>4</sup> Opaque Advertisement – Advertisement which is not easily recognized as advertisement.
- <sup>5</sup> Audience - The persons reached by a website, book, radio or television broadcast, etc.; public.
- <sup>6</sup> Ads – Short for Advertisement.
- <sup>7</sup> Organic Content – The opposite of paid content, anything that happens without paid promotion.
- <sup>8</sup> Digital Word-of-Mouth - Informal oral communication online.
- <sup>9</sup> Disclosure language - The act of disclosing commercial content like ads and sponsorship.
- <sup>10</sup> Regulator – A person or entity that regulates, in this case the regulation of advertisement of influencers.
- <sup>11</sup> Awareness - The state or condition of being aware; having knowledge; consciousness. In this paper it's related to advertisement awareness.
- <sup>12</sup> Names, brand - The choice of a brand name is an important means to build equity (Aaker 1991), (Adidam 1995). Brand names that are neutral are more likely to succeed as they carry no negative connotation when trying to create new association with the brand name and information (Baker 2003).
- <sup>13</sup> Image, brand - First appeared in 1958 (Mayer 1958; Oxford English Dictionary 2004:2.9). It was defined as the impression of a product in the minds of potential users or customers (Michael, 2005).
- <sup>14</sup> Identity, Brand - Is its outward expression, including name and visual appearance. Brand identity is the fundamental means of consumer recognition and differentiation. Brand identity refers to the strategic goal of the brand (Adidam, 2007).
- <sup>15</sup> Instafamous – Famous on the social media channel Instagram.
- <sup>16</sup> Advertorial - An extended newspaper or magazine text advertisement that promotes the advertiser's product or services or special point of view but resembles an editorial in style and layout.
- <sup>17</sup> Vlog - A blog that features mostly videos rather than text or images.
- <sup>18</sup> Credibility - The quality of being believable or worthy of trust.
- <sup>19</sup> Blogvertising – Advertising via blogs.
- <sup>20</sup> Legitimacy - Legitimacy can be viewed as an asset or resource possessed by an organization, brand, or individual (Bitektine and Haack, 2015), (Hakala et al., 2017).
- <sup>21</sup> Likert Scale - A Likert scale is a psychometric scale commonly involved in research that employs questionnaires.
- <sup>22</sup> Traditional brand – A brand in the traditional sense, like a company or easily recognizable consumer product. In contrast to modern brands or personal brands.
- <sup>23</sup> Credibility - The quality of being believable or worthy of trust.
- <sup>24</sup> Narrative Inquiry - Compared to a case study which often has structured interviews, and arguably more concise and organized information, a narrative inquiry is more about listening to the story and get information about how events and entities connect to each other.
- <sup>25</sup> Thematic Structure - A thematic structure helps to make a media text coherent -- it orients a text around a central theme of a strand of related themes running through a story.
- <sup>26</sup> Participant Error - Any factor which adversely alters the way in which a participant performs. Like interviewing at different times of the day.
- <sup>27</sup> Participant bias - Any factor which produces a false response. Like falsely answering because he might be overheard by other co-workers.
- <sup>28</sup> Research error - Any factor which alters the researcher's interpretation. Like doing many interviews in a day, and becoming tired toward the end of the day, and interviewing badly.
- <sup>29</sup> Research bias - Any factor which induces bias in the researcher's recording of responses. Like asking biased question.
- <sup>30</sup> Construct validity - Is concerned with the extent to which your research measures what it claims to measure.
- <sup>31</sup> Internal validity - Is established when your research demonstrates a causal relationship between two variables.
- <sup>32</sup> External validity - Is concerned whether a study's research findings can be generalized to other relevant settings or groups.