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**Social Media and the Mediating Role of Perceived Authenticity in
Covert Celebrity Endorsement: Influencing Factors
Levitan, Sabina**

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**Social Media and the Mediating Role of Perceived
Authenticity in Covert Celebrity Endorsement:
Influencing Factors**

Sabina Levitan

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the factors that influence the celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity and its impact on the promoted brand in covert social media marketing. To examine consumer behaviour, the Persuasion Knowledge Model and Attribution Theory were integrated, and a theoretical framework was then developed. In total, 653 social media users were recruited to participate in the research, and structural equation modelling was conducted to test the proposed model. The results confirm that (1) activated persuasion knowledge negatively influences celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity in covert social media marketing; (2) celebrity-brand congruity does not have a significant impact on the endorser's perceived authenticity; (3) celebrity's expertise positively influences the celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity when endorsing products related to his or her area of expertise; (4) the celebrity's perceived attractiveness has a positive impact on the celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing attractiveness enhancing products covertly in social media; and (5) perceived authenticity of a celebrity endorser positively influences brand attitudes and, consequently, behavioural intentions. Both theoretical and managerial implications are drawn, suggesting directions for future studies.

Keywords: *celebrity endorsement, social media marketing, perceived authenticity, covert marketing, influencer marketing*

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Author's Declaration

“I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Westminster or any other institution”

Sabina Levitan,

July 2020

Glossary of Terms¹

Term	Definition
Blog	An online journal containing short articles which are updated on a regular basis. Blogs are usually written by one person where he or she shares his or her opinions, experiences and interests
Covert social media marketing	Brand promotion on social media platforms where consumers are not intended to recognize advertising motives in the social media post.
Flog	A fake blog which is used by companies for the marketing purposes and consists of biased reviews written by the individual within the company
Follower	A person who is subscribed to another social media user's updates on a social media platform
Hashtag	A word or phrase led by a hash symbol used in social media
Link or hyperlink	An HTML object that navigates people between web pages and transfers them to another web location by clicking or tapping it
Social media influencer	A social media user who has a substantial following base in social media and can persuade the audience by virtue of his or her established credibility and expertise in a specific industry.
Social media micro-influencer	A social media user that has between 500 to 10,000 followers and is considered an expert in his or her respective niche.
Social media macro-influencer	A social media user that has between 10,000 to 1 million followers and is considered an expert in his or her respective niche.

¹ Unless otherwise cited, the terms should be understood as shown in this table

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Social media has received growing attention from academics as well as has become commonly used by businesses offering (mostly) less expensive ways to reach their target audiences (Rehman et al., 2019). Companies use social media for various purposes, such as to increase brand awareness, build relationships with potential customers, build brand loyalty amongst existing consumers, and inform clients about companies' news and novelties (Cochrane, 2018). With the increasing popularity of social media, companies have started using celebrities' image and status to influence their customers through social media (Jin and Phua, 2014). In the modern marketing environment, it is not easy to differentiate products only through their characteristics; thus, celebrity endorsements bring an important value to advertising as a tool for establishing and enhancing brand equity and brand image (Pringle, 2004).

Various studies and research have found that celebrities are very powerful in shifting consumers' attitudes and triggering purchasing behaviour (Zhao et al., 2015; Choi and Berger, 2010). Because of their wide recognition and popularity, celebrities are perceived as more credible than ordinary people, and for that reason, they are expected to have a greater influence on advertising effect measures through their well-known and reputable credible images (Atkin and Block 1983; Ohanian 1990). They are considered as opinion leaders with a large number of followers in social media who automatically become the audience for brands' promotions (Dhanesh and Duthler, 2019). According to Abidin and Ots (2015), pivotal to the success of celebrities as social media influencers are the relationships between their personal brand and their audience, or followers, which make their influence so strong and lead to positive outcomes, such as increased purchase intentions and electronic-word-of-mouth (Evans et al., 2017).

Moreover, nowadays it also has become very common for people to keep an eye on celebrities' everyday life through social media. Consumers want to see who the celebrity 'really' is and feel the connection with an 'authentic' existence, and with social media it has become possible (Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016). Although celebrities used to be seen only as media co-constructs them, people tend to judge them according to what they are perceived to be 'really' like, particularly through social media (Dyer, 2003).

In a traditional advertising channel (e.g. television and printed media), companies' sponsorship of celebrities' appearances is usually obvious, however, celebrity endorsement on social media quite often has no direct evidence of such relationships unless it is disclosed by the endorser, which is quite rare (Mandelberg, 2013). Nowadays, the line between paid and earned media is quite blurred because of the organizations' active engagement with social media influencers. Thus, non-disclosure of sponsorship relationships between an endorser and brand in social media endorsements challenges notions of both the celebrity's and brand's honesty and openness, implicating them in deeply problematic issues of fairness, sincerity and transparency (Dhanesh and Duthler, 2019). In the United States, the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) Code, written by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), states that just as in a broadcast media, advertisement in a non-broadcast media including social media, must be clearly labelled as such (ASA, 2020). However, legal systems and industry regulatory bodies still face difficulties in dealing with these evolving issues, as many social media influencers including A-list celebrities do not comply with this regulation (Dhanesh and Duthler, 2019). Moreover, only 12 percent of in-house marketing managers find it necessary to mark celebrities' sponsored content as advertisement by adding disclosure or specific hashtags (i.e. #ad or #sponsored) (Stockwell, 2017). Sponsored content is a paid advertisement of certain products or brands placed in online publications such as blogs, social media or digital editorials. It is also called native advertising and defined as advertising, which has a form and function of non-advertising content (Van Reijmersdal et al., 2016). Thus, when there is no indication of advertisement, sponsored appearances of brands in a celebrity's social media often misleads consumers as they are not aware that the celebrity has been paid for the promotion of the brand.

Due to the fact that celebrities' social media include a mix of commercial content and posts about their daily lives, so they may be unaware of the persuasive intent making it is more difficult for the audience to distinguish commercial from non-commercial content (Boerman et al., 2017). Consumers may believe that celebrities are authentic endorsers or users of the promoted brands, they genuinely like the products, and sincerely share with their followers their reviews and evaluations on products they use (Boerman et al., 2017). Consumers are inspired by celebrity lifestyle and tend to copy their fashion styles, choices of restaurants and travel destinations (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017). So, having seen a particular brand on an idol's Instagram page, consumers may want to acquire and try the product as well, unless they are aware of the persuasive intent, which may affect attitudes and purchasing behaviour (Friestad and Wright, 1994).

According to Friestad and Wright (1994), consumers' persuasion knowledge activates when they recognise selling motives in celebrities' activities, and when this happens, consumers realise that the celebrity is trying to influence them. Thus, the perceived authenticity of the celebrity endorser plays an important role in consumers' purchase decision-making process as well as attitude formation process as people engage with celebrity through a negotiation of authenticity (Dyer, 2003; Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016). Literature defines authenticity as a commitment to presenting oneself truthfully and freely (Sloan, 2007).

However, not all appearances of brands on famous people's social media are sponsored. There is still a place for celebrities' own choices and preferences. Nevertheless, it is frequently unclear what content is sponsored and what content is not. Thus, it is important to study how do consumers distinguish commercial content from non-commercial content on celebrities' social media, and what makes them believe that a celebrity exposes a brand or product because she or he was paid for that or because the celebrity really likes and uses the products. It is vital for practitioners to understand what influences consumers' perception of a celebrity endorser's authenticity when they see brands' exposures and how it would affect the effectiveness of the endorsement.

Thus, current research aims to investigate the perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in social media; specifically, the factors that make the endorser more and less authentic for the consumers. Perceived authenticity is believed to engage people emotionally (Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016), enhance celebrity influence (Preece, 2105) and positively influence attitudes (Ilicic and Webster, 2014). Customers are more likely to respond to perceptions of authenticity through making a public commitment in the form of increased purchase intentions (Loroz and Braig, 2015). Therefore, this study also examines how perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers would affect brand attitudes and, consequently, behavioural intentions in covert social media marketing, where the brand's sponsorship of the endorsement is not disclosed by the celebrity.

1.2. Gap in the Literature

Authenticity has been studied for many years and is still being researched in the different contexts such as celebrity authenticity (Grow and Ward, 2013; Moulard et al., 2015), advertisement authenticity (Miller, 2015), brand authenticity (Van Nuenen, 2016), authenticity in social media (Leppanen et al., 2015), tourism authenticity (Van Nuenen, 2016; Wang, 1999) and authenticity in politics (Gaden and Dumitrica, 2015; Grow and Ward, 2013). Authenticity has been defined as the subjective evaluation of genuineness, originality and truth, and is referred to as honesty, sincerity and reality. Pillow et al. (2017) claim that authentic existence relates to the degree to which people behave and emote in a manner that is consistent with their true emotions and internal states. In the same way, Sloan (2007) suggests that authenticity is a commitment to presenting oneself truthfully and freely. According to the literature review, authenticity as well as source credibility play essential roles in consumers' purchasing decision-making processes when the source of the reference information is social media (Ali, 2013; Gaden and Dumitrica, 2015).

The first contribution of this research is to address perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in social media in the covert marketing context, which is when the sponsorship relationships between the endorser and the endorsed brand are hidden (Hwang and Zhang, 2018). Thus, building on the existing literature on celebrity endorsement, covert marketing, persuasion and authenticity, this study proposes a model that examines the factors influencing the perceived authenticity (i.e. activated persuasion knowledge, celebrity-brand congruity, expertise based congruity and perceived attractiveness) and its impact on the endorsed brand (i.e. brand attitude and behavioural intentions).

The research advances knowledge of social media marketing and celebrity endorsement by investigating antecedents of the perceived authenticity in social media. Additionally, this study contributes to a detailed understanding of outcomes for the endorsed brands in the case when the audience perceives the endorser as inauthentic in social media. Particularly, the research is going to investigate how consumers' brand attitudes and behavioural intentions are impacted when the celebrity endorser is not perceived as authentic by the audience, and the true sponsorship relationships are recognized or suspected.

Thus, the insights of this study are beneficial for social media theory and as well as for practice. The results of the study benefit marketing practitioners who spend millions of dollars on celebrity endorsements on social media (Elberse and Verleun, 2012). Therefore, it is

important to choose the right celebrity for the promotional campaign, and appropriately inform audiences of the persuasion attempt to achieve profitable results.

Second, it is important to recognise how the study informs the context of covert social media marketing. In some cases, it is hoped that consumers do not recognize the advertising motives in celebrities' social media posts featuring brands and believe that these brand exposures were not sponsored by the company. One of the main differences between celebrity endorsements in traditional media outlets and celebrity endorsements on social media platforms is that in traditional media the endorsement is filtered and distributed by the media outlet (e.g. magazine, TV channel, radio channel) and the sponsorship of the endorsements is usually obvious (Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016). Whereas social media endorsements can be distributed by either a sponsor or a celebrity through the celebrity's own social media account, which often prevents consumers from recognizing the sponsorship relationships with the promoted brand. Here, the consumer may attribute different motivations for such messages, including a genuine liking and usage of the endorsed products (Wood and Burkhalter, 2014). This difference, potentially, gives celebrity endorsements more authenticity when implemented through social media rather than through traditional media outlets (Hausman, 2012; Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016; Marwick, 2015). Most of the existing literature on persuasion knowledge and perceived authenticity is based on traditional marketing, while this research was concentrated solely on covert social media marketing.

Another key difference is that in traditional marketing, the audience for an endorsement is formed from an audience of the media outlet or vehicle distributing the endorsement advertisement. While in social media celebrity endorsement, the audience comes with the celebrity endorser consisting of people who are already fans of the celebrity. Following from the Source Attractiveness Model (McGuire, 1985), the attributes of the celebrity such as liking, familiarity and similarity (with the consumer) relates positively to the effectiveness of the celebrity endorsement. In traditional media, the advertisement featuring celebrity endorsement may be exposed to different groups of consumers, including people who like/dislike the celebrity, people who are familiar/unfamiliar with the celebrity, people similar/not similar with the celebrity. However, when the source of an advertisement featuring brand endorsement is the celebrity's social media account, the audience consists of the celebrity's fans, which enhances the effectiveness of the endorsement (Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016). Another distinctive attribute of celebrity endorsement on social media is that celebrity may promote various brands and products on social media, whereas in traditional marketing, the celebrity

often becomes a face of the endorsed brand, which quite often prohibits endorsing other brands (Chen et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2016). These differences between traditional marketing and social media marketing create the need for additional research on perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in social media settings.

Despite the significant interest in the concepts of perceived authenticity, social media marketing and celebrity endorsement, little is known about the antecedents and factors influencing consumer perceptions of celebrity endorsers' authenticity on social media in the covert marketing context. This research is going to advance the knowledge on perceived authenticity and covert social media celebrity endorsement by drawing from the Attribution Theory (Jones and Davis, 1965), the Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad and Wright, 1994). Previous studies have researched the concepts of covert marketing, celebrity endorsement, social media marketing and perceived authenticity in depth but separately, and despite of the significant number of the studies on these subjects, no research integrating all these concepts has been conducted.

Several hypotheses related to the factors influencing perceived authenticity of a celebrity endorser on social media are tested such as: celebrity-brand congruity, expertise-based celebrity-brand congruity, attractiveness-based celebrity-brand congruity, and activated persuasion knowledge. The study also examines whether and how low perceived authenticity of a celebrity endorser influences an endorsed brand, and how covert persuasion attempts in social media impact on brand attitudes and behavioural intentions. Covert persuasion attempts can be defined as one's attempt to influence someone's behaviour or beliefs without his or her recognition (Spratt, 2008). This research is going to study celebrity covert persuasion attempts in form of an endorsement of certain brands or products on social media without disclosure of his or her sponsorship relationship with the promoted brand. The research employs a quantitative research approach, using online surveys as a main research method. The procedure consisted of secondary and primary research. Primary research included pilot test and online surveys.

1.3. Research Aim, Questions and Objectives

This research aims to investigate factors influencing effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in covert social media marketing by exploring the mediating role of the perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers.

The research questions of this thesis are:

1. What is the impact of the celebrity endorsers' perceived authenticity on consumers' behaviour in covert brand endorsements in social media?
2. What factors influence the perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in covert brand endorsements in social media?

To answer these questions, the following objectives of the research have been formulated:

1. To develop a conceptual model of the impact of celebrity endorsers on the endorsed brands in covert social media marketing
2. To identify the factors influencing the perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in covert social media marketing
3. To examine the impact of perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers on brand attitudes and behavioural intentions in covert social media marketing
4. To examine the role of the activated persuasion knowledge in covert celebrity endorsements in social media

1.4. Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter, which presents the research idea and provides the background of the research problem. It also explains the significance of this study and how the study would contribute to the knowledge by enhancing the existing literature. The research objectives and research questions are also provided in this chapter.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the core literature on the topics related to the study. The chapter is structured by four key topics: celebrity endorsement, perceived authenticity, social media marketing and covert marketing. All four sections are divided into several subsections reviewing all essential for this research subjects. The second part of the chapter reviews the related theories and theoretical models, which contribute to the development of the conceptual framework for the thesis.

Chapter 3 presents the conceptual framework of perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in covert social media marketing. The chapter also discusses the hypotheses development based on the literature review provided in chapter 2.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the research methodology. The chapter begins with the discussion of the research philosophy, following by the research approach, research choice, and research strategy selected for this study. Sampling techniques, sampling size and target population are also discussed in the chapter 3. Finally, the methodological chapter explains chosen statistical analyses, presents results of the pilot test and discusses ethical considerations of the current research. The decisions leading to the chosen methodological methods and designs are presented.

Chapter 5 presents the data analyses, which include the results of the hypotheses test and the final model fit for the proposed conceptual framework.

Chapter 6 provides a detailed discussion of the research findings and suggests managerial implications of the current study.

Chapter 7 summarises the results and the research and provides the limitations of the study. Suggestions for the further research are also outlined in this chapter.

Chapter 8 is the concluding chapter, which summarises the thesis, presents its main findings of the study and its contribution to the knowledge.

Figure 1 illustrates structure of the thesis by presenting all the chapters.

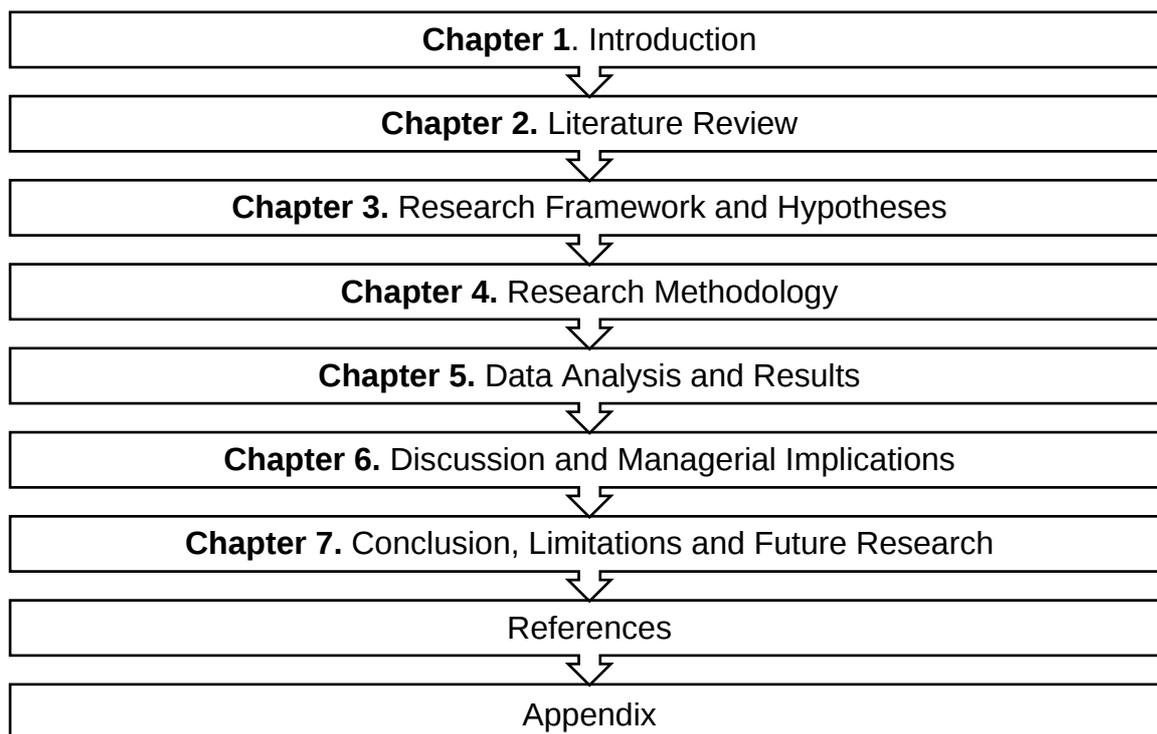


Figure 1 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Nowadays the concept of celebrity has expanded and turned into a broader phenomenon, which is expected not only in the sphere of entertainment but also in social spheres of business and politics (Guthey et al., 2009). Celebritisation is defined as ‘a meta-process that grasps the changing nature, as well as the societal and cultural embedding of celebrity, which can be observed through its democratization, diversification and migration’ (Driessens, 2013). According to Krotz (2009), this celebritisation of society happens due to the mediatisation of culture. They explain mediatisation as a process by which the importance and relevance of media for culture, society and everyday life increases. Mediatisation assumes that media influences the most private dimensions of life, for instance, interpersonal relationships and personal subjectivity (Livingstone, 2009). Thus, changes in media cause changes in the concept of celebrity (Kavka, 2012). Kavka (2012) states that the emergence of new more diverse media outlets in the last two decades, such as reality TV shows and social media has taken forward the concept of celebrity and enabled the transformation of ordinary people into celebrities. Driessens (2013) uses the term 'celebrification' to explain this process of transformation, whereas 'celebritisation' refers to the process by which celebrities influence and make changes in society and culture.

Although celebrities' presence in mass media is not a new phenomenon, modern technologies have transformed the ways of celebrities' direct interaction with their fans (Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016). According to Jin and Phua (2014), global growth of social media usage enhanced the mass fascination with celebrity and even created a new category of fame, called social media influencers. In the 21st century, considerably fewer people are obsessed with science or history; nevertheless, most of the millennium society is influenced by celebrities (Jin and Phua, 2014). The increasing popularity of social media among youth has made significant changes in celebrity culture (Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016). Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) state that before the emergence of social media, information about celebrities was provided by third parties only (magazines, television, newspapers) and, thus, was fully controlled. Now, however, social media allows celebrities to present themselves in the way they want to be seen and control what their fans see and read about their personal and professional lives. Thus, both traditional celebrities who have an online presence and social media influencers have large numbers of followers in social media. For example, singer

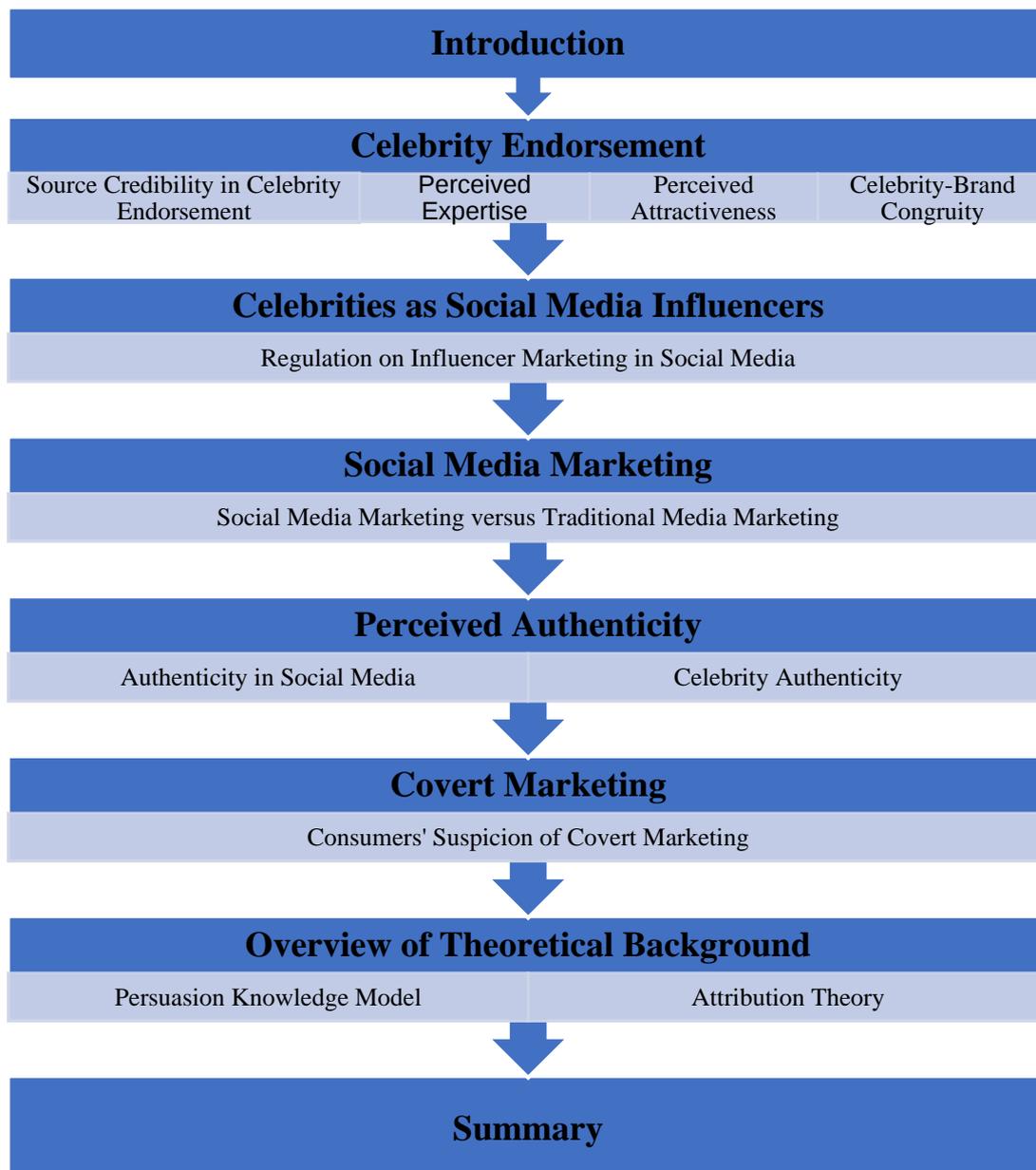
Rihanna has 93.4 million followers on Twitter (Twitter, 2019), while singer Beyonce has 133 million on Instagram (Instagram, 2019). Therefore, marketers have realised the potential of collaborating with them in this forum, and started using celebrities' social media popularity for brand promotions (Poyry et al., 2019). As of 2019, companies spent \$5.6 billion a year on social media influencer marketing, and this amount is expected to grow up to \$8 billion by 2020 (99 Firms, 2019a). According to Mackay (2018), a celebrity with 1 million followers on Instagram normally charges around £10,000 per brand endorsement, making this attractive for the celebrity as well.

Meanwhile, consumers have become increasingly more sceptical towards advertisement and sponsored promotions, which encourages marketers to try to hide any sign of commerce in their marketing communication messages using covert marketing (Milne et al., 2009; Kuhn et al., 2010; Nelson and Park, 2014). Kaikati and Kaikati (2004) claim that the primary task of covert marketing is to make an advertisement look more like an entertainment rather than an advertisement (cf. p.45). Using celebrities and other social media influencers in covert social media marketing is becoming a very common practice. It is common that each celebrities' Instagram account features brand references, and most of these are not specified as advertisement. Consequently, consumers are unaware of their exposure to a persuasion attempt, conversely assume they are viewing the celebrity's true identity and preferences. This assumption by consumers is the celebrity's' perceived authenticity and is a very important component of celebrity-consumers relationships (Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016). According to Wood et al. (2008), authentic individuals are those with deeply held beliefs whose behaviour does not change because of external pressures, such as financial rewards. Thus, consumers expect authentic celebrity endorsers to genuinely like and use the products that are present in their social media publications, rather than assume the celebrities are being paid by the brand for the promotion. Authenticity, therefore, engages people emotionally and enhances celebrity influence (Preece, 2015) making it more likely that consumers respond with increased purchase intentions (Loroz and Braig, 2015).

Since this study focuses on the role of the celebrity's perceived authenticity in covert marketing in social media, the literature review discusses the current situation of knowledge on the most relevant concepts to this research: celebrity endorsement, social media influencers, social media marketing, perceived authenticity and covert marketing. Additionally, the literature review includes overview of the previous studies on several concepts in traditional overt marketing, since they have not been investigated from the covert marketing perspective

but are essential for the current research. Thus, celebrity-brand congruity, celebrity’s credibility, including trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness are discussed in the literature review. Also, the chapter presents the related theories and theoretical models to develop the conceptual framework for this research study. Table 1 illustrates the structure of the literature review.

Table 1 Literature Review Structure



2.2. Celebrity Endorsement

There was no concept of celebrity until the beginning of the 20th century (Schickel, 2000). However, history and advertising studies have evidenced the existence of celebrity and fame for centuries (Barry, 2008). Historically significant persons strategically maintained their special status in society by literature, portraiture, or monuments, which could be considered as early mass media. McCracken (1989) explains the concept of celebrity endorsement as a process when well-known people promote brands using their popularity and recognition in society. Bergkvist and Zhou (2016) propose another definition of the concept of celebrity endorsement: an agreement between celebrity and an entity to use the celebrity for the promotion of the entity. Pringle (2004) says that one in five advertisements in the world includes the appearance of a celebrity. These practices help companies to enhance their brand image, increase brand awareness and create desirable associations using celebrities' image (Pringle, 2004).

Celebrity endorsers are more effective than non-celebrity endorsers in generating desirable effects for companies under the conditions of celebrity - product and celebrity - consumer congruity (Atkin and Block, 1983). Both researchers and practitioners have found these benefits include positive feelings and favourable attitudes towards the advertisement (Atkin and Block, 1983; Kamins, 1990), riveting of consumers' attention (Erdogan, 1999), encouragement to greater purchase intentions (Friedman and Friedman, 1976; Atkin and Block, 1983), greater advertisement recall (O'Mahony and Meenaghan, 1998), increased stock value for organisations (Farrell et al., 2000; Mathur et al., 1997), and increased word-of-mouth (Pringle and Binet, 2005). Marketers use celebrity endorsement strategy not only in traditional advertisements, but they also integrate commercial content into television programmes and films, which is referred to as product placement. In traditional advertising, a celebrity endorsement is considered as more direct than a product placement; thus, the results of these two strategies cannot be compared (Dekker and Reijmersdal, 2013).

In the modern intense marketing environment, it is not easy to distinguish products through their utilitarian benefits; thus, celebrities bring a very important value to advertising as a tool for establishing and enhancing brand equity and brand image (Choi and Rifon, 2012). Although celebrity and/or brand related marketing activities do not guarantee company's profitability (Gitomer, 1998; Merkert and Pearson, 2015), celebrity endorsements contribute to the formation of favourable attitudes towards the endorsed brands (Till et al., 2008). Thus,

companies spend billions of dollars annually on celebrity endorsements to promote their products because celebrities' symbolic meanings and aspirational associations are expected to transfer to the endorsed products (Escalas, 2004). According to the Information-Based Model, consumers form their attitude towards brands by utilising brand-related information in the advertisement, which consequently may influence purchase intentions (Shimp, 1981). This also can be explained by the Meaning Transfer Model theorised by McCracken (1989), which proposes that celebrity generated meanings are transferred (or expected to be transferred) firstly to the brand or product by virtue of the endorsement, and then to the consumers via purchasing and consumption.

As McCracken (1989) argues convincingly, effectiveness of an endorsement varies according to the perceived profiles of the celebrities. Davies and Slater (2015) explain that this may be partially shaped by their actions or accomplishments, but also how the media present them. As a result, a number of interesting questions arise about how an interaction between endorser's perceived personality and performance affects the endorsement value and how this is built up with communications that use traditional media outlets vs. advanced technologies (social media e.g. Instagram and Facebook) (Davies and Slater, 2015). According to Davies and Slater (2015), these contemporary technologies offer new ways of broadcasting messages enhancing an endorsement and increasing its impact. The authors argue that such media instruments like blogs, Instagram, and Google pages assure an increased prospective for celebrity endorsement by offering consumers additional media reports and other people's opinions, which can affect consumers' purchasing behaviour either positively or negatively. Nowadays customers are enticed by products through the normative pressure of advertising as well as through online testimonials (Davies and Slater, 2015).

The greater part of celebrity endorsement literature focus on the influence of celebrity persuasion on brand attitude, brand perception, and purchase intentions. Most of these studies employ an experimental research design to measure consumers' brand evaluations after the exposure to advertisement with celebrity endorsement. A substantial number of studies focus on the effect of source credibility (Atkin and Block 1983; Goldberg and Hartwick 1990; Lafferty and Goldsmith, 1999; Spry et al. 2009) as well as the impact of each of the three source credibility components separately – trustworthiness (Lafferty and Goldsmith, 1998; Spry et al., 2011), expertise (Eisend and Langner, 2010; Mishra et al., 2015; Till and Busler, 1998; Till and Busler, 2000; Siemens et al., 2008), and attractiveness (Kahle and Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990 McGuire, 1985), which will be discussed in more depth in the following section.

The academic literature on celebrity endorsement also proposes another source factor in celebrity attitude evaluation – celebrity liking (Bergkvist and Zhou, 2016), where impact on the endorsed brands is not as clearly defined. Thus, Kahle and Homer (1985), Silvera and Austad (2004) and Misra and Beatty (1990) have found that celebrity liking has a positive influence on brand evaluations. Whereas studies by Miller and Allen (2012) and Fleck et al. (2012) show that celebrity liking does not have any effect on brands.

It is essential for marketers to understand customers' responses to celebrity endorsements and develop the right approach for celebrity selection, as there are quite serious risks associated with the selection of the wrong celebrity and the substantial sums of money spent on the endorsements (Choi and Rifon, 2012). A few studies focus on how advertisers select or should select celebrities for endorsement of their brands. Erdogan et al. (2001) researched three factors, which UK advertising agencies consider while selecting celebrities: celebrity-consumer match, celebrity-brand/product match, and celebrity's image are considered to be the most important. Choi and Rifon (2012) found that celebrity-target audience congruity is the main factor to be considered while planning celebrity endorsement, as rated by marketing practitioners. Zwilling and Fructher (2012) suggest a model for creating optimal celebrity-brand match for an endorsement by applying a genetic algorithm. The model considers both celebrity traits and product attributes presuming that consumers construct a brand according to these two factors. However, Bergkvist and Zhou (2016) criticise the model arguing that it would not be widely used by marketing practitioners and academics because of the mathematical complexities of the model. To sum up, there is a limited amount of celebrity endorsement studies dedicated to the celebrity selection methods employed by marketers as well as an optimal algorithm for this process.

Several studies investigate cross country effectiveness of celebrity endorsements on frequency of appearances in advertising, differences in product types and differences in media types (Praet, 2008; Choi et al., 2005; Belch and Belch, 2013). These researchers find that in Asian countries' celebrities are more prevalent than in the US and Europe (Praet, 2008). Additionally, studies show differences between product types promoted by male and female celebrities (Stafford et al., 2003), the prevalence of celebrities' appearances in the advertisements in different categories of magazines (e.g. fashion, sports), and prevalence of celebrity endorsements among various product categories (Belch and Belch, 2013).

There are only few studies focused on financial impacts of celebrity endorsement – either on sales or share prices. Elberse and Verleun (2012) show that athlete celebrity

endorsements generate a positive pay-off to a company's decision to engage in celebrity endorsements, which significantly increase sales for 43 of the 51 companies that signed a contract with an endorser. Moreover, the authors found that the celebrity's career achievements contributed to the sales increase. As for the impact on firm's market value, celebrity endorsement studies show contradictory findings. Agrawal and Kamakura (1995) and Elberse and Verleun (2012) found that announcement of the endorsement immediately and significantly increases share prices, and the average excess returns rises up to half percent. Conversely, the study of Ding et al. (2011) showed that the announcement of a celebrity endorsement does not generate any abnormal returns, with the exception of technology industry products. Several studies also look at how celebrities' (mainly athletes) performance affects firms' market value showing a positive correlation between celebrities' achievements and share prices increase (Elberse and Varleun, 2012; Farrell et al., 2000; Nicolau and Santa-Maria, 2013). Finally, several researchers looked at the effect of negative celebrity events on firm valuation. Although it is expected to generate negative outcomes for companies, Louie et al. (2001) found that celebrity's negative events negatively impact firms only if the celebrity is seen to deserve blame for the incident. Moreover, Bartz et al. (2013) found that negative celebrities' events do not lower abnormal returns significantly, and if the company terminates the endorsement contract, no sizeable returns are observed.

Several studies investigate target audience factors and their effects on celebrity persuasion power. Atkin and Block (1983) studied age-related differences in audience responses to advertisement and found that celebrity endorsement has a greater effect on younger people (13-17 years old) compared to older (18 and above). Conversely, Ohanian's (1991) research did not show any age-related differences. Other studies researched gender-related differences in response to celebrity endorsement (Bush et al., 2004; Ohanian, 1991). Bush et al. (2004) found that athlete celebrities are important influencers for teenagers. The athletes were found to be powerful in enhancing brand loyalty and spreading positive word-of-mouth about brands (Bush et al., 2004). Money et al. (2006) is the only study, which attempted to find cross-national differences in response to celebrity advertisements. The authors found that both Japanese and American consumers perceive endorsed products more positively in the presence of self-oriented negative information about a celebrity.

Bergkvist and Zhou (2016) argue that literature on celebrity endorsement is limited to celebrities' appearances only in the advertisement, however, today's celebrities also appear in other marketing communication modes, such as brand related content in social media, which

is also a very powerful marketing communication tool (Wood and Burkhalter, 2014). Moreover, the existing celebrity endorsement literature focuses mostly on consumer goods, disregarding how celebrities also promote consumer services, B2B products and services, and non-profit organisations (Del Mar Garcia de Los Salmones et al., 2013).

Marketing literature proposes a number of important models and theories dedicated to the concept of celebrity endorsement (Table 2).

Table 2 Celebrity Endorsement Models and Theories

Halo Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumers' associations with the celebrity endorser can transfer to the endorsed brand through the celebrity endorsement (Thorndike, 1920).
Meaning Transfer Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associated with the celebrity by consumers meanings can be transferred to the brand or product through celebrity endorsement. (McCracken, 1989).
TEARS Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, respect and similarity are the key characteristics of a celebrity endorser, which influence effectiveness of the endorsement (Shimp, 2003).
Source Credibility Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness are the main source effects influencing brand attitudes, advertisement attitudes and purchase intentions (Ohanian, 1991).

Thus, Thorndike (1920) was the first who discovered The Halo Effect claiming that the perception of a person creates a 'halo' around herself or himself, which can be either positive or negative, and according to that 'halo' therefore influences the perception of person's individual characteristics and actions. The Halo Effect has been studied widely within marketing literature from the perspective of consumer behaviour (Klein and Dawar, 2004). Halo Effect Theory suggests that consumers evaluate the advertised product based on an evaluation that they receive from its endorser. Thus, companies use the 'halo' of celebrities in the promotion of their products in order to ascribe positive associations to the products (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017).

Similarly, McCracken presented (1989) the Meaning Transfer Model, which illustrates how celebrities' image, qualities, and symbolic meanings transfer through the association to the products that they advertise. It is suggested that positive feelings that celebrities generate in consumers can be transferred to the products, so the products can also evoke consumers'

positive reactions (Carolyn et al., 1998). Both the Halo Effect Theory and the Meaning Transfer Model support the idea presented in this study's framework that the positive perception of the celebrity endorser positively influences the brand attitude. Thus, a brand endorsed by a celebrity who is perceived as authentic, in other words sincere, honest and acting according to his true self, is expected to achieve positive consumers' attitudes.

The TEARS model is another important model for celebrity endorsement theory. According to the TEARS model, there are five characteristics of an endorser, which are crucial for a success of endorsement campaign: trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness (physical), respect and similarity (Shimp, 2008). Shimp (2008) claim is that the credibility of a celebrity endorser is one of the main conditions for favourable outcomes of an endorsement campaign and is crucial in the evaluation of an advertisement and promoted brand (Goldsmith et al., 2000). Since expertise, attractiveness and trustworthiness are closely aligned with exhibiting and communicating one's deeply held beliefs whose behaviour, this theory also supports the framework proposed by this thesis. It is suggested that the expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness of a celebrity endorser have a positive impact on the endorsement effectiveness through the celebrity's perceived authenticity.

Ohanian (1991) developed the Source Credibility Model, which states that effectiveness of the delivered information depends on the endorser's perceived level of credibility and trustworthiness. The message from a credible source can affect consumers' opinions, beliefs and behaviour related to the promoted brand (Erdogan, 1999). Similarly, the Source Attractiveness Model contends that marketers benefit from celebrity endorsement due to the dual effects of celebrity reputation and physical appeal (McGuire, 1985). McGuire (1985) believes that that effectiveness of a message depends on the similarity of the sender (endorser) and receiver (consumer) of the message. Also, familiarity and liking of the endorser are important in order to achieve desired results of the delivered information. Additionally, the attractiveness of an endorser does not mean only physical appearance but also includes intellect, professional achievements and lifestyle (Erdogan, 1999). Both above-mentioned models describe how and why celebrity an endorsement is influenced by the source's aspect not taking into consideration the target audience's aspect (Fang and Jiang, 2015). As in the TEARS model, the Source Credibility and Source Attractiveness Models support the current study's premise that a celebrity's expertise, attractiveness and trustworthiness have a positive influence on the endorsement effectiveness by contributing to the higher perceived authenticity of the endorser.

2.2.1. Source Credibility in Celebrity Endorsement

Generally, celebrity endorsements are extremely effective in generating more positive responses on the dependent variables, so marketers are ready to pay huge sums of money to associate their brands with celebrities. However, the perceived credibility of the celebrity endorsers, plays a key role as a mediator in determining their effectiveness (Le Ferle and Choi, 2005). Numerous studies have measured the effectiveness of celebrity endorser through applying the Source Credibility Model, which is intended to identify under what conditions the source of information is the most persuasive (Le Ferle and Choi, 2005). Early studies show that because of the wide recognition and popularity, celebrities are idolised and frequently perceived as more credible than ordinary people, and for that reason, they are expected to have a greater influence on advertising effect measures through their well-known and reputable credible images (Atkin and Block 1983; Ohanian 1990). However, more recent studies on celebrity endorsement on social media show that macro-influencers have greater power over consumers in fashion related endorsements than A-list celebrities (Ratcliff, 2015; Poyry et al., 2019). Thus, fashion bloggers Leandra Medine and Chiara Ferragni had a stronger influence on social media than famous singer Taylor Swift (Ratcliff, 2015), who is in the list of The World's Most Powerful Women according to Forbes in 2019, and among the top three most powerful musicians (Forbes, 2019). Similarly, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) found that social media influencers have a stronger impact on purchase behaviours and brand attitudes compared to traditional celebrities.

Nonetheless, not all celebrities are perceived as equally credible by all people as each individual judges the level of an endorser's credibility subjectively, thus their perceptions vary widely depending on the perceiver (Le Ferle and Choi, 2005). According to Erdogan (1999), consumers' perceptions of an endorser is more important than factual attributes possessed by him or her while processing the persuasive message conveyed by the celebrity through the advertisement. As a result, celebrity endorsers perceived as credible are likely to have a more positive influence on people's advertisement responses (Le Ferle and Choi, 2005; Choi and Rifon, 2012). Specifically, a credible celebrity endorser positively influences both the consumers' attitude towards the advertisement and consumers' attitude towards the brand (Atkin and Block 1983; Goldberg and Hartwick 1990; Lafferty and Goldsmith 1999). In addition, analytical results of the research carried by Wang et al., (2017) show that consumers'

assessment of the credibility of the endorser positively and extensively impacts their attitude towards the endorsed brand and brand credibility.

Ohanian (1990) created an instrument for measuring the influence of celebrity endorsers through the assessment of their credibility. Thus, the Source Credibility Model (Ohanian, 1991) suggests three elements of celebrity endorser credibility: trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness. According to Ohanian (1991), the source's perceived level of credibility positively influences message effectiveness and brand attitude.

Trustworthiness indicates the audience's degree of confidence in the speaker and degree of message acceptance that is being delivered by the speaker (Hovland et al. 1953). Erdogan (1999) defines trustworthiness as the quality of honesty, dignity, and believability acquired by the endorser and perceived by the consumers. This attribute can be described as subjective quality, as all individuals perceive it differently (Wang et al., 2017). According to Hovland and Wiess (1951), in the case when the consumers evaluate the source as trustworthy, they also suppose that the communicated message is believable. Advertisers therefore try to enhance the level of trustworthiness by choosing endorsers who are perceived as reliable, honest and believable (Wang et al., 2017). A number of studies have confirmed the power of communicators' trustworthiness in changing attitudes. For instance, Miller and Basehart (1969) studied the effect of source trustworthiness on the persuasiveness of communications that arouse fear. Their research showed that when the degree of the communicator's perceived trustworthiness was high, an opinionated message was more efficient compared to the non-opinionated one in the attitude change process (Miller and Basehart, 1969). The authors define an opinionated statement as one that reveals the source's attitude towards certain ideas or beliefs and the individuals who either agree or disagree with the speaker's opinion; whereas a non-opinionated statements reveal only the source's attitude towards certain ideas or beliefs.

Expertise relates to the extent to which the source is considered a valid source of information (Erdogan, 1999). Similarly, Sternthal et al. (1978) defines expertise as the extent to which an individual is perceived to have enough knowledge, skills and experience to make accurate statements. Meanwhile sociology theory states that expertise is associated with social influence and authority and is expected to facilitate trust (Eiser et al., 2009). When a celebrity endorser is perceived to have a particular expertise, he or she is also perceived as more reliable and believable in the subjects related to this area (Hung et al., 2011).

Ohanian (1991) defines attractiveness as the degree to which an individual is likeable and physically good-looking to others. Numerous studies have supported the fact that physical attractiveness is an essential factor in human's initial judgement and perception of other individuals (Baker and Churchill, 1977; Mills and Aronson, 1965; Chaiken, 1979; Eisend and Langner, 2010; Joseph, 1982; Kahle and Homer, 1985). According to Baker and Churchill (1977), physical attractiveness is one of the main reasons why advertisers use celebrities in brand endorsements. This is mainly due to the fact that celebrities' attractiveness also transfers to the brands and products, which are associated with them (Joseph, 1982; McCracken, 1989). Moreover, it has been validated by numerous researchers that physical attractiveness of the source contributes to the attitude change (Baker and Gilbert 1977; Chaiken 1979; Mills and Aronson 1965; Petty and Cacioppo 1980; Erdogan, 1999).

Thus, if an endorser is perceived as being trustworthy, physically attractive, knowledgeable and experienced in the related subject, he or she is considered a credible source, and consequently, induces favourable behavioural and attitudinal responses from the audience (Ohanian 1991). For example, Pornpitakpan's (2004) study revealed that all three components of source credibility (trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness) are favourably and significantly related to the purchase intentions of Singaporean respondents.

Lafferty and Goldsmith (1999) examined whether and how endorser credibility impacts consumer behaviour and attitudes and found that effect of the celebrity endorser's credibility on attitude towards the brand is mediated by the attitude towards the advertisement. Similarly, Goldsmith et al. (2000) suggest that celebrity endorser credibility impacts only consumers' attitude towards the advertisement, which in its turn influences other variables (i.e. attitude towards the brand and behavioural intentions). Other studies show that a credible celebrity endorser influences positively both consumers' attitude towards the advertisement and consumers' attitude towards the brand (Atkin and Block 1983; Goldberg and Hartwick 1990; Lafferty and Goldsmith 1999). Furthermore, various studies have found that when the source of the advertisement is perceived as credible, consumers process the advertisement more easily and do not start deep examinations of the advertised product. Contrarily, when the source is perceived as less credible, consumers start evaluating the advertised product more carefully in order to reduce risk probability (Harmon and Coney, 1982). Thus, highly credible sources are more persuasive than less credible ones and facilitate acceptance of the message in the advertisement, which leads to more favourable outcomes (Heesacker and Petty, 1983).

Dwivedi et al. (2015a) and Spry et al. (2009) found that the credibility of the celebrity endorsing a brand contributes to brand equity. However, Spry et al. (2009) add that the influence of endorser credibility on brand equity is mediated by brand credibility, which they define as the believability of the product information conveyed in the ad and the consumers' perception that the brand can deliver what has been promised (Spry et al., 2009). Moreover, impact of brand credibility on brand equity is mediated by the type of branding employed, where parent brands have stronger impact in comparison to sub-brands (Spry et al., 2009). Their findings support the study by Till (1998), which state the impact of celebrity endorser on brand equity is based on the principles of associative learning. According to the Associative Network Memory Model, when a celebrity is connected with a brand through an endorsement arrangement, consumers' perception of the celebrity connects with the endorsed brand, which is stored in their memory (Till, 1998). Associative Network Memory Model explains that consumer's memory consists of a set of nodes, which are relationally linked between each other. According to the model, these nodes can be represented in the form of product categories, attributes and benefits, brand names and celebrities associated with a brand or product (Collins and Elizabeth, 1975). Thus, the endorsement relationships between celebrities and brands facilitate a process of meaning transfer (McCracken, 1989) from the celebrity endorser to the endorsed brand via the network associations. A celebrity who is perceived as credible (i.e. trustworthy, attractive, expert) (Ohanian, 1990) contributes to a favourable attitude towards the endorsed brand. Thus, Walker et al., (1992) conclude that the image of a celebrity endorsing a brand influences the image of the endorsed brand.

A celebrity's image and activities can both harm and improve perception and attitude of the brands they endorse (Kaikati, 1987). Negative information about the celebrity can evoke consumers' negative feelings not only about the celebrity, but it can also affect attitude towards the brands and products that the celebrity endorses (White et al., 2009). Allen (2012) found that negative beliefs about the celebrity endorser can be transferred to the brand by applying an evaluative conditioning method. This negatively affected attitude towards the brand and perceived brand quality. Moreover, Gibson (2008) discovered that it is possible to change implicit attitudes towards established brands when initial attitudes are neutral. In addition, it was found that negative traits of celebrity endorsers are more likely to transfer to the endorsed brands than positive traits (Campbell and Warren, 2012).

Numerous studies are dedicated to the effects of celebrity credibility on advertising and brand attitudes. When a celebrity endorser is perceived as trustworthy and an expert in the

product category that he or she endorses, consumers are more likely to make the purchase (Choi and Rifon, 2012; Goldsmith et al., 2000; Lee and Koo, 2015). According to Holloway and Robinson (1995), companies can attain trustworthiness by choosing a celebrity for endorsement whose expertise matches the brand. However, there is a term ‘credibility gap’ in source credibility theory, which refers to the situations when the celebrity endorser is not believed to be using the endorsing product, so consequently, the brand loses its credibility (Solomon et al., 1999).

Ledbetter and Redd (2016) researched the factors that predict perceived credibility of celebrities in social media. They assessed a theoretical model where posting frequency and credibility are variables mediated by parasocial interaction and moderated by attitudes towards online self-disclosure. The study found that the celebrity’s posting frequency generates interest, group identification, and problem-solving dimensions of parasocial interaction. Consequently, interest and problem-solving dimensions of parasocial interaction positively influence the celebrity’s perceived credibility. Parasocial interaction is considered as a strong mediator in the relationship between posting frequency of celebrity and celebrity’s perceived credibility (Ledbetter and Redd, 2016).

The most recent study on credibility of social media influencers conducted by Lou and Yuan (2019) found that credibility of social media influencers has a positive impact on their followers' trust in their posts that feature brands. Moreover, their study found that credibility, as well as entertaining and informative value of influencers' content in social media has a positive effect on followers' trust in the influencers' branded posts. Lou and Yuan's (2019) findings are in line with the findings of Djafarova and Rushworth (2017).

Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) also looked at the celebrity endorser’s credibility within the social media context. They investigated how Instagram endorsers’ credibility influences the buying behaviour of young women. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) found that with purchase of the product or service recommended by a celebrity on Instagram, consumers enhance their self-esteem. Therefore, they search for the recommendations of others as, presumably, they are not secure enough about their own capabilities to make right decisions (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017). There is another valuable contribution of Djafarova’s and Rushworth’s (2017) study: although the participants were informed about the sponsorship of the celebrity’s product endorsements on social media, participants’ purchase intentions did not decrease. This has been explained by consumers’ beliefs about celebrities’ fame, reputation and position of power, which they would not want to abuse by sharing disingenuous reviews

(Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017). The findings contradict common beliefs about increased consumers' scepticism towards sponsored content (Jiang et al., 2017; Nelson and Park, 2014; Kuhn et al., 2010; Milne et al., 2009). Their study adopted a qualitative research method using in-depth interviews with a quite small sample – 18 female Instagram users based in UK. It would be valuable to replicate their research objectives, however, using a representative sample. Furthermore, since the participants of their research were aware that celebrities are sponsored by brands to promote the products, the results are based on overt marketing, where the nature of the communication is clear, and the company makes explicit efforts to assure audience attention (Akdogan and Altuntas, 2015). Therefore, it would be a useful contribution to social media knowledge if researchers investigated consumers' attitudes towards celebrities' product and service recommendations on social media when the marketing communication message is masked and consumers are not aware about the real relationship between the celebrity and the promoted brand.

2.2.2. Perceived Expertise

As noted earlier, according to the Source Credibility Model, a third contributor to message effectiveness and brand attitude is expertise (Ohanian, 1991). As noted earlier, the literature provides a few definitions which can be summarised as the extent to which a person is perceived to have enough knowledge, skills and experience to make accurate statements. When a celebrity endorser is perceived to have a particular expertise, he or she is also perceived as more reliable and believable (Hung et al., 2011) and is expected to facilitate trust (Eiser et al. 2009). A person's profession has a significant impact on the endorser's perceived expertise (Erdogan, 1999). According to Ohanian (1990), endorsers with a high level of perceived expertise have a stronger power of recommendation compared to those who have limited knowledge and skills (Ohanian, 1990). Thus, in their study, Peetz et al. (2004) used expertise to explain the effectiveness of the meaning transfer process in celebrity endorsements.

The expertise literature shows that the difference between expertise and experience is of great interest to researchers. Jacoby et al. (1986) clarified this difference stating that a person can have a considerable amount of experience in a certain area but not be an expert on it, whereas an individual with a significant level of expertise may have different amounts of experience. Thus, although both experience and expertise are usually presumed to involve obtaining knowledge, having experience does not necessarily associate with expertise (Jacoby

et al., 1986). For instance, a professional football player's expertise in playing football may be perceived to be different from his expertise in sports shoes. Similarly, Braunsberger and Munch (1998) claim that expertise refers to a high degree of knowledge and/or skills in a subject area or product achieved through some sort of formal training, while experience refers to a high degree of familiarity with a subject area and/or product achieved through some sort of interaction or exposure.

Consequently, the source credibility scale of Ohanian (1991) can be extended with two expertise subdimensions: professional expertise and product expertise (Siemens et al., 2008). Siemens et al., (2008) state that advertisers quite often choose endorsers due to their overall image of being successful in their occupational field disregarding whether the endorser has direct experience with the endorsed product or not. They studied the effect of congruity between the celebrity's professional expertise and product expertise on the endorser's perceived credibility. Siemens et al., (2008) found that congruity between celebrity endorser's professional expertise and his or her product expertise results in a positive consumers' perception of the endorser's perceived credibility. Additionally, both types of perceived expertise are negatively influenced by the endorsement of incongruent products, in other words, products that are not related to the endorsers' expertise. These findings are consistent with match-up theory and congruity effect (Siemens et al., 2008). Similarly, Davies and Slater (2015) found that endorsers who promote products unrelated to their expertise are not effective.

Zhao's et al. (2015) study evaluated social media influence by measuring repost rates of celebrities' social media publications by users. The research showed that there is a strong correlation between celebrities' level of expertise and their influence in domains within, and unrelated to their expertise, where 'domain' is a specific field of interest or activity, over which an individual has an influence and control. They also found that top-expertise celebrities have more influence in social media than in-domain celebrities, who are experts in a very specific category. Moreover, their study shows that expertise is more important in social media influence than relevance and participation.

Despite the significant number of studies on expertise within social influence analysis, Lou and Yuan's (2019) study is the only research looking at the social media influencers' expertise effects on the endorsed brands. Surprisingly, their results showed no significant effect of the influencers' expertise on followers' trust in branded social media posts. Moreover, none of the source credibility dimensions showed any positive influence on purchase intentions (Lou and Yuan's, 2019). The authors explain such results proposing that the credibility of traditional

celebrities may function differently than credibility of social media influencers. However, social media influencers' expertise was found to have an increased effect on consumers' brand awareness.

Surprisingly, there is a gap in the literature on the impact of the celebrity endorser's expertise on brand endorsements in social media within the covert marketing context. It would be reasonable to investigate how expertise based congruity between the celebrity and the brand affects consumers if they are unaware of the persuasion attempt. While the Hung et al. (2011) study investigated high trustworthiness and believability of the celebrity endorser, combined with a high level of expertise within the overt marketing context, it is necessary to research this correlation within covert marketing. Thus, when the celebrity promotes a certain brand on social media without any indication that it is a sponsored advertisement, it would be useful to see if the promotion of the product, which is not related to the celebrity's expertise impacts the celebrity's trustworthiness, believability and authenticity.

2.2.3. Perceived Attractiveness

Attractiveness is defined as a measurement of how likeable and physically attractive an individual is to others (Ohanian, 1991). Researchers have found that physical attractiveness is an essential factor in a person's initial judgement and perception of another person (Baker and Churchill, 1977; Mills and Aronson, 1965; Chaiken, 1979; Eisend and Langner, 2010; Joseph, 1982; Kahle and Homer, 1985). Physical attractiveness is one of the main reasons why advertisers use celebrities as brand endorsers (Baker and Churchill, 1977). This is mainly because their attractiveness also transfers to brands and products, which are associated with them (Joseph, 1982; McCracken, 1989).

Physical attractiveness is considered a matter of a subjective taste, that there are no common standards of beauty (Joseph, 1982). However, researchers implement and manipulate attractiveness by consensus. Joseph (1982) asked a representative panel of 'judges' to rate the physical attractiveness of a stimulus individual. If a sizeable number of judging participants rate a stimulus individual to have a highly attractive physical appearance, then he or she is defined as being physically attractive (Joseph, 1982). Joseph (1982) also found that facial attractiveness is considered to be the most influential determinant of human physical attractiveness.

Various studies find evidence that physically attractive sources are liked more than unattractive ones and perceived more favourably (Brand et al., 2012; Lorenzo et al., 2010; Joseph, 1982; Chanthika, 2003). While interacting with physically attractive individuals, people experience more positive emotions (Pataki and Clark, 2004) and more favourable affective reactions (Olson and Marshuetz, 2005) compared to unattractive persons. Early studies on physical attractiveness (Langlois et al., 2000; Maner et al., 2003; Miller, 1970; Snyder and Rothbart, 1971; Dion et al., 1972) evidently supported these stereotypes, suggesting a tendency to ascribe more positive qualities to physically attractive people rather than to unattractive ones (Joseph, 1982).

McGuire (1985) proposes four determinants of attractiveness: familiarity, likeability, attractiveness of the person and similarity. The author suggests the Source Attractiveness Model as an extension of the source credibility model, thus he included attractiveness as the third source credibility dimension (trustworthiness and expertise). Hence, Bosman et al. (2000) found that physically attractive lawyers are perceived as more trustworthy by their clients compared to less attractive ones. However, Wang and Bowen (2014) researched attractiveness in the medical context and found that extreme attractiveness of a provider may negatively affect patient trust and willingness to disclose. Specifically, they claim that extreme doctor's attractiveness may develop uncertainty about his role as a doctor leading to reduced trust. Brand et al., (2012) looked at attractiveness from the online dating context. They found that people with attractive profile photos are perceived more favourably overall than individuals with the less attractive picture. McGloin and Denes (2016) also studied the role of attractiveness in online dating. They found that attractive profile pictures of women are perceived as less trustworthy by men, while women perceived men with attractive photos as more trustworthy.

Numerous studies support the statement that physical attractiveness of the source can facilitate attitude change (Baker and Gilbert 1977; Chaiken 1979; Mills and Aronson 1965; Petty and Cacioppo 1980; Erdogan, 1999); however, other researchers argue that physical attractiveness of the communicator does not facilitate attitude change (Maddox and Rogers, 1980). This inspired Mills and Aronson (1965) to articulate conditions when the spokesperson's attractiveness and overtly stated desire to influence an audience might enhance the effectiveness of a message. Specifically, the communicator's physical attractiveness may positively influence the audience's opinion if the communicator states openly and honestly that he or she wants to influence their opinions. The authors explain it by noting the human desire

to please the person that the audience member likes very much. According to Mills and Aronson (1965), if an individual perceives that the person he or she likes expects a certain behaviour from him or her, the individual becomes motivated to act accordingly, even if the admired communicator is unaware of this influence. Thus, a frankly stated desire to change opinions may increase the effectiveness of the communication if the spokesperson is physically attractive to the audience (Mills and Aronson, 1965). On the contrary, the authors found that in the case when the communicator is unattractive and the audience does not like him or her, the communicator's openly stated desire to influence the audience's opinions decreases the effectiveness of the communication. This is mainly because the audience would not want to please the communicator they do not like (Mills and Aronson, 1965). Snyder and Rothbart (1971) also studied the persuasive strength of the communicator's physical attractiveness. They conducted an experiment with college age people by simulating a television broadcast. Again, the results showed that physical attractiveness facilitates greater opinion change. However, in contrast to the favourable effects on brand/product attitude, physical attractiveness did not show any significant influence on source's perceived honesty, sincerity, and trustworthiness (Joseph, 1977; Snyder and Rothbart, 1971).

Miller (1970) found that compared to people of moderate or high levels of attractiveness, individuals who are low in attractiveness are usually perceived as 'external' according to the dimensions of internal-external control (Rotter, 1966). Rotter (1966) divides individuals into two groups: internal and external. He claims that internal individuals believe that their lives can be controlled primarily by their own actions, while external persons think that life is controlled only by fate and external factors, so they do not have any influence over it. Miller (1970) explains his findings by advocating that physically attractive individuals are likely to be seen as people who behave with complete control of what happens to them and are harder for others to influence, whereas unattractive people are more likely to be perceived as those who can be easily influenced by others. According to Joseph (1982), these findings suggest important implications for source credibility theory. If attractive sources are perceived as those who have 'full control of their own fate', they may also be perceived as persons who do not easily fall under someone's influence or manipulation. Thus, their opinions are the results of their independent thinking and own experience, which relates to a greater credibility of the communicator (Joseph, 1982).

One of the recent studies on influencer marketing conducted by Lou and Yuan (2019) state that perceived attractiveness of social media endorsers has a positive impact on the

consumers' trust in their branded content. Moreover, influencers' attractiveness showed a strong effect on followers' brand awareness (Lou and Yuan, 2019). Interestingly, influencers' perceived attractiveness did not show any effect on purchase intentions, which contradicts previous studies on celebrity endorsers' attractiveness (Lafferty et al., 2002; Lee and Koo, 2015; Kamins, 1990; Till and Busler, 2000).

Kahle and Homer (1985) and Kamins (1990) claim that physically attractive celebrities are effective in endorsing attractiveness-related products and brands. Specifically, they have a favourable influence on that product evaluation (Joseph, 1982; Eisend and Langner, 2010), source perception (Joseph, 1982), attitude change, advertisement recall and purchasing intentions (Lee and Koo, 2015). Kahle and Homer (1985) explain their findings by supposing that consumers assume that the promoted product contributed to the celebrity's attractiveness. However, Till and Busler (2000) criticise that assumption arguing that it does not seem particularly obvious. In his research, Kamins (1990) manipulated the scenario of an attractive celebrity endorsing a luxury car. Till and Busler (2000) suppose that although a luxury car can serve as an attractiveness-enhancing product, it is also used in many other important purposes, such as transportation, image and pleasure. Thus, purchasing a luxury car to enhance their attractiveness may not be salient enough for customers (Till and Busler, 2000). Therefore, the authors presume that it would be more logical for consumers if an attractive celebrity endorsed cosmetic products. This calls for further research on celebrity-brand congruity based on attractiveness in beauty product category. Since all the congruity studies have researched congruity effects within overt marketing, it would be beneficial to look at this concept from the covert marketing perspective, and see how consumers respond to the persuasion attempt. Again, since covert celebrity endorsements are more often used in social media today rather than in traditional media, research on the effects of covert endorsement of cosmetic product on social media by a physically attractive celebrity would be a valuable addition to the congruity literature.

In summary, the literature on celebrity endorsement shows that celebrities have a positive and strong impact on sales, persuasion and brand evaluations. However, the literature offers inconsistent findings regarding the effects of celebrity liking, celebrity endorsement influence on firm share price, impact of multiple brand endorsements by a single celebrity on celebrity persuasion, and the effect of congruity between celebrities and brands on consumers' attitudes (Bergkvist and Zhou, 2016). Although celebrity endorsement is a quite well researched area, there is limited research on the new progressive modes of celebrity

endorsements, such as influencer marketing in social media, social media product placement and electronic WOM in social media.

2.2.4. Celebrity-Brand Congruity

The effectiveness and importance of celebrity endorsement have been shown by various studies as well as by their positive influence on consumers' purchasing behaviour (Kahle and Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1989; Pringle, 2004). This impact is to some extent due to a desire to identify with the celebrity (Kamins, 1989). Shimp (2008) believes that there are some key factors, which need to be considered while planning a celebrity endorsement campaign: celebrity credibility, celebrity attractiveness and celebrity - brand congruity. Most of the studies on congruity effects in celebrity endorsement have focused either on a celebrity-brand congruity (Misra and Beatty, 1990; Kamins, 1990; Kamins and Gupta, 1994; Lee and Thorson, 2008, Mishra et al., 2015) or consumer-brand congruity (Govers and Schoormans, 2005; Achouri and Bouslama, 2010). Celebrity-brand congruity is defined as the extent to which accessible associations and attributes of a celebrity endorser match the endorsed brand (Kimrani and Shiv, 1998).

One of the most important theories for the concept of celebrity endorsement is a congruity theory or match-up theory. The effect of celebrity and brand match-up on consumer attitudes has received considerable attention from scholars (Kamins 1990; Kamins and Gupta, 1994). The celebrity-brand congruity model suggests that congruity between 'highly accessible celebrity associations and highly accessible brand/product associations' (Misra and Beatty, 1990) is a key condition for an effective endorsement campaign (Kamins, 1990; Kamins and Gupta, 1994; Forkan, 1980; Martin, 1996; Till and Busler, 2000; Davies and Slater, 2015). Also, congruity between the celebrity endorser and the brand positively influences advertisement credibility (Levy, 1959), attitude towards the brand/product (Davies and Slater; Till and Busler, 2000), attitude towards the advertisement (Choi and Rifon, 2012), celebrity believability (Kamins and Gupta, 1994) and strengthens the relationship between endorser credibility and brand equity (Dwivedi et al., 2015a). In other words, the fit between the celebrity and the endorsed brand enhances the endorsement (Till and Busler, 2000).

Also, studies of Batra and Homer (2004) and Campbell and Warren (2012) show that positive attributes of a celebrity endorser are more likely to transfer to a congruent product than

to an incongruent product. However, negative meanings of familiar celebrity endorsers transfer to both congruent and incongruent brands (Campbell and Warren, 2012). McCracken (1989) evaluates the importance of celebrity-brand congruity in the meaning-transfer process. He states that firstly, consumers assess the similarity between the endorser and product and then they consider whether to recognise the meaning transfer.

Fleck et al. (2012) found that when a celebrity and a brand are connected via endorsement, the perceived celebrity-brand congruity is as significant as the attitude towards the celebrity. However, the authors claim that attitude towards the celebrity endorser has an impact on congruity, which in turn affects predisposition towards the advertisement. In other words, when the celebrity is extensively appreciated or/and popular, individuals who like him or her are more likely to perceive him or her as congruent with the endorsed brand (Fleck et al., 2012).

However, there are also some contradictions in congruity theory. For instance, Lee and Thorson (2008) found that when there are moderate levels of congruity between celebrities and brands, consumers perceive endorsements with more favourable attitudes compared to complete congruity/incongruity. Similarly, Lee (2000) argues that slight incongruity between celebrity and brand may encourage the audience to process the information more intensively. Torn (2012) replicated the study of Lee and Thorson (2008) who researched all three levels of incongruity (extreme incongruity, moderate incongruity, and congruity), however, they studied effects of only congruity and moderate incongruity. Their findings show that incongruity between brand and celebrity endorser improves communication effects, increases times of viewing the advertisement, generates higher brand attitudes, higher brand interest, increases purchase intentions and positive word-of-mouth. Yoo and Jin (2015) studied the mediation role of celebrity-product congruity in reverse transfer effect of celebrity advertisement on the celebrity endorser. The research showed that a low level of congruity decreases the celebrity's perceived credibility (attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise), whereas a high level of congruity does not show any significant changes. Thus, the match-up hypothesis cannot be applied to the reversed transfer effect of the advertisement- celebrity relationship (Yoo and Jin, 2015).

Mishra et al. (2015) indicate the dimensions by which celebrity-brand congruity may be assessed: personality (derived from behaviour, attitudes and beliefs), lifestyle, and demographic characteristics. Mishra et al. (2015) claim that match between the brand's personality and the celebrity endorser's personality positively and significantly influence the

endorser's credibility, suitability, and consequently increase advertisement believability. Moreover, advertisement believability leads to a positive advertisement attitude, which, in turn, significantly and positively impacts brand attitude and increases purchase intentions (Mishra et al., 2015). Empirical research of Malodia et al. (2017) shows that congruity between brand personality and celebrity personality makes a significant contribution to brand personality reinforcement, which supports the Meaning Transfer model (McCracken, 1989). Additionally, they found that this type of congruity positively impacts brand associations, brand recall, attitude towards the brand, attitude towards the advertisement, and purchase intentions. Their findings are consistent with the study of Mishra and Beatty (1990), which also suggests that brand recall is positively affected by celebrity-brand personality congruity.

Mishra et al. (2015) say that perceived attractiveness and perceived expertise are the main criteria for assessment of congruity between brands and celebrity endorsers. First studies on congruity hypothesis examined physical attractiveness as a main match-up factor (Kamins, 1990; Choi and Rifon, 2012; Roy, 2016). They found that more attractive celebrities are more persuasive in endorsing products related to physical beauty, contributing to a more favourable attitude towards the brand and enhancing the credibility of the communication (Kahle and Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990). Later studies showed that expertise serves as a more influential match-up factor (Kamins and Gupta, 1994; Till and Busler, 2000). However, Eisend and Langner (2010) state that in the immediate condition, the celebrity endorser's attractiveness is a dominant driver in creating a favourable attitude towards the endorsed brand, while in the delayed condition, a high level of expertise has more positive influence compared to attractiveness.

Solomon et al. (1992) proposed the Beauty Match-Up Hypothesis, which suggests that consumers' response to models in advertisements is influenced by consumers' implicit theories of beauty. The authors explain implicit theories of beauty as a hypothetical construct, which consists of the following components: a) beliefs regarding different types of good appearances, including physical and other features of each type as well as relationship between all these types; b) inferences about what personal attributes relate to each type (e.g. lifestyle, traits). Additionally, the Beauty Match-Up Hypothesis (Solomon et al., 1992) suggests that when the type of beauty and associated image of a model endorsing the products match the product, the model's advertisement message will be more coherent, which may improve acceptance of the advertisement. This is consistent with the match-up hypothesis (Kamins, 1990), stating that

certain types of physical attractiveness (certain types of celebrities) match better with certain brands or products than other types of beauty (other types of celebrities) (Solomon et al., 1992).

The effect of celebrity and brand match-up on consumer attitudes in overt traditional marketing has received enough attention in academia (Malodia et al., 2017). However, its role in covert marketing, specifically how it influences the activation of persuasion knowledge, has not been addressed by marketing researchers. Since covert celebrity endorsement in social media has become more popular than in traditional media, it would be valuable to research celebrity - brand congruity within covert social media marketing, and investigate if and how it affects attitudes towards the celebrity and the brand, and consequently, purchase intentions.

2.3. Social Media Influencers

Social media has offered celebrities new opportunities to engage with their fans (Jin and Phua, 2014). While consumers are expected to follow their favourite celebrities, celebrities are expected to find ways to engage with their followers hoping that they will maintain the celebrities' presence in the entertainment marketplace (Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016). Social media encourages celebrities to build unmediated, direct relationships with their fans, which strengthen the emotional connection between themselves and their audiences (Marwick, 2015). Due to the Internet and particularly social media, people can keep an eye on their idols' everyday life: see what they wear, what products they consume and the places they visit (Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016). Thus, Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) say that apart from celebrities' appearances in advertisements, there are also celebrities' recommendations in social media, which are just as important for a brand's promotion.

Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) found that the primary motivation for consumers to engage with celebrities in social media is to receive information about their professional and personal lives. Moreover, emotional attachment and celebrity authenticity are the most important aspects for consumers about engagement with celebrities through social media (Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016).

Savvy marketers have realised that they should use celebrities' social media popularity for their own business purposes (Zhao et al., 2015). For example, the famous American singer Rihanna has 93.4 million followers on Twitter (Twitter, 2019). Another American star, Beyonce, has 133 million followers on Instagram (Instagram, 2019). These fans include people of different professions, occupations, ages and nationalities, but they have one common characteristic – interest in the public and personal life of the celebrity that they all follow in social media (Jin and Phua, 2014). As of 2019, companies spend \$5.6 billion per year on social media influencer marketing, and this sum is expected to grow to \$8 billion by 2020 (99 Firms, 2019a). In 2019, Instagram accounted 3.3 million sponsored posts, while in 2018 this number was 2.5 million (Mediakix, 2020). These numbers represent the sponsored endorsements of the users who disclosed that they have been compensated for the promotion. As a number of celebrities and influencers do not disclose the sponsorship relationships with brands, these numbers are expected to be even larger (Mediakix, 2020).

In the era of social media, average people also have an opportunity to command audiences through social networks that are as large as those celebrities cultivate through mass

media (Marshall and Redmond, 2015). However, Marshall and Redmond (2015) argue that the dynamics of social media and traditional media are not alike, so there are different types of celebrity in each of the media. Influencer marketing has become a widely popular marketing strategy among practitioners and refers to ‘the identification and use of social media influencers to aid in the marketing activities of the brand’ (Dhanesh and Duthler, 2019). Lou and Yuan (2019) define influencer marketing as a form of social media marketing that involves collaboration of brands with individuals who have a certain expertise, popularity and authority among other people, with the purpose to increase brand awareness and product acquisition. This form of marketing has become an integral part of organisations' marketing strategies as many marketers believe that this new way of promoting brands is efficient in generating higher profits (Ki et al., 2020).

Literature defines social media influencers as a new category of independent third-party endorsers who have a large number of followers in social media, and thus have the potential to influence audience opinions and attitudes in relation to the endorsed brands, products or services through social media (Ki and Kim, 2019). Also, Abidin and Ots (2015) define social media influencers as a type of celebrities who demonstrate their everyday lives in social media, meanwhile shaping public opinion and persuading the audience ‘through the conscientious calibration of personae on social media’ and sustaining their believability, accessibility and intimacy. In other words, a social media influencer is what one does, rather than who one is. Quite often the line between celebrities and social media influencers is blurred because many influencers who became famous due to social media, rise to the heights of traditional celebrities and become famous also outside social media. Also, traditional celebrities can reach some influencer status if they become regular content creators in social media (Lou and Yuan, 2019). Therefore, a big number of social media influencers can be classified both as celebrities and social media influencers at the same time. Dhanesh and Duthler (2019) compare social media influencers with celebrity endorsers claiming that both categories enjoy their public recognition and use it for the purpose of promoting consumer goods. However, in terms of consumer purchasing behaviour, social media influencers have been found to be more powerful and perceived as more credible than traditional celebrities (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017). The most distinctive characteristic of social media influencers is credibility, which plays the role of a carefully crafted foundation for the relationships that influencers build and maintain between their personal brands and their audience (Abidin and Ots, 2015). Gottbrecht (2016) divides all influencers into three groups: micro-influencers, macro-influencers and mega-influencers. His

classification is based on the following criteria: relevance, reach and resonance. According to Gottbrecht (2016), relevance defines how strong is an influencer's connection with a subject or brand, while reach stands for the influencer's ability to deliver information to a target audience. Lastly, resonance is defined as influencer's ability to engage his or her audience in a desired behaviour (Gottbrecht, 2016).

Micro-influencers are everyday consumers who have relatively few followers (between 500 and 10,000 followers), and usually get compensated with free goods or get rewarded with up to \$150 for promotion. Micro-influencers have the lowest reach but their resonance is the highest (Gottbrecht, 2016). Because of their low costs, high levels of perceived credibility and engagement with their followers, as well as niche target audiences, marketers prefer micro-influencers to other two types of the influencers (Dhanik, 2016). Macro-influencers are those bloggers, experts or professionals whose following base varies from 10,000 to 1 million followers. Their relevance is the highest because they normally have an expertise and influence in specific spheres such as fashion, nutrition, cosmetics, or business (Dhanik, 2016). Finally, mega-influencers are those A-list celebrities and social media stars whose social media following is over 1 million (Dhanik, 2016). Although their reach is the highest, their resonance is the lowest.

Wakefield (2019) says that the average price for social media endorsement has risen from £104 in 2014 to £1276 in 2019. Also, the average cost for an Instagram post featuring sponsored content has grown 44% from 2018 to 2019 (Wakefield. 2019). As for the earnings, social media influencer with around 1 million followers normally charges about £10,000 for a single endorsement in a social media post (Mackay, 2018). According to Rense (2016), a celebrity with 3-7 million followers on Instagram normally charges around £60,000 per one brand endorsement. While big celebrities like Kylie Jenner with her 116 million followers on Instagram charges around £750,000 for one Instagram endorsement (Mackay, 2018). Thus, in return for financial remuneration or other type of reward, influencers produce promotional social media content based on deeply personal stories, representing their personal opinions about certain products and services (Dhanesh and Duthler, 2019). This makes the line between earned and paid media very blurred, questioning endorsers' trust, openness, and ethics.

Marwick (2015) declares that for social media influencers, the audience is a fan base rather than friends or family, therefore they perform strategically. The author says that influencers share information with their audience to gain more attention within a network and increase their popularity. Social media influencers usually specialise in a specific niche area of

interest and expertise; hence their audiences are also very specific, which is quite complicated for broadcast media to support (Marshall and Redmond, 2015; Evans et al., 2017). According to Marshall and Redmond (2015), social media influencers are willing to interact with their fans, receive questions and respond directly to them, breaking down the traditional performer/viewer dichotomy. They share intimate information and emotional material with their viewers and quite often remain financially unrewarded (Marshall and Redmond, 2015). While social media influencers create direct interaction with their audiences, broadcast celebrities only create the illusion of interaction, which Horton and Wohl (1956) identified as 'parasocial interaction'. According to Horton and Wohl (1956), parasocial interaction is a one-sided, nondialectical interaction between a media figure and audience members, which is controlled by the performer. This kind of illusional relationship is crucial for social media influencers in developing and maintaining their popularity, thus becomes an integral part of their self-branding (Marwick, 2015).

According to Abidin (2018), apart from celebrities, social media influencers can be ordinary people who develop a large following in social media or blogs due to their unique content, which engages large audiences online. This category of social media user is also distinguished by commercializing their social media presence via integrating marketing material into their social media posts (Abidin, 2018). According to Mandelberg (2013), if it is done right, their recommendations do not look like paid promotions, but rather faithful opinions and feelings about particular products or services. The author believes that one of the main reasons for that is that these social media users do not push their audience to buy the product but increase brand awareness and generate word-of-mouth around it. They lead their audience to a corporate web page or social media account where the company attacks consumers with the sales pitch (Mandelberg, 2013).

Ankeny (2015) believes that targeting customers through social media influencers is a much more powerful method than corporate advertising. He points out that there are numerous tastemakers and trendsetters in social media, whose opinions and choices are extremely influential for today's people, especially for youth. According to Lockett (2015, cited in Ankeny, 2015), social media celebrities can build the strongest emotional connection with their audience (followers), which traditional advertisement lacks. Moreover, the author adds that influencers bring with themselves not only great content but also a great audience. This is the biggest change in the traditional celebrity endorsement concept. Now celebrities can use not only traditional media to deliver a certain marketing message to the target audience but also

their own media, such as blogs, Facebook, Instagram and websites (Ankeny, 2015). Companies just need to select the right influencers with regards to their fans' demographic characteristics/interests, as these fans will be the target segment (Ankeny, 2015; Khamis et al., 2016).

Nonprofit Business Advisor (2015) categorised all influencers into five groups: VIPs, professionals, citizens, cautious strivers and unaware potentials. According to Nonprofit Business Advisor (2015), VIPs are considered as celebrities who influence the general public due to their fame. They include actors, singers, athletes and other famous individuals. The reach of VIPs is the highest comparing it to other influencers. Members of the group 'Professionals' have a certain professional reputation and strong influence on their peers and audience alike. Their follower base is built according to their expertise, for example, fashion bloggers, nutritionists, executive directors and fitness trainers. Citizens are the largest in size group of influencers, which are easily accessible and have large numbers of social media networks. They include people, who promote, advocate and actively support the company 'beyond the typical donor engagement level.' Thus, firms should concentrate on these three largest groups of influencers in order to make the most of social media marketing (Nonprofit Business Advisor, 2015).

Mandelberg (2013) identifies endorsement on social media as a traditional product placement that has moved forward to social media. He explains it by the example of a popular blogger or celebrity who promotes a product passing it off as his or her personal choice, so consumers do not always realise that they are being sold to. Later, Liu et al. (2015) researched the effectiveness of social media product placement. They found that with regards to product prominence and presentation, effects of product placement on social media are the same as the effects of traditional product placement. Additionally, product placement on a more popular social media platform/website would produce greater results. Furthermore, when there is high congruity between a platform/website and a product, consumers spend more time browsing the product on its website with deeper browsing depth (Liu et al., 2015). With regards to the current state of literature on social media celebrity endorsement, an extension of Liu's et al. (2015) study with the celebrity endorsement context would be a valuable contribution to marketing knowledge. It is very common in social media for celebrities to post pictures with certain brands and products on a background without any references or recommendations of these brands, however, their style, logo, or packaging can be easily recognised. This marketing approach relates more to the concept of covert product placement rather than to the concept of

covert celebrity endorsement, since the products are neither explicitly advertised nor recommended.

According to Rutledge (2015, cited in Qvist, 2015), consumers, especially youth, perceive their engagement with any social media users they follow as real relationships; therefore, endorsers should avoid blurring the line between real life and sponsored endorsement. The author points out that it is not illegal to promote brands in social media; however, it is illegal to deceive consumers. Bailey (2015, cited in Green, 2015) expresses his concerns about approaching kids and youth by vlogging (video blogging). He states that it is usually not clear enough that endorsers sharing the information about their favourite products are being paid to do the promotion. Particularly for children and young people, the difference between advertising and editorial material can be very blurred (Bailey, 2015, cited in Green, 2015). Thus, public bodies worldwide have recognised the misleading nature of social media endorsements, and the potential harm for consumers caused by deceptive advertisement in social media. The following section discusses the regulations on influencer marketing in social media, and how the UK authorities encourage influencers to comply with them.

2.3.1. Regulations on Influencer Marketing in Social Media

There are three main public authorities who are responsible for regulating marketing activities in the UK. They include the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), the UK primary advertising regulator, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), the UK primary authority for competition and consumer law, and the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP), the body that writes and updates the UK Code of non-broadcast advertising (ASA, 2020). These three public bodies have also recognised the ability to promote brands through social media, and made significant efforts to regulate social media marketing, particularly influencer marketing. Generally, consumer laws state that all people have a right to know that they are being exposed to advertising (ASA, 2019). The CAP Code is the advertising code that includes rules for non-broadcast advertisement, sales promotions and marketing communications in order to protect consumers from misleading, deceptive and offensive advertising. Thus, the ASA along with the CAP and the CMA created the guidance for influencers, which 'brings together all the advisory information influencers needed to ensure they were sticking to the ad rules and the relevant provisions from consumer protection legislation' (ASA, 2020).

The CAP Code also includes the rules for influencer marketing in social media. Thus, according to the CAP Code, in social media marketing, organisations must comply with the same rules as they comply with in traditional marketing (ASA, 2020). Advertising integrated into the social media context in the form of a blog, vlog, post or other social media formats must be obviously identifiable as advertisement (ASA, 2020). Therefore, while posting sponsored content in social media, whether it is 'advertorial' or 'affiliate' advertisement, the endorser needs to inform the audience that they are engaged with marketing content (ASA, 2020). ASA (2020) defines advertorial content as social media content where a brand gives the influencers monetary rewards, free items or other form of remuneration for referencing the brand or its products in the influencer's social media post. Similarly, when it come to the social media affiliates, a brand gives to the influencer some form of commission from the sales of the products promoted by the influencer on social media (ASA, 2020). Thus, both the influencer and the brand are responsible for making it clear that the promotion in the social media content was sponsored by the company (ASA, 2020). Additionally, the CAP Code prohibits making false claims or impressions that an individual, who has been paid to promote a brand or products, 'is acting outside of their business purposes or falsely representing themselves as a consumer' (ASA, 2019). Thus, an individual has to clearly state in a social media post that the consumers are being exposed to an advertisement if he or she received any type of remuneration including monetary incentives, a loan of a product, commission or free product/service for exposing the product or service in social media (ASA, 2019).

The ASA (2019) recommends identifying sponsored content by adding the following labels to the content: Ad, Advert, Advertisement, Advertising, and Advertisement Feature. These labels can be used with or without a hashtag symbol (#). Few celebrities and other social media influencers disclose the sponsorship of endorsements and usually they do it by including hashtags '#sp', '#sponsored' or '#ad' to the caption of the social media post. Some social media platforms including Instagram offer their users, particularly celebrities and other influencers, to use their built-in partnership tool, which allows users to make it clear that a post is sponsored by a brand (Wakefield, 2019). Evans et al. (2017) discovered brand-related outcomes resulted from the type of disclosure language they use in the Instagram endorsements. Their findings show that any variation of disclosure ('paid ad', 'sponsored', and 'sp') generated greater advertising recognition than no disclosure. Moreover, advertising recognition leads to more negative attitudes towards the brand and decreases intentions to spread electronic word-of-mouth, however, it does not affect purchase intentions (Evans et al., 2017).

As of 2019, around 300 influencers were warned by the ASA about breaking ad disclosure rules within a 12 months period (Oakes, 2019). As a punishment for breaching the Code, both the influencer and the brand will be named in the ASA ruling, and the CMA will take legal action against the lawbreakers (ASA, 2020). The CMA investigates social media posts that feature brands and products, and checks whether they include upfront disclosure of the commercial relationships. If the CMA considers that the social media post breaks the Code, the source of the post is asked to modify it or remove it (ASA, 2020). If the source does not undertake to do so or violates the Code again after the warning, the authority considers what sanctions to apply against the influencer and the brand. Thus, influencers and brands could be taken to court where they might 'face heavy fines or prison sentences of up to two years' (Wakefield, 2019).

In USA, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is responsible for protecting consumers from deceptive advertisement and created similar rules for the endorsers, advertisers and brands as in the UK. Thus, more than 400 celebrities were sued for promoting brands in social media without the sponsorship disclosures, including Bella Hadid, Kendall Jenner and Emily Ratajkowski (Garson, 2019). According to Garson (2019), Kendal Jenner received a \$250,000 fine for a single unlawful social media post. Similarly, in Europe, both brands and influencers are penalised for failure to disclose the sponsorship of the endorsement in social media. In France, for example, influencers who violate law can receive a fine of up to €300,000, and can even be imprisoned for up to 2 years (Garson, 2019). As for the brands, they can be penalised with a fine of up to €1.5m if they do not follow the rules in influencer marketing (Garson, 2019).

According to Qvist (2015), the advertisement in social media should be transparent and identifiable. It is not illegal for companies to pay influencers for the promotion of their products in social media posts, however, it is illegal not to disclose that the endorsement has been paid for (ASA, 2019). However, Hallam (2015, cited in Qvist, 2015) explains how marketers used to break rules of a fair game classifying all media on 'paid' and 'earned' media. The author states that in the case of paid media, marketers pay influencers for borrowing their time and audience to promote their products; whereas, in earned media, endorsers get complimentary services or products, and then in return, they promote these brands among their followers. Previously this type of earned media was not considered native advertisement in social media, and influencers were not required to mark it as such in their social media posts. Now, if an influencer receives gifts or loans, the posts about them must be labelled as advertisement.

However, if a celebrity or other influencer has not been paid by a brand, and he or she features products in a social media post because he or she genuinely likes them and uses them, then the influencer is not required to mark the post as an advertisement or sponsored content. Hence, such differentiation makes social media endorsement quite a grey area. Einstein (2016) says that influencer marketing makes the line between commercials and unbiased content very blurred by making paid content look like earned media. While this tactic considerably benefits sponsoring organizations, consumers may be deceived by mistaking sponsored content for authentic, unpaid posts. Moreover, brands often offer to pay more to the endorsers for non-disclosure of ads in the sponsored posts (Cahill, 2020). Similarly, brands ask endorsers to wait for an initial wave of engagement under the post before disclosing that the post is sponsored (Cahill, 2020). Thus, the possibility of deception creates challenges for organizations and social media influencers in terms of transparency and disclosure required by law.

2.4. Social Media Marketing

With the development of the Internet, social media has become an integral part of people's everyday life (Stefanone et al., 2015), as well as an integral part of companies' marketing strategies (Rehman et al., 2019). It significantly changed the way people communicate, meet and influence each other (Jacobson et al., 2020). Initially, social media networks were created for meeting people, making friends, and establishing relationships with other users (Prodanova and Looy, 2019). Social media have been progressively engaged in most aspects of society's lives (i.e. private life, business, commerce, education and entertainment) (Algharabat et al., 2017; Rathore et al., 2016; Alalwan et al., 2016). Presently, social media have created a unique opportunity for marketing because of their high penetration and large number of active users (Akdogan and Altuntas, 2015). Stefanone et al. (2015) claim that social media is one of the main reasons people spend an enormous amount of their time online. Smith (2019) says that by the end of 2019, the global number of active social media users was 3.725 billion. Thus, the average daily time people spend in social media is 142 minutes (Smith, 2019). Moreover, 91% of retail brands have recognised the significance of social media and use 2 or more social media platforms to target their consumers (Smith, 2019). According to Mediakix (2016), social media offers great opportunities for distributing sponsored editorial content. Moreover, consumers are rapidly replacing traditional media (e.g. TV, radio, magazines) with social media while searching for certain information about products, services or people (Kumar et al., 2017). Filo et al. (2015) define social media as 'new media technologies facilitating interactivity and cocreation that allow for the development and sharing of user-generated content among and between organizations (e.g., teams, government agencies, and media groups) and individuals (e.g., customers, athletes, and journalists)'. According to the current state of business affairs, companies are looking for more benefits from social media. While the traditional way of selling is based on investigating their needs and preferences, building relationships with them and providing the best service, organisations have recognised that social media can be used as an effective instrument for improving communication with consumers, improving overall business performance, and achieving competitive advantages (Prodanova and Looy, 2019).

Anandhan et al., (2018) classify social media into the following categories: electronic commerce, forums, social networks, entertainment, digital libraries, social games, social

bookmarks and social reviews. Thus, the authors state that social media networking sites are subcategory of social media, which divide people into groups by their interests and occupations (Anandhan et al., 2018). This gives marketers an opportunity to reach their target audience and apply suitable marketing strategies (Chi, 2011). According to Cochrane (2018), social media allows marketers to create personalised promotions and messages for their target audience, which has been shown to increase sales by 10% and deliver eight times the return of investment. Dwivedi et al. (2015b) explains social media marketing as ‘a dialogue often triggered by consumers/audiences, or a business/product/service that circulate amongst the stated parties to set in motion a revealing communication on some promotional information so that it allows learning from one another's use and experiences, eventually benefitting all of the involved parties’. Most of the studies on social media marketing focus either on an organizational perspective or consumer behaviour, in terms of how people use social media or their behaviour in relation to brands.

The literature social media can be divided into the following categories: electronic word-of-mouth in social media, advertising in social media, product-harm crises within social media, brand communities in social media networks, customer relationship management through social media, and social media network analysis (Alalwan et al., 2017). Various studies investigate the use of advertising on social media (Kumar et al., 2017; Alalwan, 2018; Shareef et al., 2018; Swani et al., 2016; Lin and Kim, 2016; Rejon-Guardia et al., 2016; Lee and Hong, 2016; Carrillat et al., 2014; Duffet, 2015; Bannister et al., 2013; Taylor et al., 2011; Kodjamanis and Angelopoulos, 2013; Chandra et al., 2013) and most of these support the effectiveness of social media in enhancing the impact of marketing activities and improving consumers’ perceptions and awareness. For example, Duffet (2015) found that the effectiveness of marketing activities on social media depends on how consumers perceive and express their attitudes towards these activities. Lee and Hong (2016) study the antecedents of positive consumer behaviour towards a social media advertisement. Thus, they found that informativeness and creativity of an advertisement are the key drivers of positive behavioural responses to an advertisement on social media networking platforms. Moreover, positive advertisement responses have been found to generate higher purchase intentions. Carrillat et al. (2014) state that in order to generate positive consumer attitudes, hedonic aspects should be addressed in social media marketing activities in such a careful way that consumers receive pleasurable experience. Shareef et al. (2018) found that promotional activities of products in social media have a stronger positive effect on purchasing intentions if they come from and are

passed on to a regular user of the social media platform. However, if these activities are generated by the company and perceived as a commercial message, they are perceived less credible, generate irritation and consequently, negative attitudes toward the advertisement (Shareef et al., 2018).

Chandra et al. (2013) found that although advertisements on social media positively affected purchase intentions, such advertisements showed negative effects on both cognitive and affective consumers' attitudes. However, the study of Kodjamanis and Angelopoulos (2013) contradicts the studies discussed earlier by claiming that Facebook advertisements do not influence consumers' shopping habits, and demographic factors do not show any moderating effect in the relationships between Facebook advertisements and consumers purchase intentions and attitudes as Taylor et al. (2011) and Bannister et al. (2013) suggest. The lack of moderating influence is mainly because the advertisement did not relate to the consumers' requirement and information was thus ignored by them (Bannister et al., 2013). However, social media has changed within the last few year offering better conditions for marketing and advertising activities (Alalwan, 2018). Social media platforms offer businesses a targeted advertising feature so they can successfully attract consumers and increase sales.

According to Rejon-Guardia et al. (2016), social media advertising generates higher attention levels compared to other online advertising. Moreover, video has been discovered as the most efficient format for attracting audience attention in social media networks (Rejon-Guardia et al., 2016). Interestingly, Rejon-Guardia et al. (2016) also found that the higher the advertising pressure in social media, the lower the attention levels and the lower message recall rates. However, the higher consumers' exposure to social media advertisement, the higher their message recall rates (Rejon-Guardia et al., 2016).

Various studies on social media are dedicated to electronic word-of-mouth in social media (Teng et al., 2017; Viglia et al., 2016; Coulter and Roggeveen, 2012; Balaji et al., 2016; Chu and Kim, 2011). Rosman and Stuhura (2013), and Bertrand (2013) claim that with the development of social media, consumers have become more powerful in the generation, creation and sharing of content, and participation in social networks allows them to share their opinions, reviews, and recommendations, and communicate with other consumers. It was found that 88% of consumers trust the online reviews and recommendations of people from their personal connections (Solar, 2019). Moreover, 74% of consumers believe that word-of-mouth is the main influencer is their purchasing decision making process (Solar, 2019). Also, Swant (2016) found that 49% of social media users trust recommendations of influencers in

Twitter, and 56% of the social media users rely on their friends' recommendations. Thus, the term 'electronic word-of-mouth' has become very common and important both in marketing theory and practice, as well as in consumer decision making process (Viglia et al., 2016). Electronic word-of-mouth is an exchange of either positive or negative expressions about the product or brand by former, actual or future consumers through the Internet (Einstein, 2016). According to Viglia et al. (2016), nowadays, online peer reviews have replaced reviews produced by professionals. Comparing it to traditional word-of-mouth, electronic word-of-mouth is believed to reach more people and have more influence on consumers (Hudson et al., 2016).

Most of the studies on electronic word-of-mouth in social media claim that the interactive nature of social media empowers consumers to efficiently share both their positive and negative experiences about products, brands and companies to a large number of other consumers (Priyanka, 2013; Hudson et al., 2016). However, Coulter and Roggeveen (2012) found that traditional word-of-mouth is more influential than its electronic version. Their research focuses on the impact of several factors (i.e. closeness to the source, size of product network) on consumers' response on word-of-mouth distributed through social media. Chu and Kim (2011) investigated the important antecedents of positive electronic word-of-mouth, and found that trust, strength, normative and informational influence are positively related to users' electronic word-of-mouth behaviour on social media. According to Teng et al. (2017), the important antecedents of persuasive word-of-mouth messages in social media are source credibility, source attractiveness, source style and source perception. Also, their study demonstrates a significant correlation between information acceptance and intention to use the information. Balaji et al. (2016) studied antecedents of negative word-of-mouth in social media. Their research found that feelings of injustice, company's image, company's attribution, face concern, reappraisal, tie strength, and use intensity are the main determinants of negative word-of-mouth intention in social media.

Fryatt (2013) says that recommendations have always been a desired outcome of mass marketing, but with the emergence of social media marketing, word-of-mouth has been taken to a new level. According to Fryatt (2013), social media platforms give everyone an opportunity to become a reviewer and recommend brands and products to other people with one simple click. As it has become quite easy to share information with everyone through social media networks, consumers have started to refuse acceptance of broadcast messages but to rely more and more on uninterested parties' feedback (Fryatt, 2013).

Much of the social media literature is dedicated to customer relationship management (CRM) and claim that the increased frequency and amount posts on social media content by organisations fosters relationships and interactivity with customers (Swarts et al., 2016; Sigala, 2018; Dewnarain et al., 2019; Orenge-Rogla and Chalmeta, 2017; Xu, 2017; Agnihotri et al., 2016; Soler-Labajos and Jimenez-Zarco, 2016; Moore et al. 2013; Gummerus et al., 2012; Gamboa and Goncalves, 2014). Orenge-Rogla and Chalmeta (2017) claim that due to the emergence of the Internet and Big Data technologies, a new customer relationship strategy based on collaboration, interactivity and engagement evolved called Social CRM. This business strategy occurs when organisations engage with their customers through social media with the purpose of building trust and loyalty to the company (Dewnarain et al., 2019). In their study, Orenge-Rogla and Chalmeta (2017) propose a new methodology for companies to implement into their Social CRM including ‘the Social CRM performance measurement system, the Social CRM computer system, the Social CRM business processes, and social customer strategy’. Sigala (2018) claims that by using social CRM companies encourage and foster conversation facilitation and consumer engagement in co-creating consumers' experiences and suggests five methods for implementing social CRM: ‘collecting, analysing and interpreting customer insight; monitoring and improving the performance of CRM; developing holistic and seamless personalised customer experiences; gamifying CRM and loyalty programmes; and nurturing community relationship management’.

According to the research of Ashley and Tuten (2015), the most commonly used social media channels by brands are social networks, microblogs, and microsites. Furthermore, Facebook is a leader among social networks used by companies. Moore et al. (2013) compared the utilization of social media by business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) salespeople and found that B2B practitioners are more likely to use media targeted at professionals (i.e. LinkedIn) and for the purpose of after sales follow-up, prospecting and handling objections, they utilize more relationship-oriented social media applications in comparison to B2C professionals. B2C were found to use more social media platforms, which target the general public (i.e. Facebook) in order to engage their target consumers in one-on-one communication. Thus, according to Moore et al. (2013), different social media platforms play different roles in building and maintaining relationships with consumers. Gummerus et al. (2012) investigated the impact of customer engagement behaviours on perceived outcomes and benefits of relationship. Thus, they identified three relationship benefits: social benefits, economic benefits, and entertainment benefits. The authors also divided customer engagement

into two groups: community engagement behaviours and transactional engagement behaviours, and both showed great influence on the benefits received. Similarly, Pereira et al. (2014) investigated the role of Facebook in establishing brand-consumer relationships. They explored users' motivations to connect with brands on Facebook, participate and interact with the brand community and share content published by brands. Pereira et al's (2014) study showed that Facebook users like to connect with brands in social media, however, they are not willing to interact with brands or share their Facebook content. Gamboa and Goncalves (2014) also researched the role of Facebook in enhancing clients' loyalty. They show that Facebook fosters relationships that enhance loyalty via customer satisfaction, commitment, trust, and perceived value. Kim et al. (2014) focused their research on social media network Twitter and investigated how consumers' relationships with brands impact the reposting the brands' posts. They found that people who are more engaged in reposting brands' posts have higher rates of brand trust, brand identification, community membership intention, community commitment, and platform usage frequency.

Salesperson's use of social media has a direct effect on information communication behaviours, which consequently influences salesperson responsiveness and customer satisfaction (Agnihotri et al., 2016). Agnihotri et al's (2016) study says that salesperson responsiveness in social media has a positive influence on customer satisfaction. According to the authors, social media is an important channel for organisations' communication with their customers, which plays a role of an antecedent enhancing salesperson behaviour and improving consumers satisfaction (Agnihotri et al., 2016). These findings suggest organisations to carefully create social media strategies for their sales force (Agnihotri et al., 2016).

Many marketing studies focus on the role of social media in branding (Hajli et al., 2017; Bernritter et al., 2016; Moro et al., 2016; Harrigan et al., 2017). Vernuccio (2014) writes that social media can be one of the fundamental elements in the brand-building process. The author believes that to make the most use of it, companies should follow three main approaches: collaboration with opinion leaders and influencers through social media; communication with stakeholders and following their discussions in social media related to the company's business; and finally, building and developing relationships with partners and clients via social media platforms in order to create and maintain the image and reputation of the company. Tuten and Solomon (2013) say that social media gives several opportunities for branding, such as placing sponsored advertising, engaging customers in brand-related activities within social networks, publishing brand-related content and creating a brand persona. Most of the studies showed a

strong effect of social media marketing activities on branding identity and branding recognition (Smith and Gallicano, 2015; Nguyen et al., 2015; Kim and Ko, 2012; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2013). Smith and Gallicano (2015) found that compared to YouTube, Twitter and Facebook are more efficient platforms in communicating with consumers as well as in creating and delivering brand stories. Nguyen et al. (2015) suggested and found that knowledge acquisition from social media predicts brand innovation and confirms the significance of social media as a strategic mechanism in brand innovation. Kim and Ko (2012) investigated how social media marketing activities influence brand equity, value equity and relationship equity in luxury fashion sector. Their findings showed the positive effect of all five constructs of perceived social media marketing activities (word-of-mouth, interaction, entertainment, customization, and trendiness) on the above-mentioned types of equities. However, Hennig-Thurau et al. (2013) point out the possibility of harmful effects of social media on brands since consumers can share their negative brand experiences, their stories can reach large audiences within the network.

Consumer behaviour and attitudes have also been widely investigated from the social media marketing perspective. Hamilton et al. (2016) and Zhu et al. (2016) find that social media is a key source of information to which consumers can return while in the process of purchasing decision-making. Various studies supported the crucial impact of social media on purchase behaviour in different contexts, for example, when the promoted brand is unfamiliar (Naylor et al., 2012), when the brand promoted by the user's social media friends (Zhu et al., 2016), or when purchase intentions are evoked by the generated electronic word-of-mouth around the brand or product in social media (Erkan and Evans, 2016).

Social media has become one of most effective instruments for enhancing consumer-to-consumer (C2C), B2C, and B2B relationships by improving information flows (Prodanova and Looy, 2019). However, Schaefer (2012) states that social media is neither a 'B to B' channel nor 'B to C' channel, but a 'P to P' channel, which means person to person channel. The author states that companies should not build relationships between a potential customer and a company logo. According to Schaefer (2012), companies use social media the same way they use traditional media not realising that consumers are tired of being advertised to and being sold to. However, they are always interested in people who can give them some honest recommendations; people who can help them save money and time by sharing useful tips regarding products, services, tourists' attractions and other things (Schaefer, 2012). Therefore, the main advantage of social media marketing for companies is influencers – 'people who

possess greater-than-average potential to influence others due to such attributes as frequency of communication, personal persuasiveness or size of – and centrality to – a social network’ (Nonprofit Business Advisor, 2015). According to Kumar et al. (2017), more academic research needs to be done on the understanding of these social media effects from the academic perspective, as well as on synergistic effects of traditional marketing and social media marketing. Moreover, there is a significant gap in the literature on covert marketing in social media and how it might influence consumers’ attitudes and behaviours in relation to brands.

2.4.1. Social Media Marketing versus Traditional Marketing

Traditional marketing or mass media marketing can be defined as an offline advertising used for promoting brands and products (Kumar et al., 2017). Hausman (2014) describes mass media as a form of communication that reaches a large audience either in a written, spoken or broadcast form. Mass media includes the most common advertising outlets, such as television, radio, printed media, and the Internet (Einstein (2016). Hausman (2014) states that along with brands and products, mass media also promote moods, attitudes, values and senses of what is significant and what is not. By the aid of mass media, the concepts of celebrity and celebrity endorsement have become possible; the ability of mass media to reach audiences across thousands of miles have given many people an opportunity to become famous (Durham and Kellner, 2006).

Marketers divide all media into three groups: earned media, paid media and owned media (Einstein, 2016). Einstein (2016) refers paid media to traditional advertising, where companies purchase ‘air time or space’ to deliver a commercial message to the audience. Owned media implies delivery of a commercial message to the audience via the company’s own media outlets such as website, blogs, and social media accounts (Einstein, 2016). Finally, earned media involves the distribution of a commercial message through other than the company’s owned media outlets for free including word-of-mouth, publicity, and bloggers (Einstein, 2016). Harvey (2014) states that while planning a marketing strategy companies should consider all three types of media. Harvey (2014) claims that with the emergence of social media marketing and its steadily increasing popularity, it has become more important for firms to understand how earned media influence their sales.

There is a very limited body of literature dedicated to the difference between social media and mass media marketing. The lines between these two forms of marketing communication are increasingly blurred as, for example, many newspapers and magazines have their own online blogs (Guggenheim et al., 2015). According to Goodrich and Mooij (2013), social media can be considered a hybrid media since it offers both generation of electronic word-of-mouth and message delivery to the target audience as a mass media platform. While word-of-mouth has a significant impact on purchase decision-making process, the electronic form of word-of-mouth creates the opportunity to spread information from one consumer to many other people online making, it even more powerful (Jeong and Jang, 2011; Goodrich and Mooij, 2013).

Another difference between these two types of media, which is significant for practitioners, is the relatively low cost of social media compared to traditional advertising (Long et al., 2010). Despite these savings, social media does not offer much control over the messages (Neff, 2011). Ledford (2012) argues that marketing communication has moved to an era of dialogue where consumers have more power and authority in message control through its design and delivery. Although companies are increasingly using social media for their marketing communication, they have not always had successful results, since often their efforts are neither driven by theory nor based on evidence (Ledford, 2012). Bruhn et al. (2012) found that traditional media communications have a stronger influence on brands awareness than social media marketing. However, social media communications are believed to have a stronger positive impact on a brand image (Bruhn et al., 2012).

Social media impacts sales in a shorter period of time compared to traditional marketing because of its ability to rapidly disseminate information and engage a large number of people in discussion (Kumar et al., 2017). Unlike traditional media, consumer behaviour in social media can be more engaged (i.e. likes, positive comments and shares) and more disengaged (i.e. unlike and negative comments), which can be harmful or beneficial for the company, depending on consumers' different reactions (Kumar et al., 2017).

Audrezet et al. (2018) compared product placement in the context of traditional media with product placement in the context of social media. They claim that in movies, for example, the commercial message is created by the brand, while in social media marketing, the influencers are controlling the process of product placement in their social networks, and the commercial content supposedly represents their real life. This, according to Audrezet et al. (2018), exposes particular risks for influencers, as products integrated into movies are

'implicitly approved because they are embedded into a fictional narrative'. Conversely, the products featured by influencers and celebrities in social media seem explicitly approved by them as their 'real consumption choices' because they are embedded into their real daily life content (Audrezet et al., 2018). Also, since influencers often pitch the products they endorse and direct their audience to the 'check this out', consumers might perceive them as sellers and put the responsibility for their dis/satisfaction with the product performance. Thus, Audrezet et al. (2018) suggest that it worth studying whether a brand or an influencer would be blamed for customers' dissatisfaction.

Stephen and Galak (2012) investigated how social media and mass media influence sales as well as how they affect one another. The authors suggest several examples as to how social media influence traditional media. First, these two types of media can reach different audiences through a selectivity mechanism. While mass media reaches a great number of people, social media reaches high-involvement individuals who are enthusiastically engaged in the promoted brand (Filo et al., 2015). Arrington (2009) believes that the advantage of social media marketing is that social media entities are usually topic specific, which means that they gather mostly high-involved consumers who are willing to discuss topics of mutual interest with other interested users. Hence, they are more inclined to make a purchase and generate word-of-mouth (Arrington, 2009). Stephen and Galak (2012) believe that in the case when a brand is not very popular, social media can influence traditional mass media. They say that because of a limited budget, many start-ups usually begin from social media by generating word-of-mouth and build a following base. Then they start attracting the attention of traditional media outlets (Stephen and Galak, 2012).

According to Foux (2006), social media outlets are perceived as more trustworthy sources of information in comparison to traditional media outlets used by companies. This is mainly because sponsorship of advertisement in traditional media is more recognisable compared to sponsorship of advertisement in social media (Foux, 2009). Foux (2009) also states that social media usually has higher publication frequencies and less strict rules than traditional mass media. Additionally, representatives of traditional media quite often use social media to get material for their stories (Arrington, 2009).

Hausman (2014) states that one of the most important dimensions that differentiates social media marketing from traditional marketing is interactivity. Traditional media delivers information to the consumer exemplifying a one-way communicational model, while social media involves them in a two-way experience promoting word-of-mouth and creating

engagement (Rehman et al., 2019). As for engagement, in social media marketing, consumers are actively involved, while in mass media marketing, they are passively involved (Hausman, 2014). As a result, social media provides an opportunity to analyse the performance of a particular commercial message by measuring consumers' engagement through the social media platforms' own built-in analytics (e.g. Facebook, Instagram) or through external analytics platforms (Batinca and Treleaven, 2015). These authors also state that marketers can track how many people saw the message, how many of them shared it and how many sales it generated. In contrast, companies that are using traditional media as a sales driver cannot accurately measure how well the message worked.

Fryatt (2013) asserts that businesses should adjust their marketing strategies to each media type because an approach that is successful in a mass media environment might not be effective in social media. The author believes that the online world is more honest and more respectful towards individuals and community, so building a long-term relationship online can produce much greater results than one-off campaigns used in mass media. According to Fryatt (2013), mass media marketing is more brand-oriented, while social media marketing, conversely, is consumer-oriented. Thus, the author claims that the organisations that accept these changes have every chance to succeed.

According to Harvey (2014), in the modern environment, where traditional and social media channels go together, it is not clear to what extent and in what way earned media affects sales. The author says that companies can assist in generating earned media activity, but they cannot directly produce it as it is usually done by other entities, such as consumers generating word-of-mouth about a brand or journalists promoting a company through publicity (Harvey, 2014). Stephen and Galak (2012) found that traditional earned media activity is more effective in increasing sales than social earned media activity, as traditional media outlets, in general, reach a bigger audience than social media outlets. However, Trusov et al. (2009) found that word-of-mouth and all the other outlets of social earned media have a greater influence on consumer opinion than either paid or traditionally earned media. Therefore, information received from a social source may be more powerful in consumers' decision-making process.

Following from the definitions of earned and paid media (Harvey, 2014), social media celebrity endorsement might be considered both as paid media and earned media. In the case when an endorser was paid for a promotion on his or her social media page or blog, it can be referred to as paid media. When an endorser features a certain brand or product in his or her social media post voluntarily because he or she likes the product, then it may be referred to as

earned media. Thus, for consumers, it is often not clear when a company is sponsoring its brand/product appearance in the social media post of an endorser and when it is the endorser's own decision to post about the brand/product.

To summarise, mass media marketing has been studied for many years and its effectiveness has been shown by numerous scholars. Studies that investigated the difference between social media and mass media marketing show that often the lines between these two forms of marketing are blurred. The marketing literature states that mass media reach a greater amount of people, but social media reach more involved consumers. Moreover, information received from social media is more credible for consumers than the information received from mass media. Thus, the higher level of trustworthiness of social media marketing (Foux, 2006) creates a need for more research on the covert marketing approach within social media. Additionally, it would be reasonable to investigate celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing on social media from the perspective of earned and paid media, and how consumers distinguish and perceive promotional material in relation to these two groups of media.

2.5. Perceived Authenticity

Authenticity has always been in high demand, and consumers are constantly pursuing it in their products and brands choices (Ilicic and Webster, 2016). Academic literature suggests several definitions of authenticity. Preece (2015) explains authenticity as ‘a socially constructed interpretation of the essence of what is observed rather than any inherent properties found in the object (or person), making it context specific and collectively recognized.’ Meanwhile, according to Kernis and Goldman (2006), authenticity is ‘the unimpeded operation of one’s core or true self in one’s daily enterprise.’ Other scholars understand authenticity as a complex construct that relates to attributes such as frankness, genuineness, sincerity and originality (Molleda, 2010; Moulard et al., 2015), as well as an expression of congruity between one’s beliefs, values, internal states and behaviour (Wood et al., 2008). According to Wood et al. (2008), authentic individuals are people with deeply held beliefs whose behaviour does not change because of external pressures to do the opposite. In other words, what makes people authentic is the stability of their behaviour. Similarly, Pillow et al. (2017) claim that authentic existence relates to the degree to which people behave and emote with consistency to their true emotions and internal states. In the same way, Ilicic and Webster, (2016) suggests that authenticity is a commitment to be ‘true to oneself’ in one’s behaviour and interaction with others.

For social media celebrity endorsers, perceived authenticity is an important subject for practice because it influences whether consumers rely on celebrities’ recommendations (Ankeny, 2015) and believe that they are credible sources of information on various issues (Atkin and Block 1983). Thus, following from the above definitions of authenticity, if consumers perceive that what a celebrity endorser says and does is consistent with what he or she thinks and feels, the behaviour will be perceived as authentic.

Perceived authenticity has been studied in quite a few contexts, but no study was found on the perceived authenticity of celebrities as social media endorsers. The difference between the concepts of traditional celebrity endorsement and social media celebrity endorsement creates an urgent need for more research in this context.

The pervasive and constantly emerging changes brought by superdiversity, globalisation, mobility and increased socio - cultural complexity, have evoked new conditions for authenticity (Leppanen et al., 2015) and a new meaning for the term ‘real’ (Henderson and

Bowley, 2010). The increased attention to the 'real' creates consumers' need for more authentic, person-to-person communications (Henderson and Bowley, 2010).

Earlier studies suggest that consumers interpret authenticity subjectively, drawing from personal experience, knowledge and beliefs (Bruner, 1994; Wang, 1999; Napoli et al., 2013). Various researchers advocate that authenticity of a spokesperson in an advertisement is significant due to the fact that consumers' feelings towards spokespersons transfer to promoted brands (Berger and Mitchell, 1989; Jin and Phua, 2014). When consumers perceive that a spokesperson has been paid for endorsing products, their attitude towards the endorser becomes more negative (Silvera and Austad, 2004).

In business studies, Napoli et al. (2013) defines authenticity as the subjective evaluation of genuineness, originality and truth, and is referred to as honesty, sincerity and reality. Furthermore, Napoli's et al. (2014) research suggests that authenticity perceptions include a quality perception as well as heritage and sincerity. Hence, brand authenticity cannot be imposed by a single brand manager because it requires a collective contribution of the whole team (Preece, 2015). Napoli et al. (2013) believe that it is important for managers to ensure that selected collaborators, partners and sponsors fit their brand, as they also affect its authenticity. Brand authenticity has been found to have a positive influence on brand trust (Schallehn et al., 2016), brand perceived quality (Moulard et al., 2016), purchase intentions (Napoli et al., 2014), and consumers' behavioural intentions (Fritz et al., 2017).

For marketing theory, the concept of authenticity is not a new phenomenon and research focuses on the various contexts where it plays a large role. Within the last twenty years, researchers have discovered that customers are looking for authentic experiences in various forms: beverages (Kamiloglu, 2019), luxury food (Hartmann et al., 2017), fashion (Choi et al., 2015), art (Ingo, 2018), tourist destinations (Lovell and Bull, 2017; Rickly and Vidon, 2018), education (Sandlin and Pena, 2014), and television programmes (Stephen, 2017). Besides luxury brands, people are looking for authenticity in basic daily consumer goods (Beverland, 2005; Beverland, 2009). Beverland (2009) found that consumer attribution of authenticity to brands is influenced by the consumption context, consumer life goals and personalities. Preece (2015) claims that authenticity can be communicated through certain cues, for example, availability, non-commerciality, transparency, sacrifice and accessibility. Nowadays, people are sceptical of marketing, as everything in their lives seems contrived and commercialised. Thus, authentic brand positioning is a core element of companies' success (Napoli et al., 2016). Beverland (2010) examined whether there were specific cognitive goals that motivate

consumers to consume certain objects and found that consumers focus on cues that convey authenticity. The conclusion is that consumers' decision-making is influenced by the desire to obtain various identity benefits, such as control, virtue and connection from authentic objects.

Academics have discovered several forms of authenticity (Beverland et al., 2008; Gilmore and Pine, 2007; Grayson and Martinec, 2004; Audrezet et al., 2018). Beverland et al. (2008) evaluated a variety of perspectives of authenticity in the context of alcoholic beverages and articulated three types. The first type of authenticity is pure (or literal) authenticity, the second is moral authenticity and, third, is approximate authenticity. Pure (or literal) authenticity expresses a dedication to tradition and supports the continuation of traditional practices. Moral authenticity involves the love and passion for a service or craft, expressing a sincere intent instead of a focus on financial incentives (Beverland et al., 2008). Finally, approximate authenticity offers more flexibility, accepting that historical traditions may be advanced with modern standards.

Expanding on this, Gilmore and Pine (2007) recognise five types of authenticity that are service and product specific. When commodities exist in an organic, natural and raw state, they are assumed to be naturally authentic. Goods are perceived as originally authentic when they are new and one of a kind. Services are believed to be exceptionally authentic when they are hand-made, exclusive, unique and customised. As for the experiences, when they are based on iconic and traditional memories, they are considered referentially authentic. Finally, when transformations focus on 'greater good' or 'better ways' aspirations and values, they are influentially authentic (Gilmore and Pine, 2007).

Grayson and Martinec (2004) found two types of authenticity: iconic (an imitation, recreation of the original) and indexical (the original, genuine thing). According to Grayson and Martinec (2004), authenticity is a subjective result of the consumer's perception of the 'offering' within the actual context, rather than an inherent attribute of the 'offering' itself. Thus, in their study of tourist attractions, the authors discovered that these market offerings (e.g. Sherlock Holmes Museum) had features that improved the perception of iconic or indexical authenticity and resulted in positive visitors' responses (Grayson and Martinec, 2004).

2.5.1. Authenticity in Social Media

Gaden and Dumitrica (2015) describe authenticity in social media communication as being yourself and sharing a 'personal' voice. It is about sharing personal information about your hobbies and interests and avoiding any perception of insincerity (Grow and Ward, 2013). Ali (2013) emphasises that what can be perceived as authentic constantly changes, and according to each context, signifiers and signals marking something as authentic may vary. However, if looking at the authentic behaviour of celebrity endorsers in social media, it would always imply being yourself and sharing your genuine thoughts and opinions with the followers.

According to Ali (2013), social media presence, which is usually deemed authentic by its nature, is essential for organisations in order to successfully build brand equity. The author states that companies make the most use of social media marketing when there is a place for honesty and genuineness. He found that all marketers' efforts to promote their brands might be destroyed once consumers discover that the positive comments about the products are falsified by the company that hired people pretending to be 'satisfied customers'. Ali (2013) says that companies must balance promoting their brands and maintaining friendly relationships with their audiences. Being authentic in social media is a challenge for businesses, especially those attempting to approach consumers through 'fake' fans of their brands (Ali, 2013).

Gaden and Dumitrica (2015) studied the concept of strategic authenticity from the social media perspective. They state that authenticity is a hallmark of a good blog, which people cannot find in today's mass media. Bloggers, some of whom can be considered as social media influencers, strategically disrespect some brands and products discussed their blogs to create a perception of authenticity and convince readers that the posts are not sponsored by brands (Gaden and Dumitrica, 2015). Gaden and Dumitrica (2015) also argue that the feeling of immediacy is one more essential characteristic of blogs that gives their audience an impression of authenticity. According to Ali (2015), unlike traditional media, social media is considered as an immediate form of communication, which allows people to present their own selves on an ongoing basis. Consumers state that social media should serve as an extension of reality just like individuals communicating in front of each other (Ali, 2013). Little likelihood of posting 'delayed' and 'edited' material makes social media blogs much more authentic in comparison with mass media (Gaden and Dumitrica, 2015). Further, researchers claim that links to other

blogs or sites can create and signify connectivity, which also facilitates the production of authenticity (Gaden and Dumitrica, 2015).

Philosopher Frankfurt (2005) believes that people are not looking for the ‘truth’, they are looking for ‘sincerity’ in blogging. The author explains that a blogger may not be right but should be honest. Early practitioners explained blogging as a valuable and credible practice of ‘expressing yourself’ in a sincere manner. For instance, unlike traditional news organisations, political bloggers speak on their own behalf not representing someone’s interests (Frankfurt, 2005).

Blogger’s who evoke authenticity become recognised, which increases his or her online popularity. Papacharissi (2010) believes that when publicity brings success either financial or reputational, authenticity should be the blogger’s main strategy for the presentation of the self, as it will assure him of audiences’ loyalty and increased exposure in the form of likes, shares, links and reposts. According to Papacharissi (2010), this visibility itself validates the blogger’s worth and authenticity. Thus, authenticity as a strategy assumes that bloggers use their existing audience in order to promote themselves in the public arena and increase their following base (Gaden and Dumitrica, 2015).

Along with authenticity, trust is very important in most economic and social interactions, especially in the e-commerce environment because of the high level of uncertainty there (Ba and Pavlou, 2002). Ba and Pavlou (2002) claim that trust is considered as a catalyst in buyer-seller relationships as it gives consumers positive transaction expectations. Ali (2013) argues that self-disclosure, which is a process of revealing truthful information about oneself, is vital in order to gain audience’s trust. All relationships established in social media are considered as voluntary and involve honesty, credibility and self-disclosure. Ali (2013) names this communication as a ‘give-and-take relationship’ that is based on trust and transparency, which in their turn create authenticity.

Most of the studies on authenticity in social media are descriptive, which creates an urgent need for empirical research on this subject.

2.5.2. Celebrity Authenticity

One of the main weapons of social media influencers is a promise of authenticity (Abidin, 2018). Accordingly, celebrities give their social media audience a sense of closeness

and ‘impression of an exclusive, intimate exchange’ by sharing information that is not typically distributed through traditional media outlets (Abidin 2018). The author believes that followers usually perceive this material as raw and genuine information about influencers’ private lives. Furthermore, perceived authenticity has been considered as an important attribute of social media influencers because platforms like Instagram are abundant with advertisement and sponsored endorsements (Audrezet et al., 2018).

Preece (2015) studied authenticity from the celebrity brand perspective to reveal the meaning and value it brings to the endorsed brands. Celebrity brand refers to a brand founded and created by a celebrity. The author believes that with the rapid development of the Internet and social media, it has become much easier for celebrities to show their authenticity to audience, and, the amount of authenticity in engagement differentiates a celebrity brand from a product, corporate or another individual brand (Preece 2015). Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) researched the role of celebrities’ authenticity and engagement with consumers through social media to see the impact of emotional attachment to celebrities on purchase intentions. The research supported the importance of celebrities’ authenticity in their activities, which facilitates fans’ emotional attachment to the celebrity. The authors conclude that people enjoy seeing celebrities as ‘real’ people and want to learn more about their personality and private lives, rather than seeing just aspects of their career and public life. Consumers are more interested in insights into their idol’s authentic lives, rather than the imagery that is usually transmitted via traditional media, such as celebrity award shows, red carpet events and television shows (Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016). Similarly, Dyer (2003) states that people want to see who the celebrity ‘really’ is and feel a connection with an ‘authentic’ existence. Although they are seen only as media co-constructs them, people tend to judge celebrities according to what they are perceived to be ‘really’ like. Authenticity is crucial to the process of meaning-making as people engage with a celebrity through a negotiation of authenticity (Dyer, 2003).

According to Abidin (2015), celebrities express their authenticity in social media through the posting of private and intimate photos that show some aspect of the star’s true self. These types of posts provide a feeling of closeness because people believe that they are engaging with the celebrities’ private selves (Marwick and Boyd, 2011). Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) found that consumers enjoy it when celebrities show authenticity in social media by posting their daily routines. According to Preece (2015), the more ‘accessible’ celebrities make themselves for consumers and the more information is available about the

celebrities and their private selves, the more authentic will be their engagement with consumers, which leads to emotional attachment. Authenticity signals to the audiences the truthful and faithful attitudes of a celebrity towards his or her fans as well as towards himself or herself (Moulard et al., 2015). Consumers perceive celebrity brands as authentic when celebrities' behaviour is congruent with their values (Moulard et al., 2015; Ilicic and Webster, 2016). However, in the process of authenticity creation, consumers can be considered as co-creators, as they interact with the authentic individual or object (Rose and Wood, 2005). Customers define authenticity accordingly; some may perceive brand, object, or experience to be real or genuine, while others may identify the same brand, object or experience as fabricated or fake (Ilicic and Webster, 2016).

Preece (2015) states that authenticity engages people emotionally and enhances celebrity influence. Loroz and Braig (2015) have found that customers are more likely to respond to perceptions of authenticity by making a public commitment in the form of increased purchase intentions. Further, Moulard et al. (2015) demonstrated that the perceived authenticity of a celebrity results in positive attitudes. Moreover, it has been discovered that perceived authenticity positively and strongly influences purchase intentions of an endorsed celebrity brand (Ilicic and Webster, 2016). Also, the Ilicic and Webster's (2016) study demonstrates that the perceived authenticity of a celebrity endorser is more influential in predicting purchasing intentions than familiarity with the endorser. Thus, organisations can benefit from collaboration with authentic celebrities (Poyry et al., 2019).

Audrezet et al. (2018) found two types of authenticity strategies used by social media influencers: transparent authenticity and passionate authenticity. The authors define transparent authenticity as disclosing the partnership relationship with the endorsed brands and placing the fact-based information about the endorsed products and services in the centre of the endorsement. Passionate authenticity is defined as being intrinsically motivated rather than motivated by the extrinsic factors (Audrezet et al., 2018). The authors explain that social media influencers who pursue passionate authenticity strategy are driven by their inner values and desires rather than by business interests.

Preece (2015) suggested a framework illustrating the process of authenticity creation and its communication to various publics through a celebrity (Figure 2). The model uses cultural and corporate branding theories to demonstrate the brand leveraging process, which contributes to amplification, reproduction and co-creation of central brand vision in order to create authenticity across various audiences and numerous markets. Corporate branding theory

demonstrates how celebrity keeps its authenticity while operating across various brand endorsements and media. Celebrities do it through 1) a global market that engages numerous constituencies; 2) rich heritage assets and core values that are held to unify the brand; and 3) a cultural capital in form of a strong performance record. Moreover, cultural branding theory explains what emotions this authentic engagement develops, adding value to the brand through ‘a shared ideological vision of the world’ (Preece, 2015). Thus, the successful combination of all these components leads to global prominence expressed by personality recognition, public attention, strong reputation, recognisability and high credibility.

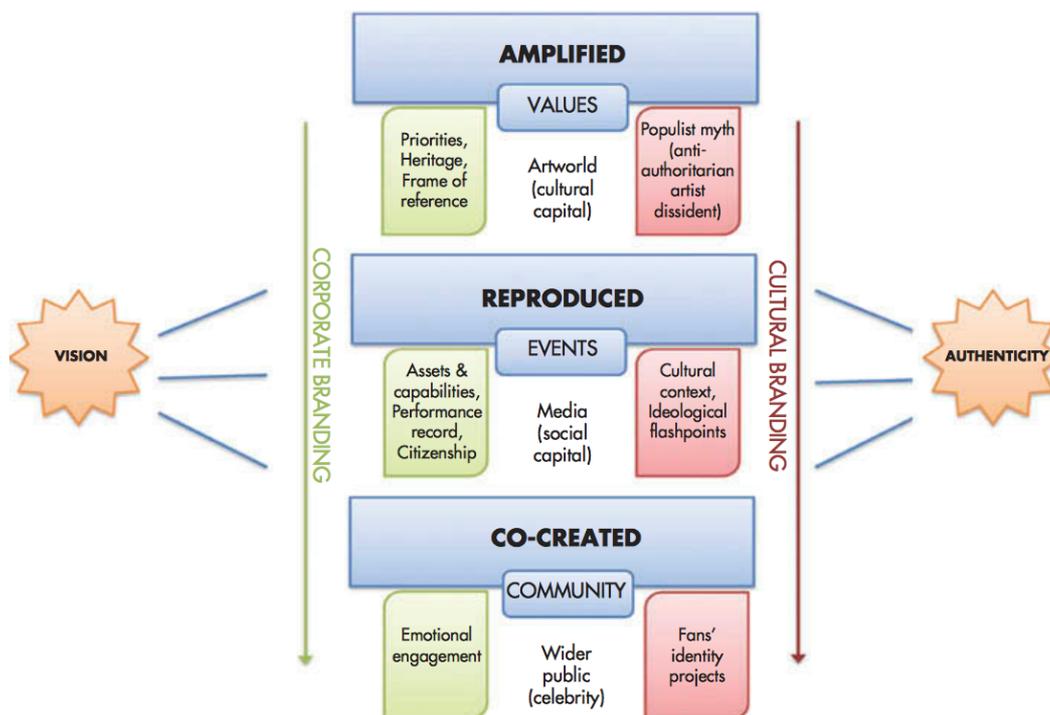


Figure 2 Authenticity Framework for the Celebrity Brand (Preece, 2015)

In their research on the perceived authenticity of celebrities in social media, Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) found that celebrities’ authenticity positively influences emotional attachment and fosters consumer-celebrity relationships. Moreover, their findings show that celebrity authenticity has a positive influence on word-of-mouth and purchase intentions and that emotional attachment to celebrities enhances authenticity of celebrities’ social media postings, which influences consumers to share more information about the celebrity and buy more products endorsed by the celebrity. However, their research has several limitations, which should be taken into consideration in future studies to achieve more reliable results. For example, 70% of research participants were Caucasian, which limits the findings to one ethnicity group. Additionally, the authors suggest that future research should use a celebrity

with a strong social media presence to conduct experimental research as their research employed focus groups and surveys. Finally, Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) emphasise the need for research on the antecedents of celebrity perceived authenticity on social media, and their potential effects, which are going to be addressed in the current study. Moreover, the study of Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) examined the perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in overt marketing, while the current study is exploring the perceived authenticity in covert marketing. Finally, to measure the perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in social media, Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) adopted the authenticity measurement scale from Moulard et al's. (2015) study, which examined the concept of celebrity brand authenticity in traditional media. The difference between these two concepts is that a celebrity endorser involves promotion of other brands, whereas the concept of the celebrity brand implies an understanding of the celebrity's brand itself (Moulard et al., 2015). Therefore, measurement scales of celebrity brand authenticity in traditional media marketing may not be appropriate for celebrity endorser authenticity in social media marketing.

Kapitan and Silvera (2016) researched consumers' attribution of how endorsers truly like, use and value the endorsed products and how it influences the effectiveness of the endorsement. They proposed an Attribution-Based Framework (Figure 3), which is based on the focus factors (e.g. scepticism, involvement) determining whether an individual carefully or superficially processes the message and its elements (e.g. source authenticity, product-endorser fit) that, in turn, affect the attribution process depending on these two levels of cognitive engagement. Thus, consumers' inferences about an endorser improve attitudes towards an advertisement and brand and evoke either 'fleeting identification with the endorsement or more enduring internalization of the endorser's message as a consumer's own' (Kapitan and Silvera, 2016). The authors relate the identification process to the consumer's aspiration to become like an endorser by imitating his or her behaviour, which also involves usage of the endorsed products. Meanwhile, internalization is a process of message adoption as one's own beliefs and attitudes via persuasions by others (Kapitan and Silvera, 2016).

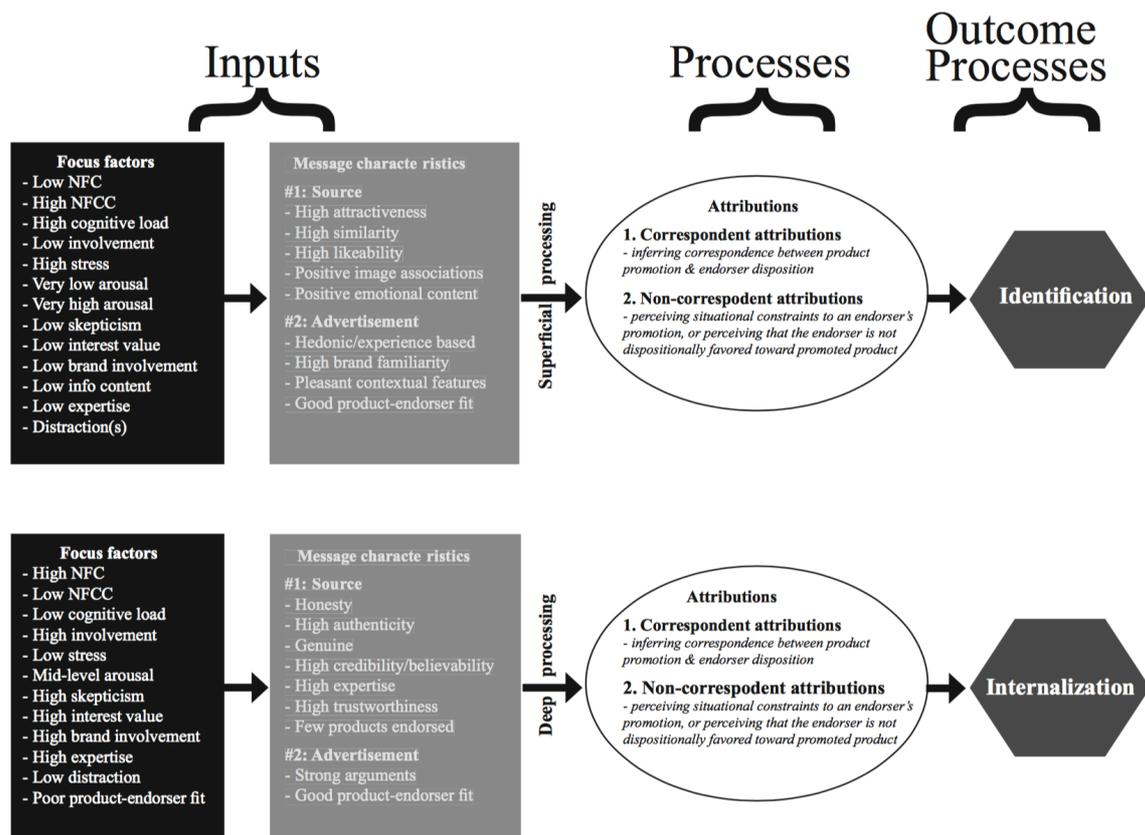


Figure 3 Attribution-Based Framework (Kapitan and Silvera, 2016)

The authors apply the Attribution-Based Framework equally to both celebrity endorsers and peer-endorsers (Kapitan and Silvera, 2016). However, the difference between the authenticity antecedents of celebrity endorsers and peer-endorsers might be too substantial to apply the framework equally to both categories of endorsers. Therefore, further studies should consider this difference. Also, it would be valuable to use the focus factors related to the endorser's performance within the context of social media. In other words, it would be reasonable to investigate how consumers interpret certain behaviours of celebrity endorsers in social media. Furthermore, this research was conducted within the overt marketing approach where the consumers are aware of the endorser's remuneration for the promotion. Therefore, it is suggested to test this model within the covert marketing context, where consumers are not informed about the sponsorship of endorsement.

To summarise, various studies have recognized the importance of authenticity in a modern commercialised world full of the deceptive advertising and sponsored celebrity endorsements. Researchers have discovered that customers are looking for authentic experiences in various forms: alcoholic beverages, art, tourist destinations, food, and television programmes. Authenticity has been also found to be vital in creating favourable advertisement

attitudes, brand attitudes and purchase intentions. Similarly, brand authenticity is believed to be the core element of a company's success. The most relevant aspect of authenticity is the celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity. It is believed to be one of the main weapons of social media influencer marketing, as in the ideal scenario, consumers are supposed to perceive the celebrity's social media posts as raw and genuine information about their private and public lives. However, despite the significant interest in the concept of perceived authenticity, it is not clearly defined nor is there an understanding of how to communicate and manage it, or how it is actually constructed of (Preece, 2015; Audrezet et al., 2018). Therefore, this study aims to investigate which factors have a significant impact on the perceived authenticity of social media influencers as brand endorsers when the sponsorship relationship of the endorsements is not disclosed. Since the literature does not provide any definition of the perceived authenticity of social media celebrity endorsers, it will be necessary to create one for purposes of this research. Building on the established definitions, perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in social media is the degree of belief that the celebrity exhibits his or her honest and sincere behaviour in relation to the promoted brands and this is not influenced by external pressures such as monetary or other types of rewards. A celebrity endorser with a high level of perceived authenticity promotes and recommends products or brands in social media because he or she really likes it, uses it and/or believes that it is a good product. By investigating the factors contributing to the celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity in social media, this study significantly advances the authenticity and celebrity endorsement literature, as well as making an important contribution to the social media marketing literature.

2.6. Covert Marketing

While scientists have studied the psychological phenomena of human subconscious cognition and unconscious perception for social science purposes (Zanot et al., 1983), businesses look at these from a marketing perspective and try to manipulate consumers' subconscious cognition to increase their profits (Einstein, 2016). Since today's consumers are more resistant towards advertising than ever before, it has become harder for marketers to access them (Boyer et al., 2015). Marvel (2012) defines advertising as a paid form of marketing communication in a public mode, which has a persuasive nature and is aimed at promoting or selling various entities, including products, services, ideas, and thoughts. In today's constantly changing media environment, marketing messages have started appearing in more venues than ever before. Marketers try to hide any sign of commerce in these messages as modern consumers have become more and more sceptical towards advertisements (Gobel et al., 2016; Nelson and Park, 2014). Also, competition for market share has become more intense, so companies are looking for new approaches to promote their products to stand out from their competitors while meeting advertising regulations (Kuhn et al., 2010).

Companies use various forms of marketing communications to influence consumers' purchasing decision-making process. One of these forms is covert marketing (Boyer et al., 2015). Einstein (2016) defines covert marketing as a way of brand promotion where advertising motives of marketing activities are concealed, and consumers are intended to believe that these activities have not been sponsored by a company. Similarly, Boyer et al. (2015) explain covert marketing as sponsored marketing content that looks like it does not have a sponsor. This type of marketing has different names within academic literature including masked marketing, undercover marketing, hidden marketing, secret marketing, content marketing, native advertisement, and buzz marketing (Einstein, 2016). The common characteristic is that the identity of the source of the consumer message is hidden, or covert (Akdogan and Altuntas, 2015). The use of covert advertising methods presupposes that potential consumers perceive advertising as unwanted, importunate, and even negative (Evans and Park, 2015). Thus, Einstein (2016) claims that the primary task of covert marketing is to engage people without their recognising they have participated in a promotional initiative. Tanaka (1999) suggests that marketers use covert advertising strategies to overcome consumers' distrust by preventing them from recognising the commercial motives of the advertisement. The author describes covert marketing as 'a form of communication where the intention of the speaker is to alter the

cognitive environment of the hearer, i.e. to make a set of assumptions more manifest to him or her, without making this intention manifest'. The purpose of covert marketing is not to present features of the product but to make it more attractive and the advertising less recognisable by placing it in an unusual advertisement environment, which may evoke positive emotions and sometimes even a sense of enjoyment (Evans and Park, 2015). Thus, the covert nature of this marketing tactic allows for persuasion without consumers' active knowledge, however, it does not guarantee that consumers will not suspect or recognise the advertising motives.

Traditional marketing communications are overt (Boyer et al., 2015). Here, the nature of the communication is clear, the company makes explicit efforts to assure audience attention, and a conscious appeal exists within the communication message (Akdogan and Altuntas, 2015). The most commonly used overt marketing approaches are television and radio advertising, personal selling, printed media advertising, direct marketing, promotions and trade displays (Boyer et al., 2015). Unlike overt marketing, covert messages are not easily distinguishable in a certain environment, and the audience is unaware that a company sponsors the activity (Akdogan and Altuntas, 2015).

Akdogan and Altuntas (2015) proposed the process in the Covert Marketing Communication Model (Figure 4). The first element of this model is the 'Real Source', which is the author of the message, which is followed by Cover 1, the extent to which the real source of the message is disclosed to the recipient. The next step is to prepare a commercial message, which includes choosing the information that the message will deliver, and determining the level of the message's cover and how the recipient will receive this information. Therefore, this step includes a second level of cover. The next element of the model is the 'Transmitted Source' which is the entity that transmits the message to the recipient. The real source, which is usually a company, identifies the transmitted source and delivers the prepared message to it. The transmitted source can be presented in various forms, for example, celebrities, film producers as well as the product itself. The medium also can vary. The transmitted source may deliver the message to the recipient through television, radio, books, social media, printed media and books. Once the recipients receive the message, they start decoding the information, according to the level of cover as well as in agreement with recipients' personal characteristics, experience, values and other relevant indicators. 'Feedback' and 'Response' follow the decoding stage and determine the reaction of the recipients. On the feedback stage, if the recipients need additional information to respond to the message, they go back to the transmitted source. The 'Response' stage reveals whether the recipient has a positive, negative

or neutral attitude towards the message. The desirable outcome of the covert marketing process is recipients' positive attitude. In the case of a neutral reaction, the covert message must be repeated, or another covert marketing technique used to achieve the desired effect. The negative response indicates a need for modification. In the case of misinterpretation by the recipient, the message should be corrected, and the causes of harmful effects eradicated. Noise is the element of the model that continually affects the process. It must be under control from the beginning, and the follow-up function with solutions must be active throughout the process.

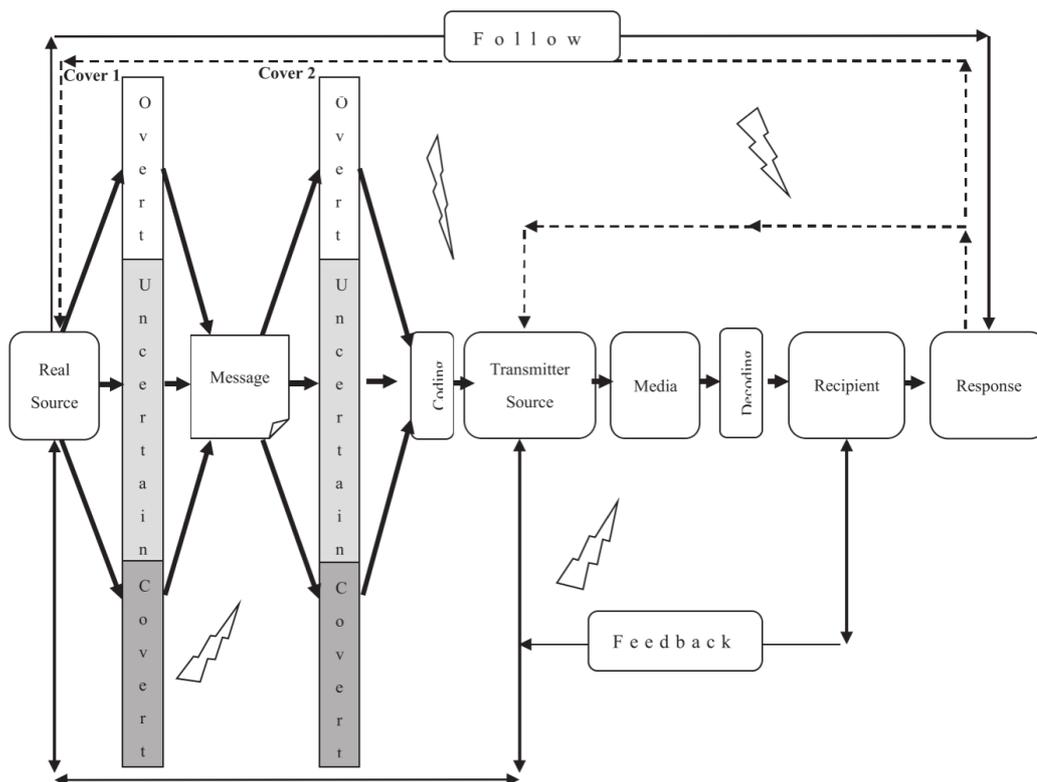


Figure 4 Covert Marketing Communication Model (Akdogan and Altuntas, 2015)

The current research is supported by this conceptual model. In our case 'Real Source' is a sponsor (company), while 'Transmitted Source' is a social media influencer, and the form of used 'Media' is social media networking sites. Since this research involves social media celebrity endorsements within covert marketing, only the covert and uncertain levels of cover relate to the subject of this research. In covert marketing, the Real Source is not disclosed, however, it might be recognized as a sponsor in the case where the consumer perceives marketing motives in the endorsement. In this case, the name of the real source is the promoted brand. The message is also not supposed to be recognized as marketing content, however, according to the conceptual model of this research, if the level of perceived authenticity of the endorser is low, the message might be recognized as an advertisement. For purposes of this

study, the Transmitted Source is always a social media influencer. As in Akdogan and Altuntas's (2015) model, the conceptual model of this research includes the phases 'Feedback' and 'Response', which are expressed in a more precise form as dependent variables, such as brand attitude/ brand perception and purchase intentions.

Akdogan and Altuntas (2015) developed a typology of covert marketing techniques (Table 3). Depending on the level of cover, they classified techniques into traditional techniques, indirect techniques, masked techniques and fox techniques. Traditional techniques could also be called overt marketing, which includes traditional advertisement, direct marketing and printed media.

Table 3 Typology of Covert Marketing Techniques (Akdogan and Altuntas, 2015)

		Real Source	
		Overt	Covert
Message	Overt	<p><i>Traditional Techniques</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisement • Public Relations • Personal Selling • Direct Marketing • Sales Promotion 	<p><i>Masked Techniques</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrities • Viral Marketing • Editorials & Video News Releases • Brand Ambassadors • Youth Marketing • Infomercials
	Covert	<p><i>Indirect Techniques</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product Placement • Artificial Crowds and Dialogues • Frightening • Manipulation • Brand Communities • Social Networks • Conditioning 	<p><i>Fox Techniques</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subliminal Message • Amateurs • Cookies • Curiosity • Flogs • Forums & Chat Rooms • Ambush Marketing • Marketing with Senses

Indirect techniques are explained as covert techniques where the genuine source of a message is not hidden, however, the message itself is covered. For example, product placement, social networks, trainings, simulated dialogues and crowds, brand communities, provocation of fear and manipulation to these type of covert marketing techniques (Akdogan and Altuntas, 2015). In the case of artificial crowds and dialogs, companies hire people to initiate talks and dialogs about their brands in blogs or other relevant websites. The perception of these type of

messages depends on many factors, such as, the recipient's personality, level of education and profession (Akdogan and Altuntas, 2015; Friestad and Wright, 1994).

The other covert marketing technique proposed by Akdogan and Altuntas (2015) is the masked technique, where the company's identity is hidden from the audience, but the message is transmitted clearly. To this group of covert techniques they assign celebrity endorsements, trendsetters and influencers, electronic word-of-mouth, youth marketing, press and video news releases (Petty and Andrews, 2008).

The most concealed marketing techniques are fox techniques where neither company's name nor commercial message is disclosed to the recipient (Akdogan and Altuntas, 2015). Sprott (2008) claims that these practices allow marketers to influence consumers without even their recognition of the persuading attempts. These techniques include subliminal messages, behavioural targeting, sense marketing, online forums and chats, ambush marketing, curiosity, brand pushers and fake blogs (flogs) (Sprott, 2008).

The current study is looking at two categories of covert marketing proposed by Akdogan and Altuntas (2015): masked techniques and fox techniques. In the case of the masked technique, the social media influencer clearly transmits a message in social media featuring an endorsed brand. However, if the sponsorship relationships are not disclosed in the message, the real source of the message stays hidden. In case of fox techniques, brand can be easily recognised in the picture posted by a celebrity in social media but the posting is not obviously an advertisement. For example, the celebrity can share a photo of her/himself with the specific cosmetics products in the background. As a result, both message and real source are concealed.

One of the most debated forms of covert marketing is stealth marketing. Martin and Einstein (2016) defines this type of marketing as practices that fail to reveal the real relationship between the source of marketing messages and the company that sponsors them. Kaikati and Kaikati (2004) classify stealth marketing as curveball strategies aimed at consumers without their awareness and permission. The purpose of these practices is to create interest and generate word-of-mouth around the product. Roy and Chattopadhyay (2010) explain how marketers apply stealth marketing in each element of the marketing mix. In relation to a product, safety information may not be fully disclosed for potentially harmful outcomes from using the products. Also, the packaging can be designed to create an impression of 'more of the product.' As for the price, marketers quite often show prices that have very little relationship to the actual

price of the merchandise, including phrases such as 'Buy one, get one free' or 'Save £10 when you spend £50 or more,' which can be referred to as a price deception. Concerning promotion, celebrities advertise certain products without disclosing compensation received for this promotion. Additionally, companies quite often hire people who act like satisfied consumers and promote their products. Finally, the last element of the marketing mix is place, which companies use very effectively for their stealth marketing purposes. For example, websites of illegal businesses can operate in countries that have lax laws, and thus attracting customers from countries where these businesses are forbidden and, therefore, don't exist (Roy and Chattopadhyay, 2010).

Many other studies propose forms of covert marketing. Gobel et al. (2016) suggest the following covert advertising examples: advertorials, where marketing content appears as independent media content; celebrity endorsements in social media; and product placements in movies and TV programs. According to Eagle and Dahl (2018), product placement is a marketing technique where recognisable branded products are inserted into the different media content including movies, television programmes, video games and literature for promotional purposes. The existing literature on product placement demonstrates inconsistent results. Some studies find a positive impact of product placement such as increased media production values and viewer experiences, however, other studies find negative impacts, criticising product placement for being subliminal persuasion and unethical (Chabria, 2002; Banerjee, 2004). Product placement has been also found to be more efficient for consumer recall (Gupta and Lord, 1998), brand recall (Bressoud et al., 2010), purchase intentions (Chang et al., 2010; Mackay et al., 2009), and brand attitudes compared to advertisement (Srivastava, 2015). However, Eagle and Dahl (2018) claim that despite that various studies focusing on the effectiveness of product placement and consumers behavioural outcomes, more research needs to be done on product placement in social media, video and advergaming.

Marketers have also applied a covert approach to social media marketing. However, the outcomes and effectiveness of these practices have not yet been thoroughly investigated by academics. Mercer (2015) declares that covert marketing might appear in the following forms in social media:

- *Viral videos.* Videos that quickly spread across the Internet reaching people all over the world. Such videos might not include any advertising text, but the recognisable logos of certain brands, their shapes or designs, which can easily reach consumers' minds either consciously or subconsciously.

- *Unpaid brand ambassadors.* According to Solar (2019), 88% of consumers trust either online or offline friends' recommendations, while just 33% trust commercials. Thus, when consumers see certain brand exposures on their friends' social media without any intended sales pitch, they unconsciously might be inspired to explore those products (Mercer, 2015).
- *Social media links on a website.* Mercer (2015) claims that when a consumer goes on a company's website and sees links to the companies' Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, his or her mind immediately forms an opinion about the company as a friendly, customer-oriented, sociable and 'cool' organisation. Even if the company is not like that, the absence of social media might add snobbism and anti-socialism to the company's image (Mercer, 2015).
- *Facebook Sponsored Posts.* As individuals' Facebook posts do not always appear in all their Facebook friends' feeds, these posts usually do not reach big audiences. Thus, Facebook offers companies an option to sponsor the exposure of private users' posts, which include brands' appearance of the company, so all the user's Facebook friends can see these posts in their feeds. Consequently, people become unpaid brand ambassadors, and this subconsciously can influence their friends' minds (Mercer, 2015).

2.6.1. Consumers' Suspicion of Covert Marketing

Most of the studies on covert marketing are focused on consumers' behaviour when they suspect or learn about covert marketing attempts. Campbell and Kirmani (2000) provide one of the consumers' psychological states as 'suspicion'. They say that when people consider that the actor may have concealed insincere motives for behaviour, they arrive at a state of 'suspicion'. It makes the perception of the actor less favourable and decreases his credibility. Liljander et al. (2015) studied consumers' reactions on suspected covert and overt marketing in blogs. Knowledge about overt marketing showed a significant decrease in consumers' purchase intentions, intentions to generate WOM, and negative effect on the attitude towards the blog, however, suspected covert marketing did not show any negative influence on consumers' behaviour. Their findings contradict other studies on covert marketing disclosures (De Veirman and Hudders, 2020; Xie et al., 2015; Campbell et al., 2013), calling for additional research on covert marketing.

Xie et al. (2015) studied consumers' perceptions of products after salespersons' self-disclosure of their initially covert selling motives. According to the study, consumers perceive

covert marketing as a deceptive and unacceptable tactic, even if the hidden intentions were disclosed before the purchase. The research findings of Xie et al. (2015) support the Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad and Wright, 1994) and show consumers' high resistance to covert marketing attempts when salespersons strategically use flattery and compliments to advance the sale during their interaction with consumers. Consumer defensiveness automatically develops distrust and creates a negative attitude towards the product and the seller, which altogether make a potentially appropriate message appear more deceptive. Overall, according to Xie et al. (2015), activated persuasion knowledge generates a perception of deceptiveness, whereby marketers' self-disclosure in covert selling activities is mainly useless. This study is limited to the sales context where consumers are aware that the message agent is a salesperson, which makes it overt marketing.

Campbell et al. (2013) found that sponsorship disclosure, placed either before or after the product placement in TV shows, leads to lower brand recall than placement without disclosure. Interestingly, persuasion knowledge is activated as the result of sponsorship disclosure when placed before the subtle product placement, but does not affect brand attitude. However, Evans and Park (2015) found that the disclosure placed after the covert advertisement exposure leads to a lower attitude towards the placed brand. Thus, the positive emotions experienced during exposure to a covert advertising are more powerful in producing attitudinal outcomes compared to sponsorship disclosure that provokes consumers' scepticism and lowers brand attitudes (Evans and Park, 2015).

Milne et al. (2009) researched the impact on consumers' purchasing decision-making process after learning about online covert marketing activities. The authors found that consumers' purchase likelihood significantly declines after consumers learn that companies use online covert marketing. However, this negative impact is moderated by familiarity with the brand and covert marketing tactics. It will be lower when the consumer has already tried the product or service, compared to situations when the consumer has not. Similarly, the negative effect is less in cases where the company is known and well established, versus when the company is young and unknown. Finally, Milne et al. (2009) found that when consumers learn that the company has resorted to the use of online covert marketing, the negative impact is lower in situations where the company offers products rather than in situations where the company offers services. Milne's et al. (2009) findings are consistent with findings of Wei's et al. (2008), which researched covert marketing in the offline context (radio). They also found that after learning of a covert persuasion attempt, the negative impact is lower when the tactic

appropriateness and brand familiarity are high. In other words, when the consumer is familiar with the brand, and the marketing tactic used is perceived by the consumer as appropriate, the impact of the learning about a persuasion attempt on the consumer's attitudes and behaviours is less negative.

Reactance Theory is one of the most important theories in covert marketing, as the task of covert marketing strategy is to use persuasion on consumers without their knowledge. Reactance Theory explains how consumers cope with covert marketing strategies aimed at them when they recognize persuasive motives, therefore, realising that their freedom of choice is restricted (Marchand et al., 2015). Brehm's (1966) Reactance Theory assumes that people do not like to be manipulated, and when they realise that marketers try to persuade them against their knowledge, they often react negatively. Further, learning that the commercial nature of the programme content was hidden, viewers feel deceived and may experience an invasion of their personal freedom, therefore, perceive advertising more critically and sceptically (Boerman, 2014). According to the Reactance Theory (Brehm, 1966), when people perceive that their decision-making process is being controlled by someone, they subconsciously protect themselves by selecting an opposite alternative. Additionally, the theory claims that another common feature of human behaviour is to desire the inaccessible object. The more the individual perceives that someone is trying to restrict his or her opportunities, the more desired the alternative object becomes (Brehm, 1966). Consequently, the more the person values his or her freedom, the larger the magnitude of the pressure; and the greater the number of threats, the stronger will be the reactance provoked (Dillard and Shen, 2012). Boerman (2014) declares that when people are aware of manipulative intentions of the message, they cope with persuasive information differently using this knowledge. The Persuasion Knowledge Model explains it as an 'if-then' procedure, i.e. if the consumer is aware of persuasive intent, he or she finds an efficient response. Consequently, this knowledge causes 'more systematic and biased processing.'

The concept of covert marketing is not new to academia; however, the online context of this approach has not been researched in depth. The current academic literature proposes a variety of techniques and types of covert marketing both online and offline (Akdogan and Altuntas, 2015; Mercer, 2015). Various studies on covert marketing are dedicated to consumers' reactions on learning about, or suspicion of covert marketing practices in different contexts (Evans and Park, 2015; Xie et al., 2015; Van Reijmersdal et al., 2016; Wojdyski and Evans, 2016; Gobel et al., 2017). Recent policy regulations on compulsory disclosure of

sponsored content in social media have encouraged researchers to study the impact of influencers' disclosures on consumers' behaviour (Evans et al., 2017; De Jans et al., 2019; Kay et al., 2020; De Vierman and Hudders, 2020).

Kay et al. (2020) found that micro-influencers' posts featuring sponsorship disclosures evoke higher consumers' purchasing intentions compared to the both micro and macro-influencers posts that do not include sponsorship disclosure. Also, when exposed to the micro-influencers' posts featuring sponsorship disclosures, consumers perceive the endorsed products as more attractive than when the products endorsed by the micro-influencers who do not disclose their sponsorships (Kay et al., 2020). De Veirman and Hudders' (2020) study show different results, which are consistent with the Persuasion Knowledge Model. They found that sponsorship disclosure in Instagram activates ad recognition, which, in turn, activates scepticism towards the ad, and consequently, negatively influences endorser's credibility brand attitude (De Veirman and Hudders, 2020). Gobel et al. (2017) also studied how covert advertising on social media platforms impacts the perception of unfamiliar brands depending on whether the covert content is provided through the brand's account or user's account. Their findings show that if persuasion knowledge is not activated, the covert advertisement presented through the user's account generates higher advertisement credibility, higher communicator credibility, higher attitude towards the advertisement, higher attitude towards the brand, and higher intentions to share the content, compared to when the covert advertisement is presented through the brand's account. Conversely, when persuasion knowledge is activated, the covert advertising distributed through the user's account generates lower attitudes and intentions than when distributed through the brand's account (Gobel et al., 2017). Thus, the authors conclude that the persuasion knowledge decreases the effectiveness of covert advertising of unfamiliar brands as well as causing damaging effects to them. Gobel et al. (2017) claim that further research is needed on covert social media advertisement for familiar brands, since the authors focused only on unfamiliar brands. Moreover, they advise to aim further research on other social media platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook, as their study is limited only to the YouTube settings. Finally, their study does not investigate the effects of social media covert advertising on purchase intentions, which is believed to be a very important variable in business research. Meanwhile, Kay et al. (2020) claim that although celebrity endorsement and sponsorship disclosure have been well researched, there is little research combining these streams, with the rise of the new phenomenon of influencer marketing in social media. In other words, it is necessary to examine consumers' purchase intentions, behaviour, and attitudes after

they suspect they were exposed to the covert advertisement in social media influencers' posts, as well as after disclosure of sponsorships.

2.7. Overview of Theoretical Background

The current section overviews the main theories, Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad and Wright, 1994) and Attribution Theory (Jones and Davis, 1965), which contribute to the development of the conceptual framework of this thesis.

2.7.1. Persuasion Knowledge Model

The Persuasion Knowledge Model, articulated by Friestad and Wright (1994), explains how people respond to companies' persuasion attempts through various marketing activities as they learn to apply their knowledge of the persuasion motives (Marchand et al., 2015). This knowledge allows consumers to resist, or even respond appropriately to these persuasion attempts. The Persuasion Knowledge Model plays a key role in covert marketing, as the task is to influence consumers without recognition of a persuasion attempt, prohibiting them from employing their persuasion knowledge. According to Friestad and Wright (1994), one of the consumers' main tasks is to recognise and cope with marketers' communication messages and advertising. The Persuasion Knowledge Model explains how people refine their attitudes towards products and cope with marketers' persuasions. The model is focused on how three knowledge structures that work together to produce and predict the outcome of persuasion attempts. These knowledge structures include persuasion knowledge, agent knowledge, and topic knowledge and the definitions are provided in Table 4 (Friestad and Wright 1994). The model presumes that targeted people are stimulated to use these three knowledge structures to pursue different attitude refinement aims. This is usually done by creating strategies for distributing resources among these three knowledge structures during and after the exposure to a persuasion attempt engaging the same agent or topic (Figure 5) (Friestad and Wright, 1994). Further, the model states that consumers allocate mental resources devoted to each knowledge structure according to its level of development (Friestad and Wright, 1994).

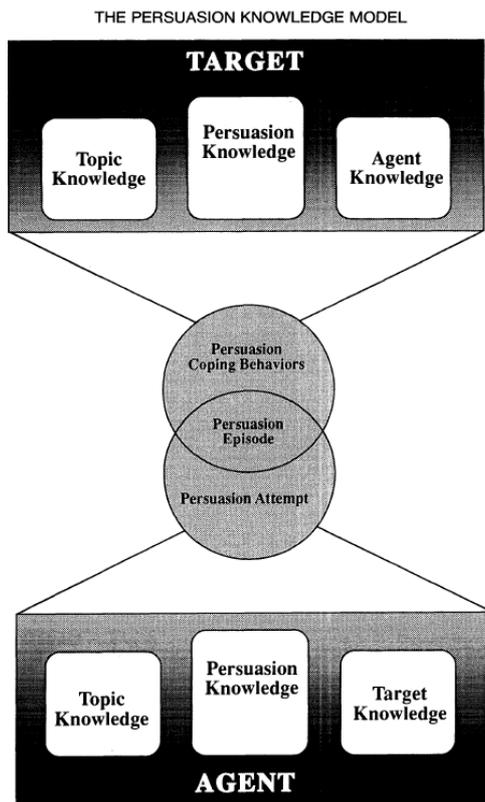


Figure 5 The Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad and Wright, 1994)

Table 4 Definitions of the Persuasion Knowledge Model Variables

Variable	Definition
Topic knowledge	'Beliefs about the topic of the message (e.g., product) (Friestad and Wright, 1994).
Persuasion knowledge	Consumers' recognition of marketing persuasion motives and attempts (Friestad and Wright, 1994).
Agent knowledge	'Beliefs about the traits, competencies, and goals of the persuasion agent' (e.g., a celebrity endorser) (Friestad and Wright, 1994).

Friestad and Wright (1994) also argue that in everyday life, it is very common for individuals to move quite quickly and easily between the roles of agent and target. The persuasion knowledge helps them to do it rapidly and fluently, allocate the necessary resources that are essential for persuasion coping and persuasion production. Hence, people's beliefs about how the persuasion process works and how others persuade, help them create and implement their own persuasive plan. In other words, persuasion knowledge is a resource,

which people immediately access once they are in need to recognize and cope with, or to construct and execute, persuasion attempts (Friestad and Wright, 1994).

Campbell and Kirmani (2000) propose that when forming persuasion knowledge, consumers try to identify the persuasion motives and tactics of the influence agents. In other words, persuasion knowledge consists of ideas of what marketers are trying to achieve with their persuasion attempt and how exactly they are doing that. According to Campbell and Kirmani (2000), consumers' persuasion knowledge helps them to form valid opinions about products and services that are being advertised and, choose the type of relationship to have with the marketer in the future, according to the marketer's persuasion approach and tactic. Friestad and Wright (1994) researched how consumers' feelings and thoughts about persuasion attempts affect their attitudes towards the promoted brand or product. They presume that activated persuasion knowledge generates coping mechanism, which evokes consumers' scepticism and negative attitudes. Specifically, people identify 'an observable feature (or pattern of features) of a persuasion attempt' as a persuasion tactic only if they recognize 'a possible causal connection between it and a psychological activity they believe mediates persuasion.' For instance, in some psychological models, audience members perceive an emotion, attention or trust as mediators of persuasion knowing that this is the route a marketer may employ to make the message persuasive. In this case, a celebrity endorsement will enhance the persuasiveness of an advertisement if the audience perceives that the celebrity endorser influences their emotions, attention or trust (Friestad and Wright, 1994).

In addition to persuasion knowledge, when consumers interact with the brand exposure, they also activate topic knowledge and agent knowledge (Friestad and Wright, 1994). If a person has limited knowledge and/or experience with the promoted product, his or her topic knowledge is to some extent too limited to engage coping behaviours during persuasion attempts. In other words, when consumers do not know the brand or/and have very little experience with it, their topic knowledge is not sufficient to engage any cognitive or physical actions in relation to the brand during any one persuasion episode. Therefore, the consumer may require additional efforts to fully accumulate this knowledge in order to understand the methods being used (Friestad and Wright, 1994).

Evans and Park (2015) suggest an enhancement to Friestad and Wright's (1994) explanation for the process of brand attitude formation when consumers recognise marketers' covert persuasion attempts. They suggest that once the covert nature of the persuasion attempt is revealed, all the positive experiences acquired from such exposure will possibly be

associated with the advertising and may result in more negative attitude outcomes for the brand. The authors do not exclude the possibility that covert advertisement might be more influential in the formation of positive attitudes towards the brand even when the persuasive nature of the advertising is detected (Evans and Park, 2015). Meanwhile, Smith and Vogt (1995) believe that the persuasion power of promotional messages affects customers only to the extent to which they undergo acceptance of the message.

Ultimately, the main task of any celebrity endorsement is to sell a product or service (McCracken, 1989). Thus, when a consumer is exposed to an advertising that includes celebrity endorsement, the persuasion knowledge might activate (Friestad and Wright, 1994). Consequently, when people feel that marketers are trying to influence their opinion through celebrity appearance and restrict their freedom of choice by persuading to buy their products, the feeling of reactance occurs, which evokes specific consumer behaviour (Brehm, 1966). However, in the case of covert endorsements on social media, the consumer may not recognise the presence of the persuasion attempt. When the levels of persuasion knowledge and reactance are low and the level of celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity is high, the audience may perceive the celebrity's opinions and recommendations as honest, sincere and trustworthy.

2.7.2. Attribution Theory

Attribution Theory states that people tend to find an explanation of others' behaviour and interpret the motivations behind those behaviours. Thus, according to Heider (1958), individuals act like a psychologist looking for a sense of the social world in order to predict and control events. Heider (1958) says that people tend to find a cause-effect relationship in everything. Following this, the individual's perceived causality affects the individual's responses and actions (Heider, 1958). 'Attribution Theory deals with how the social perceiver uses information to arrive at casual explanations for events. It examines what information is gathered and how it is combined to form a casual judgment' (Fiske and Taylor, 1991).

Heider (1958) distinguishes causes of human actions into two groups: external and internal. In other words, people make attributions depending on 'whether the locus of causality for the behaviour or event is the person (internal), or the environment (external), or both' (Hewett et al., 2018). Kelley (1967) expanded Heider's Attribution Theory by outlining three factors that influence whether the individual attributes other's behaviour to external or internal

causes. These factors include distinctiveness, consensus and consistency (Kelley, 1967). Distinctiveness refers to the degree to which an individual's behaviour does not change across similar situations (Hewett et al., 2018). Consistency refers to the degree to which an individual's behaviour is consistent over time. Thus, according to Kelley (1967), people attribute behaviours or events to other individuals when the levels of consistency, distinctiveness and consensus are high.

Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958) is often used to explain authenticity. Attribution Theory aims to identify whether an individual's behaviour is attributed to extrinsic pressure or an intrinsic motivation, which is the true self (Jones and Davis, 1965). To be specific, behaviour is perceived as authentic when it comes from intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic motivation. An individual's behaviour is considered intrinsic and authentic if it is unique to the individual and stays similar across different circumstances, different entities or different stimuli. Thus, the theory identifies authentic behaviour as a result of intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Attribution theory has also been used for understanding the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements (Park and Cho, 2015). According to Kelley (1972), the theoretical framework of attribution theory relies on the principle that states 'the role of a given cause in producing a given effect is discounted if other plausible causes are also present.' Essentially, people understand and predict events by proposing augmenting and discounting principles, where extrinsic factors play the role of inhibitory factors, and intrinsic factors function as facilitative factors (Kelley 1972). For example, if a celebrity acts as a socially responsible individual despite the possibility of financial loss or wasted time, people conclude that the celebrity's ethical standard is the main reason for such socially responsible actions and conclude an internal motivation for the behaviour. On the other hand, an individual discounts a celebrity's intrinsic motive if he or she assumes that the celebrity endorses a brand just for the monetary reward or to improve his or her status (an extrinsic motive) rather than from the inner desire to fulfil his or her civic duty (an intrinsic motive) (Mowen and Brown, 1981). Thus, people are more likely to conclude that a celebrity makes an endorsement because the he or she really likes the product or because of the financial compensation, unless it is clearly indicated that the celebrity has not been paid for the endorsement (Moore et al., 1994).

2.8. Summary

Scholars have paid a lot of attention to the core concepts of this research. Numerous studies have investigated covert marketing, celebrity endorsement, social media marketing, and perceived authenticity as separate concepts.

The literature on celebrity endorsement proposes a number of important models and theories such as Meaning Transfer Model (McCracken, 1989), the Match-up hypothesis (Friedman and Friedman, 1979), Source Credibility Model (Ohanian, 1991), the TEARS model (Shimp, 2003), and the Halo Effect (Thorndike, 1920) to name a few. A number of studies have been dedicated to celebrity – brand congruity and its influence on endorsement effectiveness within the overt marketing context (Misra and Beatty, 1990; Kamins, 1990; Kamins and Gupta, 1994; Lee and Thorson, 2008, Mishra et al., 2015). The literature review presented previous studies on celebrity's perceived expertise (Zhao's et al., 2015), celebrity's perceived attractiveness (Kahle and Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990), the celebrity's credibility (Le Ferle and Choi, 2005; Ratcliff, 2015; Wang et al., 2017; Lafferty and Goldsmith, 1999) as well as the new phenomenon of social media influencers (Zhao et al., 2016; Senft, 2008; Marwick and Boyd, 2010).

The authenticity literature focuses largely on brand authenticity. Researchers have investigated authenticity of beverages (Kamiloglu, 2019), luxury food (Hartmann et al., 2017), art (Ingo, 2018), tourist destinations (Lovell and Bull, 2017; Rickly and Vidon, 2018), and authenticity in the fashion industry (Choi et al., 2015), in education (Sandlin and Pena, 2014), and in television programmes (Stephen, 2017). Despite the considerable interest in the concept, it has not been clearly defined nor is there agreement on how best to communicate it or how it is constructed (Preece, 2015). Further, little is known about the extent to which advertising can be perceived as authentic and more research is needed how to measure this construct (Miller, 2015). As for celebrity authenticity, a few studies have addressed this concept (Abidin, 2018; Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016; Dyer, 2003), however, none of the studies are dedicated to perceived authenticity of celebrities as brand endorsers on social media. Moreover, authenticity theory lacks empirical support, since most of the studies are based on descriptive research design. Hence, more research on perceived authenticity is needed.

Overt social media marketing is also quite a researched area. Social media literature mostly focuses on a few categories: electronic word-of-mouth in social media (Coulter and

Roggeveen, 2012; Balaji et al., 2016; Chu and Kim, 2011), advertising in social media (Carrillat et al., 2014; Duffet, 2015; Bannister et al., 2013; Taylor et al., 2011; Kodjamanis and Angelopoulos, 2013; Chandra et al., 2013), customer relationship management via social media (Moore et al., 2013; Gummerus et al., 2012; Gamboa and Goncalves, 2014), branding and social media (Smith and Gallicano, 2015; Nguyen et al., 2015; Kim and Ko, 2012; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2013), and consumer behaviour and brand attitudes (Hamilton et al., 2016; Zhu et al., 2016; Naylor et al., 2012). Various studies focus on the differences between social media marketing and traditional marketing, emphasizing the need to address various problems within these two types of marketing separately (Long et al., 2010; Bruhn et al. 2012; Stephen and Galak, 2012).

There are many studies dedicated to the concept of covert marketing, however, the online context of this approach has not been researched in depth (Milne et al., 2009). The current academic literature proposes a variety of techniques and types of covert marketing both online and offline (Akdogan and Altuntas, 2015; Mercer, 2015; Martin and Smith, 2008). Various studies on covert marketing are dedicated to consumers' reactions on learning or suspecting the presence of covert marketing practices in different contexts (Evans and Park, 2015; Milne et al., 2009; Xie et al., 2015; Boerman, 2014). There is a significant gap in the literature on covert marketing on social media and its impact on consumer behaviour. Gobel et al. (2017) is the only empirical study on covert advertisement in social media, however, the author did not consider the concept of celebrity endorsement.

Overall, the literature on the research problem of current study is very limited. A few empirical studies have addressed social media celebrity endorsement in the overt marketing context (Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016; Kapitan and Silvera, 2016; Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017) and Kowalczyk and Pounders (2016) is the only empirical study on celebrity perceived authenticity in social media. Kapitan and Silvera (2016) studied consumers' attribution of whether endorsers truly like, use and value the endorsed products and how it influences the effectiveness of the endorsement. Finally, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) are the only academic researchers who have looked at the celebrity endorser's credibility in the social media context. Therefore, uniting all these areas in an investigation of perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in social media within the covert marketing context will be a valuable and unique contribution to the marketing literature.

Chapter 3 Research Framework and Hypotheses

3.1. Proposed Framework

This section provides an overview of the proposed conceptual framework. Based on existing theory and previous studies, the framework includes a number of testable hypotheses. The model integrates theoretical elements associated with attribution theory, match-up hypothesis and the persuasion knowledge model to provide a coherent framework of the effectiveness of covert celebrity endorsement in social media. Since the concepts of perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in social media and covert marketing in social media are relatively new areas of research, academic knowledge joining these concepts is limited. Thus, the concepts of authenticity and covert marketing have been incorporated into the Attribution Theory (Jones and Davis, 1965) and the Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad and Wright, 1994). Figure 6 presents the model that serves as a conceptual framework and foundation for the current research.

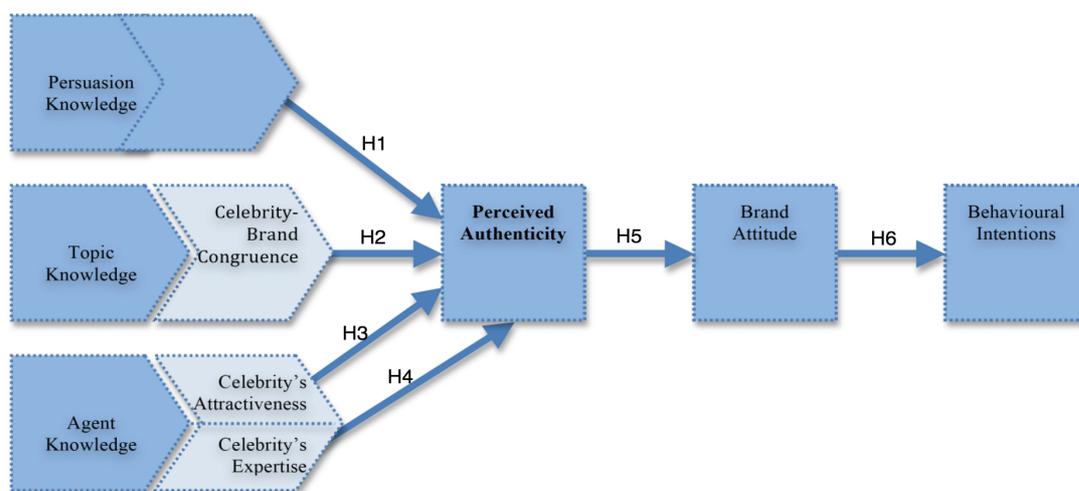


Figure 6 Conceptual Framework. Perceived Authenticity of Celebrity Endorsers in Covert Social Media Marketing

The conceptual framework (Figure 6) describes the factors that influence the perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in covert social media marketing context, and its impact on the endorsed brands, and consequently on consumers' behavioural intentions.

Theoretically, the model draws on the Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad and Wright, 1994), which explains 'how three knowledge structures interact to shape and determine

the outcomes of persuasion attempts' (Friestad and Wright, 1994). These three knowledge structures include agent knowledge, persuasion knowledge and topic knowledge. In this study, the original knowledge structures of the Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad and Wright, 1994) are incorporated as follows: persuasion knowledge remains as in the original model, but the other variables were replaced with those that fit the research context. Thus, topic knowledge was replaced with celebrity-brand congruence, and agent knowledge was replaced with celebrity's expertise and celebrity's attractiveness whereas (Table 5).

Table 5 PKM Variables vs. Current Study Variables

PKM Variables	Adapted Variables
Topic knowledge	Celebrity-brand congruence
Agent knowledge	Celebrity's attractiveness Celebrity's expertise

Since topic knowledge refers to beliefs about the subject of the persuasion message (e.g., product), celebrity-brand congruence plays because it consists of accessible associations and attributes of both a celebrity and an endorsed product, and to what extent these match each other. Agent knowledge refers to beliefs about competencies and traits of the persuasion agent (e.g., a celebrity endorser), therefore a celebrity's perceived attractiveness and a celebrity's perceived expertise play the role of agent knowledge in the current study context.

The conceptual framework is structured by the stages, which consumers pass through when exposed to covert celebrity endorsements in social media. Thus, when a social media user sees that a celebrity features a brand on his or her social media account without any reference that this is a sponsored content, there are some factors that might affect the user's evaluation of the celebrity's authenticity. The framework suggests that activated persuasion knowledge is expected to decrease the level of perceived authenticity of the celebrity endorser (H1). Furthermore, this study proposes that celebrity-brand congruity (H2), celebrity's attractiveness (H3), and celebrity's expertise (H4) will positively influence the celebrity's perceived authenticity. Hypothesis H5 suggests that perceived authenticity will positively

influence brand attitude, which, in turn, will influence consumers' behavioural intentions (H6). The definition of each variable can be found in Table 6.

Based on the Persuasion Knowledge Model, it is presumed that consumers are motivated to use their persuasion knowledge, topic knowledge and agent knowledge to develop their attitude refinement aims (Friestad and Wright, 1994). The authors explain that consumers do so 'by developing strategies for allocating resources among all three knowledge structures during and after a given persuasion episode'. Accordingly, consumers' response to the marketing efforts depends on their awareness of the persuasion attempt. Hence, the framework suggests that perceived authenticity influences the relationship between persuasion knowledge and brand attitudes, topic knowledge and brand attitudes, and agent knowledge and brand attitudes. Thus, it is proposed that the lower the level of activated persuasion knowledge, the higher the level of perceived authenticity of celebrity endorser, and this positively affects brand attitudes in covert social media endorsements (H5), and consequently, behavioural intentions (H6).

Table 6 Summary of Operating Definitions

Variables	Operating Definitions
Persuasion knowledge	Consumers' recognition and evaluation of marketers' advertising goals, tactics and attempts being used to persuade consumers (Gobel et al., 2017).
Celebrity-brand congruity	The extent to which accessible associations and attributes of a celebrity endorser match the endorsed brand (Kimrani and Shiv, 1998).
Perceived attractiveness	A measurement of how likeable and physically attractive an individual is to others (Ohanian, 1991).
Perceived expertise	The extent to which a person is perceived to have enough knowledge, skills and experience to make correct statements (Sternthal et al., 1978).
Perceived authenticity	A degree to which people behave and emote in a manner consistent with their true emotions and internal states (Pillow et al., 2017).

Brand attitude	A summary evaluation of the brand that presumably influences behaviour (Spears and Singh, 2004).
Behavioural intentions	Consumer's perceived likelihood to engage in a given behaviour (Armitage and Conner, 2001).

3.2. Hypotheses Development

The first testable hypothesis of this study is the relationship between the activated persuasion knowledge and celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity. According to the Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad and Wright, 1994), activated persuasion knowledge generates a coping mechanism, which evokes consumers' scepticism and negative attitudes. People's perception of an observable feature of a persuasion attempt as a persuasion tactic decreases the trustworthiness of the source of the persuasion and may generate negative attitude towards it (Friestad and Wright, 1994).

Persuasion targets (consumers) will have an interpretive orientation towards the advertisement or endorsement that they are faced with (Friestad and Wright, 1994). In the celebrity endorsement context, consumers seek explanations as to why a certain celebrity endorses a certain brand (Mishra et al., 2015). In traditional marketing it is obvious that a celebrity has been paid for the brand endorsement, but in social media marketing when the celebrity does not disclose the sponsorship of the endorsement, it is totally unclear. Although consumers might suspect that celebrity endorsers are paid for positive brand recommendations, their persuasion knowledge might not be activated if they do not suspect a persuasion attempt (Kapitan and Silvera, 2016). According to Attribution Theory, people aim to identify whether an individual's behaviour is attributed to extrinsic pressure or an intrinsic motivation (Jones and Davis, 1965). In the context of covert celebrity endorsements in social media, the extrinsic pressure can be expressed in the form of monetary rewards or other forms of incentives, while intrinsic motivations are driven by internal rewards, for example, products' benefits. Thus, when consumers recognise persuasion attempts and advertising motives in the celebrity's social media activities, they realise that the celebrity's behaviour is being influenced by extrinsic pressure from the endorsed brand. Following from the definition of perceived authenticity, authentic individuals refer to people with deeply held beliefs whose behaviour does not change because of external pressures (Wood et al., 2008).

Drawing from the literature on persuasion knowledge and attribution theory, when the target recognises celebrity endorser's persuasive attempts in the social media brand exposure, consumers' persuasion knowledge activates and negatively affects the celebrity's perceived authenticity. Thus, the level of the celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity decreases, which means that the celebrity is being perceived as less trustworthy, less sincere and less honest in relation to the brand promotion on social media.

Thus, the following hypothesis (H1) is suggested:

H1: Activated persuasion knowledge will negatively influence a celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing products covertly in social media.

The second hypothesis this study examines relates to celebrity-brand's congruity effect on a celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing products covertly in social media. Based on Attribution Theory (Jones and Davies, 1965), when the endorsed product and celebrity fit well together, the endorsement becomes more rationalized, and the relationship between the celebrity and the product more distinctive (Mowen and Brown, 1981). Congruity between a celebrity and an endorsed brand signifies a correspondence between celebrity's motives and behaviour. In other words, congruity between celebrity and brand might help consumers to understand why the celebrity endorses that product. Thus, when the congruity between celebrity and brand is low, consumers may assume that the celebrity does the promotion because of some external factors, such as financial rewards. According to Erdogan (1999), the lack of match between celebrity endorsers and endorsed brands or products may lead consumers to the belief that the endorser has been paid to endorse the products. Conversely, consumers are likely to make internal attributions when there is congruity between the endorser and the endorsed brand. In this case, consumers are likely to attribute the endorsement to the characteristics, quality and benefits of the endorsed products. The consumer assumes the celebrity endorser is not influenced by external factors, such as monetary rewards, concluding the celebrity is authentic and promotes a particular brand because he or she genuinely likes it and uses it.

Mishra et al. (2015) claim that in overt marketing congruity between brands and celebrity endorsers positively and significantly influence endorser's credibility and consequently increase his or her believability. Similarly, Kamins and Gupta (1994) say that the match between a celebrity endorser and the promoted brand enhances the celebrity's believability in traditional advertising. As by definition authenticity refers to a commitment to acting and presenting self truthfully and sincerely (Sloan, 2007), congruity between brands and celebrity endorsers is expected to influence positively the perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in social media covert marketing.

Thus, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H2: Celebrity-brand congruity will positively influence a celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing products covertly in social media.

The third hypothesis of this study concerns the relationship between a celebrity's perceived attractiveness and the celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing attractiveness-enhancing products covertly in social media.

Following from the findings of Kahle and Homer (1985), attractiveness of a celebrity endorsing attractiveness-enhancing products positively contributes to the endorsers' credibility and believability in traditional marketing. According to Boerman et al. (2017), the level of consumers' persuasion knowledge is lower in social media marketing than in traditional marketing. In social media, celebrities mix commercial content with content about their daily lives, so the audience cannot easily distinguish sponsored content, which prevents the activation of consumers' persuasion knowledge (Boerman et al., 2017). This leads to the conclusion that believability and credibility of an endorsement message from an attractive celebrity is higher in social media than in traditional advertising. Thereby this study presupposes that Kahle and Homer's (1985) findings also might be applicable to the social media context.

Based on Attribution Theory (Jones and Davis, 1965), Settle and Golden (1974) argue that the audience might suppose that a physically attractive endorser is motivated to promote an attractiveness-enhancing product because it contributed to his or her attractiveness. Consumers tend to make an internal attribution when they see a correspondence between celebrity endorsers' behaviour and motives (Jones and Davis, 1965). Again, since the authenticity implies maintaining strict coherence between what you feel and what you say or do (Pillow et al., 2017), the following hypothesis is suggested:

H3: Celebrity's perceived attractiveness will positively influence a celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing the attractiveness-enhancing products covertly in social media.

The fourth hypothesis of this study relates to the relationship between the celebrity's perceived expertise and the celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing products covertly in social media.

Similar to perceived attractiveness, the celebrity's perceived expertise plays a role of agent knowledge in the proposed model, when sponsorship relationships are not disclosed in covert marketing. According to Attribution Theory (Jones and Davies, 1965), when the endorser is perceived as an expert in the area of the promoted product's specialisation, consumers are more likely to assume that he or she promotes the product in social media because of the product's nature and its quality, rather than because he or she was paid for the promotion. Thus, such expertise-based congruity between an endorser and brand makes correspondence inference clearer and the endorsement more logical (Mowen and Brown, 1981), which contributes to a higher level of the celebrity's authenticity. Moreover, previous research shows that celebrity endorsers with a high level of expertise have a high level of reliability, trustworthiness and believability within the overt marketing context (Hung et al., 2011).

Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H4: Celebrity's perceived expertise will positively influence a celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing products related to his or her expertise covertly in social media.

The fifth hypothesis of this study specifies the relationship between celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity and the consumers' brand attitude in covert social media marketing. The academic literature defines perceived authenticity as the degree to which an individual acts according to his or her own personality, character and spirit, in spite of external pressures (Fine, 2003). Authenticity is usually referred to as sincerity, innocence, truth, reality and being honest (Marwick and Boyd, 2011; Preece, 2015; Abidin, 2018). Thus, in the context of celebrity endorsements in social media, the reason for an authentic celebrity endorsement is the nature of the product rather than the external factors, such as monetary incentives (Ryan and Deci, 2000). When consumers suspect that a celebrity endorser was paid for the promotion of the brand, the perceived authenticity of the endorser decreases, which according to the Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad and Wright, 1994), is expected to develop negative agent knowledge. Consequently, negative agent knowledge is believed to influence negatively the promoted brand or product (Friestad and Wright, 1994).

Moreover, according to the findings of Wei et al. (2008), activated persuasion knowledge in covert marketing negatively impacts the promoted brands. Consumers use

persuasion knowledge in understanding motives for a celebrity endorser to promote specific brand (Friestad and Wright, 1994). As the endorsed brand is suspected of covertly sponsoring this celebrity endorsement on social media, consumers' activated persuasion knowledge may also generate negative attitudes towards the brand and decrease behavioural intentions.

Therefore, it is hypothesized:

H5: Perceived authenticity of a celebrity endorser in social media will positively affect the attitudes towards the covertly endorsed brands.

The last hypothesis of the current research aims to test the relationship between brand attitude towards the brand and consumers' behavioural intentions when the brand is covertly endorsed by a celebrity in social media. In the proposed framework, brand attitude plays a mediating role between perceived authenticity and behavioural intentions. It is predicted that when a celebrity endorser's behaviour in social media is perceived as authentic in relation to the endorsed brand, the consequently increased attitudes toward the endorsed brand lead to greater consumers' behavioural intentions in relation to the brand or product.

Findings of Ilicic and Webster's (2016) study show the direct influence of the celebrity's authenticity on behavioural intentions in traditional advertisement. Additionally, many studies have showed that brand attitude has a significant impact on purchase intention (MacKenzie et al., 1986; Teng and Huihuang, 2007; Shwu-Lng and Chen-Lien, 2009; Shah et al., 2012). Their findings confirm that the more positive the brand attitude, the higher the purchase intentions. Moreover, Wang and Scheinbaum (2018) found that in a celebrity endorsement context, positive brand attitude has a significant positive impact on behavioural intentions.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H6: Positive brand attitude towards a covertly endorsed brand by a celebrity in social media will have a positive effect on consumers' behavioural intentions.

Chapter 4 Research Methodology

4.1. Introduction

The following chapter discusses all methodological decisions that were undertaken in this thesis with a detailed description of the research process. According to Radha and Jija (2013), research methodology is a ‘systematic effort to gain knowledge’. It is a vital phase of the research process, which explains how the research is done scientifically (Saunders et al., 2016).

The chapter starts with the discussion of the main research paradigms used in marketing research along with the discussion of the most appropriate philosophy for this research. This is followed by the description of the research approach, research choice and research design. The detailed description of the questionnaire design is provided in the following chapter. In addition, this chapter includes discussions of the sampling technique, sample population, and sampling size used in the current research. Moreover, the findings from the pilot study and observations are also presented. Finally, the chapter concludes with the description of the data analysis techniques that were used in the study.

4.2. Research Philosophy – Positivism

Research philosophy is an important part of the research methodology. It defines which methods of data collection and analysis are the most suitable for the research. It is a set of values, beliefs, models and manners that are followed by researchers (Guba and Lincoln, 1998). According to Creswell (2009), a paradigm can be defined as a ‘general orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher holds.’ Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2005), interpret paradigm as ‘a net that contains the researcher’s epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises.’ Guba and Lincoln (1998) claim that paradigms are human constructs, making them axiomatic, and impossible to prove or disprove because they thus subject to individuals.

According to Guba and Lincoln (1998), paradigms address three basic questions and, in answering these, form basic beliefs:

- 1) The **ontological** question: What is a reality? What knowledge can be gained about the world?
- 2) The **epistemological** question: How do we know something? What is the perceived relationship of the researcher with the knowledge that can be acquired? What kind of knowledge does the researcher aim to gain?
- 3) The **methodological** question: How do we acquire knowledge? How is this knowledge going to be gained from the research?

A number of different paradigms, and variations of these, exist in academia (Guba and Lincoln, 1998; Creswell, 2009). Guba and Lincoln (1994) name four main paradigms as: constructivism, positivism, postpositivism, interpretivism, and critical theory and later added the participatory/cooperative paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). Some researchers suggest pragmatism should be added (Creswell, 2009), while others do not accept positivism as a paradigm, believing that this is a poor way of labelling a quantitative study (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). As an alternative, the authors suggest postpositivism as a more appropriate paradigm (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009) and that critical theory is a qualitative theoretical perspective rather than a paradigm (Creswell, 2009). Nevertheless, each philosophy will be defined to defend the selection for this research project.

Positivism is an objective and external paradigm. According to Saunders et al. (2012), within positivism, the researcher must look at the social world independently and generally, isolating all personal factors and focusing on facts collected through observations and experience. This paradigm promotes the existence of a single reality, which is based on what is directly observed through human senses, making reality fixed and objective (Guba and Lincoln, 1998). Within positivism, the researcher controls external factors to generate consistent behavioural outcomes, which can be used for predictions (Sarantakos, 2005). According to Guba and Lincoln (1998), positivism is more likely to adopt a quantitative approach rather than qualitative and aims to verify hypotheses.

Postpositivism is a paradigm that amends positivism and overcomes the major criticisms to it. Postpositivism agrees with positivism on the existence of a single objective reality, but it argues that truth can be discovered only probabilistically and not absolutely since researchers can neither support nor accept a hypothesis. According to Guba and Lincoln (1998), postpositivism is based on critical realism and suggests that only critical examination can help to achieve a probabilistic and approximate understanding of reality. Creswell (2009) believes that postpositivism does not allow researchers to be positive about their statements

while investigating human behaviour. The author explains that this is because causal laws determine reality, however, understanding of these laws allows researchers to make only approximate and imperfect predictions about the outcomes of human behaviour and natural actions. Postpositivism encourages researchers to use a qualitative approach to collect situational information and apply more natural settings for a study (Guba and Lincoln, 1998). This research philosophy is not appropriate for this study because the outcomes of the research are quite predictable, the hypotheses were developed and for testing.

Interpretivism philosophy is based on understanding of humans as ‘social actors’ that see things differently (Saunders et al., 2012). Therefore, everything is measured subjectively so the researcher is more likely to adopt a qualitative approach rather than quantitative. Within this philosophy, the researcher-interpretivist is aware of the research topic does not have a big sample but provides an in-depth investigation of the topic. According to Saunders et al. (2012), within interpretivism, a researcher must look at the social world through the eyes of research subjects. For the current research, a quantitative approach with a large sample is more appropriate for testing the developed hypotheses. Therefore, the Interpretivism philosophy with a qualitative approach is not the best approach. Additionally, the researcher does not expect that respondents’ perceptions of the proposed scenarios of the research will differ significantly.

Critical theory accepts a single reality, like realism. However, according to critical theory, the reality is shaped by political, economic, ethnic, ideological and social forces that, over time, crystallized into social structures that are believed to be real and natural (Guba and Lincoln, 1998). Critical theory proposes applying all forms of quantitative and qualitative techniques in order to discover how historical structures determine human behaviour (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). This paradigm does not seem to be the most suitable for the current research because the researched problem is not believed to be influenced by the above mentioned forces.

Constructivism denies the existence of an absolute and objective truth. Thus, the reality is relative and subject to individuals’ worldviews (Guba and Lincoln, 1998). According to Anderson (1986), constructivism suggests the existence of multiple realities, which are mentally constructed and based on social factors and experience. This means that the content and form of reality are shaped by individual’s interpretation and understanding of the world (Creswell, 2009). Constructivism claims that knowledge is created as a result of an investigation of the object and the interaction between the researcher and the object based on

the researcher's views about the investigated object or phenomenon (Anderson, 1986; Creswell, 2009). This paradigm adopts qualitative research techniques and denies use of any quantitative measures (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). Again, since this research will test the hypotheses using quantitative methods constructivism is not the right paradigm for this research.

Participatory/Cooperative paradigm denies views of constructivism, claiming that this is an inadequate method to acquire knowledge through experience (Heron and Reason, 1997). According to Heron and Reason (1997), a participatory/cooperative paradigm promotes a subjective-objective reality and states that knowledge is composed of a subjectively articulated world, which is objectively shaped by the researcher. This research philosophy also does not fit with this research since the research implies that the reality is fixed and objective.

Pragmatism focuses on the research problem and research outcomes. According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), this paradigm proposes the investigation of practical outcomes as a method to understand the significance of philosophical positions and consequently to come up with decisions on the actions necessary for interpretation of real world phenomena. The authors consider pragmatism as an 'antiphilosophy' because it calls for actions rather than for philosophizing. This paradigm accepts the existence of multiple realities, which consist of various elements that can be both objective and subjective (Feilzer, 2010). As for the methodology, Creswell (2009) says that pragmatism encourages researchers not to focus on the research methods but to focus on the research problem and research approach as well as its outcomes for the real world. This paradigm enables researchers to use pluralistic approaches to obtain knowledge, which implies using mixed research methods (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009; Feilzer, 2010; Creswell, 2009). Since the methodology is a very important aspect for this research, which requires careful and accurate development process, and the outcomes are quite predictable, this paradigm has been denied as an option for this study.

Hudson and Ozanne (1988) compared positivism and interpretivism as the major paradigms for consumer behaviour research. The authors proposed four alternatives to address the diversity of these two paradigms: 1) the supremacy alternative, which proposes that supporters of each paradigm keep arguing about the supremacy of their approach convincing others in that; 2) the synthesis alternative, which suggests a combination of elements from these two paradigms through an additive process that unites strengths and decreases weaknesses of each of the paradigms; 3) the dialectic alternative that promotes a development of a new approach to understanding, which can emerge in result of debate counter posing features of the

different paradigms; and 4) the relativistic alternative, which supports critical relativism proposed by Anderson (1986).

The philosophy adopted for this research is positivism, as it is believed to achieve the richest form of the methodology for this study.

4.3. Research Approach

Malhotra et al. (2012) states that there are two types of research approach that determine theory development in research: inductive and deductive. This research adopted a deductive research approach because of its suitability for research that aims to explore a theory by testing developed hypotheses, defined as ‘testable propositions about the relationship between two or more events or concepts’ (Saunders, et al., 2016). Consequently, the generated hypotheses are either supported or not by the data.

This is the opposite of an inductive approach where the researcher makes observations first, then finds patterns, and finally, formulates a theory (Bryman and Bell, 2012). Saunders et al. (2016) explains that the inductive approach begins with the observation of the subject or problem, followed by data collection, and then seeks answers to the research questions. As such, the inductive research approach does not begin with prior theories or knowledge that can be applied to examined within the context of the investigation (Collis and Hussey, 2013; Malhotra et al., 2012). Conversely, with the deductive research approach, the researcher first develops a conceptual and theoretical structure of the study and then collects data and either confirms or rejects the proposed hypotheses (Bryman and Bell, 2012).

The deductive approach is more suitable for this research for the following reasons. First, there is extensive knowledge on celebrity endorsement in traditional marketing. However, this research is focused on a new setting of celebrity endorsers in social media covert marketing. Therefore, this research proposed a new framework, based on existing theory, and includes several testable research hypotheses that further develop knowledge in the area. Secondly, this study aims to collect quantitative data and use structural equation modelling to analyse them, which makes a deductive research approach suitable.

4.4. Data Sources

There are two types of data: primary and secondary data, which are both very important in research practice as they provide researchers with knowledge and information necessary for achievement of research aims and objectives (Saunders et al., 2016). This study employs both primary and secondary data.

The researcher collects primary data to fulfil a specific purpose of a research project, and this data may not have been collected before (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Primary data are very important in research to address a specific research subject or problem where the necessary data may not exist or be readily available. Moreover, primary data are believed to be more accurate for a specific problem compared to secondary data, however, the collection of primary data requires more time and costs than the collection of secondary data (Creswell, 2009). There are several primary data collection techniques, such as questionnaires, observations or experiments (Kotler et al., 2003).

Secondary data is also very important for a successful research study as they assist in formulating the research problem and developing the research approach (Saunders et al., 2016). Malhotra et al. (2012) define secondary data as data collected by other individuals for other research purposes and that are readily available to other people. It is advised to obtain secondary data from credible and reliable sources, such as academic journals, books, commercial marketing organisations, corporate databases, organisational records, census surveys, interview transcripts or government books (Creswell, 2009).

The current research project used both types of data sources. The secondary data for this research were obtained from academic journals, industrial reports, social media network sites, and reports of digital resource Influencer Intelligence. The primary data were collected through conducting online surveys using the Amazon MTurk platform to recruit respondents. The purpose of the primary data research of this study is to test the proposed hypotheses.

4.5. Research Design

Research design is defined as a framework for conducting a research study, which includes the detailed description of the procedures required for obtaining the information

needed for achievement of the research aims (Malhotra et al., 2012). Based on the Figure 7, research designs are exploratory or conclusive (Malhotra et al. 2012).

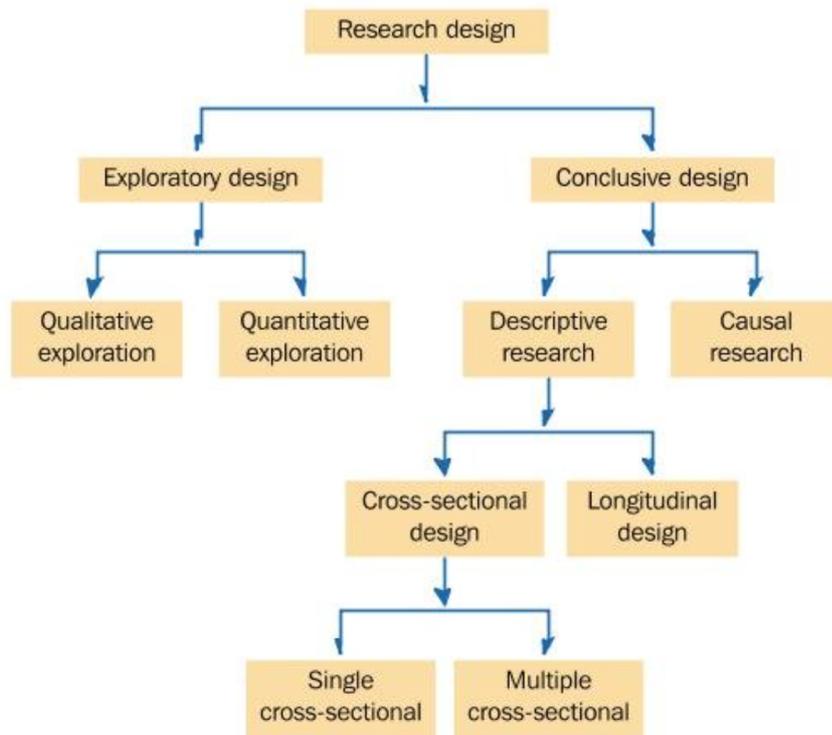


Figure 7 Classifications of Marketing Research Designs (Malhotra et al., 2012)

Exploratory research aims to gain understanding of a certain marketing phenomenon and to provide some insights into this phenomenon (Malhotra et al., 2012). This research design is used in studies where it is impossible to measure the subject of the research in a quantitative manner or in cases where particular qualities cannot realistically be represented by the process of measurement (Saunders et al., 2016). An exploratory research design can involve both quantitative or qualitative data analysis approaches, and research methods may include pilot surveys, expert surveys, interviews, unstructured observations, secondary data or quantitative exploratory multivariate methods (Malhotra et al., 2012).

A conclusive research design aims to test specific hypotheses and investigate specific relationships (Saunders et al., 2016). Within this research design, a sample is normally large and quantitative data analysis approach is used (Malhotra et al., 2012). Malhotra et al. (2012) notes that the researcher conducting conclusive research clearly defines what information he

or she needs, so the research process is well structured and formal. The data collection methods can include surveys, experiments, secondary data, structured observations, databases and panels (Saunders et al., 2016). Malhotra et al. (2012) defines two types of conclusive research as descriptive and casual. Casual research aims to examine and find evidence of such cause-and-effect relationships (Malhotra et al., 2012). This type of research design allows researchers to understand and identify independent variables and dependent variables: which variables are the cause and which variables are the consequence of a certain marketing phenomenon (Malhotra et al., 2012). Descriptive research is usually used to describe certain market characteristics or functions, events, situations or persons (Saunders et al., 2016)

This research adopts a conclusive casual design because it seeks evidence of casual relationships between perceived authenticity of social media celebrity endorsers (independent variable) and consumers' attitudes and purchasing behaviours (dependent variables). This makes a conclusive research design the most appropriate choice.

4.6. Methodological Choice

Based on the nature of the research and its philosophy, the researcher needs to choose between quantitative and qualitative research methods or, alternatively, the mixed method approach, which is a hybrid form of both quantitative and qualitative data collection approaches (Saunders et al., 2016). According to Saunders et al. (2016), when the research is focused on testing the theory and a deductive approach is employed, the quantitative data collection method is suggested. This research approach involves investigation of relationships between variables and engages generation and evaluation of numeric data (numbers) using various statistical and graphical techniques (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Since this study involves testing the developed hypotheses based on the theory and findings of previous studies and aims to test the relationships between certain constructs, the quantitative approach is believed to be the most appropriate choice. Additionally, the quantitative research method is believed to be effective for studies involving consumer surveys (Malhotra et al., 2012), which is the main data collection method for this study. Also, since this research is using only one data collection technique, it will be a mono method quantitative study (Saunders et al., 2016).

4.7. Research Strategy

Saunders et al. (2016) define research strategy as a plan of actions which researchers follow to achieve research aims and answer research questions. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) consider research strategy as a methodological link connecting research philosophy and consequent research methods for data collection and analysis. This study uses surveys as the main strategy for the research.

Malhotra et al. (2012) defines a survey as a research technique that uses structured questionnaires distributed to a sample of a population. These questions are usually related to respondents' behaviours, attitudes, intentions, motivations, awareness as well as lifestyle and demographic characteristics. According to Malhotra et al. (2012), surveys can be conducted in various modes, such as face-to-face, via telephone conversation, online or through post mail. Typically, most of the questionnaires included provide a closed set of possible responses and respondents are asked to select one of the options (Saunders et al., 2016). The key advantages of surveys are: simplicity of administration, data consistency, reduced variability in results, and simplicity of data analysis and interpretation (Malhotra et al., 2012). There are also some disadvantages of this research technique, such as the possibility of respondents' inability or unwillingness to share certain information. Moreover, the validity of certain types of data (e.g. feelings and beliefs) may be reduced due to the fixed and structured nature of questions (Malhotra et al., 2012). However, the survey is the most widespread primary data collection method in business and management research (Saunders et al., 2016).

An online survey is believed to be the most appropriate approach for this study as this research aims to examine the relationship between variables in the social media context. Moreover, compared to face-to-face research methods, online surveys can more easily reach and collect data from a larger sample (Wright, 2005), which is important for this study. The questionnaire was created on Google Forms software, which allows for the creation of various types of questions as well as including multimedia material. The participants were recruited through the Amazon Mechanical Turk system. Despite its relatively high cost, online surveys are fast to administer and can reach respondents from distant locations.

4.7.1. Questionnaire Design

A structured survey was used in this study to measure the perceived authenticity of the celebrity endorser, celebrity's congruity with the brand, his or her perceived attractiveness and expertise. The survey instrument was also designed to measure respondents' persuasion awareness, their attitude towards the brand and behavioural intentions. These seven constructs were measured using either a 7-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree or not at all likely to extremely likely) or a semantic differential scale adopted from previous studies. Table 7 shows the original measurement items, which were modified to meet the context of the current research.

Table 7 Measurement Items

Variable/Adopted from	Original measurement items
Persuasion knowledge (PK) / Van Reijmersdal et al. (2017)	Indicate the extent to which you think the item about product Y was made to: PK1: make you like the brand PK2: sell product Y PK3: influence you PK4: To what extent do you believe the item about product Y is advertising?
Celebrity-brand congruity (CB) / Rifon et al. (2004)	In Celebrity X's posts that include Brand Y's product, they are: CB1: Not compatible/ Compatible CB2: Bad fit/ A good fit CB3: Irrelevant/ Relevant CB4: Not congruent/Congruent

<p>Celebrity's perceived expertise (CE) / Ohanian (1990)</p>	<p>In terms of beauty products, Celebrity X is:</p> <p>CE1: Not an expert/ An expert</p> <p>CE2: Inexperienced/ Experienced</p> <p>CE3: Unknowledgeable/ Knowledgeable</p> <p>CE4: Unqualified/ Qualified</p> <p>CE5: Unskilled/ Skilled</p>
<p>Celebrity's perceived attractiveness (CA) / Ohanian (1990)</p>	<p>Celebrity X is:</p> <p>CA1: Unattractive/ Attractive</p> <p>CA2: Not classy/ Classy</p> <p>CA3: Ugly/ Beautiful</p> <p>CA4: Plain/ Elegant</p> <p>CB5: Not sexy/ Sexy</p>
<p>Celebrity's perceived authenticity (CPA): Correspondence inferences (CI) / Silvera and Austad (2004)</p> <p>Trustworthiness (T) / Ohanian (1990)</p>	<p>Indicate the level of belief that Celebrity X:</p> <p>CI1: Likes Y product</p> <p>CI2: Frequently uses Y product</p> <p>CI3: Views Y product as a good product</p> <p>Indicate the level of belief that Celebrity X is:</p> <p>T1: Is trustworthy</p> <p>T2: Is honest</p> <p>T3: Is sincere</p> <p>T4: Is dependable</p> <p>T5: Is reliable</p>

<p>Brand attitude (BA) / Peterson et al. (1992)</p>	<p>Brand Y is:</p> <p>BA1: Unique/Not unique</p> <p>BA2: Desirable/Not desirable</p> <p>BA3: High quality/Low quality</p> <p>BA4: Useful/Not useful</p> <p>BA5: Expensive/Inexpensive</p>
<p>Behavioural intentions (BI) / Krishnamurthy and Sivaraman (2002)</p> <p>McCormick (2016)</p>	<p>Indicate the likelihood of each of the following actions:</p> <p>BI1: I am likely to ask the salesperson about Pro Surge-470 the next time I visit an electronics store;</p> <p>BI2: I am likely to consider the Pro Surge-470 the next time I think about buying a computer;</p> <p>BI3: I am likely to consider the Pro Surge-470 the next time I think about buying any equipment;</p> <p>BI4: I am likely to check reviews regarding Pro Surge-470’;</p> <p>BI5: ‘I am likely to suggest Pro Surge-470 to a friend.</p> <p>Indicate the likelihood of each of the following actions:</p> <p>BI1: Likelihood of trying the product if seen in a store;</p> <p>BI2: likelihood of purchasing the product;</p> <p>BI3: likelihood of actively seeking out the product in a store.</p>

Petrova and Cialdini (2005)	<p>Indicate the likelihood of each of the following actions:</p> <p>BI1: likelihood of considering the vacation in the future;</p> <p>BI2: likelihood of requesting a brochure with further product information;</p> <p>BI3: likelihood of visiting the Web site shown on the ad;</p> <p>BI4: likelihood of visiting the advertised destination.</p>
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The questionnaire was divided into five sections and is shown in the Appendix. The survey started with the consent form where the participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and an approximate time the questionnaire would take to complete. The participants were informed that their participation is voluntary and they can withdraw from the study at any time without any need of explanation. Participants indicated their consent to participate by ticking the box ‘I give my consent to taking part to this study’. The second section consisted of a screening question to determine whether the respondent is an Instagram user, making the individual sufficiently knowledgeable to participate in the study since it was important that he or she is familiar with the platform's interface.

The next section introduced general information about the brand and the celebrity endorser. These questions are followed by a section that assess the respondent’s familiarity with the brand and the celebrity before this survey. The fourth section pertains to the proposed model constructs of celebrity-brand congruity, celebrity’s perceived expertise, celebrity’s perceived attractiveness, celebrity’s perceived authenticity, consumers’ brand attitudes and behavioural intentions. The final section included demographic questions, such as gender, age, region of origin, education level, income and frequency of social media sites usage.

Table 8 Questionnaire

Construct	Question	Nº	Measures	Reference
Celebrity-brand congruity	What do you think about Slick Woods, endorsing Fenty Beauty in the post?	1	Compatible/ Not compatible	Rifon et al. (2004)
		2	A good fit/ Not a good fit	
		3	Congruent/ Not congruent	
Celebrity's expertise	From the post above and the information provided in the beginning of the survey, in terms of cosmetics products, Slick Woods appears to be	4	An expert/ Not an expert	Ohanian (1990)
		5	Experienced/ Inexperienced	
		6	Knowledgeable/ Unknowledgeable	
		7	Qualified/ Unqualified	
Celebrity's attractiveness	After seeing the post above, I think Slick Woods is	8	Attractive/ Unattractive	Ohanian (1990)
		9	Beautiful/ Ugly	
		10	Classy/ Not classy	
		11	Sexy/ Not Sexy	
Celebrity's perceived	Have a look at the following social	12	Likes Fenty Beauty products	Silvera and Austad (2004)

authenticity	media post and indicate your level of belief that Slick Woods	13	Frequently uses Fenty Beauty products	Ohanian (1990)
		14	Views Fenty Beauty products as good products	
		15	Is trustworthy	
		16	Is honest	
		17	Is sincere	
Persuasion knowledge	Have a look at the following social media post and indicate your level of belief that	18	Slick Woods is trying to make me like Fenty Beauty products ^R	Van Reijmersdal et al. (2017)
		19	Slick Woods sells Fenty Beauty products ^R	
		20	Slick Woods is trying to influence me ^R	
		21	This Instagram post is advertising ^R	
Brand attitude	For me, after seeing the post below, the brand Fenty Beauty is	22	Unique/ Not unique	Peterson et al. (1992)
		23	Desirable/ Not Desirable	

^R Reverse coded

		24	High quality/ Low quality	
		25	Useful/ Not useful	
		26	Expensive/ Inexpensive	
Behavioural Intentions	How likely are you to consider or reconsider purchasing Fenty Beauty the next time you think about buying cosmetics products?	27	Very likely/ Very unlikely	Krishnamurthy and Sivaraman (2002)
	How likely are you to ask the salesperson about Fenty Beauty products the next time you visit a cosmetics store?	28		
	How likely are you to suggest Fenty Beauty to a friend?	29		

	How likely are you to check reviews regarding the Fenty Beauty products?	30		
	How likely are you to try this product if seen in a store?	31		McCormick (2016)
	How likely are you to visit Fenty Beauty social media page shown in the celebrity's post?	32		Petrova and Cialdini (2005)

Perceived authenticity is the degree to which people behave and emote consistent with their true emotions and internal states (Pillow et al., 2017). Since the existing literature does not provide any measurement scale for the perceived authenticity of social media celebrity endorsers, to create the measurement scale for this construct, two different constructs were combined: trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1990) and correspondence inferences (Silvera and Austad, 2004). Correspondence inferences are defined as ‘any judgment in which observers use an individual’s behaviour (e.g. an endorser saying that she loves Cheerio’s cereal) to infer congruent dispositions in that individual (e.g. inferring that the endorser actually does love Cheerio’s cereal)’ (Silvera and Austad, 2004). This definition aligns with the idea that if an authentic celebrity endorser recommends the product in social media, consumers expect her or him to really use and like it. The second component of perceived authenticity of social media celebrity endorsers, trustworthiness, refers to the ability to be relied on as truthful, sincere and honest individual (Ohanian, 1990). According to Moulard et al. (2015), authenticity signals to the audiences the truthful and faithful attitudes of a celebrity towards his or her fans as well as

towards himself or herself. Accordingly, in the context of celebrity endorsements in social media, an authentic celebrity is perceived as being truthful and honest about the products she or he recommends. Thus, the measurement items of correspondence inferences and trustworthiness were used to create the measurement scale for the perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in social media.

The research also required a measurement of behavioural intentions; 6 items from three different studies were combined in order to create the most suitable measurement scale for the study for consumer behavioural intentions based on social media celebrity endorsements. All the measurement scales were reviewed and approved by experts.

The survey was designed in the English language. The questionnaire was checked and validated by the supervisory team, two field professionals and the pilot test. The pilot study procedure and its results will be discussed in the section 4.9.2 of the current chapter.

4.8. Sampling

Every quantitative researcher aims to make statements about a population they are interested in, based on a subset of the target population, which is called a sample (Mellinger and Hanson, 2017). A sample is defined as a group of a population, which is chosen for the investigation for the study (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The sampling technique allows researchers to reduce the amount of data needed to those from a specific subgroup (Saunders et al., 2016). Malhotra et al. (2012) note that the sampling technique is an important element of any research design.

4.8.1. Target Population

The target population is a subset of a population on which research inquiry is focused (Kervin, 1999). The sample must be selected in relation to the population highlighted in the research objectives and research questions (Saunders et al., 2016). Since the research objectives are to investigate consumers' perception of the celebrity endorser's authenticity in social media, the target population for this study is social media users.

4.8.2. Sampling Technique

As a sample is a subgroup of a population, and the researcher must determine the method he or she will use to identify and recruit research participants (Mellinger and Hanson, 2017). As shown in Table 9, there are two broad categories of sample collection techniques: probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Saunders et al., 2016).

Table 9 Classifications of Sampling Techniques (Saunders et al., 2016)

Probability sampling techniques	Non-probability sampling techniques
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simple random sampling• Systematic random sampling• Stratified random sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quota sampling• Purposive sampling• Volunteer sampling• Convenience sampling

Probability sampling is defined as a sampling technique where the full list of the population is available so each member of the population has a chance to be selected and the researcher knows the probability of each one being selected (Saunders et al., 2016). Probability sampling techniques include: systematic sampling, cluster sampling, stratified sampling, and simple random sampling (Malhotra et al. 2012).

With non-probability sampling, the selection of the participants depends on the researcher's personal judgement, so some of the population have no chance to be selected (Malhotra et al. 2012). Saunders et al. (2016) explain non-probability sampling as techniques where a researcher does not have a complete list of the target population, so the research sample cannot be selected randomly from this population and the researcher cannot estimate the probability of each member of the population being chosen. Non-probability sampling techniques include snowball or volunteer sampling, convenience sampling, quota sampling and judgemental or purposive sampling (Malhotra et al., 2012; Saunders et al. 2016). Non-probability sampling techniques are usually associated with qualitative data collection methods, such as interviews and observations (Saunders et al., 2016).

This research used non-probability sampling techniques. In the pilot study, a non-probability, convenience sampling technique was used where the researcher selects sampling

units from convenient elements, which are easy to access and measure. Thus, the preliminary survey was distributed among the researcher's connections on the social media networking platform Instagram. For the main study, purposive sampling was employed. Saunders et al. (2016) define purposive sampling as a technique where the researcher judgementally selects the sample units based on certain reasons and premises. Thus, the researcher used her judgement to choose the sample that would best be able to assist in answering the research questions and meet the research objectives. Since this research focuses on celebrity endorsements on social media networking sites, it is essential to make sure that the respondents are social media users. Moreover, the questionnaire included celebrity endorser's posts from social media platform Instagram. So, the Instagram users who had reached 18 years old were selected to participate in the survey. The researcher recruited 653 participants using the Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk) programme in April 2018. The participants were paid \$0,5 for a completed questionnaire.

MTurk is a fast-growing method for online recruitment of survey participants (Casler et al., 2013) and commonly used in social media studies (e.g. Wakefield and Wakefield, 2018; Campisi et al., 2015). Mturk is an online marketplace, which allows a requester (employer) to post assignments for paid workers to complete online. In academia, Mturk has become a widely used method for recruiting participants to complete computer-based assignments. Mturk is significantly less time consuming and a much cheaper method for data collection than in-person lab-based testing (Casler et al., 2013). Studies suggest that Mturk participants are more demographically diverse (age, ethnic and economic background and country of residency) than homogenous college student samples (Paolacci et al., 2010) and then participants recruited via social media (Casler et al., 2013). Similarly, Casler et al. (2013) compared the survey responses of participants employed via MTurk, to a sample recruited via social media, and another recruited face-to-face at a college campus. The demographics of the sample recruited via MTurk was much more ethnically and socio-economically diverse compared to the samples recruited via social media and at a campus (Casler et al., 2013).

Regarding the reliability of Mturk as a tool for sample recruitment in academic research, it was also found that there were no differences between the results completed by Mturk workers online and the results produced by college student samples (Buhrmester et al., 2011; Sprouse, 2011; Horton et al., 2011) or to participants recruited via social media (Casler et al., 2013). Overall, Mturk workers showed results consistent with those obtained via traditional recruitment methods in various studies (Mason and Watts, 2009; Suri and Watts,

2011; Gardner et al., 2012; Eriksson and Simpson, 2010). Moreover, as slack performance of Mturk participants may result in reduction of their approval ratings, Mturk workers are motivated to take the time to complete the assignment adequately (Casler et al., 2013). Thus, Mturk is believed to be an optimal tool for sample recruitment for the current research study.

Furthermore, as it is important for this study to employ participants who are fluent in using the Internet and social media, and MTurk is considered to be an optimal platform for recruiting sample for this research. Unlike traditional recruitment methods, MTurk provides the filtering and sample selection control features (Steelman et al., 2014), which allows engaging the participants who are Internet and social media users, thus, eliminating non-optimal sample. In regards of workers' motivation to participate in the surveys, MTurk users pursue not just payment but also tend to acquire hedonic value from the experience (Kaufmann et al., 2011; Sun et al., 2011). Overall, MTurk is believed to be a reliable platform for recruiting sample for academic research (Paolacci et al., 2010; Buhrmester et al., 2011; Sprouse, 2011; Horton et al., 2011; Casler et al., 2013), and is optimal for the current research.

4.8.3. Sample Size

According to Saunders et al. (2016), it is important to engage a large sample in order to achieve reliable results. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) claim that 300 respondents are the minimum sample size acceptable for a quantitative research study. The pilot study of the current research employed 112 participants where 10 people participated in the interview and 102 people filled out the survey. As for the main study, the sample size was 653, which is believed to be large enough to provide reliable data. Initially, the target sample size for the main study was 600 respondents and received 677 responses. However, 24 responses were excluded because the participants completed the questionnaire too quickly, indicating a lack of attention to the task, or had too many missing answers, signalling that the study was not taken responsibly. The final sample was 653.

4.8.4. Instagram

For this research, Instagram was chosen as the social media site containing covert celebrity endorsements. Instagram is a free photo-sharing application for smartphones (mobile devices), which allows users to upload, edit and share pictures and videos with other Instagram users (Giannoulakis and Tsapatsoulis, 2016). The platform was launched in 2010 and gained 1 billion active users by the beginning of 2020, with 100 million pictures being uploaded daily to the site (99 Firms, 2019b). Also, 60% of registered users are on Instagram daily, including 38% who log in more than twice a day (99 Firms, 2019b). Instagram gives their corporate users a considerable freedom for the promotion of their brands, for example, celebrity endorsements, contests, or collaborations with other brands (Carah and Shaul, 2016). As of 2019, Instagram generated \$20 bn in advertising revenue, which is greater than the advertisement revenue of Google and Twitter in the USA (Forrester, 2020). Instagram has been ranked as a top social media platform in which marketers invest advertising (74%), while Facebook is in the second position (65%) (Forrester, 2020). Even though Instagram is one of the fastest-growing social media platforms (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017), academic knowledge related to this media outlet is very limited.

According to 99 Firms (2019b), Instagram users spend more time on Instagram than on any other social media platform, claiming that it is important to research this type of media. Celebrities have the highest number of followers on Instagram and they often use Instagram to deliver marketing communication messages to their audience (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017). For example, the Instagram profile of Kim Kardashian, one of today's most popular celebrities, reached 148m followers (Instagram, 2019). According to Thoumrunroje (2014), due to the increased popularity of social media and accessibility via mobile devices, electronic word-of-mouth on Instagram has become a very influential and persuasive source of information.

Instagram's increasing popularity among social media users as well as prominence as an outlet for celebrity endorsements compared to other social networks makes Instagram the best option for conducting this research. The celebrity selected is Slick Woods because she actively and exclusively uses Instagram, instead of other social media sites. The detailed explanation of why Slick Wood was selected to participate in the study is provided in the following section.

4.9. Procedure

The procedure of the current research study consisted of three stages. First, secondary research was conducted through the observations to identify potential celebrity-brand pairs, which would be used firstly in the pilot study and consequently in the main survey. Second, the pilot study was conducted to reduce the number of celebrity-brand pairs and select the most appropriate pair for the main study. The pilot study also validated the measurement scales of celebrity perceived authenticity and behavioural intentions created by combining three different measurement scales adopted from the extant literature. Finally, the main study involved structured online questionnaires.

4.9.1. Observations – Selecting a Celebrity for the Main Study

Influencer Intelligence is a digital resource that was chosen for selecting celebrities due to its high reliability and authority in the industry (Realwire, 2018). According to Influencer Intelligence (2017), social media influencers are as powerful in endorsing brands as traditional celebrities and are expected to become even more influential in brand endorsements. Influencer Intelligence (2017) proposed a list of 20 high profile celebrity endorsers of 2017, which was drawn from 60,000 worldwide celebrity profiles. According to the volume of endorsement deals signed within the year, the following 20 social media influencers were selected for the pilot test:

Bella Hadid, Kendall Jenner, Gigi Hadid, Tom Daley, Kim Kardashian West, Jasmine Sanders, Taylor Hill, Karlie Kloss, Sofia Richie, Demi Rose Mawby, Snoop Dogg, Charlee Fraser, ASAP Rocky, Sam Quek, Chris Hughes, Adwoa Aboah, Steve Aoki, Joan Smalls, Yara Shahidi, Slick Woods.

These endorsers include models, singers, athletes, and other public figures, who have enormously enhanced their popularity due to their social media activities and are found to be very powerful in brand endorsements. American models Jasmine Sanders and Slick Woods were selected for the pilot study because they appeared to be the only celebrities from the above list, who had endorsed cosmetics brands without disclosure of the sponsorship relationships with the brand as of the date the observations were conducted (23 January 2018). Other celebrities were either official endorsers in offline marketing campaigns of the brands,

collaborated with the brands in product development or identified that the posts were sponsored. For example, Jasmine Sanders was endorsing covertly only one cosmetics brand – Moroccan Oil, which is a hair care brand. Similarly, Slick Woods was endorsing cosmetics brand Fenty Beauty founded by singer Rihanna.

Cosmetics is the product category chosen for the study, since the level of consumer involvement is low, compared to high-involvement categories, such as watches and cars (Saeed et al., 2013). Low level of involvement is considered the most appropriate level for this research because the higher the involvement, the higher the impulse buying behaviour (Liang, 2012). Liang (2012) defines impulse buying behaviour as consumer behaviour generated by some negative thoughts about the purchase, such as risks related to the product quality, excessive waste of money, making unreasonable purchases and bearing uncertainty. Thus, to prevent biased results, it was decided to choose a product category with a low level of involvement. Also, celebrity endorsement is a common practice in the promotion of these products. Moreover, as the performance of cosmetic products cannot be instantly evaluated, recommendations are the very important driver in sales of this product category, compared to, for example, fashion products, where the product's appearance is more essential. Thus, several studies claim that perceived authenticity is essential in the social media content generation in beauty industry (Gannon and Prothero, 2016; Garcia-Rapp, 2017). Additionally, cosmetics brands include numerous famous brands, so the respondents are expected to have a high level of familiarity with them (Guthrie et al., 2007).

4.9.2. Pilot Study

According to Saunders et al. (2015), the aim of a pilot test is to refine and improve a questionnaire as well as to identify whether there are any problems that need addressing. The pilot study of this research was also conducted to identify which one of the two selected celebrities was more suitable for the main study research and to check the reliability and validity of the proposed constructs.

The pilot study of the current study had 2 stages. Firstly, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 consumers using purposive sampling to confirm that Slick Woods and Jasmine Sanders were endorsing the products in social media not disclosing sponsorship

relationships with the brand. During the interviews, all the respondents expressed their suspicions that the endorsements were covert and sponsored by the endorsed brands.

The second stage of the pilot study included a structured survey, which was reviewed by experts before distributing it to the respondents. Following the experts' suggested recommendations on the questionnaire design and wording the pilot survey was modified and set up through the online survey platform Google Forms. The questionnaire was distributed to the convenience sample through social networking platform Instagram and 102 valid responses were returned in the second part of the pilot study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections; one was dedicated to Jasmine Sanders and another one - to Slick Woods. Both Slick Woods and Jasmine Sanders have endorsed just one cosmetics brand each on Instagram. Thus, the pilot study included two celebrity-brand pairs: a) Jasmine Sanders – Moroccan oil and b) Slick Woods – Fenty Beauty. There was also a consent form in the beginning of the questionnaire where detailed information about the study was provided. Each of two sections included information about the celebrity and the endorsed brand, followed by 21 questions measuring celebrity-brand congruity, celebrity's perceived attractiveness, celebrity's perceived expertise, and celebrity's perceived authenticity. These four constructs were measured using the same response scales described earlier.

The data received from the second part (102 surveys) of the pilot test were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS 24). The results obtained from Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) showed a good fit between the data and the model for the celebrity endorser Slick Woods (DF=98, CMIN/DF = 2.759, RMR = 0,047), but not for Jasmine Sanders. Thus, Slick Woods was selected for the main study survey as a better candidate for the current research. The detailed explanation of the model fit coefficients and their acceptable thresholds are discussed in the following chapter.

Also, the reliability test based on 102 surveys showed a good consistency in measuring concepts. Thus, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients are presented in Table 10. According to Malhotra et al. (2012), Cronbach's alpha values between 0,7 and 1 are considered to be as significant, while values below 0,7 are believed to have an unsatisfactory internal consistency. The detailed discussion of a reliability test and acceptable thresholds of Cronbach's Alpha coefficients are also reviewed in the next chapter.

Table 10 Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Congruence	0.943
Expertise	0.721
Attractiveness	0.950
Persuasion Knowledge	0.797
Perceived Authenticity	0.712
Brand Attitude	0.902
Behavioural intentions	0.896

4.9.3. Main Study

The questionnaire was created on online survey platform Google Forms and recruited participants through crowdsourcing marketplace Mturk.

First, the Mturk requester account was created. To set up a HIT (Human Intelligence Task), which is a paid task for MTurk workers, some information must be provided, such as task title, description, keywords and question details. Additionally, several pre-settings were created, such as reward for completed survey, required number of participants, time allotted per task, and period of HIT availability. For an additional charge, MTurk offers requesters to set up filters that make the task available only for workers of certain categories, for example, according to their age, employability, online purchase behaviour and Internet usage frequency. This function was not used for the current research because screening questions helped to eliminate non-optimal participants. Further, the survey instructions were provided, where the study and its purpose are briefly explained. Also, the participants verified that they actually

completed the survey by entering a unique survey completion code provided at the end of the questionnaire. Thus, to get paid, workers had to provide the survey code on the MTurk website. Finally, the link with the survey on the Google Form platform was provided. The HIT had been available for the workers until the required number of responses was reached. Then the researcher manually accepted each of the responses according to completion time and whether the correct survey code was provided. If the time within which a participant completed the survey was significantly less than the average time of the completion of the current survey, the worker's responses were not accepted. This is believed to signify that the worker did not take enough time to read the questions and complete the assignment adequately. This could be explained by the respondents' intention to complete as many questionnaires as possible within the shortest period of time and consequently, to earn more money. Thus, such respondents were rejected and eliminated from the study. The time that respondents spent completing the survey was provided by MTurk.

4.10. Data Analysis Method

According to Sanders et al. (2011), quantitative data analysis is intended to process raw numerical data into meaningful information using graphics, tables, charts and summary statistics. There are various statistical analyses that can be used for quantitative data analysis. This research used the statistical software package SPSS and AMOS 24 to run the main statistical analysis tests, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and SEM based on responses from 653 questionnaires. Thus, the results of these tests will estimate the model fit.

Haig (2010) defines EFA as 'a multivariate statistical method designed to facilitate the postulation of latent variables that are thought to underlie – and give rise to – patterns of correlations in new domains of manifest variables'. CFA is a form of factor analysis that is used to test whether the data is suitable for hypothesis measurement model testing (Malhotra et al., 2017). Structural equation modelling (SEM) is a statistical technique intended to investigate relationships between independent and dependent variables, which can be latent or measured variables (Malhotra et al., 2017). SEM involves several statistical techniques, such as multiple regression and factor analysis and is based on the results of CFA (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). SEM is believed to be an optimal choice for the current research as it can specify

latent variable and produce separate estimates of relationships between the variables at the same time (Hu and Bentler, 1999). Another advantage of SEM is the ability to account for measurement error in the model, which traditional regression approaches cannot provide (Kline, 2015). Moreover, SEM can examine direct and indirect paths in a model (Kline, 2015).

4.11. Validity

Validity is the degree to which ‘differences in observed scale scores reflect true differences in what is being measured, rather than systematic or random error’. In other words, the validity of scale assesses whether what was meant to be measured is actually measured (McDaniel and Gates, 2010). In order to ensure high data validity, it is very important to make sure that the design of the research methods is accurate and legitimate, and the questions are not biased and do not lead the respondents in a certain direction (Gelo et al., 2008). There are several types of validity, and construct validity is used in the current study (Malhotra, 2012).

Construct validity refers to the extent to which ‘a measurement instrument represents and logically connects, via the underlying theory, the observed phenomenon to the construct’ (McDaniel and Gates, 2010). The construct validity can be tested through the following statistical measures: convergent validity and discriminant validity (Malhotra, 2012). Convergent validity is the extent of positive correlation among different measures within the same construct (McDaniel and Gates, 2010). While discriminant validity refers to the degree to which a construct does not correlate with other constructs that are supposed to differ (Malhotra, 2012).

4.12. Reliability

Malhotra (2012) defines reliability as ‘the extent to which a scale produces consistent results if repeated measurements are made’. Thus, reliability determines the extent to which the measurement scale is ‘free random error’ (McDaniel and Gates, 2010). Cronbach’s alpha or coefficient alpha is one of the most commonly used approaches for assessing reliability of scales in quantitative research. It is measured by averaging the coefficients of all possible combinations of split halves when splitting the items from different scales (McDaniel and Gates, 2010). When a value of the coefficient is 0,6 or less, the internal-consistency reliability

is considered as unsatisfactory, while a value of 0,7 and up to 1 is satisfactory (Malhotra, 2012). The reliability of the current research's scales was tested through the specialist software SPSS and AMOS 24, which are commonly used for statistical analysis (McDaniel and Gates, 2010).

4.13. Timeline for Data Collection

The data were collected in April 2018. The researcher received 677 responses within 3 hours in the main study. The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to fill out for the respondents including signing a consent form. Firstly, the participants had to accept their participation in the assignment on Mturk, then they were redirected to the survey set up on the Google Forms platform. After the completion of the online survey on Google Forms, the participants received a code, which they had to provide at completion in order to get paid for their participation. Each of the respondents was paid 0,50 US dollar for a completed survey. Participants could fill out the questionnaire only one time. The questionnaire included two screening questions to eliminate non-optimal respondents who were younger than 18 years old and non-Instagram users.

In total, \$406,2 were spent for the data collection for the main study. This included 0,50 US dollar incentive for each of the 677 responses (\$338,5) and additional 20% fee on the reward that was paid to the participants for Amazon Mechanical Turk service (\$67,7).

4.14. Ethical Considerations

It is very important to ensure that the conducted research meets all ethical requirements and does not cause any harm to its participants (Saunders et al., 2012). According to the standard social science guidelines on ethics, to prevent any possible harm to participants, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research and were provided with the general description of the study (Mellinger and Hanson, 2017). All the information provided to the participants is presented in the Appendix along with the final version of the questionnaire. Additionally, participants were informed of the inherent risks and benefits of participation and were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. Moreover, they were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could quit the survey at any time. The participants were also allowed to skip any question. All data were kept in a

confidential and safe manner and were used only for this research. No contact information was collected, such as email address, telephone number or name. However, the respondents were suggested to leave their email addresses if they wished to be contacted and receive a summary of the results of the study in a PDF. All the participants had first to give their consent to participate in the research project in order to start completing the survey. The ethical consent application was submitted by the researcher.

4.15. Summary

The methodology chapter discussed the research philosophies, methodological approaches and techniques used in this study to meet the research objectives. The research design was reviewed in detail as well as the questionnaire design and sampling technique. This chapter also presented the results of the pilot test and observations. All the methodological choices were explained and justified. Ethical considerations were also provided in this chapter.

In summary, this research adopted a positivist philosophy, deductive research approach and quantitative research methods. Both secondary and primary data were collected within the project. As for the sampling, non-probability purposive sampling was used in this study. In total, after eliminating invalid responses the researcher received 653 valid responses in the main study using Amazon Mechanical Turk panel.

Chapter 5 Data Analysis and Results

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the statistical analysis methods used to explore the relationships between celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity, perceived attractiveness, perceived expertise, celebrity-brand congruence, activated persuasion knowledge, brand attitude, and behavioural intentions. The data collected by the questionnaire was divided into two equal groups; the first half was used for Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), and another one was used for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

5.2. Descriptive Analysis

As described in the previous chapter, an online survey was posted on Amazon MTurk platform and participants who used the social media networking site Instagram were screened before completing it. Of the 677 completed questionnaires, 653 were valid. Table 11 presents the descriptive statistics of the sample.

Table 11 Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Valid percent
Gender	Male	334	51.2
	Female	310	47.5
	Other	9	1.2
Age	18-29	342	52.3
	30-39	239	36.5
	40-49	41	6.3
	50-59	23	3.5
	60-69	6	0.9
	70 and older	2	0.3

Region of Origin	Africa- Middle East/North Africa	3	0.5
	Africa- Sub-Saharan Africa	1	0.2
	America- North America	394	64.9
	America-South America	18	3
	Asia- Central Asia	2	0.3
	Asia- East Asia	16	2.6
	Asia-South Asia	119	19.6
	Asia- Southeast Asia	11	1.8
	Australia	1	0.2
	Europe- Central Europe	6	1
	Europe- Eastern Europe	9	1.5
	Europe- North Europe	7	1.2
	Europe- Southern Europe	2	0.3
	Europe- Western Europe	8	1.3
	Other	10	1.6
Annual Income	Less than \$14,999	112	17.3
	\$15,000-\$24,999	126	19.4
	\$25,000-\$34,999	123	19
	\$35,000-\$49,999	106	16.3
	\$50,000-\$59,999	65	10
	\$60,000 or more	117	18

Highest Education Degree Attained	Higher Education -PhD	11	1.7
	Higher Education - Masters	97	15
	Higher Education – Bachelor’s degree	341	52.8
	Further Education	121	18.7
	Secondary Education	76	11.8
Social Media Usage Frequency	1-3 times a month	22	3.4
	1-5 times a week	80	12.3
	1-3 times a day	22	3.4
	4-10 times a day	198	30.5
	More than 10 times a day	153	23.5

5.3. Demographic Sample Validity

The main screening criterion for the sample was the use of social media networks, particularly Instagram because this social network was used in the survey. Screening questions assisted in identifying potential respondents who do not use Instagram. The sample was 51.1% males, 47.5% females and 1.4% other and the key age groups were 18-29 (52.3%) and 30-39 (36.5%). As for the region of origin, most of the respondents were from North America (64.9%).

5.4. Reliability Analysis of Scale Items

According to Hair et al. (2010), reliability is defined as the degree to which a set of variables is able to produce consistent measuring results, free from random error. Reliability is measured by the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, which is a highly important statistic (Malhotra and Birks, 2007). According to Malhotra et al. (2012), Cronbach’s alpha values between 0,7

and 1 are considered significant. Thus, scales with values below 0,7 are believed to have an unsatisfactory internal consistency (Malhotra et al., 2012). Table 12 presents the reliability of the scale used in the thesis.

Table 12 Total Scale Score for Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
Celebrity – Brand Congruence	0.934	3
Expertise	0.922	4
Attractiveness	0.926	4
Persuasion Knowledge	0.772	4
Perceived Authenticity	0.932	6
Brand Attitude	0.874	5
Behavioural intentions	0.957	6

All the variables have values above 0.7, which is satisfactory. Hence, the scales used in the study have reliable internal consistency suggesting that the constructs are satisfactory for further analysis.

5.5. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

According to Pallant (2013), to assess the suitability of the dataset for EFA, the sample size and the strength of the relationship between variables have to be considered. It is believed that the larger the sample size is, the more reliable the correlation coefficients are among variables (Malhotra et al., 2012). Thus, to measure the factorability of the data, Bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test were used in this study.

For EFA, the size of the sample is very important as it influences the correlation coefficients and the reliability (Field, 2013). Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) and Comrey and Lee (1992) agree that the minimum size of a sample should be 300 but it also depends on how

many constructs are being tested. The sample size of the current study is 653, where 326 responses were used for EFA and other 325 for CFA.

5.5.1. Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Sampling Adequacy

Bartlett’s test of sphericity checks whether there are equal variances in sample populations (Pallant, 2013). It is believed that in order to proceed with the factor analysis, the significance value should be below 0.5 (Field, 2013). KMO is the index for measuring sampling adequacy, which should be between 0.6 and 1.0 in order to be considered appropriate for factor analysis (Pallant, 2013). Table 13 illustrates the results of the KMO test and the Bartlett’s test of sphericity. The results signify a good factorability of the dataset and thus considered suitable for EFA. The approximate Chi-Square is 8844.680 with 496 degree of freedom, and significant value is .000. The KMO index is .948, which also meets the minimum standards to run EFA.

Table 13 KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.948
	Approx. Chi Square	8844.680
Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity	df	496
	Sig.	.000

Tables 14-20 present the results of KMO test and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity for each of the variables.

Table 14 KMO and Bartlett's Test. Celebrity-Brand Congruence

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.768
	Approx. Chi Square	858.683
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	3
	Sig.	.000

Table 15 KMO and Bartlett's Test. Celebrity's Expertise

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.863
	Approx. Chi Square	1041.198
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Table 16 KMO and Bartlett's Test. Celebrity's Attractiveness

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.844
	Approx. Chi Square	879.087
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Table 17 KMO and Bartlett's Test. Persuasion Knowledge

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.757
	Approx. Chi Square	339.525
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Table 18 KMO and Bartlett's Test. Perceived Authenticity

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.868
	Approx. Chi Square	1586.432
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	15
	Sig.	.000

Table 19 KMO and Bartlett's Test. Brand Attitude

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.862
	Approx. Chi Square	875.722
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	10
	Sig.	.000

Table 20 KMO and Bartlett's Test. Behavioural Intentions

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.918
	Approx. Chi Square	1802.546
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	15
	Sig.	.000

5.5.2. Factor Extraction

Pallant (2013) defines factor extraction as a method for determining the smallest number of factors that could best represent the underlying relationships among a set of variables. While there are several approaches for this task, most studies use the principal component analysis, which is also set as the default extraction method in SPSS (Pallant, 2010), However, Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) suggest the researcher should try different methods in order to find an optimal solution. SPSS proposes the following extraction methods: maximum-

likelihood method, unweighted-least squares method, alpha factoring, image factoring, generalised least-squares method, and principal axis factoring (Osborne and Costello, 2009).

5.5.3. Factor Rotation

When the number of factors to be extracted from the dataset is clarified, the researcher undertakes factor rotation to simplify and clarify the data that results in factor loadings facilitate interpretation (Osborne and Costello, 2009; Pallant 2013). As with extraction, rotation also involves making a decision among a variety of options and there are two main ones: oblique and orthogonal factor solutions (Pallant, 2013). There are five orthogonal rotation methods, varimax, direct oblimin, quartimax, equamax and promax (Osborne and Costello, 2009) and, of these, varimax is the most commonly used method, which aims to reduce the number of variables with high loadings on each factor (Pallant, 2013).

5.5.4. Factor Loadings

Factor loadings is an output of factor analysis that shows the correlations between the examined variable and its factor (Pallant, 2010). Table 21 presents factor loadings values extracted from datasets.

Table 21 Factor Loading Values

Variable	Factor Loading Value
Congruence 1	.951
Congruence 2	.943
Congruence 3	.938
Expertise 1	.888
Expertise 2	.925
Expertise 3	.909

Expertise 4	.914
Attractiveness 1	.903
Attractiveness 2	.907
Attractiveness 3	.837
Attractiveness 4	.899
Authenticity 1	.839
Authenticity 2	.843
Authenticity 3	.850
Authenticity 4	.859
Authenticity 5	.850
Authenticity 6	.832
Brand Attitude 1	.802
Brand Attitude 2	.860
Brand Attitude 3	.871
Brand Attitude 4	.873
Brand Attitude 5	.705
Behavioural Intentions 1	.903
Behavioural Intentions 2	.907
Behavioural Intentions 3	.892
Behavioural Intentions 4	.885
Behavioural Intentions 5	.883
Behavioural Intentions 6	.876
Persuasion Knowledge 1	.818
Persuasion Knowledge 2	.624

Persuasion Knowledge 3	.842
Persuasion Knowledge 4	.768

According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), EFA factor loadings above 0.6 are considered as a norm. Table 22 shows that all factor loadings meet the minimum requirement. Thus, no items should be eliminated.

5.6. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

CFA is employed to assess measurement invariance, assess method effects, validate construct, evaluate psychometric properties, and test relationships between the latent variables (factors) and their structures (Field, 2013).

5.6.1. SPSS/AMOS 24

SPSS is software for running statistical tests and data analysis (McDaniel and Gates, 2010). AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) is an add-on to SPSS, which is commonly used for testing hypotheses about the relations between latent variables and their structures (Field, 2013). Thus, SPSS and AMOS 24 were used in this research project.

5.6.2. CFA Model fit assessment

The development of the conceptual model measuring the relationships among the construct was presented in Chapter 3 based on the Persuasion Knowledge model and Attribution Theory. Moreover, the existing literatures on celebrity endorsement, covert marketing and social media marketing were reviewed to identify the constructs before collecting the data. In order to show whether the proposed model is applicable to explain the relationships between the variables, it is necessary to examine the model fit and there are several measures to determine the quality and fit of the data to the model. Table 22 presents

the fit indices of the current research along with the suggested values for each index from the extant literature.

Table 22 CFA Model Measurements after EFA

	Fit Index	Value	Suggested Value	Reference
Absolute Fit Measure	Chi-Square	1792.884	P>.05	Field, 2013
	DF	443		
	CMIN/DF	4.047	<5	Field, 2013
	RMR	0.119	<.05	Lomax and Schmacker (2012)
	RMSEA	0.068	<.08	Lomax and Schmacker (2012)
	GFI	0.989	>.9	Lomax and Schmacker (2012)
	AGFI	0.982	>.9	Tabachnick and Fidell (2007).
Incremental Fit Measure	NFI	0.907	>.9	Lomax and Schmacker (2012)
	IFI	0.928	>.9	Byrne (2010)
	TLI	0.919	>.9	Hu and Bentler (1999)
	CFI	0.928	>.9	Byrne (2010)

To determine any non-optimal estimates in terms of the statistical significance of all the parameter estimates, such as probability, regression weights and standardised regression weights, the estimated model results were checked. According to Hair et al. (2010), the suggested standardised loading estimates are 0.5 and higher, however, 0.7 and higher are ideal estimates. Probability signifies the statistical significance of the coefficient based on the proposed hypotheses (Hair et al., 2010). If $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the coefficient is significant.

Figure 8 presents the model specification drawn in AMOS 24 showing the observed variables and latent constructs, which will be used in CFA and SEM. The model illustrates the scale items with its variable.

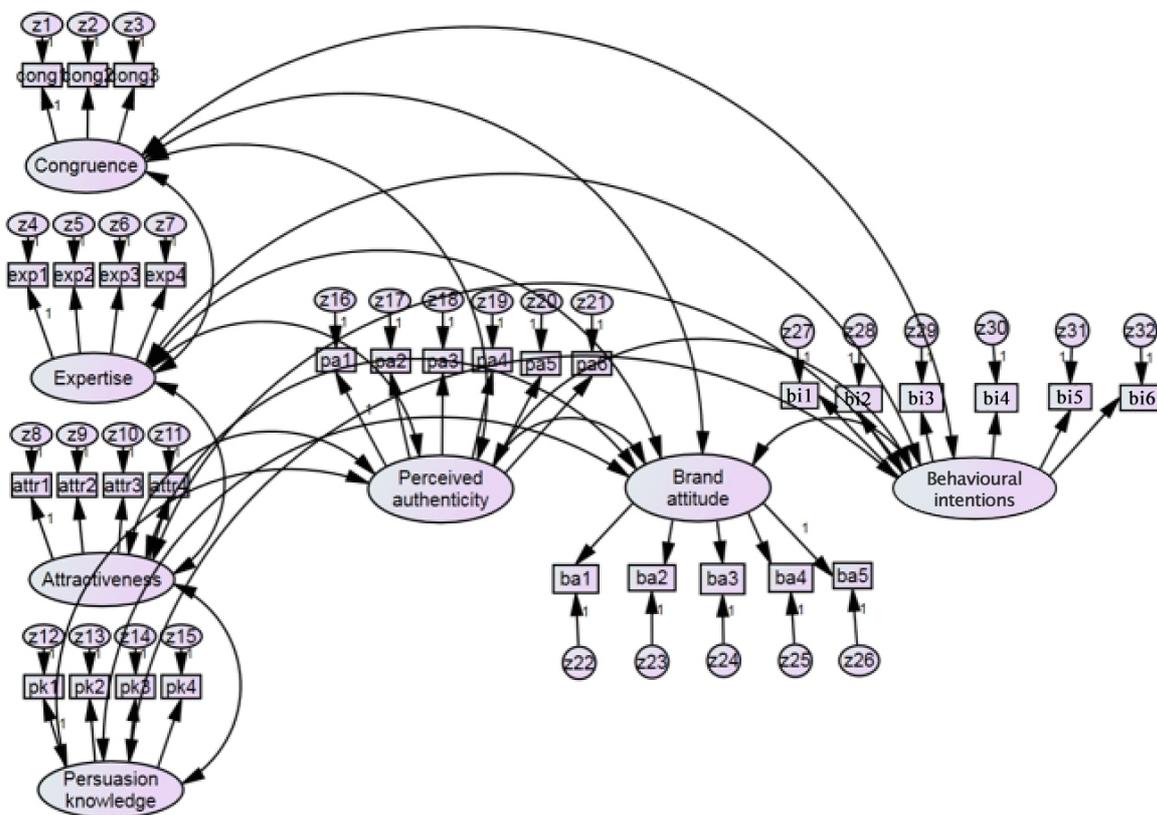


Figure 8 CFA Model Specifications after EFA

5.6.2.1. Chi-Square (χ^2)

Chi-square (χ^2) is a statistical hypothesis test, which measures the difference between the observed and expected variance and covariance matrices in one or more categories (Hair et al. 2010). According to (Lomax and Schmack, 2012), the statistical significance of the

difference may reflect the possibility that the difference occurs as a result of sampling variation. The threshold for Chi-square test is 0.05 and above (Field, 2013). Thus, Chi-square of the proposed model is 1792.884, which means that the model fits well.

5.6.2.2. *CMIN/DF*

The relative chi-square, or normed chi-square, measures the difference between the chi-square index and sample variations (Byrne, 2010). The range of suggested values vary from 2.0 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007) to 5.0 (Lomax and Schmacker, 2012). The degrees of freedom (Df) indicate the amount of available mathematical information necessary for the estimation of model parameters (Hair et al., 2010). The relative chi-square of the current model is 4.047, which meets the threshold.

5.6.2.3. *GFI (Goodness-of-Fit Index)*

GFI is an alternative to the chi-square test that estimates the ratio of variance, which is accounted for by the estimated population covariance (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). According to Lomax and Schmacker (2012), GFI values range between 0 and 1, and the recommended GFI value is above 0.90. GFI of the model is 0.989, meaning that the model fits well.

5.6.2.4. *AGFI (Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index)*

AGFI adjusts GFI by a proportion of the df of the proposed model to the total df available and takes into consideration 'differing degrees of model complexity' (Hair et al., 2010). AGFI values increase with the sample size and range between 0 and 1, where values of 0.9 and greater indicate a good fit (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). AGFI of the current model is 0.982 and indicates that the model fits well.

5.6.2.5. *RMR (Root Mean Square Residual)*

RMR is 'the square root of the mean of the squared residuals, or an average of the residuals' (Hair et al. 2010). The lower the RMR value, the better the model fit. RMR values range between 0 and 1, where the values indicating a good fit are less than 0.05 (Byrne, 2010). RMR of the proposed model is 0.119, which does not meet the threshold.

5.6.2.6. *RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)*

RMSEA is an absolute measure of fit widely used in SEM as a supplementary fit to correct any tendency of the chi-square fit test to reject models that have large samples or large numbers of observed variables (Hair et al., 2010). Therefore, RMSEA can estimate how well

a model fits the population (Hair et al., 2010).

It is believed that a well-fitting model should have a RMSEA value of 0.05 or less, while values between 0.05 and 0.08 represent an adequate fit, and values between 0.08 and 0.1 reflect a mediocre fit (Lomax and Schmacker, 2012). According to Hair et al. (2010), RMSEA works best for studies with sample sizes over 500. RMSEA of the proposed model is 0.068, which meets the adequate fit threshold.

5.6.2.7. NFI (Normed Fit Index)

The NFI measures the ratio of the difference between the chi-square value of the proposed model and the chi-square value of the null model (Hair et al., 2010). NFI values range from 0 to 1, where the value of 1 indicates the perfect model fit (Hair et al., 2010). According to Lomax and Schmacker (2012), NFI values of 0.9 and higher represent an acceptable fit, while values above 0.95 indicate a good fit. The NFI value of the proposed model is 0.907 meaning that the model shows an acceptable fit.

5.6.2.8. TLI (Tucker Lewis Index)

TLI is a comparison of the CMIN/DF values for the specified and null model that takes into consideration model complexity (Hair et al., 2010). The higher the TLI values, the better the model fit, noting that the values can be below 0 or above 1 because it is not normed, and that values approaching 1 indicate a good fit (Hair et al., 2010). The TLI value of the current model is 0.919, so it meets this threshold.

5.6.2.9. CFI (Comparative Fit Index)

CFI is an incremental fit index, which is an improved version of the NFI (Hair et al., 2010). CFI values range from 0 to 1 and the higher the CFI value, the better the model fit (Hair et al., 2010). Values that are equal to or greater than 0.9 indicate a perfect fit, and a value of 0 indicates no fit (Bentler, 1990). The CFI value of this model is 0.928, which indicates a good fit.

5.6.2.10. Regression Coefficients

Table 24 presents standardized regression coefficients for each variable. The threshold for the standardized regression weights of the latent variable is 0.7 and higher. Thus, all the weights presented in Table 23 meet the requirements of the test.

Table 23 Standardized Regression Coefficients

Variable	Standardized Regression Weights
Congruence 1	.920
Congruence 2	.886
Congruence 3	.916
Expertise 1	.851
Expertise 2	.874
Expertise 3	.839
Expertise 4	.891
Attractiveness 1	.920
Attractiveness 2	.898
Attractiveness 3	.766
Attractiveness 4	.900
Authenticity 1	.798
Authenticity 2	.773
Authenticity 3	.784
Authenticity 4	.866
Authenticity 5	.875
Authenticity 6	.888
Brand Attitude 1	.656
Brand Attitude 2	.827
Brand Attitude 3	.882
Brand Attitude 4	.895
Brand Attitude 5	.543
Behavioural intentions 1	.919

Behavioural intentions 2	.902
Behavioural intentions 3	.871
Behavioural intentions 4	.880
Behavioural intentions 5	.868
Behavioural intentions 6	.882
Persuasion Knowledge 1	.839
Persuasion Knowledge 2	.575
Persuasion Knowledge 3	.780
Persuasion Knowledge 4	.538

5.6.3. Celebrity-Brand Congruence

The model for celebrity-brand congruence is shown in Figure 9.

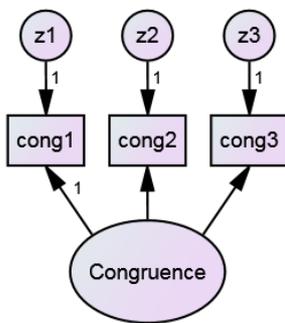


Figure 9 Celebrity - Brand Congruence. CFA Model

A CFA factor loading for celebrity-brand congruence is presented in Table 24.

Table 24 Congruence, CFA Factor Loading

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Cong1 = Cong	1.000			
Cong2 = Cong	1.006	0.041	24.603	***
Cong3 = Cong	1.034	0.039	26.306	***

5.6.4. Perceived Expertise

The model for celebrity's perceived expertise is shown in Figure 10.

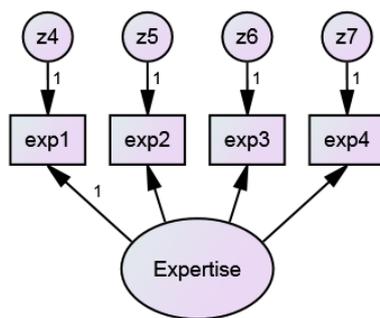


Figure 10 Celebrity's Expertise. CFA Model

Table 25 presents a CFA factor loading for perceived expertise.

Table 25 Perceived Expertise, CFA Factor Loading

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Exp1 = Exp	1.000			
Exp2 = Exp	1.064	0.053	20.193	***
Exp3 = Exp	0.947	0.050	18.876	***
Exp4 = Exp	1.097	.053	20.815	***

5.6.5. Perceived Attractiveness

The model for celebrity's perceived attractiveness is shown in Figure 11.

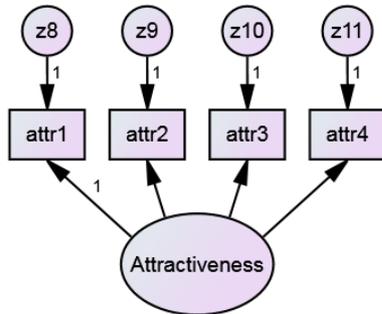


Figure 11 Celebrity's Attractiveness. CFA Model

Table 26 shows a CFA factor loading for perceived attractiveness.

Table 26 Perceived Attractiveness, CFA Factor Loading

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Attr1 \square Attr	1.000			
Attr2 \square Attr	0.954	0.037	25.707	***
Attr3 \square Attr	0.752	0.041	18.272	***
Attr4 \square Attr	1.006	0.039	25.852	***

5.6.6. Persuasion Knowledge

The model for persuasion knowledge is shown in Figure 12.

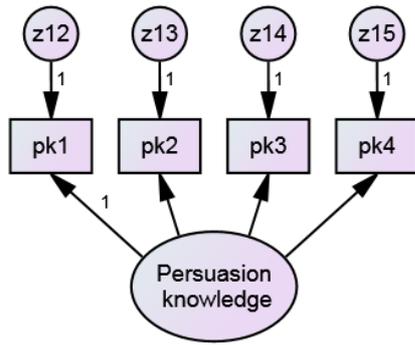


Figure 12 Persuasion Knowledge. CFA Model

CFA factor loading for persuasion knowledge is presented in Table 27.

Table 27 Persuasion Knowledge, CFA Factor Loading

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
PK1 \square PK	1.000			
PK2 \square PK	0.730	0.076	9.624	***
PK3 \square PK	0.908	0.075	12.101	***
PK4 \square PK	0.570	.063	9.015	***

5.6.7. Perceived Authenticity

The model for celebrity's perceived authenticity is shown in Figure 13.

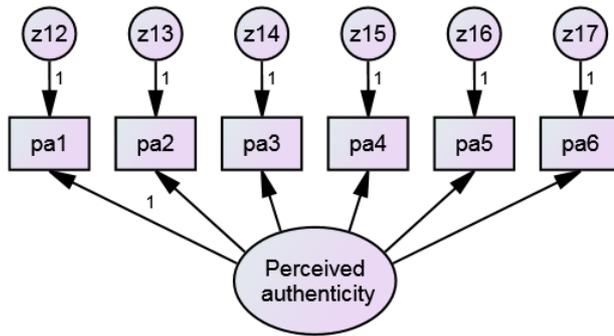


Figure 13 Perceived Authenticity. CFA Model

Table 28 presents a CFA Factor Loading for perceived authenticity.

Table 28 Perceived Authenticity, CFA Factor Loading

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Auth1 □ Auth	1.000			
Auth2 □ Auth	1.059	0.068	15.547	***
Auth3 □ Auth	1.004	0.063	15.841	***
Auth4 □ Auth	1.094	.060	18.147	***
Auth5 □ Auth	1.108	0.060	18.411	***
Auth6 □ Auth	1.110	0.059	18.808	***

5.6.8. Brand Attitude

The model for brand attitude is shown in Figure 14.

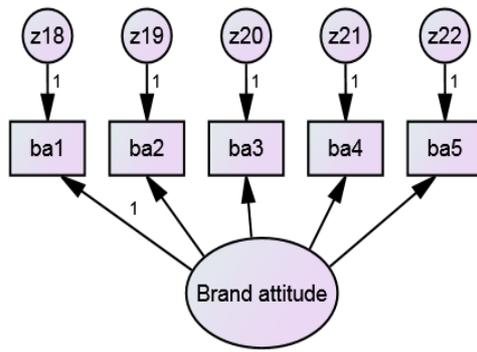


Figure 14 Brand Attitude. CFA Model

Table 29 presents CFA factor loading for brand attitude.

Table 29 Brand Attitude, CFA Factor Loading

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
BA1 = BA	1.000			
BA2 = BA	1.302	0.102	12.803	***
BA3 = BA	1.318	0.098	13.418	***
BA4 = BA	1.357	0.100	13.535	***
BA5 = BA	0.741	0.083	8.941	***

5.6.9. Behavioural Intentions

The model for behavioural intentions is shown in Figure 15.

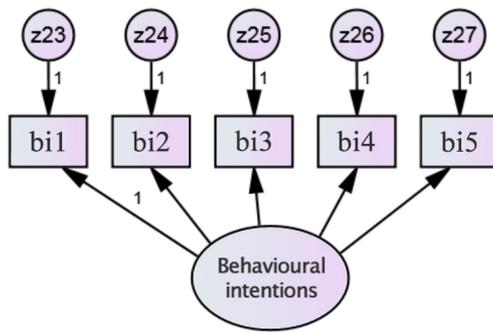


Figure 15 Behavioural Intentions. CFA Model

CFA factor loading for behavioural intentions is presented in Table 30.

Table 30 Behavioural intentions, CFA Factor Loading

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
BI1 □ BI	1.000			
BI2 □ BI	1.009	0.037	27.192	***
BI3 □ BI	0.994	0.040	24.700	***
BI4 □ BI	0.993	0.039	25.366	***
BI5 □ BI	0.990	0.040	24.516	***
BI6 □ BI	0.971	0.038	25.554	***

5.7. Construct Validity and Reliability

Hair et al. (2010, p.601) define construct validity as the 'extent to which a set of measured variables actually represents the theoretical latent construct those variables are designed to measure'. Lewis et al. (2005) name six measurement properties of construct validity, such as reliability, convergent, content, nomological validity, discriminant and factorial. Hair et al. (2010) suggest the following measures for testing validity and reliability in CFA: Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The results of CR and AVE of the suggested model are acceptable and presented in the following sections.

5.7.1. Reliability

Hair et al. (2010) define CR as a test that measures the overall reliability and internal consistency of a collection of variables. The suggested value of the CR threshold is 0.70 and over (Hair et al., 2010).

5.7.2. Convergent Validity

The convergent validity test was developed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and measures 'high shared variance among multiple measures of each construct, relative to the amount of variance due to the measurement error' (Batra and Ahtola, 1991, p.160). Convergent validity is measured through AVE statistics with a suggested value 0.50 or greater (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Batra and Ahtola, 1991). The results of CR and AVE tests are presented in Table 31.

Table 31 Summary of CR and AVE results

Variables	CR	AVE
Congruence	.93	.82
Expertise	.92	.75
Attractiveness	.93	.76
Authenticity	.93	.69
Brand Attitude	.88	.60
Behavioural Intentions	.96	.79
Persuasion Knowledge	.85	.59

The results show that the CR of celebrity-brand congruence, celebrity's expertise, celebrity's attractiveness, celebrity's perceived authenticity, brand attitude, behavioural intentions and persuasion knowledge are above 0.70. Furthermore, the AVE of all variables are

greater than 0.50, with celebrity-brand congruence the highest, at 0.82.

5.7.3. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity estimates the extent to which one latent variable accounts for more variance in the observed variables than measurement error or other similar external influence, and is different from other latent variables within the conceptual model (Farrell 2010).

A discriminant validity test is conducted by examining the AVE for each latent variable versus the other latent variables' shared variances, where shared variance represents the amount of variance in a variable or construct that can be explained by another variable or construct (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Shared variance is represented by the square of the correlation between any two variables or constructs (Farrell, 2010). The AVE for an individual construct should be greater than its shared variance with any other construct (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Table 32 presents discriminant validity tests for all constructs of the conceptual framework. The table explains the meanings of the abbreviations of construct names presented in Table 33.

Table 32 Discriminant Validity Analysis Results

	CR	AVE	CONG	EXP	ATTR	AUTH	BA	BI	PK
CONG	.93	.82	.91						
EXP	.92	.75	.66	.87					
ATTR	.93	.76	.65	.63	.87				
AUTH	.93	.69	.60	.68	.68	.83			
BA	.88	.60	.65	.68	.70	.79	.77		
BI	.96	.79	.43	.44	.68	.57	.64	.89	
PK	.85	.59	.51	.47	.39	.49	.53	.21	.77

Table 33 Description of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
CONG	Celebrity-brand congruence
EXP	Celebrity's expertise
ATTR	Celebrity's attractiveness
AUTH	Celebrity's perceived authenticity
BA	Brand attitudes
BI	Behavioural intentions
PK	Persuasion knowledge

According to Table 32, the AVE for each construct is greater than the correlation coefficients of each construct with the other constructs meeting the requirements of the test.

Because relatively high correlations among some variables were observed (0.79, BA and Auth), the variance inflation factor (VIF) value and Collinearity tolerance value were checked. The VIF is between 1.222 and 2.121, which is well below the conservative threshold of 5.3 (Hair et al., 2006). This suggests that the results of the regression model are not substantially influenced by multicollinearity effect.

5.8. SEM and Hypothesis Testing

SEM is defined as a multivariate statistical analysis technique for examination of casual relationships between dependent and independent variables (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007) based on the results of CFA (Hair et al. 2010). Figure 16 presents the structural model, which was developed based on the suggested hypotheses to measure the relationships between the measured variables and latent constructs.

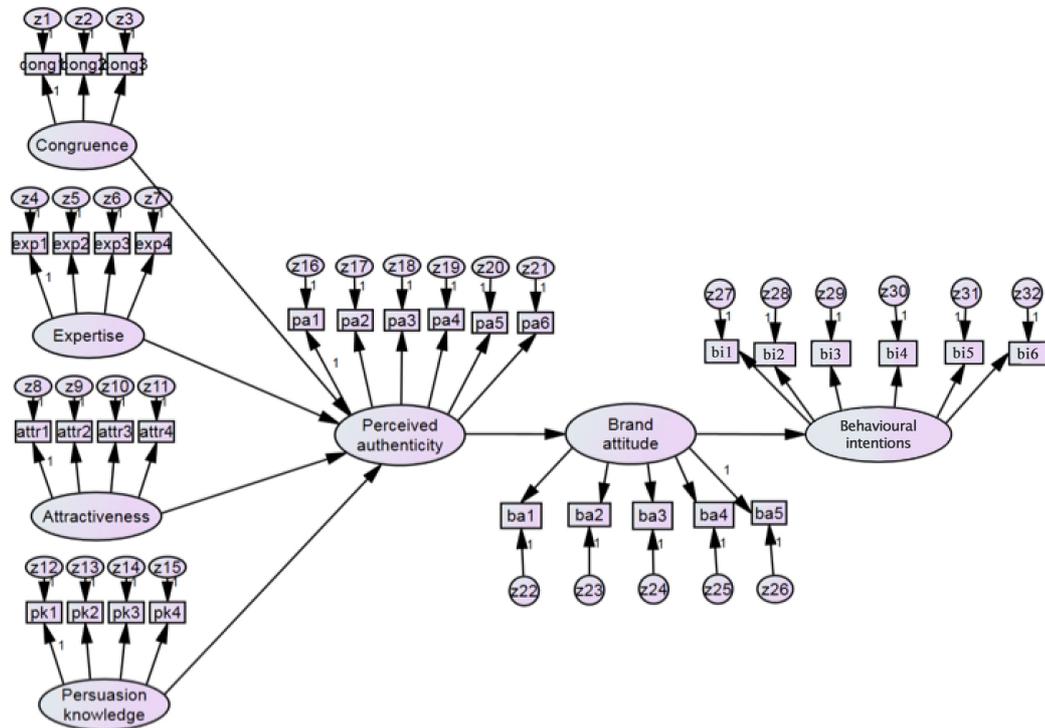


Figure 16 Structural Model

5.8.1. SEM Path Diagram Specification

A structural model was drawn based on the relationships indicated in the hypotheses in Chapter 3. Table 34 presents a summary of the hypotheses.

Table 34 Summary of Proposed Hypotheses

No	Hypotheses
H1	Activated persuasion knowledge will negatively influence a celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing products covertly in social media.
H2	Celebrity-brand congruity will positively influence a celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing products covertly in social media.
H3	Celebrity's perceived attractiveness will positively influence a celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing the attractiveness-enhancing products covertly in social media.

-
- H4 Celebrity’s perceived expertise will positively influence a celebrity’s perceived authenticity when endorsing products related to his or her expertise covertly in social media.
- H5 Perceived authenticity of a celebrity endorser in social media will positively affect the attitudes towards the covertly endorsed brands.
- H6 Positive brand attitude towards a covertly endorsed brand by a celebrity in social media will have a positive effect on consumers’ behavioural intentions.
-

5.8.2. SEM Model Measurement

To measure the SEM model fit, the researcher used the fit indices discussed before and used in CFA. Table 35 presents the SEM model’s values based on the CFA.

Table 35 SEM Model Fit

	Fit Index	Value	Suggested Value	Reference
Absolute Fit Measure	Chi-Square	1978.371	P>0.05	Field, 2013
	DF	451		
	CMIN/DF	4.387	<5	Field, 2013
	RMR	0.180	<0.05	Lomax and Schmacker (2012)
	RMSEA	0.072	<0.08	Lomax and Schmacker (2012)
Incremental Fit Measure	NFI	0.897	>0.90	Lomax and Schmacker (2012)
	IFI	0.919	>0.9	Byrne (2010)
	TLI	0.910	>0.90	Hu and Bentler (1999)
	CFI	0.918	>0.90	Byrne (2010)

Table 35 shows satisfactory values for RMSEA (0.072), NFI (0.897), IFI (0.919), TLI (0.910) and CFI (0.918) values are within the suggested range indicating a good model fit of SEM model.

5.8.3. Hypothesis Testing

To evaluate the hypothesised relationships, it is necessary to examine the p-values (Field, 2013). Thus, p-value below 0.05 ($p < .05$) indicates a significant prediction between the constructs, while p-value greater than 0.05 ($p > .05$) shows non-significant prediction (Field, 2013).

Table 36 shows that only five constructs have a direct effect, while one construct does not have an effect. Thus, activated persuasion knowledge, celebrity's perceived attractiveness and expertise have direct effects on perceived authenticity, while celebrity-brand congruence does not have a direct effect on perceived authenticity. Additionally, perceived authenticity has a direct effect on brand attitudes, and brand attitudes have a direct effect on behavioural intentions. The results of the hypotheses tests are presented in Table 36.

Table 36 Regression Weights for the Structural Model

Hypotheses	B	S.E.	C.R.	P	β	Result
H1: Activated persuasion knowledge will negatively influence a celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing products covertly in social media	0.155	.034	4.663	*** <0.001	.158	Significant
H2: Celebrity-brand congruity will positively influence a celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing products covertly in social media	0.21	.037	.632	.527	.024	Not significant

H3: Celebrity's perceived attractiveness will positively influence a celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing the attractiveness-enhancing products covertly in social media	0.329	.030	10.962	***	<0.001	.324	Significant
H4: Celebrity's perceived expertise will positively influence a celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing products related to his or her expertise covertly in social media.	0.324	.041	7.965	***	<0.001	.327	Significant
H5: Perceived authenticity of a celebrity endorser in social media will affect positively the attitudes towards the covertly endorsed brands.	0.807	.046	17.612	***	<0.001	.808	Significant
H6: Positive brand attitude towards a covertly endorsed brand by a celebrity in social media will have a positive effect on consumers' behavioural intentions.	0.272	.070	15.572	***	<0.001	1.090	Significant

***= p< .001

5.9. Serial Mediating Effect

A mediating effect is an intervention process of a related variables/constructs into the direct effect between two other variables/constructs (Hair et al., 2010). Essentially, the mediating variable facilitates the relationship between the other two variables or constructs (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). According to Hair et al. (2010), the most important condition for mediation is a significant correlation among the constructs. Hair et al. (2010) states that

mediation can be partial or complete, depending on the degree to which the mediator explains the relationship between the constructs. Serial mediation is ‘a causal chain linking the mediators, with a specified direction of causal flow’ (Hayes, 2012). Figure 17 presents the path diagram of the serial mediating effect, where X is an independent variable, Y - dependant variable, M1 and M2 - mediators. Path e shows the direct effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, while paths a, b, and c illustrate the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through both mediating variables M1 and M2. Also, paths a and f and paths d and c present indirect effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable through one of the mediators (M1 or M2).

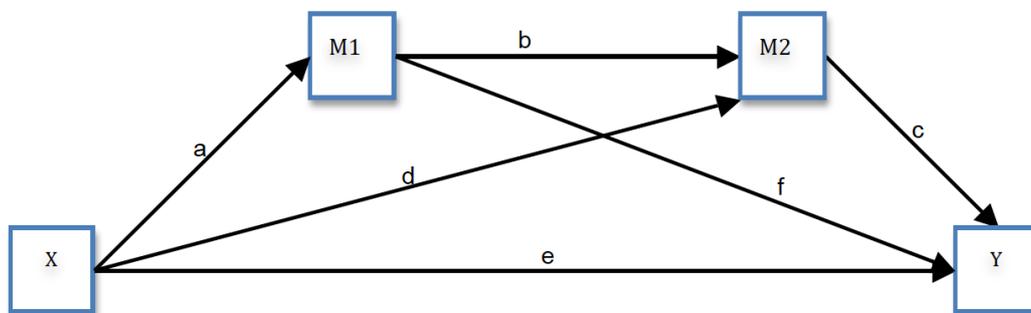


Figure 17 Path Diagram of the Serial Mediating Effect

To examine the mediating effect of perceived authenticity and brand attitude, Zhao et al.’s (2010) recommendation is to apply PROCESS model 6. As H2 was not supported, no mediation test for measuring the effect between celebrity-brand congruence and the dependent variables is necessary. However, the mediation results show that the influence of perceived attractiveness’s on behavioural intentions is partially mediated by perceived authenticity and brand attitude. Similarly, it was found that perceived expertise’s influence on behavioural intentions is partially mediated by perceived authenticity and brand attitudes. Finally, the influence of the activated persuasion knowledge on behavioural intentions is partially mediated by perceived authenticity and brand attitudes. The results of the mediation tests are summarised in Table 37.

Table 37 Path Diagram of the Mediating Effect

Independent variable	Mediator	Mediator	Dependent variable	B	T	P
Attractiveness	Authenticity	-	Behavioural intentions	0.07	17.66	<0.001 ***
Attractiveness	-	Brand attitude	Behavioural intentions	0.09	4.44	<0.001 ***
Attractiveness	Authenticity	Brand attitude	Behavioural intentions	0.12	4.50	<0.001 ***
Expertise	Authenticity	-	Behavioural intentions	0.23	4.14	<0.001 ***
Expertise	-	Brand attitude	Behavioural intentions	0.14	4.36	<0.001 ***
Expertise	Authenticity	Brand attitude	Behavioural intentions	0.23	7.07	<0.001 ***
Persuasion knowledge	Authenticity	-	Behavioural intentions	0.19	4.79	<0.001 ***
Persuasion knowledge	-	Brand attitude	Behavioural intentions	0.11	3.82	<0.001 ***
Persuasion knowledge	Authenticity	Brand attitude	Behavioural intentions	0.24	6.28	<0.001 ***

The analyses also investigate whether perceived celebrity–brand congruence has a direct effect on brand attitude and behavioural intentions instead of a mediated relationship through perceived authenticity. The results are presented in Table 38 and show that perceived congruence has a direct effect on brand attitudes, however, its direct effect on behavioural

intentions is not significant.

Table 38 Congruence's Direct Effect on Brand Attitude and Behavioral Intentions

	S.E.	T	P
Congruence → Brand attitude	0.02	8.38	<0.001 ***
Congruence → Behavioural intentions	0.05	-0.84	Not significant

5.10. Summary

The empirical results of the data analysis are described in this chapter. Firstly, the profile characteristics of the research sample were presented in the form of a statistical descriptive analysis. Then, the EFA was performed through SPSS and factor loadings values were extracted from datasets. This was followed by CFA and SEM, conducted using AMOS 24, which determine the measurement model. After CFA and SEM, the path analysis was carried out using AMOS 24 to test the proposed hypotheses. Finally, this was followed by a mediation technique, which was undertaken to examine serial mediation effects between the constructs of the proposed model.

According to the results, the measures employed in the research were acceptable and suitable, and the reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity of the theoretical measurement model showed satisfactory results. The theoretical framework proposed in this research was validated by SEM. The mediation test was conducted using Preacher and Hays's (2008) PROCESS model 6 showed that all paths are significant. The following chapter discusses the results and highlights the theoretical and managerial implications.

Chapter 6 Discussion and Managerial Implications

6.1. Introduction

The purpose of this research is to explore the factors that affect celebrity's perceived authenticity on social media, such as Instagram, in a marketing context to which the consumer is unaware. Nowadays, celebrities endorse various brands in social media without disclosing the sponsorship relationships with the endorsed company, which makes this kind of advertisement covert (Mandelberg, 2013).

With the rapid growth of social media, celebrity endorsers have become influential and powerful opinion leaders. By incorporating product appearances into their daily lifestyle posts, celebrities inspire their audiences' desires to possess the same products, which consequently affect purchase intentions (Hwang and Zhang, 2018). The recognition of the power and effectiveness of this marketing technique indicates the shift in marketers' focus from traditional celebrity endorsements to social media celebrity endorsements.

The phenomenal power of social media celebrity endorsements can be explained by the concept of perceived authenticity, which implies that followers' accept that these are truthful and faithful attitudes of celebrities towards these products and brands (Moulard et al., 2015). Therefore, consumers are more likely to respond to the perception of authenticity through increased purchase intentions (Loroz and Braig, 2015).

Based on Attribution Theory (Jones and Davis, 1965) and the Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad and Wright, 1994), this study proposes and tests a conceptual framework examining celebrity's perceived authenticity and consumers' subsequent attitude and behavioural intentions. The following sections discuss the implications of the current study for existing knowledge and theory. Second, the chapter provides a comparison of the research findings with previous similar studies.

6.2. Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to the celebrity endorsement literature and persuasion studies by providing a clear framework for examining the impact of a covert celebrity endorsement in social media. The framework integrates the persuasion knowledge model, meaning attribution theory, and findings from celebrity endorsement literature. The research framework incorporates theoretical elements of celebrity-brand congruence, source attractiveness, source expertise, persuasion knowledge, authenticity, brand attitude and behavioural intentions to provide a coherent model of the role perceived authenticity plays in celebrity endorsements in covert social media marketing attempts. Moreover, the theoretical framework details how these important variables impact brand attitudes and behavioural intentions. This study is the first one to integrate the relationships between persuasion knowledge, celebrity-brand congruence, perceived attractiveness, expertise, and authenticity of celebrity endorsers in social media.

First, this study makes a contribution to the marketing literature by applying Attribution Theory to social media marketing. Based on this theory it is presumed that consumers attempt to interpret a celebrity's behaviours on social media and determine whether an individual's behaviour is attributed to extrinsic pressure or an intrinsic motivation (Jones and Davis, 1965). In the context of celebrity endorsements in social media, the extrinsic pressure can be expressed in the form of monetary rewards or other forms of incentives, while intrinsic motivations are driven by internal rewards, for example, product benefits. In the covert setting where the sponsorship relationship is not disclosed, consumers are more likely to believe that the celebrity genuinely likes and uses the promoted product, and infer that the motive is intrinsic and driven by the quality and characteristics of the product. Thus, the current research expands the application of Attribution Theory into covert celebrity endorsements in social media. Despite the extensive use of attribution theory in celebrity endorsement studies, very few have added this covert marketing aspect.

Another contribution of this study to marketing theory is an application of the Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad and Wright, 1994) to social media marketing by examining consumers' evaluations of celebrity's brand endorsements. The results suggest that persuasion knowledge is activated, celebrity's perceived attractiveness and perceived expertise influence the celebrity's perceived authenticity that, in turn, affects consumers' attitudes towards the endorsed brand and behavioural intentions. Interestingly, this study finds celebrity-brand congruence does not significantly influence the celebrity's perceived authenticity.

Celebrity-brand congruence refers to an overall correspondence between the images of the celebrity endorser and the endorsed brand. Expertise of celebrity endorsers refers to people's perception whether he or she has enough experience and knowledge to support the claims made about the products made in the promotional message (Lee and Thorson, 2008). Thus, this study contributes to the literature on celebrity-brand match-up effects as most of the previous research focuses on traditional, rather than social media advertising. In addition, this study uses a well-established brand, while other studies use new or fictitious brands. Contrary to previous studies, the current research finds that the effect of the congruity between the celebrity endorser and the brand on perceived authenticity and behavioural intentions is not significant, however, the direct effect of celebrity-brand congruity on brand attitudes is significant.

Despite the extensive interest in social media influence marketing, very few studies have researched the perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in a covert setting. The study adds to the literature by showing that covert marketing in social media may be successful in terms of brand evaluations and behavioural intentions, if consumers do not recognise sponsorship relationships between the celebrity and the brand, and their persuasion knowledge is not activated. However, the opposite conditions generate opposite results. Once consumers recognise the celebrity's posts as advertising, the perceived authenticity of the celebrity decreases, leading to the lower endorsement effectiveness.

In their study, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) found that the awareness of the sponsorship relationships between celebrity endorser and the endorsed social media company does not decrease behavioural intentions. The authors explain that consumers believe that celebrities would not want to abuse their fame, reputation and position of power by sharing disingenuous reviews. However, the current study's results contradict their findings showing that consumers' suspicion of the sponsorship relationships between the endorser and brand negatively affects consumers' behavioural intentions.

6.2.1. Discussion of the Research Hypotheses

The current section presents, explains and discusses the results with respect to the research hypotheses, research aims and research questions.

6.2.1.1. Persuasion knowledge

H1: Activated persuasion knowledge will negatively influence a celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing products covertly in social media

-> Significant/Do not reject hypothesis

According to this study, consumers' recognition of a celebrity endorser's persuasion attempts negatively influences the celebrity's perceived authenticity in covert social media marketing. When consumers' persuasion knowledge activates, they perceive the celebrity endorser as less authentic, meaning less sincere, honest and trustworthy in relation to the endorsed brand, they recognise advertising motives. The activation of persuasion knowledge enables consumers to 'recognize, analyse, interpret, evaluate, and remember persuasion attempts and select and execute coping tactics believed to be effective and appropriate' (Friestad and Wright, 1994). The findings support the results of Evans and Park (2015), who claim that activation of persuasion knowledge generates a coping mechanism and, consequently, leads to negative brand attitudes. Since the majority of the extant literature on persuasion knowledge was based on traditional marketing, this research adds to the literature by applying it to social media marketing.

6.2.1.2. Celebrity-brand congruity

H2: Celebrity-brand congruity will positively influence a celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing products covertly in social media

-> Not significant/Reject hypothesis

Despite the vast number of studies confirming the strong impact of celebrity-brand fit on dependent variables such as brands' attitudes (Davies and Slater, 2015; Till and Busler, 2000), advertisement credibility (Levy, 1959) celebrity believability (Kamins and Gupta, 1994), and purchase intentions (Fleck et al., 2012), the current research showed no significant relationship between celebrity-brand congruity and the perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in a covert social media marketing setting. This finding challenges previous studies by demonstrating that differences exist. For example, previous studies confirming positive effects of celebrity-brand match-up particularly relate to new brands, rather than the established ones like Fenty Beauty, while others used fictitious brands, which may explain why the results

of this study do not support previous findings. Using existing brands, as in this study, allows the consumers to apply their prior knowledge and experience with the brands. In another study using established brands, Torn (2012) found that celebrity-brand incongruence results in higher levels of brand trustworthiness than the celebrity-brand congruence. As trustworthiness is one of the two elements of the perceived authenticity of social media celebrity endorsers (the second one is correspondence inferences), the results of the current study are consistent. Some other studies say that a mismatch between celebrity endorsers and brands can result in greater attention to messages (Lynch and Schuler, 1994). Torn (2012) claims that endorser match-up may limit opportunities for curiosity and interest in the brand, thus, incongruent celebrity endorsements positively affect brand attitudes and purchase intentions. Similarly, a poor fit between a celebrity and brand is found to encourage consumers to process the information more intensively with greater elaboration (Lee, 2000).

These findings are controversial in relation to other studies' results that support the match-up theory (Kamins, 1990; Davies and Slater, 2015; Till and Busler, 2000) that states that celebrity endorsements are more effective when there is congruity between the endorser and the brand or product (Kamins, 1990). This theory was just partially supported by the current study because celebrity-brand congruence did not show significant direct effect either on behavioural intentions or perceived authenticity, while it did show significant direct effect on brand attitudes.

There is one possible reason why this hypothesis was not supported. All the previous studies on celebrity-brand congruity and match-up theory were conducted in a traditional advertising setting, while this research was concentrated solely on covert social media marketing. The nature of these two marketing strategies differs considerably, but mainly because traditional advertising is known to be promotional content sponsored by brands, while in social media, the content might be either the celebrity's own content or content provided by the brand. Thus, consumers may have difficulties in recognising the commercial nature of celebrities' social media posts featuring certain brands or products, as there might be different motivations for such messages, including a genuine liking and usage of the endorsed products (Wood and Burkhalter, 2014). Therefore, the match between a celebrity and brand might not be significant for celebrity's perceived authenticity in social media marketing.

Also, celebrity-brand congruence did not influence a celebrity endorser's authenticity because, by default, fashion models are associated with make-up brands and vice versa, therefore, making them seem as a good match. Thus, such congruence does not necessarily

promise endorsers' perceived authenticity in their sponsored content.

6.2.1.3. Celebrity's perceived attractiveness

H3: Celebrity's perceived attractiveness will positively influence a celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing the attractiveness-enhancing products covertly in social media.

-> Significant/Do not reject hypothesis

The results of this study show that the higher the celebrity's perceived attractiveness, the higher his or her perceived authenticity when endorsing attractiveness-enhancing products covertly in social media. These findings support a study of Kahle and Homer (1985) stating that attractiveness of the celebrity endorsing attractiveness-enhancing products positively contributes to the endorsers' credibility and believability in traditional marketing. They explain their findings with Attribution Theory (Jones and Davis, 1965) stating that the audience might suppose that a physically attractive endorser who promotes an attractiveness-enhancing product is motivated to do so because the product contributed to his or her attractiveness rather than because he or she was paid for the endorsement.

In the current research, the concept of celebrity endorsement has been studied in covert social media settings, where sponsorship relationships between the endorser and the brand are hidden and, consequently, less obvious than in traditional advertising. In traditional advertising, consumers are aware of the sponsorship relationships between the celebrity and the endorsed brand. In social media marketing, however, because the sponsorship relationship may or may not exist, it is not clear whether the communication is the celebrity's own content or the marketers' content. Attribution Theory (Jones and Davis, 1965) better explains consumers' behaviour in covert social media marketing because consumers tend to make an internal attribution when they see correspondence between celebrity endorsers' behaviour and motives. For example, when a physically attractive celebrity promotes an attractiveness-enhancing product, claiming that she or he uses the product, the audience may presume that the celebrity recommends the product because it contributed to his or her attractive appearance, meaning that the nature of the product is the reason for the social media endorsement rather than any kind of incentives. Therefore, such attributions are believed to contribute to the celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity, which implies a strict coherence between what you

feel and what you say or do (Pillow et al., 2017).

The findings of this study are also supported by Cohen and Golden (1972) who found that a physically attractive communicator is more effective in delivering a persuasive message because the information is more likely to be accepted because consumers have a desire to identify with an attractive endorser. In the proposed framework, perceived authenticity plays the role of mediator in the relationship between celebrity's perceived attractiveness, brand attitudes and behavioural intentions. Thus, the findings show that a celebrity's attractiveness has a positive effect on brand attitudes and, consequently, on behavioural intentions, which is supported by the extant literature. Previous studies on celebrity endorsements in traditional marketing showed that physically attractive celebrity endorsers have a stronger influence on brand attitudes and behavioural intentions compared to less attractive celebrity endorsers (Kahle and Homer, 1985; Friedman et al., 1876; Petty and Cacioppo, 1980).

6.2.1.4. Celebrity's perceived expertise

H4: Celebrity's perceived expertise will positively influence a celebrity's perceived authenticity when endorsing products related to his or her expertise covertly in social media.

-> Significant/Do not reject hypothesis

This hypothesis was drawn based on the extant literature and Attribution Theory (Jones and Davies, 1965). SEM and factor analysis results of this study confirmed that a celebrity's perceived expertise has a significant influence on a celebrity's perceived authenticity, which, consequently, influences positively brand attitudes and behavioural intentions. Consumers perceive celebrity endorsers as more sincere and trustworthy in relation to promoted brands when he or she is perceived by the audience to be knowledgeable and experienced in the field of the endorsed brands. Slick Woods is known as a fashion model, which provides an obvious link with the cosmetics field. Knowing that fashion models deal with cosmetics products daily due to their work, consumers have a certain level of confidence in celebrities' knowledge and experience in this field compared to other product categories. Thus, having applied Attribution Theory (Jones and Davies, 1965), an expertise-based match between the celebrity endorsers and brands makes the correspondence inference clearer and the social media endorsement more logical. When the celebrity's expertise is congruent with the endorsed brand, consumers

assume that the reason for the promotion in social media is the nature and quality of the product rather than the sponsorship agreement. Consumers may believe that celebrities with a high level of expertise would not want to damage their image and expertise by promoting poor or low quality products. This attribution increases the level of celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity.

6.2.1.5. Celebrity's perceived authenticity

H5: Perceived authenticity of a celebrity endorser in social media will positively affect the attitudes towards covertly endorsed brands

-> Significant/Do not reject hypothesis

SEM and factor analysis results of the study confirmed that perceived authenticity of a celebrity endorser in covert social media endorsements positively affects the attitudes towards endorsed brands. Consumers' attitudes towards the promoted brands are more positive when the celebrity exposing the brand or products is perceived as more sincere, trustworthy and honest in relation to the endorsed brand or products. This supports all the previous studies on perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in traditional advertising, stating that the perceived authenticity of the celebrity endorser plays an important role in consumers' attitude formation process as people engage with the celebrity through a negotiation of authenticity (Dyer, 2003; Kowalczyk and Pounders, 2016). According to the extant literature, an authentic individual is an individual who presents him or herself truthfully and freely and whose behaviour does not change because of external pressures (Wood et al., 2008; Pillow et al., 2017). Based on this, an authentic celebrity endorser promotes brands and products in social media because he or she genuinely likes them and uses them. An authentic celebrity endorser recommends products because he or she sincerely believes that they are good rather than because he or she was paid to advertise them. Consequently, when consumers perceive that the celebrity acts inauthentically and is not being sincere in relation to the exposed brand, consumers may suspect that the brand has paid the celebrity for positive promotion; therefore, their attitudes towards the brand become more negative.

H6: Positive brand attitude towards a covertly endorsed brand by a celebrity in social media will have a positive effect on consumers' behavioural intentions

-> Significant/Do not reject hypothesis

The results of this study also support findings of previous studies about a significant influence of brand attitude on purchase and other behavioural intentions in traditional marketing (MacKenzie et al., 1986; Teng and Huihuang, 2007; Shwu-Lng and Chen-Lien, 2009; Shah et al., 2012; Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018). Previous research shows that in response to traditional advertising, people are more likely to make a purchase when they have higher brand attitudes. This research study looked at a brand that is covertly endorsed by a celebrity in social media and also found that brand attitude has a significant effect on consumers' behavioural intentions. This means that consumers are more likely to engage in the desired behaviour in relation to the endorsed brand when they have more favourable brand attitudes. In the retailing context, the desired behaviour includes purchase/repurchase, recommending the product, asking a salesperson about the product, reading reviews about the product, trying the product, and checking the brand's website/social media.

Brand attitude plays a mediating role in the relationship between the celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity and behavioural intentions. Unlike previous research that focused on the direct relationships between perceived authenticity and purchase intentions (Loroz and Braig, 2015), this study investigated the role of brand attitude as a mediator. The results of this study show that authentic celebrity endorsers who covertly promote products on social media, have a stronger influence on consumers' behavioural intentions than the less authentic celebrity endorsers, via generating higher brand attitudes. Consumers are more likely to search, try, purchase and recommend the promoted products when the celebrity who posts content about the products in social media is believed to be sincere, and truly likes and uses the products. Perception of authenticity of a celebrity endorser leads to the consumers' beliefs that the social media post is not a sponsored advertisement but the celebrity's own thoughts from his or her daily life experiences. Thus, perceived authenticity of celebrities recommending products in social media without a sponsorship disclosure has a strong positive influence on brand attitudes, which in turn, positively affects consumers' behavioural intentions.

6.3. Managerial Implications

The results of the current research provide some important managerial implications. However, these implications should be considered only in the context in which the study took place. Thus, they will be predominantly relevant in covert celebrity endorsements on social media, where the brand's sponsorship of the promotion is not disclosed.

The current study's theoretical framework integrates decades of celebrity endorsement research to provide a unique, up-to-date model for predicting the effectiveness of covert social media celebrity endorsements. As practitioners continually learn how to plan and execute social media campaigns, the findings of this research should give practitioners an in-depth understanding of how to select celebrity endorsers for their brand promotions in social media.

The framework makes important predictions for the effectiveness of covert celebrity endorsements in social media. It is recommended to carefully select social media endorsers for brands in order to improve the endorsement's effectiveness. First, the advertisers should consider celebrities whose perceived expertise matches the brand's product category. Thus, if the celebrity endorser is perceived by consumers as one who has certain skills, knowledge and experience in a product category of the endorsed brand, the celebrity will be perceived as more authentic, which is, consequently, found to positively influence on brand attitudes and behavioural intentions. For example, cosmetics products can be endorsed by fashion models because models deal with such products daily due to their work nature. Similarly, celebrity athletes can promote sportswear or sports supplements because they are supposed to know a lot about such products.

The second contribution states that overall celebrity-brand congruence does not affect the celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity, nor behaviour intentions. For that reason, advertisers can promote brands in social media through celebrities, whose accessible associations and attributes do not necessarily match the endorsed brand. The results show that the match between the celebrity endorser and the promoted brand does not have an impact on celebrity's perceived authenticity and, consequently, brand attitudes and behavioural intentions. The selection of potential endorsers should be greater, and the risk of consumer predictability of the brand endorsers, which leads to the boredom with the brand (Torn, 2012), is expected to reduce significantly. Therefore, managers involved in marketing communication for brands in social media without the sponsorship disclosure may disregard overall match

between the endorsed brand and the celebrity.

Measuring and analysing consumer perceptions of a celebrity endorser's authenticity is useful for marketing practitioners. Marketers and celebrities' managers can use the framework to assess the perceived authenticity of the celebrity endorser and predict the celebrity's influence on consumer behaviour in relation to the covertly endorsed brands in social media at any point in time. Such knowledge can be used for the construction or reconstruction of a celebrity endorser's authenticity. The celebrity endorser's authenticity can be used for brand development, positioning and building brand image. The attraction of the authentic celebrity endorser may encourage the audience to engage more in the celebrity's social media activities and to consider the endorsed brands.

Other findings of the study suggest that the celebrity endorser's perceived attractiveness positively influences the celebrity's perceived authenticity in covert social media marketing of attractiveness enhancing products. This suggests that when promoting attractiveness-related products on social media, such as skincare and make-up products, these brand should be paired with physically attractive celebrities. This would help advertisers to achieve higher brand attitudes and increase purchasing intentions.

The current study's results also claim that consumers' activated persuasion knowledge has a negative effect on the celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity and, consequently, on brand attitudes and behavioural intentions when it is covert. In other words, when a celebrity endorser promotes a brand in social media without indicating it as a sponsored content, but the consumers' persuasion knowledge activates so they suspect that the post has been sponsored, endorser's perceived authenticity becomes lower as well as brand attitudes and, consequently, behavioural intentions. This creates a necessity for marketers and celebrities to reveal the sponsorship relationship between an endorser and a brand, thus, not to use covert marketing in their social media practices. Gobel et al. (2017) found that the disclosure of sponsorship relationship between a celebrity endorser and a brand has a positive impact on brand evaluations under the condition of consumers' persuasion knowledge activation. Thus, managers should realize that if consumers believe they are subject to covert persuasion attempts, they may develop negative attitudes toward the social media post, the celebrity endorser and the endorsed brand. Dismissing consumers' defence mechanisms through covert social media marketing may generate distrust for the future celebrity endorser's social media activities as well as for the brand's both traditional and social media marketing communication. Practitioners should realize that by trying to overcome difficulties in reaching the target

audience and breaking the law, they are risking exacerbating the situation by creating consumers' distrust, which potentially may become irreversible.

Finally, the perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers has a positive influence on brand attitudes and behavioural intentions in covert social media marketing. Even though very famous celebrities may not be perceived as authentic, an authentic celebrity, even if lesser known, may have greater influence and success (Moulard et al., 2015). Thus, it is suggested that marketers use only the endorsers who are perceived by consumers as authentic in their social media activities. Celebrities are believed to be authentic when they maintain strict coherence between what they feel and what they say or do (Pillow et al., 2017). Thus, in order to increase behavioural intentions and improve brand attitudes, marketers have to ensure that consumers truly believe that the celebrity endorser truly likes and uses the promoted product, and sincerely believes that the product is good, and the celebrity should convey sincerity, trustworthiness and honesty. An authentic individual always acts and says what he or she really thinks and believes. Thus, such a message should be conveyed by celebrities endorsing products or brands covertly in social media in order to get successful results.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explore the factors that affect a celebrity's perceived authenticity on social media sites, such as Instagram, when consumers sense the celebrity is endorsing a brand covertly, and how a celebrity's perceived authenticity influences brand attitude, and brand attitudes in turn, influence behavioural intentions. Celebrity endorsement, persuasion knowledge and meaning attribution were reviewed to conceptualize the coherent and relevant empirical and theoretical foundations for the research.

The current chapter concludes the thesis providing overall conclusion and suggesting research limitations and recommendations for future studies.

7.2. Overview of Chapters

A summary of each chapter and its significance to the research project is presented below.

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the study and highlights the research objectives and research questions. The gaps in the literature were identified in Chapter One by underlining the importance of the covert aspect of celebrity endorsement in social media. Overall, the chapter emphasizes today's common and deceptive usage of covert celebrity endorsements in social media and highlights the need for more research on this marketing strategy.

Chapter 2 provides a critical overview of the literature on the core topics of the research problem. Thus, existing studies on social media marketing, covert marketing, celebrity endorsement and perceived authenticity are presented and discussed. The chapter also reviews literature on the variables to develop a coherent research framework.

Chapter 3 develops and discusses the research framework and hypotheses. The model integrates theoretical elements associated with attribution, match-up and persuasion knowledge to provide a coherent framework of effectiveness of covert celebrity endorsement in social media. The chapter provides an explanation on how the original variables of the Persuasion Knowledge Model (Friestad and Wright, 1994) were replaced with new variables, thus, adapting the model to the research context. Also, the chapter justifies the integration of Attribution Theory (Jones and Davis, 1965) into the framework and discusses how the model explains the relationships between the variables.

Chapter 4 presents the methodological approaches employed in this study. A review of the most suitable research philosophies, methods, strategies and statistical techniques is provided. This research adopted the positivism philosophy, deductive research approach and quantitative research methods. The questionnaire was designed based on previous studies. Both secondary and primary data collection procedures are discussed in the chapter. The justification of the sampling methods and techniques chosen is provided followed by a discussion of the ethical considerations.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the research data analysis. It described the process and results of EFA, CFA and SEM using SPSS and AMOS 24. The model fit measurements are provided showing satisfactory results. Also, the mediation analysis was conducted to estimate the indirect effect of the celebrity's perceived authenticity and brand attitudes on

behavioural intentions within the proposed framework.

Chapter 6 presents the detailed discussion of the research results and theoretical contributions of the thesis followed by the suggested managerial implications of the study. Additionally, summaries of each hypothesis were presented, highlighting the data analysis results and key findings.

Chapter 7 provides a research summary and its key findings. Also, the suggestions for the future studies are presented underlining also the limitations of the current research.

7.3. Research Limitations

Although this research makes contributions to the literature, there are several limitations that could be taken into consideration for future studies.

First, the current study looked at just one celebrity-brand pair. Thus, cooperation of one female celebrity model and an attractiveness-enhancing product was investigated during this research. It was presumed that authenticity of the same type of celebrity endorser might be perceived differently when endorsing brands or products of other categories in social media. Likewise, other types of celebrities endorsing attractiveness-enhancing products covertly in social media may show different levels of perceived authenticity leading to different endorsement effectiveness results. Also, the celebrity-brand pair used in this study is perceived as well matched. Thus, this might have affected the results of the rejected hypothesis.

Second, while the sample of participants might reflect accurately social media users originating from the USA, it is not representative of social media users worldwide. Because of the limitation of the Amazon MTurk platform, the research sample of the current study is highly concentrated in North America. Therefore, due to the cultural and geographical differences between US consumers and consumers originating from other world regions, the current study's findings cannot be generalized across all social media users. Because of the cultural differences, consumers from some world regions might be more resistant to persuasion messages compared to consumers from other world regions. Also, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions originated from different cultures might contribute differently to understanding of a celebrity's authenticity and its perception in these cultures. Thus, culture may affect the degree to which consumers' persuasion knowledge activates, and consequently, affects the perceptions of a celebrity endorser's authenticity.

Moreover, the current study did not look at the aspect of emotional attachment to the celebrity as well as the initial attitudes towards the celebrity, which could provide beneficial insight into consumer behaviour and attitude generation. Also, prior attitudes towards the celebrity might bias the results. It would be valuable to check whether attitudes towards the celebrity endorser affect consumers' brand attitudes, behavioural intentions as well as to evaluate other potential effects.

7.4. Future Research

One opportunity for future work is to account for cultural difference. It would be relevant to look at the consumers from other world regions and see whether there were any differences in consumer behaviours affected by cultural backgrounds with respect to attitudes towards advertising, and covert social media celebrity endorsements.

Secondly, it would be a valuable contribution to conduct a similar study using a number of other product categories and other celebrities within different specializations. For example, using actors, musicians, or athletes to see whether there were any differences in consumers' perceptions of perceived authenticity when these celebrities are paired with products from different categories or in different contexts. Additionally, it is also recommended to use celebrity-brand pairs that are congruent and not congruent to see if there would be effects on perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers.

A vast amount of the marketing literature is dedicated to electronic word-of-mouth, which claims that 88% of social media users trust peer reviews and recommendations (Solar, 2019). Thus, it would be relevant to test the proposed framework on social media peer endorsements. Knowing that non-celebrity social media users do not normally get paid by brands for promoting their products, consumers' persuasion knowledge might not activate. This, consequently, is expected to contribute to a higher level of perceived authenticity of peer endorsers. In these cases, the antecedents of peer endorsers' perceived authenticity might differ from the antecedents of celebrity endorsers' perceived authenticity, which would be a valuable addition to the research.

Since the study's findings are based on covert marketing, it would be valuable to conduct a similar study in an overt marketing context when the celebrity endorser discloses sponsorship relationships with the endorsed brand. Thus, it is suggested to investigate the effect of revealed persuasion attempts on the perceived authenticity of a celebrity endorser in social media. If there is no negative impact of the revealed persuasion attempts on the celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity, it would be interesting to discover if and why consumers still perceive the celebrity endorser as authentic if it is known that the celebrity was trying to influence them. It would be valuable to investigate how activating persuasion knowledge impacts the attributions consumers make about the motivations behind any celebrity recommendations. Further exploration of consumers' thinking may yield valuable findings.

Finally, future research can conduct a similar study using other social media platforms such as Snapchat, which is also commonly used for celebrity endorsements. The nature, settings and interface of Snapchat and Instagram differ significantly; therefore, it would be a relevant contribution to social media and the celebrity endorsement literature.

Summary

There is rising interest among academics and practitioners on celebrity endorsement effects. However, there are few empirical studies on celebrity endorsements in social media and, as far as can be known, none in a covert marketing setting. The research conducted within this study examines the factors influencing the perceived authenticity of covert celebrity endorsements and its impact on the endorsement effectiveness within the Instagram platform, drawing upon Attribution Theory and the Persuasion Knowledge Model. More specifically, the research explores the factors influencing perceived authenticity, which play a mediating role in relationships between those influencing factors and the endorsements effectiveness indicators of brand attitudes and behavioural intentions. This study is one of the first one to examine the relationship between persuasion knowledge, celebrity-brand congruence, perceived attractiveness and the expertise of celebrity endorser and perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in social media.

The perceived attractiveness, perceived expertise and persuasion knowledge of celebrity endorsers are of significant importance to consumers in the evaluation of the endorser's perceived authenticity in covert marketing. Findings show that physically attractive celebrity endorsers promoting attractiveness enhancing products covertly on social media are perceived as more authentic than less attractive celebrities. Similarly, the perceived authenticity is higher when the endorser is perceived as an expert in the product category of the endorsed brands rather than a less knowledgeable celebrity. The study demonstrates that activated persuasion knowledge decreases the perceived authenticity of celebrity endorsers in covert social media marketing. When consumers recognise that the social media post is supported by advertising motives and the celebrity's attempts to influence them, consumers perceive the celebrity as less sincere, trustworthy and honest in relation to the endorsed products or brands.

This research revealed that the celebrity endorser's perceived authenticity has a significant impact on the endorsed brand's attitude, and brand attitude, in turn, has a significant influence on consumers' behavioural intentions. Brand attitude plays a mediating role in the relationship between perceived authenticity and behavioural intentions. Thus, consumers are more likely to engage in a desired behaviour in relation to the endorsed brand when the celebrity endorsing the brand covertly on social media is perceived as authentic. In other words, when the celebrity endorser maintains strict coherence between what he or she

feels and what he or she says or does (Pillow et al., 2017), consumers are more likely to either purchase endorsed products, look for the products in the store, or read reviews online about this brand. In the given context, people are more likely to infer that an authentic celebrity makes an endorsement on social media because she or he believes in positive characteristics of the product rather than because of the financial compensation.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Consent Form

Dear respondent,

You are invited to participate in a study on consumer purchase intentions on social networking sites. This research is being conducted as part of PhD Thesis in Business Studies at University of Westminster.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. The data collected from the study will be used in aggregate and for academic purposes only, thus you will never be identified as an individual participant. All data will be stored in a password-protected folder in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Your opinion is highly appreciated. The questionnaire has been timed and it takes approximately 8 minutes to complete.

Should you wish to withdraw from this study, you can do so at any time and with no need of explanations.

Should you have any queries about this study, please do not hesitate to contact Ms Sabina Levitan (w1569109@my.westminster.ac.uk) who will endeavor to answer your queries.

By ticking the following box you confirm you give your consent in taking part to this study.

I give my consent to taking part to this study.

1. Do you use Instagram?

*Yes

*No

Please read the following information about the celebrity and brand participating in this study:

Slick Woods



Slick Woods, born Simone Thompson, is an American 21 years old fashion model, known for her bald head, gapped teeth, and tattoos. Woods is a part of the "Social Media Modeling" or "Instagirl" movement as she has around 481 000 followers. She has most notably modeled for Marc Jacobs. She has appeared in several international editions of Vogue and a campaign for Calvin Klein. She is featured in the 2018 Pirelli calendar alongside celebrities such as Naomi Campbell, Lupita Nyong'o, and Diddy.

Fenty Beauty



F E N T Y B E A U T Y

B Y R I H A N N A

Rihanna was inspired to create Fenty Beauty after years of experimenting with the best-of-the-best in beauty—and still seeing a void in the industry for products that performed across all

skin types and tones. She launched a makeup line “so that women everywhere would be included,” focusing on a wide range of traditionally hard-to-match skin tones, creating formulas that work for all skin types, and pinpointing universal shades. Most importantly, Rihanna creates makeup to inspire: “Makeup is there for you to have fun with,” she says.

2. Have you heard about Slick Woods before this survey?

*Yes and I follow her on social media

*Yes but I do not follow her on social media

*No

3. Have you heard about the brand Fenty Beauty before this survey?

*Yes

*No

Have a look at the following social media post and answer the questions that follow:



What do you think about Slick Woods, endorsing Fenty Beauty in the post? Using the following adjectives, please tick the number that reflects your opinion.

- | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| 4. Not compatible | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Compatible |
| 5. Not a good fit | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | A good fit |
| 6. Not congruent | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Congruent |

From the post above and the information provided in the beginning of the survey, in terms of cosmetics products, Slick Woods appears to be:

- | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|
| 7. Not an expert | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | An expert |
| 8. Inexperienced | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Experienced |
| 9. Unknowledgeable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Knowledgeable |

10. Unqualified 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Qualified

After seeing the post above, I think Slick Woods is:

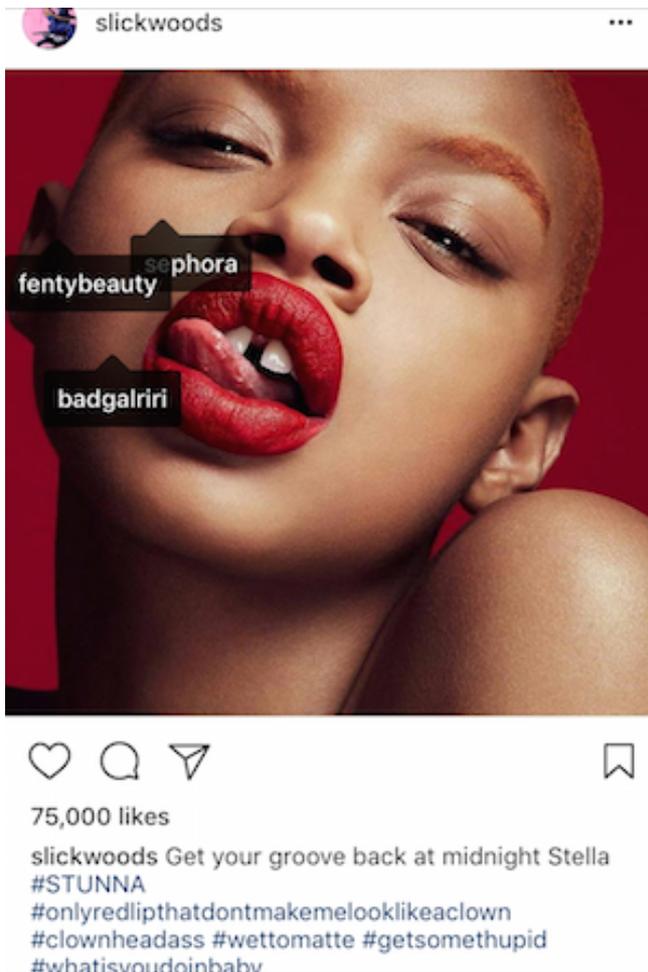
11. Unattractive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Attractive

12. Ugly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Beautiful

13. Not classy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Classy

14. Not sexy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Sexy

Have a look at the following social media post and indicate your level of belief that Slick Woods:



15. Likes Fenty Beauty products

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely likely

16. Frequently uses Fenty Beauty products

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely likely

17. Views Fenty Beauty products as good products

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely likely

18. Is trustworthy

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely likely

19. Is honest

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely likely

20. Is sincere

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely likely

For me, after seeing the post below, the brand Fenty Beauty is:



- | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| 21. Not unique | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Unique |
| 22. Not desirable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Desirable |
| 23. Low quality | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | High quality |
| 24. Not useful | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Useful |
| 25. Inexpensive | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Expensive |

26. How likely are you to consider or reconsider purchasing Fenty Beauty the next time you think about buying cosmetics products?

- | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------|
| Very unlikely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Very likely |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------|

27. How likely are you to ask the salesperson about Fenty Beauty products the next time you visit a cosmetics store?

Very unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very likely

28. How likely are you to try this product if seen in a store?

Very unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very likely

29. How likely are you to visit Fenty Beauty social media page shown in the celebrity's post?

Very unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very likely

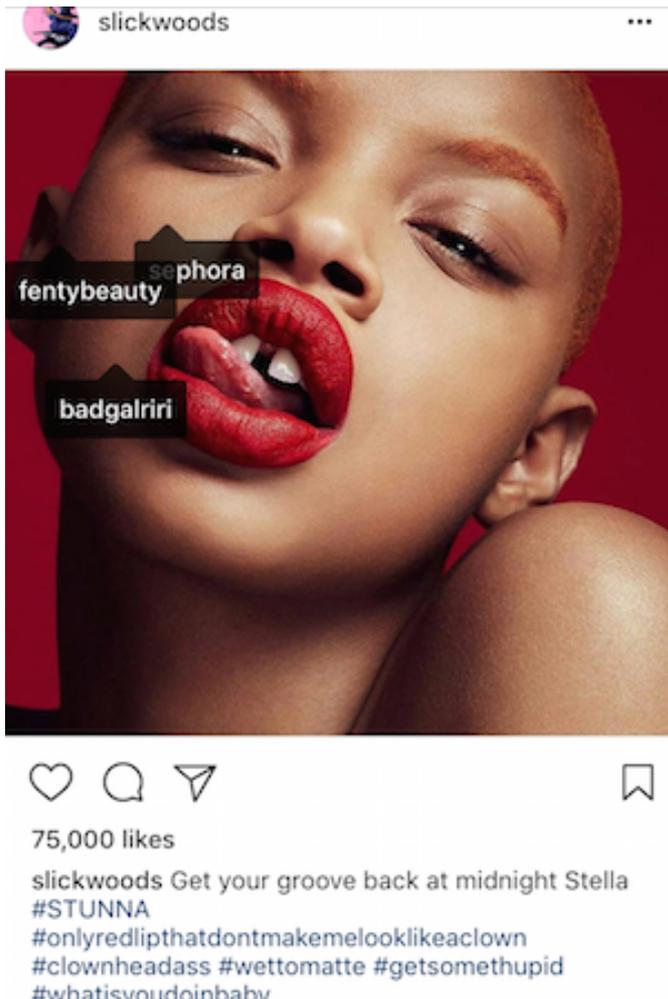
30. How likely are you to check reviews regarding the Fenty Beauty products?

Very unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very likely

31. How likely are you to suggest Fenty Beauty to a friend?

Very unlikely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very likely

Have a look at the following social media post and indicate your level of belief that:



32. Slick Woods is trying to make me like Fenty Beauty products

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

33. Slick Woods sells Fenty Beauty products

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

34. Slick Woods is trying to influence me

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

35. This Instagram post is advertising

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

36. What is your age?

- * Under 18
- * 18-29
- * 30-39
- * 40-49
- *50-59
- *60-69
- *70 and older

37. What is your gender?

- * Male
- * Female
- *Other

38. What is the region of your origin?

AFRICA

- * Middle East/North Africa
- * Sub-Saharan Africa

AMERICA

- * North America
- * South America

ASIA

- * East Asia
- * South Asia
- * Central Asia
- * Southeast Asia

AUSTRALIA

EUROPE

- * Eastern Europe
- * Western Europe
- * North Europe
- * Southern Europe

* Central Europe

OTHER

39. What is your annual income?

* less than \$14,999

* \$15,000-\$24,999

* \$25,000-\$34,999

* \$35,000-\$49,999

* \$50,000-\$59,999

* \$60,000 or more

40. What is your highest education degree attained?

*Higher Education – PhD

*Higher Education – Masters

*Higher Education – Bachelor’s degree

*Further Education

*Secondary Education

41. On average, how often do you use social media?

*1-3 times a month *1-5 times a week *1-3 times a day * 4-10 times a day

*more than 10 times a day

Thank you for completing the questionnaire. If you wish to be contacted and receive a summary of the results of this study in a PDF please leave your email address.

Email address: _____

