Fashion icons
Celebrities & Influencers

The attitude perception of consumers on endorsement strategies

Bachelor thesis for the degree in Fashion & Management under the supervision of Ms. Karen Bosch and Ms. Maaike Feitsma

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____________________________
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# Table of Content

- **1.0 || Introduction** 5
  - 1.1 Relevance of the study 5
  - 1.2 Purpose of the study 5
  - 1.3 Research question(s) 6
  - 1.4 Methodology and methods 7
  - 1.5 Limitations 9

- **2.0 || Fashion icons, Celebrities and Social influencers** 10
  - 2.1 Defining Fashion icons 10
    - 2.1.1 Identifying Fashion icons 11
  - 2.2 Defining Celebrities 12
    - 2.2.1 Identifying celebrities 13
  - 2.3 Defining Social influencers 13
  - 2.4 Conclusion 15

- **3.0 || The influential factors** 17
  - 3.1 The internet 17
    - 3.1.1 Social media 17
  - 3.2 The new era of bubble up: social influencers 18
  - 3.3 The power of Hollywood 18
  - 3.4 Models are becoming brands 19
  - 3.5 Conclusion 19

- **4.0 || Celebrity Endorsement & Influencer Marketing** 20
  - 4.1 Celebrity Endorsement 20
  - 4.2 Source model theories 21
    - 4.2.1 Source credibility model 21
    - 4.2.2 Source attractive model 22
  - 4.3 The meaning transfer model 22
  - 4.4 The product match up 23
  - 4.6 Influencer marketing 23
  - 4.7 Word-of-mouth marketing 24
  - 4.8 Developments of influencer marketing 24
  - 4.9 Micro-influencers 25
  - 4.12 Conclusion 25

- **5.0 || Celebrities versus Influencers** 27
  - 5.1 Celebrities' values 27
  - 5.3 Influencers' values 29
  - 5.4 Conclusion 29

- **6.0 || The attitude of the consumers** 31
  - 6.1 Focus group (analysis) 31
  - 6.2 Netnographic research 34
  - 6.3 Online perception 34
    - 6.3.1. Negative or positive? 35
  - 6.4 Conclusion 36

- **7.0 || Conclusion** 37

- **References** 39
1.0 Introduction

In order to attract more attention towards the fashion industry, fashion marketers have been forced to find creative and innovative ways to reach more consumers. One way of attracting more attention, is by implementing a celebrity endorsement strategy. For example, contemporary fashion brands gain quicker recognition as celebrities now put brands regularly into the public eye of consumers (Giordano, 2016). In addition, with the active use of social media, people have become more captivated with their preferred celebrities’ personal lifestyle. According to Carroll (2008), the fashion industry has been growing due to the use of icons and celebrities by fashion brands. Gibson (2012) conjointly claims that ‘the fashion industry of today would not be the same without its help of previous influential fashion icons’. However, research points out that a new type of third party endorsers have been arising and thus joining the contemporary fashion industry: the social influencers (Thornley, 2014). But what does the term ‘social influencer’ mean and how does this development contribute to the fashion industry.

1.1 Relevance of the study

Research shows that the notion ‘fashion icon’ has been fading due to the presence of media and an overload of style icons (Gibson, 2010). According to Gibson, the terminology ‘fashion icon’ needs to be redefined as there is a lot of ambiguity regarding this concept. More specifically, the fact that there is no general accepted definition regarding this term may contribute to that as many find the title ‘fashion icon’ unclear. Additionally, research has also shown that there are certain contractions between the notions ‘social influencers’ and ‘celebrities’ (Mediakix, 2015; Huffingtonpost, 2016; Hellenkemper, 2017). Social influencers, who are considered specialists, have built a community around themselves, hence created a huge following base (Wiedmann, et al., 2010). According to Fashion and Beauty Monitor (2016), the influential opportunities of influencers has not been unnoticed by the fashion industry. A research report by Fashion and Beauty Monitor (2016) has shown that approximately 21% of the Fashion and Beauty industry had plans to invest in influencers over the next 12 months. But in what ways does the use of a social influencer differ from a traditional celebrity?

Many marketing agencies along with media bureaus discuss the fact whether the use of an influencer is more effective than a celebrity or not (Mediakix, 2015). A subsequent number of articles that are recently published contain headlines such as: ‘Influencers vs. Celebrity’ or ‘Influencers are the new brands’. In addition, all publishing dates date from January 2016 onward till present-day. This means this is considered a recent issue in the marketing world, as there is also no drawn conclusion whether one is better than the other. For businesses, it is important to understand these differences and similarities. Implying these individuals strategically can enhance a companies’ future marketing communication strategy as well as help brands in a decision-making process. By examining and researching the different notions, in-depth information will be acquired which will help create more coherence between the different subjects thus tighten the gap for companies between research and practical knowledge.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The aim of this research is to acquaint data which will help give fashion businesses insights into how they can imply public figures strategically into their marketing communication strategy. By gathering information regarding the different notions, the use of a traditional celebrity can be distinguished from the use of a social influencer as a marketing tool. This thesis will furthermore provide
information about if the use of an iconic figure by fashion brands has become a necessarily aspect for fashion consumers. The final product of this thesis will be an opinionated article written for an online platform Business of Fashion. Business Off Fashion delivers fashion news, analysis and business intelligence from the leading digital authority on the global fashion industry (Business of Fashion, 2017). This platform has been chosen in order to reach a big audience and professionals within the fashion industry. By representing this article, I tend to reach (global) fashion businesses as this is a popular online platform within the fashion industry with global reach over 200 different countries.

1.3 Research question(s)

The discussion above has led to the following research question:

“What perception do consumers have towards the usage of fashion icons by fashion brands?”

Consecutively, the sub questions below are composed to support and answer the main research question.

1. What are the differences and similarities between fashion icons, celebrities and social influencers?

2. What factors have led to the rise in popularity of the use icons, celebrities and social influencers by fashion brands?

3. What marketing and communication strategies – which include icons, celebrities or social influencers – are currently used by fashion brands?

4. What added value does the use of a fashion icon create for fashion brands and how does the use of an influencer differ from the use of a traditional celebrity?

5. What is the attitude of consumers towards these endorsement strategies used by fashion brands?
1.4 Methodology and methods

1. What are the differences and similarities between fashion icons, celebrities and social influencers?

**Secondary Research:**
1. *(External) Online desk-research* has been applied in order to gather more information regarding these concepts. All consulted information was acquired from online marketing platforms, dictionaries or from literature. However, in order to grasp more in-depth information regarding the concerned subjects, academic papers of Universities in the Marketing and Advertisement department were consulted.

**Primary Research:**
2. A 10-questioned *consumer survey* has been composed in order to answer the first sub-question. The composed survey has made it able to reach a substantial number of participants in order to obey the conception and idea society has about these notions. In total, the survey has been filled in by 128 respondents. Research claims that surveys which are short, to the point and as clear as possible result in a higher and more accurate response rate (Benchmark, 2016). The same survey has also contributed to sub-question 5, whereas the main goal was to unveil the attitude of fashion consumers towards fashion brands who use iconic figures.
3. By organising two *focus groups* a deeper insight has been created regarding the differences and similarities between these notions. However, an important thing to note is that the method focus groups is not the main methodology for sub-question 1 but for sub-question 5.

2. What factors have led to the rise in popularity of the use icons, celebrities and social influencers by fashion brands?

**Secondary Research:**
1. For this sub-question both primary as well as secondary research has been applied. Within secondary research mostly *(external) desk research* has been practiced. In comparison to previous research question, this sub-question merely relies on online retrieved information. Literature such as Shimp, 2007; Agins, 1999 and Gibson, 2012 has been conducted.

**Primary Research:**
2. On the 18th of May, a *semi-structured interview* has been held with Megan Rochebrune, Marketing Operator of Hunkemöller. On the 12th of June, a *semi-structured interview* has been held with Daisy van Gend, Marketing Coördinator of Tommy Hilfiger. Both interviews have helped gain more in-depth information about the use of iconic figures in advertisements. Hunkemöller and Tommy Hilfiger have both been chosen based on their continuous collaboration with either celebrities or (social) influencers. The retrieved information has also been used for sub-question 4. The focus of this interview relied on collecting information about why Hunkemöller and Tommy Hilfiger continuously choose to work with public figures.
3. What marketing and communication strategies – which include icons, celebrities or social influencers – are currently used by fashion brands?

Secondary Research:

1. The third sub-question will in particular only focus on celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing. Both marketing communication strategies concern endorsement strategies. However, as the use of a traditional celebrity is not a recent phenomenon, earlier done research (e.g. academic papers) shall be conducted and reviewed. However, as there is not as many research been done regarding influencer marketing mostly blogs, marketing platforms and media websites have been visited to gather in-depth information. The methodology applied for this sub-question is (external) online desk-research.

Primary Research:

2. On the March 23 2017, a semi-structured interview has been held with social media influencer Widya van der Heijden. By interviewing influencers more in-depth information regarding influencer marketing has been gained. In addition, retrieving information from a different point of view also led into gaining more alternative data from the endorsers point of view rather than the brand. By interviewing influencers, additional information such as the evolution process of influencer marketing has been highlighted.

4. What added value does the use of a fashion icon create for fashion brands?

Secondary Research:

1. In order to identify the added value of fashion icons, the advantages as well as disadvantages of both strategies have been analysed to occur their differences. In order to retrieve information concerning celebrity endorsement, mostly academic articles (e.g. Silvera & Austad, 2004; Agrawal & Kamakura 1995; Louie & Obermiller, 2002) have been conducted. However, regarding influencer marketing more information has been acquired by visiting online marketing platforms, media websites and articles on Business off Fashion, Fashion United and WGSN. Both concern the method content analysis. By bringing both quantitative and qualitative data together, the reliability and validity of the results shall be enhanced.

Primary Research:

2. As previous research question has highlighted the different endorsement strategies, this sub-question will go onward into unveiling the differences between a traditional celebrity and social influencer. In order to answer the main research question, retrieved information from the semi-structured interview with Megan Rochebrune shall be disclosed. In order to discover the added value of a fashion icon, information has been acquired about how the use of a celebrity (e.g Sylvie Meis) differs from an influencer (e.g. Anna Nooshin).

3. On the 12th of June, a semi-structured interview has been held with Daisy van Gend, Marketing CoÖrdinator of Tommy Hilfiger. Celebrity Endorsement is a well-known area for Tommy Hilfiger, as they are now working with supermodel Gigi Hadid and American DJ’s The Chainsmokers as their brand ambassadors.
5. What is the attitude of consumers towards fashion icons used by fashion brands?

**Primary Research:**

7. In order to identify the attitude of consumers towards the usage of icons by fashion brands, a qualitative research method **focus group** has been chosen. The focus group enabled a deeper understanding of the target group and purchasing motivations thus created an insight into their perception of celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing. Additionally, research claims that females between the ages 18 – 23 are the most persuasive for celebrity advertisements (Fashion and Beauty Monitor, 2016). With this in consideration two focus groups have been composed in order to gain a broader insight into the different ages. Group 1 was conducted on April 9, 2017, and differed from the ages 22 – 26. Group 2 was conducted on May 9, and differed from the ages 18 – 21. The participants have first been chosen based on their preferences an interest in fashion and been divided in two different groups by age. All participants often visit fashion related events such as Vogue Fashion Night Out, Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week and Influencers’ closets sale.

5. Besides conducting two focus groups also **netnographical research** has been applied. The methodology netnography will help deliver more internet retrieved insights. However, an important thing to note is that the data which has been collected acquires more quantitative research than qualitative. By using netnography as a research method, a lot of opinions, brand awareness, customer profiling and customer behaviour data will be gathered. According to Kozinets (1998), netnography has four different categories: auto, symbolic, humanist and digital. The type of netnography that has been applied within this final thesis is: symbolic netnography\(^1\). As celebrity advertisements can obey much public attention, this research method has been chosen to seek individuals’ opinions, reviews and behaviour concerning the research topic. The tools that have been used are Twitter Search, Facebook Search and visitations of fashion forums (e.g. The Fashion Spot). The phases that have been conducted while executing the research are: the investigation phase, inspection phase, indexing phase and integration phase.

1.5 Limitations

The following limitations were found during the execution phase of this thesis.

1. All restricted information into brands’ financial data, marketing and communication spending.
2. Limited scope of view regarding the conducted consumer survey. In total 128 respondents.
3. Limited scope of view during conducted interviews with Hunkemöller and Tommy Hilfiger. This was due to restricted confidential information.
4. Limited scope of view of influencer marketing as only 1 influencer has been interviewed.

Finally, the (research) report and conclusion that will draw at the end of the process is based on the information that has been available.

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\(^1\) Symbolic netnography is one of the most commonly used version of netnography which utilizes information of social media and seeks interactions to render identities on websites or around individuals to inform business decision making.
In order to answer the main research question, it is first important to identify the individuals whom referred to when using these notions. By acquiring information and obtaining relevant data, differences as well as similarities have been compiled. The criteria which will be mentioned throughout this chapter, will help businesses distinguish one concept from the other. Throughout this chapter an occurred structure will be formed as each notion has been defined separately. By the end of this chapter the reader will have a collected information base which will lead into better insights of this research paper.

### 2.1 Defining Fashion icons

According to Friedman (2014), the title *fashion icon* needs to be re-discussed. In 2014 the Rock and Hall of Fame exhibited the iconic Beyoncé costumes. In response to this, Friedman argued that Beyoncé may be a pop culture icon but does not actually merit the title of a real fashion icon. Subsequently, Allison Davis mentioned that the notion *fashion icon* should stop being so narrow and inaccessible as it currently is these days. Davis thinks that it should be about more than just wearing the most avant-garde or fresh-off the runway looks (New York Magazine, 2014). Accordingly, many readers seem to have taken this in consideration as they have acknowledged that the term *fashion icon* should be extended beyond the realm of celebrity (Focus group, 2017; Survey, 2017).

Although there is not a general accepted definition concerning this phrase, many statements anyhow show striking similarities. By means of conducting a consumer survey, in-depth information has been provided which has specified the conception society has among this term (Survey, 2017). However, in order to examine the terminology, various published definitions have been acquired (Herald, 2016; Modern Allure, 2017; The free dictionary, 2014; Nielsson, 2007; Lea, 2016; Caress, 2007). The acquired definitions are retrieved from dictionaries, fashion forums or from written literature whereas individuals have spoken their mind about this terminology.

The following aspects are from importance when defining a fashion icon:

1. One who gets idolized for **expressing themselves differently** from the rest by means of fashion.
2. One whose has had an **influential impact** on the fashion industry,
3. An individual or thing that is **very well known** as being highly fashionable.
4. One who a has **timeless** style.
5. One who **fulfils your fashion desires** and **enhances** every individual style.
6. One who **leads in fashion circles.**
7. One who has that **inescapable confidence** and that can make anything they wear simply desirable.

(Herald, 2016; Modern Allure, 2017; The free dictionary, 2014; Nielsson, 2007; Lea, 2016; Caress, 2007)

It is important to set a clarified definition concerning this phrase, as this thesis will continuously refer to this terminology. With the acquired research, retrieved definitions and answers that have been given on the consumer survey, the following definition has been composed:

*A fashion icon is an individual who gets idolized for expressing themselves differently by means of fashion. It is someone who fulfils your fashion desires as well as have an inescapable confidence by embodying any cultural zeitgeist with his or her own style. A fashion icon is not related to a social status*
nor profession, but could be very well known in terms of being highly fashionable. It is an individual who is desirable and considered influential in the world of fashion.”

2.1.1 Identifying Fashion icons

In Fashion & Celebrity Culture, Gibson (2012) argues that the notion fashion icon has drastically changed due to the arise of celebrity culture. Celebrities have become more influential within the fashion industry but also became highly centralised within the media (Gibson, 2012). This has led to the discussion whether a fashion icon is always a celebrity likewise the other way around.

In response to obtain clarification regarding the ambiguity of the phrase fashion icon, a consumer survey has been set up. In order to retrieve relevant information, questions as “Whose name come first to mind when hearing the term fashion icon?” as well as “Do you personally have a fashion icon?” are asked. These queries have provided additional data about who people give the title a fashion icon and why?

In previous decades’ fashion icons were the ones who had stepped out in the most conventional and traditional crowd by means of their different fashion senses. They were the ones who were influential, without knowing it, hence changed the face of fashion. Research shows that an exquisite representation of this notion is designer Coco Chanel (Sun, 2012). In addition, retrieved results of an own conducted survey show that Coco Chanel is taking the lead with 19.4% on the question who people think of when hearing the term fashion icon (Survey, 2017). Many described her as a fashion queen of the 1920s. She was the one who had created ‘looser’ clothing for women and took inspiration from men’s clothing, turning them into chic and sophisticated. She used materials such as jersey and ignored the structure of the 1920s corsets, which was uncommon at that time.

"I gave women a sense of freedom. I gave them back their bodies: bodies that were drenched in sweat, due to fashion’s finery, lace, corsets, underclothes and padding."

– Gabrielle Bonheur ‘Coco’ Chanel

However, when evaluating the bar chart (chart 2.1) you can see that Coco Chanel is followed by a number of celebrities (Rihanna, Kim Kardashian, Audrey Hepburn and Kanye West). Only (4) of the (8) individuals are directly linked to the fashion industry. These are designers Karl Lagerfeld and Coco Chanel and models Gigi Hadid and Kate Moss. It is interesting to note that here is that the two designers are seemingly close related by means of running the same fashion business. Karl Lagerfeld is since 1983 chief designer of high fashion brand Chanel. He has kept the brand alive until present-day and has incorporated what was signature for Chanel into his current designs. As he is still carrying out the
legacy which was first created by Chanel, many tend to think that he achieved the status fashion icon on his own (Survey, 2017).

Gigi Hadid obtained a super-model status and received the title ‘It-girl’ as she had walked the Victoria Secret Show in 2015 and 2016. In addition, she also has an extended list of endorsements with various fashion brands. However, Kate Moss also obtained supermodel status in 1990s, as she was a big part of the heroin chic fashion trend. In addition, by means of her collaboration with Calvin Klein she now is seen as authentic fashion icon status (Robehmed, 2016).

The rest of the icons, whom are classified as celebrities, may have received this status through the gaze of publicity. Audrey Hepburn, for instance, has become popular due to the arise in cinema and her continuous collaboration with Hubert de Givenchy. Kanye West and Rihanna are both perceived as pop culture icons and recently launched a new collection with sport brands Adidas and Puma. At last, Kim Kardashian may have obtained her fashion icon status through the rise of reality TV. However, many respondents additionally answered that the title fashion icon does not specifically relate to a certain profession or social status as there does not necessarily need to be a link between having style and a having a job (Survey, 2017).

2.2 Defining Celebrities

Opposed to fashion icons, celebrities often achieve a high social status due to their profession and/or commercial success. According to consulted dictionaries and literature (Merriam Webster, 2016; Lea-Greenwood, 2013; Gunter, 2014; Marshall, 1997; English Oxford Dictionaries, 2016; Cambridge Dictionary, 2016; The Free Dictionary, 2016), the term celebrity refers to an individual who has fame and acquires public attention. The status of being a celebrity is commonly associated with wealth which also refers to fame, recognition and fortune. As this recognition may be related to a profession or expertise, there are also a number of celebrities who are known for their name, for a famous partner or simply being exposed by the media (Lea-Greenwood, 2013). An example of these celebrities are for instance Paris Hilton, Nicole Ritchie, Liz Hurley and the Kardashians. These celebrities can be wax and wane depending on their activities and publicists. Although the term often intends to refer to famous individuals, it is also commonly used for anyone who has moderate public
attention in the media. This is regardless of how well-known they are beyond their niche (Brockes, 2010).

Until the nineteenth century, people became famous were remembered when they had done something that was important and memorable at the time. However, since the rise of mass media, anyone can become famous and infamous in a relatively short period of time without doing anything important nor memorable. As mentioned earlier, some people gradually acquaint a celebrity status by means of unprecedented media attention.

The following aspects are from importance when defining a celebrity.

1. A celebrity is one who is **famous** and gains **public attention**
2. A celebrity is one who gains fame and attention through **mass media**
3. A celebrity is often associated with **wealth**, which is provided by fame
4. A celebrity is one who has a (high) **social status** in society
5. A celebrity is an individual who often has gained a high-status due to their **profession** in the sports-and entertainment world.


With this being said the following definition has been composed regarding the term celebrity.

'A celebrity is an individual who has fame and recognition through mass media. It is an individual who has reached a high social status in society and gains a lot of public attention, which is provided by fame. The fame celebrities have achieved are often caused through their (successful) profession in the sports-and entertainment world, which has eventually provided opportunities to earn a lot of revenue.'

### 2.2.1 Identifying celebrities

According to Pamela Church Gibson, celebrities have always had a close relationship with the fashion industry. The amount of celebrities doing business within this industry is innumerable. As celebrities get their status with fame, fortune and recognition, many fashion designers also strive to become a celebrity in their own right. Although fashion designers can achieve celebrity status on their own, they often seek assistance from celebrities in other industries to help launch their labels (Apparel Search, 2016). This has led to a commonly known marketing strategy named celebrity endorsement. Madonna, for instance, was considered a fashion leader since she became famous in the mid-1980s. Not only was she a pop culture icon, she had also set a wide variety of fashion trends as well as boosted up careers of upcoming and established fashion designers.

### 2.3 Defining Social influencers

The word of mouth in the digital age of today has led to a new phenome called social influencers. A social influencer is an individual who has access to a large audience on several social media platforms. It is an individual who has established credibility in a specific industry and can persuade
others by virtue of their authenticity and reach (Pixlee, 2016). In the new world of digital relationships, influencers carry their influence over others by expressing their thoughts and ideas through social media via, for instance, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. The content which influencers produce are considered very valuable and genuine according to their followers. After seizing various online retrieved definitions, the recurring elements of the notions have been analysed.

In summary, the below mentioned aspects are from importance when defining a social influencer.

1. Influencers are considered individuals whom have **very much knowledge** about a specific topic.
2. Influencers are **personally involved** in what they stand for and what their followers attach value to.
3. Influencers make **use of various online channels** such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and blogs.
4. The content influencers produce is considered **very valuable and genuine** according to their followers.
5. Influencers within a specific field are considered more **influential** than an average person.


With this in consideration an established definition has been composed as this terminology will be frequently further used within this thesis.

‘*An influencer is someone who can exert influence on other people. He or she does this by bassist knowledge or opinions (s)he has about a specific topic. This could involve a physical product or can be abstract data, such as a political affiliation or an opinion about a company or product. The influencer makes use of internet based communication platforms such as blogs, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or YouTube, whereas (s)he can share his or her knowledge and opinion.*’

### 2.3.1 Identifying Social influencers

Today social influencers are seen as influential opinion leaders within the (fashion) industry. Fashion bloggers, for instance, communicate with their followers, through their online platform about, for example, new fashion trends. However, as influencers do not only check and offer feedback on brands’ products, they also act as a connection between themselves and their targeted consumers. Written entries discuss events in the blogger’s day, their outfit choices, ‘things they like’, or fashion items encountered in other places (Chittenden, 2010). Today fashion influencers play a very important role in the ‘adoption process’ of fashion. This has also come forward in both focus groups as several participants have mentioned that their fashion icon plays a significant role in the adoption process whether to buy a garment or not. An example of a very influential fashion blogger in Europe is Kenza Zouiten. With her blog kenzas.se she has become one of Sweden’s most viewed blogs. She is entitled several global awards and has set-up her own fashion label ‘Ivy Revel’ in 2015.
2.4 Conclusion

“What are the differences and similarities between fashion icons, celebrities and social influencers?”

To state the differences and similarities between the different notions, a clear overview has been created alongside the considered aspects. When studying the table, you can see that the most similarities are found between fashion icons and influencers (8). They are both considered expressive and influential. However, they are also considered opinionated as they have a certain point-of-view and most likely tend to express this. For example, fashion designers have created collections based on their political point-of-view (e.g. woman’s march) (Givhan, 2017). This was also the case with Coco Chanel, who gave women a sense of freedom by giving back their bodies and ignoring the 1920s corsets. In addition, influencers also have a certain point-of-view as they often express their affiliation with a certain kind of product or brand in their video’s or on their website. Subsequently, they both fulfill desires as well as gain public attention. However, it is important to note that the aspect gaining public attention is not the main desire of a fashion icon. This appositely to the influencers, who make use of several social media platforms to discuss their ideas and share their mind with their online audience. Furthermore, social influencers, as for instance fashion bloggers, are present-day often featured as fashion opinion leaders. They communicate and express information about fashion through their social media platforms thus play a significant role in the adoption process. This may contribute to the fact that the notion ‘fashion icon’ has been fading hence changed into a fashion influencer.

Accordinally, acquired research has shown that there are (6) similarities and (12) differences found between fashion icons and celebrities. Both are considered influential and well-known, hence are seen as individuals who have a leading aspect in the fashion world. However, celebrities do not relate to fashion icons as they are not considered timeless nor seen as expressive.

Finally, celebrities and influencers contain (7) similarities and (10) differences. Celebrities as well as influencers obtain much publicity. However, opposed to celebrities, influencers are deliberated specialised.
as well as considered genuine. While celebrities (often) gain their fame profession-related, influencers seize this through their expertise within a specific topic. In addition, celebrities often operate via mass media, while influencers are specialised within online platforms.

It seems that the term ‘fashion icon’ has been fading due to the presence of (social) media, an arise in (fashion) influencers and the growth of celebrity culture. The answers that have been given on the consumer survey mainly state that a fashion icon could be any person. By taking this in consideration, we can conclude that the determination of a fashion icon should be extended beyond the realm of celebrity. As the notion fashion icon has been tattered and differed, this report will only rely on the strategic processes in which influencers or celebrities are used.
3.0 The influential factors

Research shows that many contemporary fashion brands are brimming with a high level of competition. According to Apparel Search (2014), the older established luxury brands are currently being joined by up-and-coming designers who target the younger generations of consumers.

Since the late 20th century fashion designers have been taking their cues from mainstream consumers (Agins, 1999). Since then, Agins argues that creativity within fashion is channelled more into mass-marketing clothes than into designing them. Due to the arise of mass marketing, mass media and mass consumption, many companies have started to work on amending their marketing techniques in order to stand out. Examples of widely incorporated marketing techniques are for instance celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing. Research claims that celebrities and influencers play an imperative role for advertising diligence and promoting products (Kambitsis et al. 2002; Daneshvary & Schwer, 2000; Thorne, 2015; Diligent Commerce, 2015). In response to this development the following sub-chapters will therefore highlight the factors which were fundamental in the arising popularity in the use of fashion icons by fashion brands.

3.1 The internet

Fashion has become highly accessible to a large spectrum of consumers due to the advent of the internet. Today many consumers are able to search whatever whenever about their favourite designers in just a matter of seconds. In response to this advent many companies have been establishing their strategy around the use of it (Reynolds, 2014). According to Jahn, Kunz and Meyer (2012), the internet has changed the fashion industry due to the arise many social media platforms. Social media can be defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0. Social media allows the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Jahn, et al., 2013).

3.1.1 Social media

According to an interview with Megan Rochebrune, marketing operator at Hunkemöller, social media is the most important and influential factor on the rising use of fashion icons by fashion brands. Rochebrune (2017) claims that the advent of social media has created huge business opportunities, specifically in marketing. She mentioned that via social media the brand has created more personal contact with their core consumer and additionally stated following:

“Social media has created so much opportunities for Hunkemöller. By using social media platforms, we have created our own social community. This has allowed us to open up dialogue with our customers, recruit staff, amplify our message but also turn fans into members and much more among.” – Megan Rochebrune (Marketing Operator at Hunkemöller)

Today many fashion companies utilize social media platforms in order to create a connection with their consumer on a more personal level (Forrester, 2016). Not only did social media create a new type of engagement, it also established a new way of advertising. According to a report by Forrester (2014), the highest rate of customer engagement within fashion is through the use of social media. These results include online platforms Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

However, social media has also provided celebrities a new way of interacting with their fans. Via social media, celebrities stay connected with their fans as well as get a chance maintain their fame (Lea-Greenwood, 2012). As for today many fashion companies regularly approach
3.2 The new era of bubble up: social influencers

In previous decades’ fashion was governed by haute-couture designers who were presented to aspire the masses towards. However, due to the challenges of mass marketing, mass consumption and mass media the tradition has eventually been broken (McMahon, 2012). With the development of new technologies that have opened up the fashion marketplace from specialised stores to the global consumer, the role of initiating new fashion trends is no longer only decided by the fashion designers (Agins, 1999; McMahon, 2012). According to McMahon, the virtual world has given consumers a voice to engage brands in a conversation to express evolving ideas, needs and feedback. Whereas the fashion industry first relied upon the trickle-down theory, it has now been joined by a new era of the bubble-up movement. According to Kenyes, founder of the bubble-up, style began with youth or street fashion and were then moving up progressively on the fashion ladder (Powell-Smith, 2011). But what does the bubble-up movement have in common with the arise of fashion icons by fashion brands?

According to acquired research, influencers are the new revolution with in the bubble-up effect (Brundage, 2014). Research has shown that fashion companies seek at ordinary influencers to make worthy creations in order to garner instant recognition on their social media platform (Saul, 2016). Saul additionally notes that influencers have been forming the new ‘it’ crowd with their cult followings and steering trends thus have a large impact on society as well as on the fashion industry.

3.3 The power of Hollywood

According to Gibson (2012), celebrities have always had a close relationship with the fashion industry. Gibson argues that the contemporary fashion industry and celebrity culture are firmly linked due to the technological changes. As the cinema has had a dominant even central role in creating modern celebrities, effecting changes within fashion and connecting the two processes, it still continues to play a central role of the industry present day (Gibson, 2012).

Research shows that the intense interest in Hollywood stars by the modern society has lasted for hundred years. People were always desired to know as much as possible about their favourite celebrities’ personal life. However, research shows that the same elements have been rearranged to a different pattern, specifically in the last 30 years. Until the early 1990s people have always had a greater interest in what celebrities wore on-screen. Now, it is far more likely to be like their off-screen attire (Gibson, 2012). It has become significant for the twenty-first century that the popularity of a celebrity is seemingly unrelated to the commercial success of their films. In fact, some cinematic celebrities can currently generate intense media interest and function as a fashion icon quite independently of their on-screen roles (Gibson, 2012).

According to Gibson (2012), cinema has created new styles and has made high fashion less frightening. This was not done through the kind of altruism but through the use of fashion designers. Since the 20th century, designers were dressing the leading lady of the film, and later on like Armani and Cerruti, also dressing the leading man to show off their clothes. However, during the second half of the last century, the relationship between celebrities and designers has been heavily developed. Since 1980s onward the traditional relationship between designers and celebrities has been replaced by the proliferation of the ready-to-wear on the American screens. Since then many opportunities have been created for fashion product placement and many celebrities have been used among several different ways.

In 1950s Ferragamo named a strapped ballet pump after Audrey Hepburn as well as made over forty pairs of shoes for Marilyn Monroe. The naming of accessories after superstars and celebrities is still
continuing present-day. For instance, the contemporary shoe designer Jimmy Choo also named a grosgrain loafer Diana after the late princess, who was fond of this style off-duty (Nikkhah, 2011). In 2010 Ferragamo also launched Elise, a stiletto-heeled shoe named after a character played by Angelina Jolie in the movie The Tourist (Gibson, 2012). According to Gibson, Hollywood films helped sell anything and everything at home and abroad.

3.4 Models are becoming brands

Over the decades models have been moving forward from being completely anonymous – to whose job was to show off clothes to best effect, at first on small catwalks and then in photographs – to becoming a well-known public figure (Gibson, 2012). During the 50s models began to acquire recognizable personalities and become more identifiable by name. However, by the time it was 1960 models often obtained a celebrity persona. As for today many models have acquired somewhat of a brand identity. An example of a model who was a true celebrity in the way we understand them now was Twiggy. Twiggy was the first model who had lent her name to a range of products. She was the first model who also a was a designer. By the year of 1966 Twiggy had owned a wide range of products such as Twiggy dresses and Twiggy shoes. As for today Gibson states that celebrities often gain a celebrity status rather than being a mere photographic model.

According to Gibson (2012), today models often gain a celebrity status rather than just be a mere photographic model. Not only have models endured a functional change they have also become a brand in their own right. However, in an interview with Daisy van Gend – marketing coordinator at Tommy Hilfiger – the development of the model industry has had a greater impact on the use of iconic figures by fashion brands. She initially stated the following:

’’Models have become their own brand. However, they also have seemingly more requirements opposed to the past. An example for instance is that they must be active on social media. At Tommy Hilfiger, we embrace the use of social media. Our company therefore also strives that our models have somewhat of publicity on their own social platforms. It is no secret that brands seek into the models’ Instagram page as well as take a look at their following base. As models have become their own brand they also have acquired much more influence. And their influence is what is important for us.’’
– Daisy van Gend (Marketing Coordinator at Tommy Hilfiger)

3.5 Conclusion

”What factors have led to the rise in popularity of the use of icons, celebrities and social influencers by fashion brands?”

The fashion industry is a world which is constantly evolving. Due to the growth of the internet, more marketers have been investing in online advertising. With the arise of many different social media platforms, fashion brands have been given the chance to create their own online community. Additionally, social media has also attributed into the new-era of trickle up, whereas ordinary individuals build up credibility through their honest opinions, recommendations and authenticity via online platforms. However, as this new third-party of endorsers have been significantly growing, so are the Hollywood stars being empowered. Whilst models first were completely anonymous they have now attributed a celebrity status and became well-known public figures for society. Due to these developments, there has been an arise in popularity among the use fashion icons by fashion brands.
4.0 Celebrity Endorsement & Influencer Marketing

Today consumers are continuously exposed by celebrity faces in advertisements, commercials and magazines. Many companies across all industries use celebrities to grab the consumers’ attention in order to influence their purchasing behaviour. According to the Business Dictionary (2015), celebrity endorsement is a form of a brand or advertising campaign that involves a well-known person using their fame to help promote a product or service. Accordingly, the following sub-chapters will further inform the reader about how this strategy is utilized thus on which theories it relies.

4.1 Celebrity Endorsement

The use of celebrities as a part of a marketing communication strategy is a very common practice used by many companies. Within the fashion industry celebrity endorsement is considered one of the most important communication channels due to their exposure of mass awareness. (Olenski, 2015). According to Erdogan (1999), firms invest a significant amount of money in endorsers with qualities such as attractiveness, likeability, and trustworthiness. Companies invest these large sums of money in order to align the brand and themselves with the chosen endorsers. However, celebrities do not only serve to create and maintain attention, they also need to achieve high recall rates of macros messages in today’s highly cluttered society (Erdogan, 1999).

Research claims that the use of a celebrity helps humanizing brands (Calabro, 2014). By using celebrities, consumers can easier relate to the brand which results in a stronger brand identity. However, as the goal of this chapter is to inform the reader about what celebrity endorsement is and how it is applied, it is first important to state that there are different ways of this type of branding. Celebrity endorsement can be split in two different methods covert endorsement and overt endorsement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Covert endorsement (unpaid)</th>
<th>Overt endorsement (paid)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Gifting**: Celebrities are given a certain product or range of products in order to wear and use it. This type of endorsement considers a way of free advertising for companies. This method is widely used in the beauty industry whereas “beauty gurus” get send products in the hope they show it on their YouTube channel. | **Involves a contract**: According to Lea-Greenwood (2013), a paid endorsement involves a brand signing a celebrity to represent the level in a traditional fashion advertising campaign. Lea-Greenwood additionally notes that when an overt endorsement has been established the contract also precludes the celebrity from endorsing with a direct competitor. Celebrities generally gain a sum of money for this type endorsement, but must always follow the given guidelines which are created by the company they work for (van der Waldt, 2007).

* e.g.: PR events, advertisements and social media

*figure 4.1A overt and covert endorsement*
According to van der Waldt (2007), companies often use celebrities for big pr-events as it helps to show their support and association with the brand. An example of this is for instance, The Victoria’s Secret Show whereas celebrities perform on the catwalk while the models showcase the lingerie. In addition, as celebrities have a lot of followers on social media they also tend to frequently promote the brand they work with on these platforms in order to target more audience. According to Lea-Greenwood (2013), both of the above-mentioned endorsements are considered paid endorsements which include a contract.

4.2 Source model theories

As now basic information regarding celebrity endorsement has been provided, this part of the study will identify the theories on which the strategy relies on. The following sub-chapters will highlight two models of the communication source which is beneficial in influencing message receptivity (Robinson, 2016).

4.2.1 Source credibility model

Source credibility is the degree to which the receiver would believe the source has a certain degree of relevant knowledge and or expertise and they choose to believe the information offered by the source – (Ohanian, 1990; Erdogan, 1999)

The source credibility model relies on the fact that if the endorser has a perceived level of trustworthiness and expertise it will have a direct influence on the effectiveness of a message. According to Erdogan (1999), information which is conceived from a credible source (e.g. celebrity) influences people their beliefs, opinions and attitude through a process called internalisation. In order to achieve perceived credibility, the trustworthiness of the endorser must correspondent with certain characteristics as for instance honesty, integrity and believability. Shimp (2000) argues that brands must capitalise the value of trustworthiness when selecting endorsers as celebrities need to be honest but also dependable. According to McCracken (1986), expertness is defined as the perceived ability of the source to make a valid assertion. In addition, Ohanian (1990) believes that the expertise of an endorser is more important rather than the celebrities’ trustworthiness and attractiveness. Ohanian argues that celebrities who are qualified, knowledgeable and experienced have a greater effect on endorsing a product.
4.2.2 Source attractive model

According to Singer (1983), the source attractiveness model is based on advertisers who choose celebrities on the basis of their attractiveness in order to gain a dual effect of celebrity status and physical appear. Additionally, Erdogan (1999) claims that a physically attractive communicator is more successful at changing people’s beliefs. However, according to McGuire (1985) and Ohanian (1990), the source attractiveness is related to physical attributes such as likeability, familiarity and similarity. Research shows that these are important factors in the initial judgement of other individuals (Ohanian, 1990). With this in consideration you can conclude that attractiveness does not only relate to a physical corpus as it is also attached to certain values of the message. In the source attractiveness model receivers identify themselves with the perceived celebrity. Research shows identifying with the endorser might motive the receiver to seek some type of relationship with the source thus adopt similar behaviour, preferences, attitudes and beliefs. However, letting the consumers feel a part of the celebrity, company and brand is the main purpose of the source attractiveness model. In order to measure the credibility and attractiveness of an endorser the method Credibility Scale has been created by Ohanian (1990). This scale assumes that the credibility as well as the effectiveness of a celebrity endorser is bound to several characteristic dimensions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attractiveness</th>
<th>Trustworthiness</th>
<th>Expertise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attractive-Unattractive</td>
<td>Trustworthy-Untrustworthy</td>
<td>Expert-Not Expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classy-Not Classy</td>
<td>Dependable-Undependable</td>
<td>Experienced-Inexperienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beautiful-Ugly</td>
<td>Honest-Dishonest</td>
<td>Knowledgeable-Unknownable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elegant-Plain</td>
<td>Reliable-Unreliable</td>
<td>Qualified-Unqualified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexy-Not Sexy</td>
<td>Sincere-Insincere</td>
<td>Skilled-Unskilled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2B Source Credibility Scale by Ohanian

4.3 The meaning transfer model

According to McCracken (1989), the meaning transfer model is based on meanings. It suggests that the effectiveness of the endorser depends on the meaning the celebrity is brings in to the endorsement, brand and overall process. The meaning transfer model, which is conducted by McCracken, explains that the effectiveness of a celebrity spokesperson eventually transfers to the brand as consumers often associate themselves with the endorser. Research has shown this perspective is shared by Kambitses. In a study by Kambitses (2002), the athletes’ personality is an important factor in influencing ‘specific target groups to which personalities are easily recognizable and much admired’. According to McCracken, there are three stages within the meaning transfer model.

1st stage meaning acquisition: Creation of the celebrity image.
2nd stage endorsement: Celebrity with product and brand association.
3rd stage consumption: The brands transfer the build-up image on to the consumer.

Figure 4.3 meaning transfer model by McCracken (1989)
4.4 The product match up

The product match up theory highlights that when a celebrity has a relatively high product congruent image, it will eventually result in to a higher credibility for the advertiser as well as for the endorser. Accordingly, the product match up theory predicts that the use of an attractive celebrity is more effective when being deployed in a celebrity endorsement of which the product needs to be enriched (Ohanian, 1991). Ohanian states that congruity between the endorser and the product, results in consumers being more persuasive. In summary, this means that the persuasiveness as well as the match is sufficiently required in affecting the buying intention of consumers. A potential risk within this theory is that when the congruence between the endorser and brand is low, it can result in a reduce in sale in which consumers can conceive the advertisement as a scam. However, it is also possible that the celebrity overshadows the company. This means that consumers only remember the celebrity rather than the brand the celebrity is promoting.

An example of a celebrity overshadowing the brand is for instance Angelina Jolie for St. John (2005 – 2008). According to St. John, Angelina Jolie was the ideal brand ambassador as she was the perfect match up for the high-end luxury apparel brand. However, throughout the years she had been overshadowing the brand as she became overexposed in the media because of her romance with Brad Pitt, their six children and her charity work in Africa (Messina, 2013). As a consequent, chief executive Glenn McMahon stated that as Angelina was overshadowing the brand they were forced to drop the contract.

4.6 Influencer marketing

In a report by Fashion and Beauty Monitor (2016), research shows that the use of influencer marketing has excessively grown over the past few years. According to Davey (2016), the use of this marketing communication strategy will not stop any time soon. In fact, research shows that almost 60% of fashion and beauty brands already have an influencer marketing strategy in place (Fashion and Beauty Monitor, 2016). With this in consideration the following sub-chapters will serve to inform the reader about the purpose of this strategy and how it is applied.

Influencer marketing refers to the idea of using someone, who has influence, to promote companies’ products and services. According to acquired research, influencer marketing has become rapidly popular as the use of this strategy has been only growing (Fashion and Beauty Monitor, 2016). According to Davey (2016), more everyday people are growing some serious followings on social media, giving brands a larger pool of influencers to choose from. Davey additionally argues, that it is no longer the case of only picking the most popular celebrity of the moment. According to Forbes (2016), influencers are the new celebrity endorsements. In fact, data from influencer marketing platform MuseFind shows that 92% of the consumers trust an influencer more than an advertisement or traditional celebrity endorsement (Weinswig, 2016). In addition, research shows that consumers’ most convincing buying argument are recommendations from sources they trust (Bughin et al., 2010). Influencer marketing relies on individuals’ expertise, popularity and reputation.

3 Overshadowing the brand is also called a Vampire effect. It is defined as a decrease in brand recall for an advertising stimulus that features as celebrity endorsers versus the same stimulus with an unknown but equally attractive endorser.
4.7 Word-of-mouth marketing

However, influencer marketing is certainly not a recent phenomenon. Research claims that influencer marketing is a new way of word-of-mouth marketing. According to Westbrook (1987), word-of-mouth marketing is defined as: “an informal communication behaviour about the experiences with specific services, products or the characteristics of the providers that the consumers exchange among each other.” Classic offline word-of-mouth marketing describes the process of information being transmitted orally from one individual to another. However, classic word-of-mouth can now be adapted online. This can be in visual content on written text which can go viral and influence many consumers around the globe. In addition, according to Duan and Whinston (2008), influencer marketing is now aimed at influencers who are engaged in an online social network thus have an impact on a bigger audience.

4.8 Developments of influencer marketing

“Now fashion bloggers are leveraging their followers to become marketing machines for brands other than their own (in other words, to earn money), augmenting those companies’ advertising and PR strategies. They’re taking on numerous roles including guest bloggers, models, designers, and endorsers. They’re maintaining credibility with fans—they hope—by choosing partnerships discerningly, while discussing deliverables, audience composition, ROI, and conversions with their sponsors.” – Griffith (2011)

Griffith (2011) argues the industry of influencer marketing has become more and more professionalized over the past few years. Marketers of today tend to give influencers clear briefings and hashtags which is different from how it used to be. According to influencer Widya van der Heijden, brands do not only approach influencers to give them explicit briefings but also tend to show what the purpose of the campaign is. As Widya has been working with various fashion brands, giving them an additional advertisement channel, she is continuously given certain guidelines. In an interview, she stated that the process of the approach also took a slight shift.

“[photo 5.3 Widieee for brand Cantik Swimwear]

When I first got approached by brands to work with them they did not give me certain guidelines about how I should post the product on Instagram. I just got asked if I was interested in a product they had made and if I said yes, they would eventually send it to me for free. The only thing they did ask was if I, after using the product, was genuinely happy with it; could post a photo of it on Instagram to spread the word. So yeah, often times I liked it and sometimes not. However, I always post it on the gram if I was satisfied with it. But as for today, many companies often give me a set of guidelines and even a time and date when to post and of course where to post it. I don’t find that annoying, it is just different compared to how it was three or four years ago. This really made me realise that the use of advertising via social media (mainly Instagram) has been much more professionalized over the last couple of years.” – Widya van der Heijden

4 ROI meaning return on investment
According to Griffith (2011), money plays a huge factor behind the professionalization within influencer marketing. However, as influencers first got their products for free in exchange for an integration of brands in their channel, emoluments now have been increased. According to Fashion and Beauty Monitor (2016), 82% of the total influencers that have been surveyed, collaborated with brands in order to receive a monetary award.

4.9 Micro-influencers

Fashion and Beauty Monitor (2016) consider influencer marketing as an unknown area in terms of the actual outcome and return on investment. However, a crucial fact within influencer marketing is finding the right influencer. According to Yen (2016), there is such thing as being too popular. Yen claims that once a social media influencer reaches a critical mass of followers, the audience’s engagement repulsively begins to decrease. Additionally, a report by Markerly\(^5\) shows that for unpaid posts, Instagram influencers with fewer than 1,000 followers have a like rate of 8%. This in comparison to 4% to those whom have 1,000 to 10,000 followers. When influencers have a significant high engagement rate, followers are considered actively involved with them. When an influencer has more engagement on their posts, brands consider them more appealing. Influencers with a small base of followers are denoted as micro-influencers. According to Mediakix (2016), a micro-influencer is every YouTuber, Instagrammer, Snapchatter or blogger with a relatively small follower base of highly-engaged, extremely attentive social media users. Many marketers tend to think that the use of micro-influencer is more effective as they have better consumer interaction and offer a higher return on investment (Mediakix, 2016).

4.12 Conclusion

“What marketing and communication strategies – which include icons, celebrities or social influencers – are currently used by fashion brands?”

In order to imply these strategies, it is first important to recognize the differences in approaches. As there is a fine line between celebrities and social influencers, both have considerable different approaches thus fulfil different objectives.

In summary, celebrity endorsement can be divided in two methods: overt endorsement and covert endorsement. Whilst one method involves a contract the other does not. The theory of celebrity endorsement relies on the source credibility model, the source attractive model and the meaning transfer model. All models are essential in highlighting the communication source of message receptivity. However, in order to measure the congruency of a celebrity, the product match up theory needs to fit the strategy accordingly. In summary, the most important characteristics regarding celebrity endorsement is: raising more brand awareness, helping positioning as well as humanizing a brand and building up more credibility.

Additionally, influencer marketing refers to the idea of using someone, who has influence, to promote companies’ products and services. Whilst influencer marketing is not a recent phenomenon, it has

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\(^5\) Markerly is an American technology company specializing in influencer identification and tracking.
changed into aiming at influencers who are engaged in an online social network thus have an impact on a bigger audience. Although it is an unknown area in terms of the actual outcome and return on investment, research has shown, that when well executed, many benefits for company can be obtained. Finally, the most important characteristics of influencer marketing is: it targets niche markets; it helps build up more local brand awareness as well as helps in generating more honest recommendations.

The below mentioned table has been set up, in order to give the reader a clear overview regarding the most important characteristics of both endorsement strategies.

### Characteristics celebrity endorsement
1. Helps to build up more brand awareness (global).
2. Helps to position your brand in a competitive market place.
3. Through global recognition they will attract new consumers.
4. Helps to breathe life into a failing brand.
5. Helps humanizing a brand.
6. It helps a brand building more credibility and trust.
7. One-way-communication.
8. The celebrity is the messenger.

### Characteristics influencer marketing
1. Targets niche market.
2. Helps to build more brand awareness locally.
3. Helps to generate more honest recommendations.
4. Low maintenance compared to celebrity endorsement.
5. Helps you out of the limelight. The influencer takes central stage.
6. Saves your time by concentrating your efforts on someone who will give access to their audience and consequently do the work of promoting your product or business to their audience for you.
7. Helps you bottle-neck your focus as you move on from attracting a large audience to one influential target.
8. A running dialogue: social interaction


• 5.0 Celebrities versus Influencers

One of the main questions for companies across all industries is: How to build a strong brand? According to Hunkemöller, fashion companies continuously need to ask themselves how to strengthen their brand in order to stay competitive (Interview, 2017). In addition, research by Euromonitor (2014) has shown, that one the most frequently applied strategies to achieve this strength has been to set a celebrity endorsement deal. While celebrity endorsement deals have become rapidly popular over the past decades, little knowledge has been obtained concerning the concept of social influencers. With this in consideration, the current study will now seek to explore the added value an influencer creates, opposed to a traditional celebrity. In order to explore these, the advantages as well as disadvantageous of both strategies will analysed in order to clearly occur the differences.

5.1 Celebrities’ values

According to Silvera & Austad (2004), the effectiveness of a celebrity endorser is dynamic as it relies on the celebrity, brand, product and perhaps social regulations at the time and place where the ad is seen. Research claims that celebrity endorsements result in more positive ad ratings and product evaluations (Silvera & Austad, 2004). However, Erdogan (1999) additionally mentioned that the use of a celebrity endorsement can have a significant positive impact on the brands’ financial returns. This finding is aligned to Agrawal & Kamakura (1995) who indicated a positive stock price when a company hired a famous spokesperson. However, research has also shown that implying a celebrity endorsement strategy can also lead to a rise in annual turnover (Fibre2Fashion, 2016).

Photo 5.2a Sylvie Meis for Hunkemöller (2014)

"Using celebrities in advertising campaigns has had many benefits for Hunkemöller. Our first collaboration with Sylvie has led to huge publicity as well as help us broaden up our target group. When Sylvie had first created her swimwear collection we noticed that we were getting more (global) recognition. Using admirable thus popular woman has helped Hunkemöller to create an even more emotional as well as stronger connection with the customers."

– Megan Rochebrune (Marketing Operator at Hunkemöller)

A possible clarification for this effectiveness is that consumers tend to believe that stars are motivated by sincere affection for the product and not by the money they deserve with it (Atkin & Block, 1983). This means that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement can notably be influenced by consumers
who doubt whether the endorsers really stand behind the product or not. Additionally, by using famous celebrities in commercials, companies could be helped to enter foreign markets. Erdogan’s (1999) studies mentioned that the benefits of using a celebrity can include, for instance brand repositioning, brand introduction, image polishing and an increase in attention. However, celebrities also help breathe new life into a failing brand (Bloomberg, 2016). Research has shown that Bloomberg is questioning whether his is the case with the Tommy Hilfiger X Gigi Hadid collaboration.

“Tommy Hilfiger Hasn’t Been Cool in Years. Is a Supermodel the Fix?”

‘’…. It was about her as much as Hilfiger — perhaps because the label needs her more than she needs it. Hadid gives the brand instant credibility and exposure among her legions of young fans.’’ – Bloomberg, 2016

However according to Tommy Hilfiger, the use of an endorsement strategy has become a common tactic in order to stay active and competitive on the current marketplace (Interview, 2017). The brand initially stated:

| We are pushed to think of other creative marketing ways. So yes, the use of Gigi Hadid has led to more credibility and exposure. However, I do not agree with that we haven’t been cool in years. The only thing that has changed is that we have obtained more attention and gained recognition. The clothes designed for the collection of Gigi do not outline the design perspective of TH in general. Sure, it attracts more youth, but the clothes, pattern etc. are all alike in what we have done previous seasons. – Daisy van Gend (Marketing Coordinator at Tommy Hilfiger) |

However, there are certain downsides compiled to this endorsement strategy. One of them is negative publicity. According to Louie & Obermiller (2002), any form of negative publicity can reduce the allure of celebrity and hence the brands’. Louie & Obermiller’ (2002) state that celebrities who are accused of negative events do have a detrimental impact on the products they promote. As negative information will not only affect the perception consumers have about the celebrity, it will also affect the consumers view of the designated product (Till & Shimp, 1998). Another pitfall for brands could be that celebrities lose public recognition. Celebrities can disappear from the media before the end of the contractual period. There is also no guarantee that the celebrity will always remain successful in making music,
winning championships or acting in successful movies. Celebrities fall and rise in popularity throughout their career, depending on their level of performance (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995). However, research shows that when a celebrity fails to perform properly in the eyes of consumers, the effectiveness of the celebrity tends to deteriorate (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995).

5.3 Influencers’ values

According to a report by Fashion and Beauty Monitor (2016), influencer marketing raises more brand awareness. Influencers can add credibility to a business’ offerings thus help in recommending their products. As consumers do not trust sales pitches as much as recommendations from industry leaders, peers or colleagues; influencers can help companies improve their position in the market (Barker, 2016). Collaborating with influencers is considered an effective way of reaching a wider audience with an influential target. Through their extensive social reach, they can promote brands’ products without being directly involved with the promotion. Brands could imply an influencer within their strategy, so it would help them build more trust with the new discovered audience. Accordingly, a collaboration with a social influencer often contains creating new content (Fashion and Beauty Monitor, 2016). This means that the brand will get access to an additional branded content of presumably high quality. However, integrating a social influencer within a marketing campaign can lead to saving the brand more time, as influencers then take front and central stage on their own platform.

As we now highlighted the benefits of this strategy, research shows that there are also certain downsides. An example of a downside of this strategy is for instance the extensive research and activity before starting (Fryrear, 2015). In order to gain success from this marketing strategy, marketers are mandatory to identify the right influencer who fits the brand accordingly. Additionally, research shows that they do not offer guarantee in effectiveness. This is because it is hard to predict if the influencer will be passionate enough about the brand to generate buzz and conversion (E-marketing, 2015). However, influencers can also be really expensive. As the bigger the influencer is, the bigger the exposure is, which eventually results in higher costs. According to E-marketing (2015), a promoted Instagram post can go up from $500 to even $100.000. This depends on the terms of the deal as well as the follower base.

Social media influencer Anna Nooshin has enhanced our influencer marketing campaign in order to complement Kroes’ instant recognizable face and name. She has helped driven more conversion thus attract more consumer audience as well as reinforced Hunkemöllers’ marketing campaign. With her exclusive limited collection, she had targeted the younger women. She was a part of our integrated marketing campaign. - Megan Rochebrune (Marketing Operator at Hunkemöller)
5.4 Conclusion

“What added value does the use of a fashion icon create for fashion brands?”

In order to answer the above-mentioned research question, all acquired information has been gathered and channelled into an overviewed table (see table 5.4). The content of the table refers to the added value the concerned endorsement strategy creates. Whilst one strategy differs from the other, it is important to note that there are also striking similarities among the two. The below displayed table serves to give the reader a clarified vision regarding the endorsement strategies as well as highlights the different key characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Celebrity Endorsement</strong></th>
<th><strong>Influencer Marketing</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Helps to build up more global brand awareness.</td>
<td>1. Helps to build more local brand awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Helps to position your brand in a competitive market place.</td>
<td>2. Helps to generate more honest recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Through global recognition, they will attract new consumers.</td>
<td>3. Is low maintenance compared to celebrity endorsement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Helps to breathe life into a failing brand.</td>
<td>Once you find the right influencer who fits your company and knows what you want, they will take it from there and create own content to promote your product or business via their platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Helps humanizing a brand. Using celebrities’ results in the creation of a brand identity. Consumers begin to relate to the celebrities’ characteristics with the endorsed brand.</td>
<td>4. Helps you out of the limelight. The influencer takes central stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. It helps a brand building more credibility and trust.</td>
<td>5. Saves your time. By concentrating your efforts on someone who will give access to their audience and consequently do the work of promoting your product or business to their audience for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. One-way-communication. Advertisements via traditional media are examples of one-way communication.</td>
<td>6. Helps you bottle-neck your focus. The company will move on from attracting a large audience to one influential target.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The celebrity is the messenger.</td>
<td>7. The influencer runs a constant dialogue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*table 5.4 key characteristics of celebrity endorsement and influencer marketing (retrieved from literature studies)*
6.0 The attitude of the consumers

The purpose of the following research is to explore the attitude perception consumers have towards celebrity and influencer advertisements. In order to explore this subject, literature has been acquired, focus groups have been held and a consumer survey has been conducted. The chapter is structured by a focus group analysis followed by netnographic research. However, in order to limit the research, only the following factors will be manipulated: attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, physical appearance, popularity and negative publicity.

6.1 Focus group (analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus group 1</th>
<th>Focus group 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Savannah (26)</td>
<td>Lydia (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominique (25)</td>
<td>Omy (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharynné (22)</td>
<td>Xiomara (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sansan (22)</td>
<td>Ribka (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirsten (25)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘‘According to you, what are the differences between a social influencer and celebrity?’’

In both focus groups (1) and (2) all participants have answered that there are certain differences between the two notions. The most common answer was that influencers are more approachable opposed to celebrities. Influencers engage with their followers by constantly replying on their questions thus often ask for feedback on their online performance. A participant within focus group (2) answered:

‘‘Influencers engage more with their community. For instance, I like watching Anna Nooshin on YouTube. She creates a lot of good content such as Shoe Stories or Exposing the Gossips whereas she invites other influential people in her video. At the end of her YouTube video’s she always asks her viewer’s opinion thus if they have any additional recommendations for new video’s. She is an inspiring content creator and cares about the opinion her viewers have.’’ – Lydia (19)

By taking this in consideration you can see that engagement is considered an important facet thus point of difference between a social influencer and traditional celebrity. However, several participants have also noted that influencers are considered more honest. Influencers often generate more true recommendations rather than an unapproachable celebrity does. By taking it more in-depth, the researcher then asked if the participants find one more authentic than the other. In both focus groups, it came forward that influencers are considered more authentic than traditional celebrities. The combinations of all these important factors have led to an authentic image of a social influencers. However, when asking the participants more about important features of celebrities, they all said that they are more exposed rather than social influencers are. The below mentioned statement seems to align with the fact that celebrities serve for more mass exposure rather than influencers do.

‘‘Celebrities are most likely to have a high status. I think in terms of admirations; I tend to think that celebrities get more admired. When Gigi Hadid is perfectly dressed I always tag my friends in the comment section below notifying how gorgeous she looks. It is not really that I would like to see where her dress is from, I mean it is obvious it is unaffordable.’’ – Ribka (20)
‘Do you think that the use of a well-known person in a fashion advertisement creates an added value? How do you look upon these strategies? And do you consider them a positive or negative consumer approach?’

I consider the use of a well-known person in an advertisement as a positive added feature. I think that the use of a public figure in advertisements create more interest. I find it is nice to see someone I recognize when strolling through the city. I think it makes the brand in some kind of way more appealing. – Ribka (20)

I like that companies use public figures to promote their brand. I think it makes it easier for one another to relate to the brand as the brand then gets a face. – Omy (18)

The above-mentioned statements are retrieved answers from focus group interviews. Both statements indicate that the presence of an influencer and celebrity lead to a positive association for the brand. Accordingly, all participants of both focus groups stated that the use of a well-known figure leads to more attention for the brand and/or advertisement. These results are similar to the study ‘Celebrity Endorsement in Advertisements and Consumer Perception conducted’ by Somodutta Biswas, Mahmood Hussain and Kathleen O’Donnell. The study amplifies’ that using an iconic figure, as for instance celebrities, correlate to a positive impact on the attention and exposure of the brand by consumers. However, one participant has additionally answered that it is sometimes also very misleading.

I do experience the use of celebrities and influencers in advertisements as positive, however it can also be very misleading. It is really deceitful. I mean look at George Clooney representing Nespresso. I assume he finds the coffee good as he has been representing the brand for many years now. But does the use of celebrities and influencers necessarily mean that a brand is good or great? Or is he just promoting the brand because he is making money out of it? – Xiomara Mak (21)

This statement is considered interesting as it indicates that the participant has found it important that the advertisement needs to be trustworthy. Within this statement she has made clear that the endorser needs to have a perceived level of trustworthiness in order to be credible and not misleading. According to Kumar and Hundal (2015), trustworthiness is the most important attribute for an endorser. Research shows that the target audience must trust a celebrity that carries a particular image as it also must match with the product. Accordingly, all participants within focus group (2) seem to agree with this statement.

‘Do you think that a celebrity or influencer needs to have specific expertise in order for you to believe the message (s)he is sending?’

The researcher has chosen to ask the participants whether the expertise of a celebrity or social influencer is a necessary factor in order to achieve full credibility. According to a participant in focus group (1), celebrities are considered less credible than influencers. She additionally stated:

I think that the expertise of an endorser certainly needs to be align with the advertisement he or she is promoting. For instance, if NikkieTutorials says that the new Mac 261 brush is amazing, I tend to believe her easily. Nikkie has a passion for make-up and has a following base of 6 million people. Those people did not subscribe to her channel out of nowhere. She is an expert based on make-up. – Sansan (22)

This correlates to the study ‘Physical attractiveness of the celebrity endorser: A social adaption perspective’ by Lynn Kahle and Pamela Homer. It amplifies’ that the perceived expertise of the endorser has a positive impact on the consumers’ attitude. However, this was also a point of discussion in focus group (2). Participants of focus group (2) also considered expertise as an influential factor.
within perceived credibility. However, they additionally noted that this is more important in the beauty and cosmetics industry rather than fashion.

“Do you consider the physical appearance of an endorser important? Does an attractive physical appearance of an endorser attract you more than one who is not?”

All participants of both focus groups consider an **attractive physical appearance** of an endorser a very important factor. When the endorser is physically attractive it will result in more attention gaining. According to a participant in focus group (1), this was for instance the case with Justin Bieber for Calvin Klein.

“I remember Justin Bieber doing a campaign with Calvin Klein. He started the whole #mycalvin hashtag trend. He was everywhere back then. Not only on social media but even on Dutch television. It is insane how many people talked about that campaign. However, I certainly do understand the purpose of using Justin Bieber as he generates much attention and is really popular.” – Sharynée (22)

In addition, 6 of the 9 participants had answered that advertisements which contain popular and physical attractive public figures are more likeable and sometimes even impactful. However, the other three participants had answered that it might be more likeable but not more impactful. An interesting thing to note within focus group (1) is that the older participants do not always align with the younger participants’ opinions. The older participants tend to be less persuasive for advertisements as they simply do not care that much about celebrities and public figures. This appositely to focus group (2) whereas all participants have mentioned that the use of an iconic figure could influence their attitude thus buying intention.

“Do you think that negative publicity concerning the endorser influences your attitude perception towards the brand?”

When asking the participants if negative publicity concerning the endorser could affect their perception to the advertisement and brand, they have all answered yes but with additional side notes. According to both focus groups it all depends on the incident and type of negative publicity. If it is from a gossip magazine or said by one simple individual on the internet, it would have little to no effect. These results accordingly fit a study by Erik Hunter & Per Davidsson (2008), whereas they amplify that information regarding the celebrity leads towards negative attention to the brands and its promotion.

“Yes, I think that negative publication regarding the endorsed celebrity would certainly affect my perception towards the advertisement as well as the brand. However, I do think that it depends on the situation and incident. If it is a gossip from TMZ or an opinionated article, I really would not care at all.” – Kirsten (25)

However, the participants have additionally answered that it also depends on your engagement with the chosen celebrity and brand.

“I tend to think that if you have a certain affinity with the brand and endorser, it would have significantly more effect on your perception rather than one who does not. I think that I would distance myself a bit from the brand and celebrity.” – Xiomara (22)

“Do you trust a brand more when using a celebrity endorsement/influencer marketing strategy rather than one who does not?”

Accordingly, research shows that the participants do not necessarily trust a brand more when endorsed by a celebrity or social influencer.
“I do not necessarily think that you can trust a (well-known) brand more when it uses a celebrity or influencer rather than one who does not. I mean this for well-established brands, brands who we already know. However, it could benefit to start-up businesses as they do not have certain recognition and you actually do not know a lot about them.” – Ribka (20)

It has come forward that all participants do not necessarily trust a business more if endorsed by celebrity or social influencer. However, they all do find that it creates an added value in terms of making a brand more physically attractive thus more attention gaining.

Which medium do you consider most effective when celebrity endorsement or influencer marketing is used?

However, when asking the participants which medium they consider the most effective in terms of celebrity endorsement or influencer marketing they all mentioned social media platforms: Instagram and YouTube.

’’On Instagram, it is all about creating nice content. The pictures you post, need to fit perfectly in your feed. I love it when I see that people create beautiful content. You know when they say it’s picture perfect. Queenofjettags is a perfect example of that. I love her photo’s but I also like to watch her on YouTube. On YouTube, you really get to know the person behind that photo. Sometimes that is much more interesting than the photo’s itself. ‘’ – Lydia (19)

6.2 Netnographic research
Desk research shows that contemporary fashion brands regularly pursue a celebrity endorsement strategy. Net-a-Porter, for instance, used in five months’ alone imagery of Alexa Chung, Olivia Palermo, Karlie Kloss and Rose Brynethe (Fibre2Fashion, 2016). In 2016, they have collaborated with 16 ‘celebrities’ in total. With collaborations like Yeezy for Adidas, Beyonce for Tophop, Rihanna for Puma, Justin Bieber for Calvin Klein, Lady Gaga for Versace, and the so-called Balmain army, endorsements seem impossible to circumvent. But what perception attitude does society has among this use? Or do consumers rather prefer the use of social influencer? The following sub-chapters will give short in-depth information concerning the attitude perception society has among these practices.

6.3 Online perception
According to Hawkins (2012), the fashion industry of today revolves around the use of high-profile persons. The arising use of the celebrity endorsement strategy has not been unnoticeable by today’s fashion consumer. Netnographic research shows that many people across the globe tend to think that fashion is no longer about craftsmanship, if they have celebrity endorsement strategy in place. However, in order to retrieve relevant information regarding the perception attitude society has among the use of celebrities and influencers online platforms have been adopted.
6.3.1. Negative or positive?

When seeking in to opinions of others on online platforms, many different statements have come forward. When adopting on Twitter Search and Facebook Search and the Fashion Spot, many consumers have stated their personal view on the different notions thus different strategies. However, only a small number of statements have been chosen in order to narrow the research. The following aspects were remarkably often mentioned:

1. Consumers seem to get tired of a continuous exposure of celebrity faces in (traditional) advertisements.
2. Consumers tend to think that the fashion industry now relies on good marketing rather than the relevance of the product.
3. Consumers are more interested in good content rather than traditional celebrity advertisements.
4. Consumers see influencers as creatives, authentic and honest.
5. Transparency is essential.

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6 Traditional advertising refers to mass media that delivers commercial messages to mass audiences. It includes television, radio, outdoor billboards and print media.
According to acquired research, celebrity endorsement via traditional media has led to a neglecting attitude of (fashion) consumers. Due to the continuous exposure of celebrity faces, consumers tend to pay less attention to the advertisement. In addition, many consumers tend to think that the use of a celebrity has become a must as they think that the contemporary fashion industry now relies on good marketing rather than the relevance of the product. In addition, many have stated that good content, created by an influencer, is more effective than a traditional celebrity advertisement as long as it is mentioned that it is an ad. Media Trends (2015) even stated on twitter that content is the new way of advertising. He finds influencers, who create creative content, as trusted individuals, honest thus authentic.

According to Morning Consult (2017), 20% percent of the people do not trust celebrity endorsement advertisements. This opposed to 36% of the people who answered ‘not much’. However, an important thing to note within their research is that young adults are more amenable than the baby boomers and Generation X. Approximately 30% of the millennials had said that they give credence to celebrity advertisements (Nichols, 2017). Finally, 18% had said they trust these spots a lot.

6.4 Conclusion

“How do consumers look upon the use of fashion icons by fashion brands?”

The continuous exposure of celebrity faces towards (fashion) consumers has led to a neglected attitude of consumers. However, this does not imply that the effect of a celebrity endorsement is considered negative, it only assumes the perception consumers have towards these advertisements. Whilst celebrity endorsement has developed in to a well-known strategy, many consumers now tend to prefer influencer marketing. Influencers are considered creative, honest and authentic. The creative content they create presumably seems to be in higher interest of fashion consumers of both focus groups as well as on the internet. Acquired research shows that influencer marketing attracts consumers more due to their representation of (high) content and engagement within their community.
7.0 || Conclusion

“What attitude perception do consumers have towards the usage of fashion icons by fashion brands?”

Fashion icons, Celebrities, Social Influencers
This research has revealed that the notion fashion icon has been fading due to the presence of media and an overload of style icons. Many people nowadays seem to achieve a fashion icon status due to their exposure within the media and their presence on online platforms. However, research shows that integrating public figures within your marketing communication strategy, certainly is not a recent phenomenon. The arise in using public figures has become more popular due to the advances of social media, a growing celebrity culture, and more influential models. In addition, with the rise of online platforms; celebrities have been joined by new third-party endorsers named social influencers.

With the emerge in social influencers, a new era of trickle-up has arrived. Research shows that many fashion companies are now seeking at ordinary influencers in order to garner more recognition. According to Saul (2016), influencers are forming the new ‘it’ crowd with their cult followings and steering trends. This resulted in a new marketing communication strategy named influencer marketing.

Celebrity Endorsement & Influencer Marketing
However, research has shown that influencer marketing can be easily mistaken with celebrity endorsement. According to Hunkemöller, many marketing agencies along with media platforms seem to use these terms interchangeable. However, as there is a fine line between celebrities and social influencers, both have considerable different approaches thus fulfill different objectives. Whilst celebrity endorsement targets mass market, influencer marketing targets niche. In addition, celebrity advertisements often seed one-way-communication while influencers run a constant dialogue. To conclude, the main differences between these endorsement strategies are:

1. How they influence
2. Who they influence
3. How they are executed

Perception of consumers
Additionally, the results of the conducted focus groups show that influencer marketing is considered more appealing to the consumer rather than traditional celebrity advertisements. Many have stated that the continuous exposure of celebrity faces in traditional advertisements, has led to a neglected attitude. Many tend to be more inspired by social influencers as they are considered creative, honest and authentic. In addition, the focus group results have shown that the use of public figures does not necessarily attribute in trusting a business more rather than one who does not. However, all participants have stated that using public figures certainly is attention gaining but also creates more value.

In summary, today many fashion businesses utilize fashion icons into their marketing communication strategy. When endorsing, companies make use of celebrity endorsement or influencer marketing. However, research has shown that it is also possible to imply both. This is called an integrated marketing campaign which is currently executed by Hunkemöller.
However, an important thing to note, is that when executing an integrated marketing campaign, both strategies are performed separately. An example of this is for instance: Doutzen Kroes and Anna Nooshin for Hunkemöller or Kate Moss and Zoëlla for Topshop. In this strategy, both brands add an internationally known celebrity to a popular among demographic and influential social influencer.

At last, the continuous exposure of celebrity faces has led to a neglected attitude of (fashion) consumers. Research points out that consumers tend to be more persuasive for social influencers rather than traditional celebrities. However, this research does not serve to emphasise whether one is better than the other, but simply justifies to state their differences.
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