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The influence of friends and Instafamous people on purchase intention

구매의사에 친구들과 Instafamous인들이 끼치는 영향

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경영학과 마케팅 전공

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이 논문을 경영학 석사학위논문으로 제출함

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Abstract

The influence of friends and Instafamous people on purchase intention

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Word-of-mouth is a long existing marketing technique that was extended into an electronic version used in the world wide web. Instagram is one of many social networking platforms where this technique is used. Words are thereby spread by posting pictures and written content under the graphics. In this study, it shall be tested what influence such a post has on somebodies' intention to purchase a seen good in an Instagram post. The impact of two specific groups of post-creators are examined and compared, namely friends and Instafamous people. The perceived closeness to the information source, their expertise and trustworthiness (credibility), receiving answers from them and the product type of a fashion good were used as possible influencing factors.

The findings indicate that friends with a strong tie have more influence on somebodies' intention to purchase a good seen in an Instagram post in comparison

to the weak tie of Instafamous people. The mediator of trustworthiness has an indirect effect on friends, but contrary to expectation is no indirect effect given for the expertise of Instafamous people. Receiving or not receiving an answer to a question from the person who posted the picture has no moderating effect on both groups. The difference in product type has a moderating effect on trustworthiness of a friend with a hedonic pair of shoes, while for an Instafamous person neither the hedonic nor the utilitarian shoes have a moderating effect on either expertise or trustworthiness. Overall it can be concluded that in case of a fashion item post, a best friend has more influence on purchase intention, while the expertise of an Instafamous person is not seen as crucial to make intentions to purchase.

Keyword: eWOM, Instagram, source closeness, expertise, trustworthiness, purchase intention

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1. Introduction

1.1. eWOM

When consumers talk about food products, cloth retailers, household goods, or TV programs in their daily life, they are intentionally or even unintentionally marketing a brand or a product. This phenomenon is named as word-of-mouth (WOM). WOM is a marketing technique by which consumer-to-consumer communication is intentionally influenced, leading to an exchange of brand- and product-related messages (Kozinets, de Valck, Wojnicki & Wilner, 2010). Brooks already pointed out in 1957 that WOM marketing is a useful method for companies to market a large number of products and services. The feeling of "people like me" that WOM conveys, rises the credibility of it compared to communication with a company-marketer (Allsop, Bassett & Hoskins, 2007).

Over the years, the classical "offline WOM" has extended itself into an electronic version. The rapid development of the world-wide-web and the growth of social media, made a face-to-face exchange of information no longer necessary (Ho & Dempsey, 2010). People are now able using computers or smartphones to spread the word online. Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh and Gremler (2004) defined this form of electronic WOM (eWOM) as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet". All kinds of information, like texts, images, audio files and videos can be shared with other consumers, as well as companies. National boundaries or far

distances do not matter anymore. Social media thereby works as an advantageous platform where eWOM takes place. It has become an indispensable method for communication, and can be categorized into social networks, blogs and online communities and forums (Kotler & Keller, 2012). In terms of social networks, the major ones include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram, just to name of few. The advantage of eWOM is that content is spreading to an enormous amount of people all over the world in a glimpse of time, and therefore makes it a powerful marketing tool (Watts & Peretti, 2007; Chiu, Hsieh, Kao & Lee, 2007). In a survey conducted by the Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA) in 2013, where 328 marketing executives from various companies had been interviewed, 70% said that their company intend to raise their spending on social media in 2014 (WOMMA, 2014b). In another research from 2014, WOMMA published figures stating that 13% of all consumer sales in the US were made through WOM. This corresponds to $6 trillion whereby one-third of it was made through eWOM (WOMMA, 2014a).

The strength of eWOM combined with social media enable companies new possibilities in marketing their brands, products and services. All different channels have their advantages and disadvantages and firms have to decide which platform or several platforms suit their company best. For the research of this paper, the focus will lie on Instagram, which is rather a new social media channel compared to other big ones like Facebook or Twitter. The following paragraph thereby will introduce this new medium.

1.2. Instagram

Instagram is a free photo- and video-sharing application where people can share their media with individuals from all over the globe. Users can upload their pictures or videos to the platform, add written content under the image, as well as tag other Instagram users or add a location. The caption of the pictures often includes hashtags, so that a picture can be found by the search function, as well as links to websites. The social networking app was launched in October 2010 and has turned into a successful social media channel. According to Instagram's press release and news site, their community had more than 600 million users at the end of December 2016, whereby 100 million joined only in the second half of 2016. Statistics show this rising trend to be ongoing since the beginning of 2013 with 90 million accounts back then (Statista, 2017a). With this high and still rising number of international users, many companies have incorporated the app as one of their marketing tools. Data found on Statista (2017a) shows that 67% of luxury retail brands are using Instagram actively.

Instagram can be managed in two ways, either as a public, or private account. With a public account, every Instagram user is able to see posted pictures and can directly follow this account. Private accounts on the other hand are not open to public, so no pictures are displayed until this person has accepted a following request. Followers and non-followers can interact with a public account by commenting on pictures, pressing a heart-button which refers to liking a picture, or sending a private message. For videos, the function of sending a direct message to the video publisher is possible. By clicking on the follow button on a public

account's main page, a user is directly able see on his or her timeline all the media the newly followed account posted. In other words, when a user opens the Instagram app, all pictures of accounts he or she is following are displayed in a chronological order. In respective to private accounts, the media will become visible when the following-request has been accepted, as well as the other interactions mentioned become possible. The main page of an Instagram user also displays the number of posted pictures, the number of followers, as well as the number of following people. By clicking on these numbers, the people that are being followed by an account, and the people that are following an account become visible.

1.3. Research Objectives

The effects and impacts of eWOM in the field of SNS, is a topic that has been investigated by various scholars (Coulter & Roggeveen, 2012; Diffley, Kearns, Bennett & Kawalek, 2011; Jin & Phua, 2014; Kozinets et al., 2010). How eWOM is accepted through Instagram however has not been explored much. This study wants to achieve findings based on this newer platform and is therefore conducted for the four following objectives. Given research has examined the influence of celebrities on purchasing behavior in an online environment, but little research has been done about the influence of non-celebrities that nevertheless have a certain level of awareness in the world-wide-web (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). The first objective concentrates on the influence of eWOM from friends and "Instafamous people" through Instagram on peoples' purchase intentions. The

focus thereby lies on the closeness between the message transmitter and the message receiver. Second, Hovland, Janis and Kelley's source-credibility model (1953) serves as foundation to point out the mediating effect of expertise and trustworthiness between the closeness of a source (friends and Instafamous people) and the intention to purchase on the basis of an Instagram post. Third, direction of communication is used as one of two moderators in this study. SNS are platforms where a bidirectional communication is possible, so message recipients are able to question message transmitters to seek for further product or brand knowledge. This two-way communication however does only take place, when the inquiring information seeker will receive an answer to his or her question. The consequences of performed one-way communication and two-way communication on a purchase decision will therefore be examined. For the last research question, product type as second moderator is used. It is distinguished between two pairs of shoes, whereby one is a pair of heels representing a hedonic product, and the other one a pair of ice figure skates representing a utilitarian product.

The following literature review brings a better understanding about the single elements of this research, while afterwards the empirical research delivers revealing data for the proposed hypotheses. The last part includes a summary of the findings, as well as implications and a prospect to future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Source Closeness

One factor influencing the effectiveness of eWOM, or WOM in general, is the relationship between the transmitter and the recipient of a message, which is also called tie-strength. This term has been defined by Granovetter (1973) as "the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie." He further divided tie-strength into strong and weak ties, assigned through amount of time, intimacy, intensity and reciprocal services. The impact of this concept within WOM has further been studied by Bansal and Voyer in 2000, who concluded that a stronger tie-strength significantly influences a purchasing decision. This effect is even so powerful to the extent, that a positive, as well as a negative attitude of a person towards a product, brand or company, can change (Diffley et al., 2011). Such a strong bond does usually exist between message recipients and their close friends (Haythornthwaite, 2002), and Chang, Chen and Tan in 2012 alleged that Haythornthwaite's assertion can also be used within SNS.

To stay in contact with friends to further maintain and straighten relationships, social networking sites (SNS) are seen as a practical method (Diffley et al., 2011; Haythornthwaite, 2002). The scope of social media enables people to communicate and exchange all kinds of information. This goes from personal matters to experiences with products and brands. Words of friends are helpful in

minimizing risks and time in a decision-making process (Chiu et al., 2007). Posted pictures on Instagram, showing newly purchased goods, food enjoyed in a restaurant or pictures of the latest travel destination might therefore have some kind of influence on the viewer. He or she might have the intention to buy the same product, or a similar product in a different color from the same brand, try the same restaurant since the pictures look very appealing, or also visit the same travel destination. Even though Instagram does only show IDs and no real names, if an account is linked with Facebook, users automatically receive suggestions to follow Instagram accounts with whom the user is befriended on Facebook. This function enables Instagram users to easily connect with friends from real life, as well as offers the opportunity to simply extend their network and follow more comrades.

Besides friends, accounts of celebrities are attractive for users to follow as well, since people are commonly interested in the life of others and want to gain knowledge about them (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Famous actors, sport athletes, models or musicians are using the app as a platform to share media with fans and friends. These people are generally well-known by the public and therefore have lots of followers (Statista, 2017b). It is very common in Marketing to use celebrities to advertise products or brands due to their popularity. When a positive image of a celebrity endorser gets linked with a brand, the brand will be put in a similar, positive perspective (Spry, Pappu & Cornwell, 2011). This effect helps companies to further promote their brands and products.

Over the recent years, another influential group besides friends and prominent celebrities has emerged. Marwick (2013b) described this group of

micro-celebrities as "being famous to a niche group of people" by actively building up their online-presence and creating a fan base. Micro-celebrities are not managed by agents that help them to promote their career or protect them from harmful media, nor do they earn similar amounts of income like traditional celebrities (Marwick, 2013b). They work on their own, independently decide what content they produce, and what products or brands they promote. In the specific case of Instagram, the term Instafamous and Instafame arose out of the construct of micro-celebrities. Instafame is generated by the search of attention through self-presentation in a specific category that reflects their identity, appearance or taste (Carah & Shaul, 2016). Being Instafamous, which is reached only through an online-presence through Instagram, has enabled very few ones the possibility to become well-known in the "offline world" too. Themed accounts reaching from beauty, clothes, luxury goods, healthy lifestyle, but also pets, children, or hobbies offer people a huge selection to choose from. The 22-year old German university student Caroline Daur started with pictures on Instagram about fashion and lifestyle of her daily life and is now been recognized besides Instagram as well. Within two years she achieved to create her own lipstick for MAC, being invited for well-known fashion shows all over the world, walked on Dolce&Gabbana fashion shows herself, and was interviewed and portrayed for several magazines; by starting off posting pictures and becoming Instafamous with currently around 1,000,000 followers (Daur, 2017). The achievement of Daur is a good example to demonstrate the power of being Instafamous. As followers are copying the success of Instafamous people to obtain positive feedback from their environment (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), or just wanting to be part of the daily life of this

group of people, firms start to offer popular accounts incentives when they take photos with their company's products, or invite them to brand events. Due to the huge number of followers Instafamous people have, firms can reach out to people with similar interests, paying less than they would have paid for traditional celebrities. When sharing media on their SNS, micro-celebrities stick to the category they are representing, as well as when promoting a product or brand. This goes along with Ho and Dempsey's findings (2008) saying that a user's motivation to pass on content through his or her online channel and therefore engage in eWOM is higher, if a certain content fits well in a user's belief and forwarding motivation. A user dedicated to a fit and healthy lifestyle is less likely motivated to spread the word for unhealthy alcoholic beverages. This behavior makes Instafamous people appear more authentic and being influential, compared to traditional celebrities (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

The first hypothesis follows Bansal and Voyer's research from 2000, supported by Brown and Reingen's work from 1987, about the impact of strong tie-strength. Thereby, the influence of friends and Instafamous people on Instagram will be compared. According to their research, it is assumed that an Instagram friend with a strong tie-strength can impact individuals on their purchasing behavior more than Instafamous people with a weak tie-strength can do.

H1: The higher closeness to the information source, the more likely the intention to purchase is.

2.2. Credibility

In daily life, people are flooded with information which makes it difficult for them to decide on what is credible and what not. There is always a possibility that the newly obtained information is incorrect or incomplete. Thus, the credibility of a source is a crucial factor for the success of a statement. To determine the credibility of eWOM, taking place in an online environment without actually knowing who is behind a username or an account, can be even more difficult and also risky. Since it is possible to interact anonymously in the world-wide-web, internet-users are looking for any kind of indications that confirm the credibility of the source (Lu, Zhao &Wang, 2010).

Ohanian (1990) specified source credibility as "a term commonly used to imply a communicator's positive characteristics that affect the receiver's acceptance of a message." She appealed her explanation on Hovland, Janis and Kelley's study from 1953 where they introduced their source-credibility model. The model includes two components that contribute to the credibility of a source: expertise and trustworthiness. Expertise is thereby defined as "the extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions", while trustworthiness is explained as "the degree of confidence in the communicator's intent to communicate the assertions he considers most valid" (Hovland et al., 1953). In other words, expertise embodies knowledge and qualification, while trustworthiness refers to honesty and reliability. Even though other studies suggested additional dimensions of credibility, the majority of research papers

denote expertise and trustworthiness as the most important ones (Yoon, Kim & Kim, 1998) and will therefore be focused on in this study.

Ohanian (1991) pointed out that in advertising, "often when reference is made to a credible celebrity spokesperson, no distinction is made among the expertise, trustworthiness, or attractiveness of the spokesperson", turning source credibility into a unidimensional construct. However, it is important to distinguish dimensions, since a spokesperson (friend or Instafamous person) can be seen as expert, but not as trustworthy (Yoon, et al. 1998). The same also goes for the reverse case, when a friend or Instafamous person is perceived as trustworthy, but not as expert. The combination of both, being an expert and trustworthy, is also possible, which embodies the most powerful construct in the model (Ohanian, 1991).

2.2.1. Expertise

Expertise is a meaningful factor of evaluating the credibility of a source (Coulter & Roggeeven, 2012). Consequently, the eWOM created by an expert can have a powerful impact on a person's decision-making (Bansel & Voyer, 2000). An individual whose occupation reflects the content he or she is creating is often perceived as an expert (Ohanian, 1991). For example, a person being a chef by profession and posting pictures of his or her kitchen tools can be regarded as reliable source. Seeing the kitchen tools on Instagram, a person can probably assume that these are good and credible since an expert with knowledge of the subject is using them.

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A similar approach can be made for the group of Instafamous people. Like already mentioned in the literature review, they are representing a specific niche by creating content for a certain category only, for example healthy food, make up, crafting, and so on. To maintain their popularity and high number of followers, new pictures or videos can be found on a daily basis on their Instagram account, often several times throughout a day. In order to post with such a frequency, Instafamous people need to invest time to be informed about the newest trends, products or techniques, so that they are able to create new posts. This leads them to a broad knowledge with often long experience in their posting-profession. The group of Instafamous people therefore can be seen as experts in their matter (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

According to the literature findings it can be assumed that with a high level of expertise, the eWOM of a friend or a Instafamous person has a positive mediating effect on the purchase intention of an individual. The second hypothesis of this study is therefore formulated as:

H2: Instafamous persons (vs. friends) indirectly affect purchase intention through their perceived expertise.

2.2.2. Trustworthiness

A trustworthy message transmitter influences the decision-making of the receiver of this message (Smith, Menon & Sivakumar, 2005). Mostly, good friends are considered to be such a source of trust (Ohanian, 1991; Diffley et al., 2011; Chang at al., 2012). They have the power to influence their fellows, and if they are

recommending a product or a brand, the information seems to be pre-filtered and is therefore more trustworthy (Diffley et al., 2011). Furthermore, friends seem to share similar interests that strengthen the perceived trustworthiness (Diffley et al., 2011). In the case of Instagram, the link to a friend can be either made by adding him or her through an existing connection via Facebook, or by directly obtaining the Instagram user-ID.

For Instafamous people, even though an Instagram account often includes pictures of an account holder, there is no guarantee that the person in the photos is really the one he or she claims to be. However, like already mentioned in the introduction, users are able to see how many followers an account has. This transparency can be used as an indicator for popularity of an account and evaluate the credibility of a user (Utz, 2010; Jin & Phua, 2014). Thus, the higher the number of followers, the stronger is the trustworthiness of this account (Jin & Phua, 2014). People feel attracted to the high-quality pictures Instafamous people post (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), often clearly displaying a brand, tagging the official brand account on the picture, or tagging it in the description of the post. This behavior could possibly let users associate Instafamous accounts with being brand advertisers. Paid advertisers are focusing more on highlighting the positive points, and neglecting the negative ones of a product (Dellarocas, 2003). This finding might therefore influence the trustworthiness of Instafamous people, since they are often sponsored by companies to promote their goods, so followers might see them as less credible. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) however found in their study that Instafamous people convey trustworthiness, in comparison with

traditional celebrities, due to the perception that their opinions on products and brands appear less superficial.

Instagram can also be used to create a unique online network where people share the same interest to a topic by using hashtags. Searching for a specific keyword will display every photo that has been marked with it. For example, micro-celebrity and fitness expert Kayla Itsines, who has more than 6.6 million followers by spreading her fitness tips via Instagram, started to use the hashtag #bbg (bikini body training guide) under her pictures (Itsines, 2017). By doing this, she created her own kind of network, promoted her fitness ideas, and gained more and more followers. This strategy resulted in her fitness-program-followers tagging their exercise progress pictures with the same wording to share their changes with other members of their so-called "bbg-community". Using a specific hashtag under a picture however does not automatically mean an account belongs to a certain network. If an account constantly creates useful content about a specific topic, which other users might feel attracted to, the number of followers can increase. Through this, some followers of Kayla Itsines could raise their number of followers due to their contribution in the matter, and became Instafamous themselves (Itsines, 2017). This formed network of fitness-followers of Kayla Itsines can create a feeling of group membership possibly leading to trust and alliances (Rettberg, 2014),

Given literature showed the effect trustworthiness has in an online setting, and what kind of aspects affect it. Compared to expertise, the different perspectives of trustworthiness for friends and Instafamous person differ more. According to the

literature findings, it can be assumed that friends have a stronger positive mediating effect on the intention to purchase of an individual than an Instafamous person, so that the hypothesis is formulated as:

H3: Friends (vs. Instafamous persons) indirectly affect purchase intention through their perceived trustworthiness.

2.3. Direction of Communication

Communication in an online setting occurs virtually where information, knowledge, and media is shared through the world-wide-web. Instagram can be directly used as a platform for communication to spread pictures, videos and text messages. When an account user makes a post, the picture usually contains a written text as well, related to what is visible on the photo. This action of communication leads in one direction, reaching every Instagram user possible (if the account is public). If then someone reacts to this post, the one-way communication turns into a two-way communication. This possibility of two-way communication through the internet offers individuals to actively communicate with others to further extend their knowledge about all kind of information (Dellarocas, 2003). Diffley et al. (2011) also emphasized the role that bi-directional communication plays online, since this method of communication between two accounts is more influential than the one of one-way communication. In a study from Coulter and Roggeveen (2012), which is based on Facebook and Twitter, they concluded that if a situation with one-way communication is given, a strong tie-strength with the information source is decisive for the intention to purchase.

Consequently loses tie-strength it's leverage effect when communication takes place in a two-way form, since information recipients are able to receive follow-up information.

With the fourth hypothesis it shall be tested, how one-way communication and two-way communication moderates the effect of source closeness on purchase intention. When a user sees a post made by a friend or Instafamous person and comments under it (one-way communication), two outcomes are possible. The friend or Instafamous person either reacts to it and a two-way communication arises, or the comment does not receive any reply and a one-way communication is maintained. Both scenarios might possibly lead to different impacts on the relationship between source closeness and purchase intention. According to prior findings made through Facebook and Twitter, a similar outcome can be assumed for Instagram. Hence, the forth hypothesis is formulated as:

H4: The effect of source closeness on purchase intention differs, depending on the direction of communication (one-way vs. two-way).

2.4. Product Type

Given literature has demonstrated that consumers have the possibility to buy a product due to its necessity or for enjoyment (Lu, Liu & Fang, 2016). This concept of products being either hedonic or utilitarian is implied in this research paper as well. A hedonic good is meant to offer the buyer fun and pleasure, while a utilitarian good has a practical function (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000). Due to their

definition, consumers of a utilitarian product expect the good to have certain attributes that meet their needs (Feick & Higie, 1992). Given the example of a pair of shoes, which will also be used for this research questionnaire later on, professional sport shoes should be effective to support the shoe-wearer with his or her sportive activities. For a hedonic shoe however, this is not much of importance. Moreover, the hedonic shoe should be stylish, have a certain color, or be made by a hip brand. Since the utilitarian shoes are expected to have a specific functionality, consumers often seek for advice from others when their own knowledge is limited, while this is not the case for hedonic goods (Stafford, Stafford & Day, 2002).

With the last two hypotheses, the moderating effect a hedonic and utilitarian product has on the relationship between expertise and purchase intention, as well as between trustworthiness and purchase intention, will be examined. Chang, Wen Chen and Tan (2012) found in their study using Facebook that expertise was an important factor for advertising utilitarian goods to elicited purchase intention, while expertise was less crucial for hedonic products. It is therefore expected that in the case of Instagram consumers seek for knowledge of an expert when considering to purchase a utilitarian product, while for a hedonic product trustworthiness is more decisive. The hypotheses to show the moderating effect are formulated as:

H5: The effect of expertise on purchase intention differs, depending on the product type (hedonic vs. utilitarian).

H6: The effect of trustworthiness on purchase intention differs, depending on the product type (hedonic vs. utilitarian).

2.5. Purchase Intention

The intention to purchase usually goes along with the question if an individual is willing to buy a product or service. Seeing a product on a picture only, without touching or viewing it from all sides makes the decision more difficult. In order to reach the purchase stage in a decision-making process, a consumer needs to have collected sufficient information about a particular product or service. Instagram in the first place is not a platform for online purchase. No typical functions of an online shopping environment, like a shopping cart, drop-down lists of size, color, or amount, nor payment settings do exist. However, the gathering of information about products, services, or brands that influences an individual, potentially leading to purchase intentions, are possible (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Due to the willingness of online consumers to create and share product and brand related content, many people use the world-wide-web and SNS to search for information about goods or services they are planning to purchase (Chu & Kim, 2011). The pictures posted on Instagram, as well as the written content under the pictures, create awareness and also help a person to evaluate goods and services before making a purchase (Lu, Chang & Chang, 2014). Even tough, as just mentioned, Instagram is not designed to be a shopping platform itself, users and especially brand accounts often add hyperlinks under the description of their pictures that directly lead to a website to purchase the desired good or service. In this research however, the focus lies not on purchases that can be made through Instagram, but on the intension to purchase triggered by a user account and influencing factors.

2.6. Conceptual Framework

After the literature has been elucidated the variables that are used for this research, a conceptual framework can be introduced as followed (Figure 1).
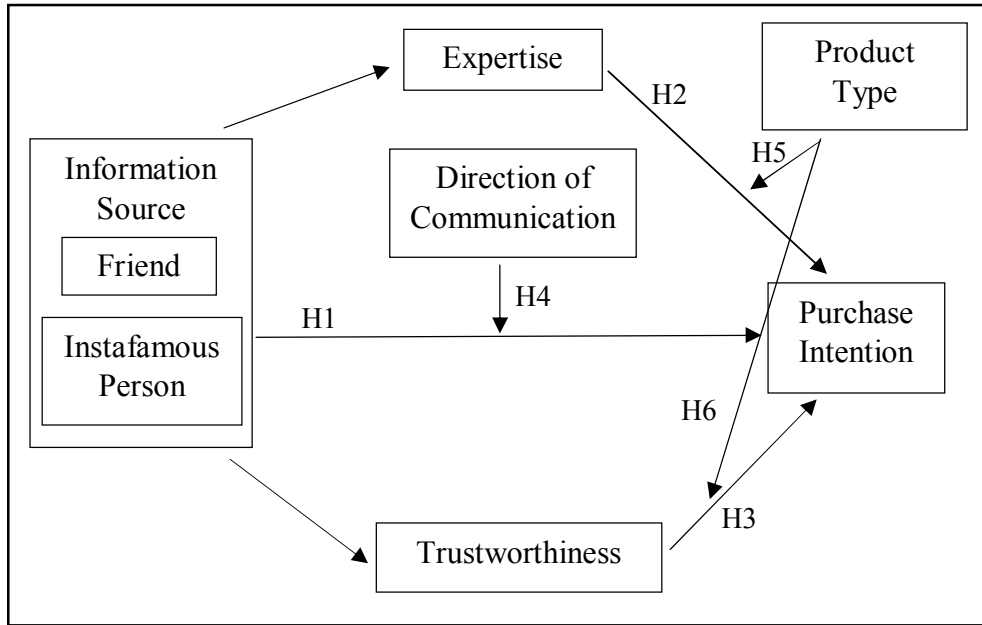
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The underlying hypotheses derived from the framework are formulated as:

H1: The higher the closeness to the information source, the more likely the intention to purchase is.

H2: Instafamous persons (vs. friends) indirectly affect purchase intention through their perceived expertise.

H3: Friends (vs. Instafamous persons) indirectly affect purchase intention through their perceived trustworthiness.

H4: The effect of closeness to the information source on purchase intention differs, depending on the direction of communication (one-way vs. two-way).

H5: The effect of expertise on purchase intention differs, depending on the product type (hedonic vs. utilitarian).

H6: The effect of trustworthiness on purchase intention differs, depending on the product type (hedonic vs. utilitarian).

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Experimental Design

For this research, a 2 x 2 x 2 between-subjects design with random assignment is used, that is, source closeness: friends versus Instafamous people, direction of communication: one-way communication versus two-way communication, and product type: hedonic vs utilitarian. As a result, eight different scenarios were created that were tested with an online questionnaire. A between-subjects design was chosen to not cause possible carryover effects that might influence participants' answers. Table 1 gives an overview of the scenarios with their manipulated variables.

Table 1: Experimental Design - 2 x 2 x 2 Factorial Design

Condition	Information Source	Direction of Communication	Product Type
1	friend	two-way	hedonic
2	friend	one-way	hedonic
3	friend	two-way	utilitarian
4	friend	one-way	utilitarian
5	Instafamous person	two-way	hedonic
6	Instafamous person	one-way	hedonic
7	Instafamous person	two-way	utilitarian
8	Instafamous person	one-way	utilitarian

The scenarios were manipulated through posts either made by a best friend or Instafamous person, who almost always or never answers questions on Instagram. Since women tend to be more active on Instagram in posting pictures and interacting in form of liking a picture or commenting under it, the survey participants were women only (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Furthermore, an age group of 20 – 35 was chosen, derived from research papers about SNS (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Lu et al., 2014; Henning-Thurau et al., 2004). Young women tend to be interested in fashion, often using SNS to check and follow trends (Marwick, 2013a; Marwick, 2011). Product type was therefore controlled by showing an Instagram post of a pair of heels from a famous brand for a hedonic product, while professional ice figure skates were chosen for the utilitarian case. Not to cause any form of bias, no brand name was given in the scenarios, nor showed the pictures any names. The scenarios of the best friend were stating that the best friend has little knowledge about this kind of fashion shoes (heels), while for the utilitarian pair of shoes the scenarios described that the best friend will start ice skating soon, but is a total beginner. The Instafamous

person on the other hand was pictured as an expert, with lots of experience and knowledge for the hedonic shoes, and being a professional ice figure skater for the utilitarian one. The choice of shoes was derived from the research of Lee, Cryder and Nowlis (2014), where they have chosen fun dress shoes for a hedonic product and practical shoes for a utilitarian product for female participants. To make questions shorter in length, both, best friend and Instafamous person were given the female surname Anna.

The questions of the survey were mainly adapted from existing research papers in the matter, and were all tested on a 7-point Likert-scale (Table 2). Three questions about the closeness of the source/tie-strength were directly adopted from the study from Coulter and Roggeveen (2012), based on the work of Frenzen and Davis (1990). Three questions each examined the perceived expertise and trustworthiness of the information source. All of these six items were created on the basis of Ohanian's work (1990). Two questions were generated to test to the level of communication and the final question asked about the intention to purchase the seen good according to the underlying scenario.

Table 2: Questionnaire Questions based on existing research

Construct	Source	Items
Source Closeness / Tie-strength	Frenzen and Davis (1990); Coulter and Roggeveen (2012);	1. How likely would you share personal secrets with Anna? 2. How likely would you perform a LARGE favor for Anna? 3. Please rate your closeness to Anna.
Expertise	Ohanian (1990); Coulter and Roggeveen (2012)	1. How important is the <u>expertise</u> of Anna in evaluating the product? 2. How important is the <u>knowledge</u> of Anna in evaluating the product? 3. How important is the <u>qualification</u> of Anna in evaluating the product?
Trustworthiness	Ohanian (1990); Coulter and Roggeveen (2012)	1. How <u>honest</u> do you believe is Anna? 2. How <u>reliable</u> do you believe is Anna? 3. How <u>trustworthy</u> do you believe is Anna?

3.2. Pretest

3.2.1. Procedure

Before the initial data collection, the questionnaire was distributed to female Instagram users to test whether participants recognize the difference of two pair of shoes, the scenarios were understandable and for manipulation check. Before the main study was conducted, the shoes had been a pair of trendy sneakers for the hedonic case and a pair of running shoes for the utilitarian case.

Ten participants were questioned about their understanding of the questionnaire. They suggested adjustments of the phrasing of the scenarios and questions, as well as stating their problems in clearly identifying trendy sneakers as a hedonic good and professional running shoes as a utilitarian one. Even though the

example of running shoes was taken from an experiment, where the authors did research about expertise by testing it through running shoes (Kim, Bickart & Brunel, 2011), the shoes seemed to be inappropriate for this study. A large part did not make any differences in using sneakers for sports and the running shoes for non-sportive activities. In order to create a clearer distinction between the two products in the survey, it was decided to select other examples, which however still belong to the category of fashion and shoes. A few days after the feedback, the same ten individuals were shown eight different pair of shoes in order to check if they can be used for manipulating the product type. Due to the difficulty participants were facing distinguishing trendy sneakers and professional running shoes, both pair of shoes were dismissed from the selection process of the new pairs. The females were tasked to select one pair they associated with being fun, exciting and delightful, and one pair of shoes as effective, helpful and functional. As a result, the majority (7 females) picked heels to be representative as hedonic good and ice figure skates (4 females) as utilitarian product (see Appendix I).

Table 3: Product type selection - kind of shoes (number of votes)

Hedonic (fun, exciting and delightful)		Utilitarian (effective, helpful, functional)	
ankle boots	(0)	ice figure skates	(4)
ballerinas	(3)	mountain climbing shoes	(2)
heels	(7)	soccer shoes	(3)
sandals	(0)	water shoes	(1)

The revised questionnaire with the new pre-checked product pictures was then send out and further manipulations were tested on 40 female Instagram users. The used 7-point Likert scale showed answer possibilities of 1 = not at all likely

and 7 = extremely likely, and 1 = not at all close and 7 = extraordinary close accordingly, for the questions about source closeness/tie-strength. Two questions for direction of communication included the frequency of communication and replies, rated with 1 = not at all and 7 = very often, and 1 = never and 7 = almost always. For the manipulation check of expertise, the questions were assessed with 1 = not at all and 7 = extremely.

3.2.2. Results

In order to decide whether it is justifying to interpret the scores that had been aggregated together, the reliability for the scores of the scales were tested with Cronbach's alpha. The obtained values for source closeness (α = .914), direction of communication (α = .830) and expertise (α = .846) indicate a high level of internal consistency for the used scales. Each of the three manipulations were then averaged across its items and the mean of source closeness, communication and expertise was obtained for each of the eight scenarios. Table 3 gives on overview of the cell-wise means on the variables. A one-way ANOVA was conducted for source closeness, showing that friends appear to have a stronger tie (M_{friend} = 4,03) than Instafamous people with a high statistical significance ($M_{Instafamous}$ = 1,88; $F(1,38)$ = 21,946, p < .000). In case of direction of communication, the one-way ANOVA was highly statistical significant. The scenarios with a high frequency of communication achieved higher means ($M_{two-way}$ = 4,55) than the scenarios with a low frequency of communication ($M_{one-way}$ = 2,57; $F(1,38)$ =12,605, p = .001). The same test was done for expertise as well. The

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results present with a high statistical significance that friends have a lower level of expertise (M_{friend} = 2,96) than Instafamous people have ($M_{Instafamous}$ = 4,50; $F(1,38)$ =12,205, p = .001). Following the obtained data, the manipulation was successful. The following table 4 gives on overview of the calculated means.

Table 4: Means of Manipulated Variables

	best friend				Instafamous person			
	Heels (hedonic product)		Skates (utilitarian product)		Heels (hedonic product)		Skates (utilitarian product)	
	two-way	one-way	two-way	one-way	two-way	one-way	two-way	one-way
Closeness	5,13	3,60	4,40	3,00	2,53	2,20	1,40	1,40
Communication	5,50	4,20	5,90	3,00	3,60	2,00	3,20	1,00
Expertise	3,40	1,86	3,80	2,80	3,86	4,33	5,06	4,73

3.3. Main Test

3.3.1. Procedure

In the main test, the effects of the variables in this study were further examined and the hypotheses tested. In total, 120 female Instagram users participated in the main test and were randomly assigned to one out of eight conditions of the online questionnaire. The participants were recruited from an Facebook group consisting of females from all over the world to ensure female participants from different nations. The structure and procedure of the questionnaire were the same as with the pretest. The participants first were presented one scenario, which also included a picture of a screen of the Instagram app showing a photo of either a pair of heels, or a pair of ice figure skates. Their

task was then to answer the following questions based on the scenario. In the last part participants were also asked about their nationality and age. No question was given about gender, since the introduction and also during the spread of the questionnaire, it was clearly stated that the study is limited to female Instagram users only.

Information Source. The classification of information source into friends and Instafamous people was made to test differences of their influence on purchase intention underlying the concept of source closeness/tie-strength. Information source as independent variable was examined with three questions asking about sharing secrets ("How likely would you share personal secrets with Anna?"), doing a large favor ("How likely would you perform a LARGE favor for Anna?"), and rating the closeness towards the person who posted the picture ("Please rate your closeness to Anna").

Expertise. For the first mediator, expertise, knowledge and qualification of the person who posted the picture should be rated. The goal was to find out, if expertise has a mediating effect on information source and purchase intention. Ohanian (1990) delivered the foundation of the questionnaire items for expertise. Even though she suggested five dimensions of expertise in her celebrity endorser-credibility scale, only three were selected to keep the questionnaire rather short. The structure of the questions was taken from Coulter and Roggeveen's study about WOM in online social networks (2012) and adjusted to this research and scenarios. They questions were stated as "How important is the expertise of Anna in evaluating the product?", "How important is the knowledge of Anna in

evaluating the product?", and "How important is the <u>qualification</u> of Anna in evaluating the product?".

Trustworthiness. The mediator trustworthiness has worked as counterpart of expertise from Ohanian's celebrity endorser-credibility scale. Like in the case of expertise, out of five dimensions for trustworthiness, only three were chosen and three questions were formed. Equally, these were created on the basis on Coulter and Roggeveen (1990), too. In more detail, the trustworthiness-items were "How <u>honest</u> do you believe is Anna?", "How <u>reliable</u> do you believe is Anna?", and "How <u>trustworthy</u> do you believe is Anna?" assessed with 1 = not at all and 7 = extremely. With these questions, a possible mediation effect of trustworthiness on information source and purchase intention should be measured. The reliability of the scores was examined with Cronbach's Alpha, hinting on a high level of internal consistency (α = .944).

Direction of Communication. Two questions to examine the frequency of communication between the information source (message transmitter) and message receiver were created, anchored by 1 = not at all and 7 = very often, and 1 = never and 7 = almost always respectively. The participants had to answer "How often do you communicate with Anna?" and "How often does Anna reply to your questions?". These questions aimed to show if one-way communication and/or two-way communication moderates the relationship between information source and purchase intention.

Product Type. Product type was the second moderator used in this study. Based on the given scenarios, participants were either classified into the group of

hedonism or utilitarianism. The seen Instagram posts in the scenarios, prior selected during the pretest, indicated either a hedonic pair of shoes (heels) or a utilitarian pair (ice figure skates).

Purchase Intention. The final question of the survey was the one to measure the dependent variable. Survey participants were asked, "According to the situation, how likely do you intend to purchase the shoes in the picture?", applied with a Likert-scale of 1 = not at all likely and 7 = extremely likely.

3.3.2. Results

In the following, the results obtained through data collection were examined with SPSS, and analyzed by subcategorizing them into main effect, mediating effects, and moderating effects. The female participants had an average age of 26.01 years, originating from North America (25.00%), South America (0.83%), Europe (47.50%) and Asia (26.67%).

Main Effect Analysis. The first hypothesis should be informative about the effects of source closeness on purchase intention influenced by a post made by the best friend or an Instafamous person on Instagram. To test if the intention to purchase is more likely to occur when the picture on Instagram has been shared by the best friend with a strong-tie in comparison to a picture from an Instafamous person with a weak-tie, a one-way ANOVA was computed. The result showed that with a strong tie or a high level of closeness to the source the intention the purchase occurred more often (M_{strong} = 4.19, SD = 1.70) than with a weak tie (M_{weak} =1.92,

SD = .92; (F(15,104) = 2.526, p = .003). This statistically significant result indicated the difference in both groups with a higher outcome for the relationship with a strong-tie and therefore supported H1.

Figure 2: Comparing Means of Source Closeness on Purchase Intention
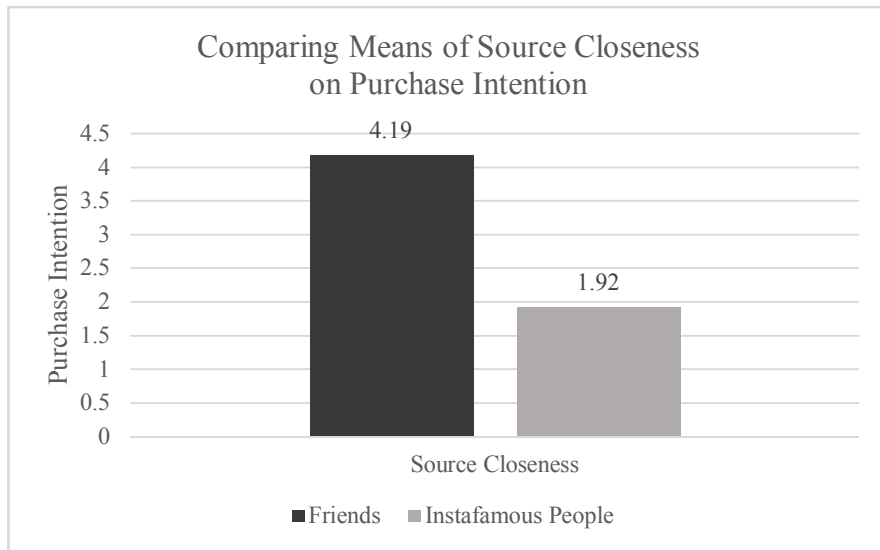
The second and third hypotheses in this research were made to test the mediating role of credibility of the information source. Credibility was thereby further divided into expertise to test H2 and trustworthiness for H3. Therefore, the bootstrap method created by Preacher and Hayes (2004, 2008) was used to conduct the two hypothesis tests. Comparing the method of bootstrapping with other methods of intervening variables, the non-parametric resampling test of bootstrapping appeared to be more powerful and valid (Williams & MacKinnon, 2008). Hayes wrote a macro called PROCESS that can be added to SPSS, which was used for the examination in this research. As suggested in his article from 2009, the number of bootstrap samples were selected as 10.000 and his forth model from

the macro was used. Following Mallinckrodt, Abraham, Wie & Russell (2006) is an indirect effect significant and a mediating effect given, if a value of zero is not included in the 95% confidence interval. The mediator analyses were done separately for friends and Instafamous persons to clearly demonstrate the different effects by the two information sources.

First, PROCESS was run to test the mediating effect for expertise. To begin with Instafamous persons, a regression of expertise on Instafamous persons was conducted (b = - .204, t(58) = -1.00, p = n.s.), resulting in a not significant outcome. Next, purchase intention was regressed on expertise assuming expertise predicts purchase intention (b = .485, t(57) = 2.72, p = .008), and showed a statistical significantly effect. Then, purchase intention was regressed on information source and expertise. The test showed that information source, here the Instafamous person, significantly affects purchase intention (b = .445, t(57) = 2.64, p = .011). Lastly, purchase intention was regressed on information source (b = - .346, t(58) = -1.698, p = n.s.) and delivered a not significant result. Furthermore did a 95% confidence interval also contain a value of zero (- .3780 and   .0426) concluding that expertise did not act as mediator between Instafamous people and purchase intention.

In the next step, a regression of expertise on friends as information source was conducted (b =   .243, t(58) = 2.62, p = .011), resulting in a statistically significant effect between them. Next, purchase intention was regressed on expertise, showing no statistically significance (b = .273, t(57) = 1.49, p = n.s.). Then, purchase intention was regressed on information source with the just

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calculated expertise as mediator. The test showed that the (best) friend, significantly affected purchase intention (b = .494, t(57) = 3.56, p = .007). To see if a mediating effect was present, purchase intention was regressed on source closeness (b = .561, t(58) = 4.76, p = .000). The statistically significant result showed that the beta weight without expertise as mediator was higher (β = .561), than the outcome with the mediator (β = .494). However, the 95% confidence interval did contain a value of zero (- .0043 and .2160) which concludes that the expertise of a friend has also no mediating effect on purchase intention. Thus, H2 needs to be rejected.

The same procedure was done for the mediator of trustworthiness. To start this time with friends, trustworthiness was regressed on information source (b = .750, t(58) = 10.40, p = .000) resulting in a statistically significant outcome. Trustworthiness was then regressed on purchase intention with the assumption that trustworthiness predicts purchase intention, showing a statistically significant result (b = .473, t(57) = 2.84, p = .0062). In the following step was purchase intention regressed on information source. The obtained outcome resulted in being not significant p value (b = .206, t(57) = 1.19, p = n.s.). A regression of purchase intention on information source delivered a highly significant statistical result (b = .561, t(58) = 4.76, p = .000), which was supported by a 95% confidence interval not containing a value of zero (.1018 and .6356). The comparison of the beta weight without the mediator trustworthiness (b = .561) was higher than with the mediator (b = .206). This means that trustworthiness of a friend has a partial mediating effect on purchase intention.

In the following, trustworthiness was regressed on Instafamous person as information source (b = .328, t(58) = 2.34, p = .023). Assuming trustworthiness predicts purchase intention, trustworthiness was regressed on it (b = .422, t(57) = 1.62, p = n.s.) showing that this assumption is statistically not significant. Then, purchase intention was regressed on information source with trustworthiness as mediator, resulting in a not significant effect on purchase intention (b = .208, t(57) = 1.16, p = n.s.). A following regression of purchase intention on information source showed that the p value was not significant (b = .346, t(58) = 1.70, p = n.s.). Additionally, did the 95% confidence interval include a value of zero in its outcome (- .0061 and .3681). According to the data is no mediating effect of trustworthiness given with an Instafamous person as information source. Since trustworthiness had an indirect effect on purchase intention for friends, but not for Instafamous persons, H3 can be accepted. In table 5, the results of the measured constructs had been visualized.

Table 5: Summary of Mediating Effects for Friends and Instafamous Persons

Label	Friend			Instafamous Person		
	β	t	Sig	β	t	Sig
IS – Ex	.243	2.62	.011	-.204	-1.00	n.s.
Ex – PI	.273	1.49	n.s.	.485	2.72	.008
Ind.Ex	.494	3.56	.007	.445	2.64	.011
IS – PI	.561	4.76	.000	.346	1.70	n.s.
IS – Tru	.750	10.40	.000	.328	2.34	.023
Tru – PI	.473	2.84	.006	.422	1.62	n.s.
Ind.Tru	.206	1.19	.241	.208	1.16	n.s.
IS – PI	.561	4.76	.000	.346	1.70	n.s.

Note: IS = Information Source; Ex = Expertise; Tru = Trustworthiness, PI = Purchase Intention; Ind. = Indirect Effect

Moderating Effect Analysis. In this study, two moderators were given, direction of communication and product type. To conduct a moderating analysis, Hayes' PROCESS macro for SPSS was used (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Hayes, 2012).

For the moderator direction of communication, Hayes' model number 1 with a sample size of 5000 was selected. Information source was inserted as independent variable, purchase intention as dependent variable, and direction of communication as moderator. The results of the first moderator analysis showed that the interaction effect between information source and direction of

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communication was not significant (p = n.s.). Furthermore did the confidence interval include the value zero (95% CI (- .1710, .039)), which led to the conclusion that no moderating effect was given. Accordingly, H4 was not supported.

To test if product type has a moderating effect in this study, Hayes' model number 14 with a sample size of 5000 was chosen. For product type, a dummy variable was created and categorized based on the scenarios into hedonic and utilitarian. Information source was set as independent variable, purchase intention as dependent variable, expertise and trustworthiness as mediator, and product type as moderator. In order to find out, whether one information source affects purchase intention more than the other source when a certain product type was involved, the perceived trustworthiness and expertise from each, friend and Instafamous person, was examined for both product types. First, it was tested if a moderated mediation is given between purchase intention on information source and expertise. To start with the expertise of the Instafamous person, a moderating effect could not be obtained, due to its non-significance for both product types (p = n.s., 95% CI (- .5253, .0409) for the hedonic product, 95% CI (-.4749, .0467) for the utilitarian product). Doing the same test for the perceived expertise of a friend, the hedonic product delivered a 95% confidence interval of -.0027 and .3818, and for the utilitarian good -.0083 and .2264, with an overall non-significance. In the relationship between expertise and purchase intention, no moderating effect with either a hedonic good, or a utilitarian product could be found for the Instafamous person, as well as for the friend. As a consequence, H5 needed to be rejected.

In the next step, the same procedure was done for purchase intention on information source and trustworthiness. The result for the trustworthiness of a friend showed that the interaction between the tested variables was statistically significant (p = .0395). By looking at the 95% confidence intervals of the two product types and examining if a value of zero can be found, the data for the hedonic pair of shoes resulted in having a moderating effect (.1998, .8410), while for the utilitarian pair a value of zero was given, resulting in no moderating effect for the ice figure skates (-.1643, .4892). In the case of perceived trustworthiness of an Instafamous person, overall no significant result of an existing moderating effect was found (p = n.s., 95% CI (.0522, .5061) for the hedonic product, 95% CI (-.1560, .3889) for the utilitarian product). This supports H6 partially. The effect of trustworthiness on purchase intention was strengthened in the case of the friend, due to the effect of the hedonic product type, while no moderated mediating effect could be found for the utilitarian product type. For the trustworthiness of the Instafamous person however, no effect was found for either the hedonic, as well as the utilitarian product.

Table 6: Moderating Effects

Label	Friend			Instafamous Person		
	p	CI		p	CI	
Ex (H)	n.s.	-.0027	.3818	n.s.	-.5253	.0409
Ex (U)	n.s.	-.0083	.2264	n.s.	-.4749	.0467
Tru (H)	.040	.1998	.8410	n.s.	.0522	.5061
Tru (U)	.040	-.1643	.4892	n.s.	-.1560	.3889

Table 7: Hypotheses Overview

Hypothesis	Test	Outcome
1	Main Effect Information Source – Purchase Intention	Accepted
2	Mediating Effect Expertise	Rejected
3	Mediating Effect Trustworthiness	Accepted
4	Moderating Effect Direction of Communication	Rejected
5	Moderating Effect Product Type – Utilitarian	Rejected
6	Moderating Effect Product Type - Hedonic	(Partially) Accepted

3.4. Summary

The here tested model showed how the closeness to the source/tie-strength, the credibility of the source, the communication between information transmitter and recipient, and the product type can influence an individual on its intention to purchase. The main experiment tested how friends with a strong-tie influence a

person, in comparison to an Instafamous person with a weak tie. As expected, having a strong-tie with the person who posted the picture did influence study participants more in their purchase intention than having a weak-tie, supporting H1. To extend this concept, the credibility of the friend and Instafamous person was further examined. Using mediators of expertise and trustworthiness, it was expected that both have an indirect effect on purchase intention. The perceived expertise and trustworthiness of both, friends and Instafamous person, were examined and the results presented. The findings showed that expertise of the Instafamous person, as well as the expertise of the friend had no mediating effect, leading to rejecting H2. While trustworthiness on the other hand showed a mediating effect in the case of friends, but none for Instafamous persons, concluding H3 can be accepted. This would mean that the perceived trust of a friend seemed to be more decisive for participants in this study for their intention to purchase the seen product. Participants were not much influenced in their decision by the Instafamous person with knowledge and experience about the seen fashion shoes and ice figure skates.

As already proofed, different ties to the information source can result in disparate outcomes. Thus, direction of communication was used as a moderator to see if receiving answers from the information source, in comparison with receiving none, had an effect on purchase intention. This assumption was not supported and therefore H4 rejected. The females in this research made no difference in exchanging messages with the information source or not. This clearly contradicts the findings made by Coulter and Roggeveen (2012) on Facebook and Twitter,

where a bi-directional communication made the closeness to the source less pivotal. To study under which conditions friends or Instafamous persons might be more credible, product type as second moderator was examined, whereby heels functioned as hedonic good and ice figure skates as utilitarian product. Again, the construct was tested with friends, and Instafamous persons separately to demonstrate possible differences within the information source. In the relationship between the expertise of the Instafamous person and purchase intention, neither in the case of the hedonic, nor the utilitarian good, a moderating effect was statistically found. The same finding was made for the perceived expertise for the friend for both goods. Product type was also tested as moderator between trustworthiness and purchase intention. The trustworthiness of a friend showed a statistical significant result with the hedonic pair of shoes, but none for the utilitarian shoes. In the case of the Instafamous person, neither did any of the two product types result in a moderating effect. This can be interpreted as, individuals in this study had a greater intention to purchase heels, when the trustworthy friend posted the picture on Instagram, while this was not the case for the trustworthy friend and ice figure skates. On the contrary, the perceived trustworthiness of the Instafamous person showed no effect in both conditions. In the case of the utilitarian shoes, even though ice figure skates cannot be bought in a common shoe store and are very specific in their functions, participants did not perceive the necessity of obtaining advice or information of an expert, namely from the Instafamous person as a professional ice figure skater. Accordingly, H5 was rejected and H6 accepted for friends based on this outcome. To sum up the findings, it can be said that in this study, using Instagram as the channel where eWOM was

transmitted triggering purchase intentions, friends with their strong tie and trustworthiness were perceived as more influential compared to Instafamous persons.

4. General Discussion

4.1 Summary

Previous studies pointed out the effects eWOM has on consumers, obtained through various SNS. Since so far Instagram has gained less attention in academic research, this study applied different concepts used with other networking channels on the popular photo-sharing app. The work of Coulter and Roggeveen (2012), examining eWOM in the context of Facebook and Twitter was thereby used as a rough basic structure for the conceptual framework.

With a 2 x 2 x 2 between-subjects research design, young female Instagram users were tasked to answer an online questionnaire. The survey, showing an Instagram post either made by the best friend or an Instafamous person, was used to examine the concepts of source closeness/tie-strength, credibility in form of expertise and trustworthiness, direction of communication (one-way and two-way), and product type (hedonic and utilitarian), that may possibly influence the intention to purchase the seen product in the post. Eight different scenarios were created in order to obtain participants' perception based on the given scenarios, whereby the females were randomly distributed to one out of eight scenarios.

To summarize the findings, participants perceived having a stronger-tie with their best friend and more often intended to purchase the good this person posted. The influence of trustworthiness as mediator strengthened the power of the friend, while no mediating effect was found for the expertise of her. Expecting that participants perceive the Instafamous person as an expert in the matter, no mediating effect of expertise was found, as well as no mediating effect for trustworthiness. According to prior studies, communication between message transmitter and message receiver might modify the casual effect of source closeness on purchase intention. This was not the case for this study. No difference in receiving an answer after asking the person who posted the picture a question, and receiving no replies was found. Last, it was assumed that product type as a moderator might affect the relationship between expertise and purchase intention, and/or trustworthiness and purchase intention. In the case of expertise, with the expertise of the Instafamous person, no mediated moderating effect for the hedonic, as well as utilitarian good could be found. The same results were concluded for the perceived expertise of the friend. For the construct of trustworthiness, a mediated moderating effect was given with friends and the hedonic shoes, while none for the utilitarian shoes. For Instafamous people, none of the two product types caused a moderating effect. Overall in this study, the best friend with a strong tie-strength and trustworthiness was perceived to be more influential on purchase intentions than the Instafamous person.

4.2. Implications

From this study, several theoretical contributions can be made. First of all, existing literature has examined consumer behavior in various social networking sites. It is already well noted that SNS enable consumers to more easily interact with others and share experiences of a product and brand, influencing others in their purchase intention (Diffley at al., 2011). Instagram however, has not been studied much in comparison with other, long-existing online channels. Due to its rising popularity and attention gained by companies, more insights about Instagram needs to be shared. This paper therefore, with its sole focus on Instagram as social media channel, enriches given literature in consumer behavior in SNS, especially in a quantitative aspect.

Second, the overall results showed that posts made by a best friend appeared to be more influential than the post of an Instafamous person. Not only was this given for the perceived high closeness to the friend, but also in terms of credibility in form of trustworthiness. Individuals relied more on information obtained from a friend perceived as trustworthy than from the Instafamous person with given expertise in the matter. A qualitative research conducted by Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) indicated that the majority of their interview participants had purchased a good, solely marketed through an Instafamous person, that they trusted. In this quantitative study however, the chosen Instafamous person appeared to be little trustworthy. Even under the condition that a utilitarian product was given, the research did not indicate significant results that the Instafamous person as expert influences individuals on their purchase intentions. It could be assumed

that other factors influence the perceived trustworthiness and expertise of an Instafamous person, like a higher number of followers as given in the scenarios, the quality of the picture, the frequency of posted pictures or even the attractiveness of the Instafamous person (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

Besides the theoretical contributions, managerial implications for companies can also been drawn. Instafamous people, seen as a group of micro-celebrities active on Instagram, are often used by companies to promote their products, due to their big scope of followers. Companies hope for new customers and sales by using Instafamous people as their marketers. Even though, the best friend appeared to be more influential in purchase intentions in direct comparison with the Instafamous person, Instafamous people seem to be in some way influential. Figures confirm this with 9.7 million brand sponsored posts made in 2016 by Instafamous people (Mediakix, 2017). In comparison with high-end celebrities, these micro-celebrities are an inexpensive method to promote a brand and appear to be more credible than stars. Especially small and medium-sized companies with limited budget could make use of them. However, as the outcome of this research has shown do friends perceive higher influence on individuals in their purchase intention. Even though a non-famous person might not have many followers, showing or mentioning a brand or product in a post still reaches other potential customers. It is therefore advisable for a company to consider having an Instagram account if the customer target group is known to be using SNS.

4.3. Limitations and Future Research

This research has several limitations and offers opportunities for future research in the matter. First of all, the online survey was conducted without any incentives, which might have led to half-hearted participation without carefully reading the scenarios.

Besides the participation, improvements can be made on the questionnaire itself. Since with the given products, trustworthiness was overall more influential than expertise in this research, a similar study should be conducted with other hedonic and utilitarian goods. A possibility would be to move away from fashion and change to a high-tech product for the utilitarian scenarios to see if the expertise of the person who posted the picture would be perceived as more crucial in comparison to the trustworthiness of the person. A replication of this study with other pictures and goods in the scenarios can be informative to test if the same outcomes can be achieved. This might help to investigate if the obtained results of this research arose due to an influence through the choice of professional sport shoes for the utilitarian product.

As mentioned in the implications part, Instafamous persons are in a way influential. Future research could examine what factors make them more influential and test this quantitatively. Like already stated, such causes could be the quality of the posted pictures, the frequency of posts, or different numbers of followers. Furthermore, the concept of expertise and trustworthiness could be extended by

attractiveness (Ohanian, 1990) in order to investigate if the attractiveness of the Instafamous person influences the credibility of made posts.

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Appendix

Appendix I

Appendix II

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
Please imagine the following situation: You are opening your Instagram app and finding this picture your real life **best friend** Anna has posted.	Please imagine the following situation: You are opening your Instagram app and finding this picture your real life **best friend** Anna has posted.	Please imagine the following situation: You are opening your Instagram app and finding this picture your real life **best friend** Anna has posted.	Please imagine the following situation: You are opening your Instagram app and finding this picture your real life **best friend** Anna has posted.
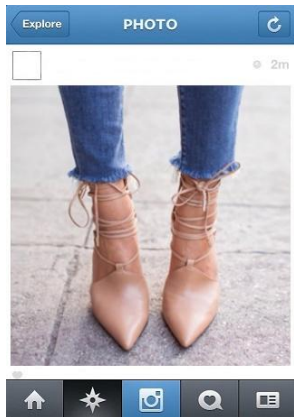
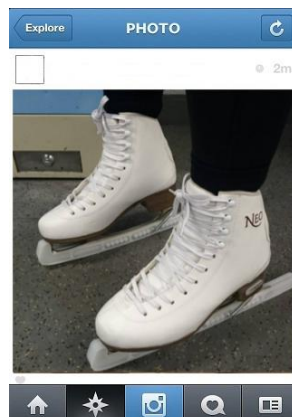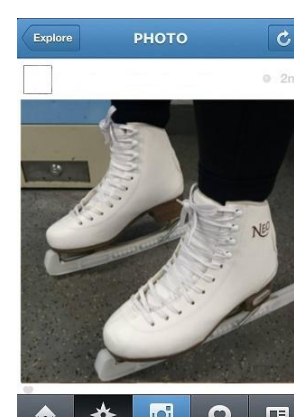|			
"I bought a pair of heels."	"I bought a pair of heels."	"I bought a pair of professional ice figure skates."	"I bought a pair of professional ice figure skates."
Your best friend has little knowledge about this kind of fashion shoes you see in the picture. In general, she <u>almost always</u> answers questions on Instagram.	Your best friend has little knowledge about this kind of fashion shoes you see in the picture. In general, she <u>never</u> answers questions on Instagram.	Your best friend will start ice skating soon, but is a total beginner. In general, she <u>almost always</u> answers questions on Instagram.	Your best friend will start ice skating soon, but is a total beginner. In general, she <u>never</u> answers questions on Instagram.
The pair of shoes Anna has posted are heels from a famous brand. You are	The pair of shoes Anna has posted are heels from a famous brand. You are	The pair of shoes Anna has posted are professional ice figure skates. You are considering buying the	The pair of shoes Anna has posted are professional ice figure skates. You are considering buying the

considering buying the heels too. Now please answer the following questions related to this situation.	considering buying the heels too. Now please answer the following questions related to this situation.	professional ice figure skates too. Now please answer the following questions related to this situation.	professional ice figure skates too. Now please answer the following questions related to this situation.

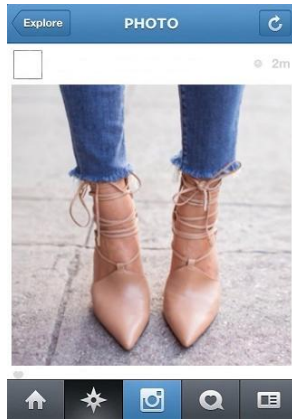| **Scenario 5**	**Scenario 6**	**Scenario 7**	**Scenario 8**
Please imagine the following situation: You are opening your Instagram app and finding this picture Anna, an **Instafamous person** you follow, has posted.	Please imagine the following situation: You are opening your Instagram app and finding this picture Anna, an **Instafamous person** you follow, has posted.	Please imagine the following situation: You are opening your Instagram app and finding this picture Anna, an **Instafamous person** you follow, has posted.	Please imagine the following situation: You are opening your Instagram app and finding this picture Anna, an **Instafamous person** you follow, has posted.

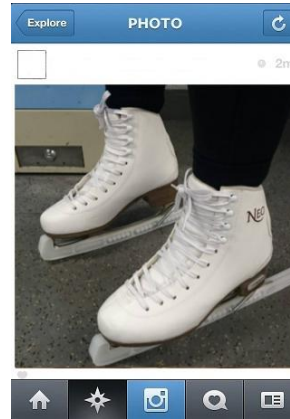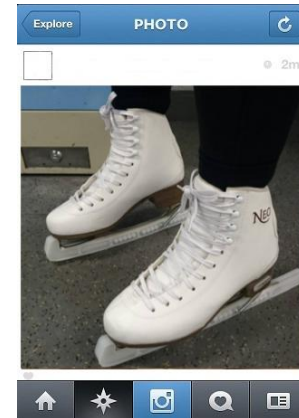|			
"I bought a pair of heels."	"I bought a pair of heels."	"I bought a pair of professional ice figure skates."	"I bought a pair of professional ice figure skates."
This Instafamous person has lots of experience and knowledge about this kind of fashion shoes you see in the picture. In general, she <u>almost always</u> answers questions on Instagram. The pair of shoes Anna has posted are heels from a	This Instafamous person has lots of experience and knowledge about this kind of fashion shoes you see in the picture. In general, she <u>never</u> answers questions on Instagram. The pair of shoes Anna has posted are heels from a	This Instafamous person is a professional ice figure skater. In general, she <u>almost always</u> answers questions on Instagram. The pair of shoes Anna has posted are professional ice figure skates. You are considering buying the	This Instafamous person is a professional ice figure skater. In general, she <u>never</u> answers questions on Instagram. The pair of shoes Anna has posted are professional ice figure skates. You are considering buying the

famous brand. You are considering buying the heels too. Now please answer the following questions related to this situation.	famous brand. You are considering buying the heels too. Now please answer the following questions related to this situation.	professional ice figure skates too. Now please answer the following questions related to this situation.	professional ice figure skates too. Now please answer the following questions related to this situation.

국문초록

구매의사에 친구들과 Instafamous인들이 끼치는 영향

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입소문은 오랜시간 마케팅의 구전 기법으로 존재해 왔으며 전자화되어 인터넷상으로 확장되었고 인스타그램은 이 기법이 사용되는 많은 SNS 교역로들중의 하나이다. 인터넷상에서의 입소문은 화면상에 노출되는 이미지의 게시와 그래픽과 복합되어있는 서면의 자료 형태로 전파된다. 이 논문은 인스타그램을 통해 노출된 상품이 소비자의 구매의사 결정에 있어서 어떠한 영향을 끼치는지에 대한 학술적 연구를 바탕으로 쓰여졌다. 인스타그램에 마케팅을 하는 두 분류의 특정한 무리들을 조사하고 비교하였으며 그 무리들은 각각 (1)친구들과 (2)Instafamous 인들로 구성되었다. 영향력의 요인으로는 정보 출처까지의 친밀감과 출처의 전문성 및 신뢰성, 그리고 유행 상품의 종류와 질의 응답시간이 사용되었다.

조사 결과 유대감이 약한 Instafamous 인들보다 비교적 강한 유대감을 가지는 친구들이 누군가에게 인스타그램상 노출된 상품의 구매 의사를 더 강하게 촉진시키는 것으로 판명되었다. 기대와는 상반되게 Instafamous 인들의 전문성이 간접적 영향을 가지지 않는 반면에 매개체의 신뢰성은 친구들에게 간접적인 영향을 끼쳤다. 게시자의 응답은 두 무리들에게 아무런 조절효과를 가지지 못했다. 결과적으로

의류상품의 게시물에 관련하여서는 절친한 친구가 구매의사에 영향력을 가지는 반면 Instafamous 인의 전문성은 소비자의 구매의사에 결정적인 영향력을 미치지 못한다고 판명되었다.