Bachelor Thesis, 15 credits, for a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration: International Business and Marketing
Spring 2018

Who are we loyal to?
An exploratory study about how collaborations between influencers and brands impact brand loyalty

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Title
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Abstract
Social media has enabled people to interact and establish relationships on online platforms such as Instagram. Consequently, brands begun to collaborate with influencers on Instagram in order to reach existing and potential customers on this platform. However, due to influencers power on Instagram, it has become important for brands to choose the right influencer and ensure customers’ development of loyalty. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to explore how collaborations between brands and influencers on Instagram impact brand loyalty and the loyalty towards the influencer.

This thesis was conducted through a qualitative approach, an abductive reasoning and with the use of a case study on the influencer: Kenza Zuiten Subosic. Three focus groups where guided by the case study on Kenza and consisted of participants who follow her on Instagram. The findings show that the match between the brand and influencer, the sharing of trustworthy posts through custom content, and personality has an impact on brand loyalty and the loyalty towards the influencer. These findings contribute to marketers who aim to develop customer loyalty and establish relationships through Instagram. Additionally, this thesis adds original value to the field of loyalty as previous studies provide limited research on the development of loyalty through collaborations on Instagram.

Keywords
Loyalty, Influencer, Collaborations, Influence marketing, Instagram, Social media
Acknowledgments

*We would like to express our sincere appreciation to...*

**Lisa Källström**
Thank you for being an outstanding supervisor and for guiding us throughout the process of this thesis. But also, for believing in us when we did not and pushing us to do better.

**Annika Fjelkner**
Thank you for your linguistic assistance in linking-words, subject- verb agreement and the genitive case.

**Kristianstad University**
Thank you for all the knowledge we have gained during the three years of studies which enabled us to conduct this thesis.

**Participants**
Thank you for contributing with your thoughts on collaborations on Instagram. The findings of this thesis would not be as noteworthy without you.

**Our families**
We are forever grateful for all the love, support and motivation you have showered us with throughout our studies.

Kristianstad 25th of May 2018

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1. Introduction

Relationship Marketing (RM) is the objectives to create, develop and maintain relationships with customers and other stakeholders, and it is becoming the most important aspect for companies and networks when building relationships (Egan, 2004; Liu, Guo, & Lee, 2011). The main factor to this aspect is that the cost of acquiring new customers is six times higher than retaining customers (Gad, 2000; Godson, 2009; De Pelsmacker, Geuens & Van Den Berg, 2013). Another aspect of RM is to create long-term relationships with customers which makes them more committed and loyal (Egan, 2004; Godson, 2009). For companies, loyalty has had a significant matter when generating profit (Srinivasan, Anderson & Ponnavolu, 2002), but it has also made it possible for companies to create and obtain sustainable competitive advantages (Egan, 2004; Roncha, Radclyffe-Thomas, 2016). Brands can also develop customer loyalty through branding, promotion and social networks such as informal networks (Ismail, 2017).

Social network enables the extension of relationships thus it allows a large amount of people to interact with each other and share thoughts (Godson, 2009; Fill & Turnbull, 2016). The interaction through social networks can create a trustworthy environment and develop relationships which could lead to loyalty (Ismail, 2017). Informal networks can take place through web-based applications and sites on social media and enables people to have close connection and share experiences with each other online (Fill & Turnbull, 2016). Social media has become the platform for brands and customers to interact (Ismail, 2017) thus it occupies almost one third of customers daily time (Laroche, Habibi & Richard, 2013). In order for brands to be able to reach a wide range of existing and potential customers on social media, brands’ use influencers as mediators (Vanmeter, Grisaffe, & Chonko, 2015). An influencer can be described as an opinion leader who has the ability to influence followers (Li & Du, 2011). Influencers can for example post pictures of themselves with brands or products on social media and be paid by a brand for it, or compensated through free products (Jaakonmäki et al., 2017). This marketing method where brands collaborate with influencers for marketing purposes is referred to as influence marketing (Kiss &
The use of influencers is due to their strong impact on social media and their ability to drive potential customers towards a brand or product (Hamilton et al., 2016). It has therefore become crucial for brands to collaborate with influencers in order to develop an authentic, reliable and present role on social media platforms (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014). According to Jaakonmäki, Müller and Vom Brocke (2017), Instagram has become the platform where most brands choose to market their activities through influence marketing. Marketers find it necessary to increase their influence marketing activities in order to stay present on Instagram (Jaakonmäki et al., 2017). Consequently, the increased activities on Instagram create higher competition among brands but also among influencers (Russmann & Svensson, 2016).

Influencers can be characterized by their large social network, where they easily communicate messages to people who follow them on Instagram (Kiss & Bichler, 2008). In order to maintain power on social media, influencers need to develop strong personal branding which can be achieved by consistently standing out, communicating memorable messages and delivering value to followers (Khamis, Ang, & Welling, 2017). Brands can therefore feel threatened by the power influencers have in the ability to influence customer loyalty on social media (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014). Therefore, researchers find it important for brands to choose the right influencer to ensure the development of brand loyalty (Brown & Fiorella, 2013). However, uncertainties remain within brands’ use of influencers in order to develop loyalty on Instagram through collaborations, which thereby calls for further research.

1.1 Problematisation

Social media platforms have changed the terms of communication in marketing (Brown & Fiorella, 2013) because of the easy access and connection to people and brands (Laroche, Habibi & Richard, 2013). Companies now use influencers as a third party when trying to reach and communicate with customers on Instagram (Jaakonmäki et al., 2017). Jaakonmäki et al. (2017) state that 52 percent of brands will enhance their influence marketing on this platform in the near future. By using influencers as a marketing tool, brands can increase customer loyalty (Li, Lin & Lai,
2010), and make significant impact on their profitability and competitive advantage (Gad, 2000). While research has proven that collaborations with influencers can lead to brand loyalty (Li et al., 2010; Brown & Fiorella, 2013), it has not been studied how this loyalty develops or impacts brand loyalty. Since Li et al. (2010) state that brands’ use of influencers can create brand loyalty, it is shown that loyalty and influencers have been investigated through brands’ perspective. However, neither the understanding of loyalty through customers’ perspective nor the impact influencers have on brand loyalty, has been studied. Thus, there is a theoretical need to explore how customers’ loyalty is influenced by brands’ use of influencers.

Brown and Fiorella (2013) state that brands need to collaborate with influencers on Instagram, who match the brand’s identity in order to develop loyalty. The choice of the right influencer can, therefore, determine if the relationship towards the brand is genuine or if the influencer only collaborate with a brand for a personal interest (Brown & Fiorella, 2013; Russmann & Svensson, 2016). Findings in this research area show that brands can avoid the risk of non-loyal customers by identify the right influencer (Brown & Fiorella, 2013). However, these studies neglect the loyalty influencers can develop with followers and how that in turn can impact brand loyalty through collaborations. Despite the importance of loyalty and influencers, few empirical studies have dealt with this issue. Studies mostly focus on confirming the effects social media activities have on customer loyalty (Ismail, 2017), influencers’ self-presentation (Forbes, 2016; Khamis et al., 2017), and followers’ engagement on Instagram, (Abdini, 2017). Due to the lack of knowledge in this research area, it is of interest to explore what influence followers’ loyalty towards influencers and if this loyalty, in turn, impact brand loyalty.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to explore how collaborations between brands and influencers on Instagram impact brand loyalty and the loyalty towards the influencer.
1.3 Research question

- How is brand loyalty influenced by brands’ use of influencers?
- What influence followers’ loyalty towards influencers, and does this loyalty impact brand loyalty?

1.4 Disposition

Chapter 1 initiates this thesis by introducing the basis and relevance of the research and its purpose.

Chapter 2 argues for the chosen research philosophy, research approach and choice of theory.

Chapter 3 discusses theories and concepts which constitutes the foundation of this research.

Chapter 4 presents a case study which contain information about the chosen influencer that is used in our data collection.

Chapter 5 presents the chosen method to produce and process empirical data.

Chapter 6 contains the findings from the chosen empirical method.

Chapter 7 discusses the main empirical findings from chapter 6 with the theoretical review from chapter 3.

Chapter 8 finalizes this thesis with a conclusion of a summary, followed by theoretical contribution, practical implication and critical review.
2. Theoretical Methodology

Within this chapter we argue for the chosen theoretical methodology in this thesis. We begin with presenting our research philosophy and why this philosophy is appropriate to our research. Further on, we identify our research approach followed by the choice of theory.

2.1 Research Philosophy

The chosen research philosophy sets the groundwork for how researchers approach theoretical and empirical knowledge (Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2012). Bryman and Bell (2015) present three main research philosophies, *interpretivism, positivism* and *realism*, which describes the physical view of a human’s assumption and perception of the world. Interpretivism is the research philosophy which corresponds to the research purpose, thus the aim of this thesis is to explore how collaborations between brands and influencers on Instagram impact brand loyalty and the loyalty towards the influencer. The philosophy of interpretivism refers to individuals who view the world and its relationships as complex. Interpretivism addresses the attempt to understand how individuals perceive the meaning of actions and experiences in social contexts (Bryman & Bell, 2015). As individuals portray their perception of meaning individually, interpretivism cannot generalize the individual perception of the world (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). The interest in this thesis lies solely in exploring individuals’ perspective of collaborations and to understand the development of loyalty on Instagram. In order to explore individuals’ perspective of a certain social experience, it can be argued that this perspective only can be understood once we identify the underlying reasons of an action, which indicates a realism philosophy (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Therefore, a realism philosophy can be aligned with our research purpose, thus it can broaden the understanding of how individuals are influenced by influencers and become loyal.

2.2 Research Approach

Research can be explored through three approaches: *deduction, induction* and *abduction* (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This research uses existing theories in order to develop a conceptual model, which suggest a deductive approach (Saunders *et al.*,}
2012). Furthermore, a conceptual model set the guidelines in the production of empirical data and enables the development for new findings, which calls for an inductive approach. However, as this thesis includes both a deductive and an inductive approach, an abductive research approach is required. This approach enables the research to analyse existing theories about loyalty, influencers and brands, in order to discover new findings.

2.3 Choice of theory
To reach the aim of this exploratory thesis, theories founded in Relationship Marketing (RM) has been reviewed and applied in the theoretical framework. The main theoretical fields addressed throughout the thesis are loyalty and influence marketing. Appropriate theories among the field of loyalty are used in order to understand the development of loyalty (Godson, 2009; Brown & Fiorella, 2013). Theories within the field of influence marketing refers to influencers’ role on social media and their impact on customers’ purchasing behaviour (Fahy & Jobber, 2015). By analysing the theories gathered, a conceptual model has been developed to explore the dilemma of loyalty through collaborations on Instagram.
3. Theoretical framework

Chapter 3 addresses theories regarding loyalty through collaborations between influencers and brands. Theoretical concepts such as Relationship Marketing, Loyalty, Social Networks, and Influence marketing are presented in order to explore how collaborations impact brands and influencers. These concepts have later in this chapter resulted in a conceptual model that will guide the research throughout this thesis.

3.1 Relationship Marketing

The term relationship marketing (RM) was established three decades ago and has since then been a subject area for research to develop and define this marketing concept (Egan, 2004; Godson, 2009; Payne & Frow, 2017). RM include many aspects, such as “customer relationships, supply chain relationships, customer value management, retention and loyalty”, which is also why research has found it difficult when defining this concept (Godson, 2009:4). RM can be defined as the strategy to create, develop and maintain relationships with customers and other stakeholders (Egan, 2004). By using marketing as a way of creating relationships, the focus for marketers has gone from attracting short-term transactional customers to retaining long-term relationships with customers (Chiu, Hsieh, & Lee, 2005; Laroche et al., 2012). This shift in strategy, is due to the fact that the longer the relationship with customers the lower the costs for companies (Egan, 2004), which can be seen as a competitive advantage (Laroche et al., 2012). To create long-term relationships, brands must know customers and understand their needs in order to make them satisfied and unlikely to switch to other brands (Egan, 2004; Chiu, et al., 2005; Gummesson, 2017). Another important aspect when developing long-term relationships, is that the benefits customers receive can enhance their perception of value (Chiu et al., 2005). When customers value the relationship with a brand, they are more likely to be loyal (Gad, 2000; Chiu et al., 2005).

3.2 Loyalty

Customer loyalty is a central RM goal for companies since it can lead to profitability and the possibility to grow or keep market share through long-term relationships.
Even though customer loyalty is a marketing goal, research has shown that it cannot be achieved by incentives strategies but through strategies that build relationships (Watson IV et al., 2015). By achieving customer loyalty, companies can avoid the high costs from acquiring new customers (Chaudhuri, & Holbrook, 2001; Srinivasan et al., 2002). When the concept of customer loyalty was established, it was understood as customers repeat purchasing behaviour (Srinivasan et al., 2002). However, research further explain the concept of customer loyalty as customers’ relationship and identification to a brand (Erdogmus, & Cicek, 2012; Watson IV et al., 2015). Customers develop relationships with brands that create positive meaning for them (Erdogmus, & Cicek, 2012; Watson IV et al., 2015) which makes them behave differently compared to non-loyal customers (Srinivasan et al., 2002). Research claim that loyal customers focus both on the relationship and economic sacrifice which is why these customers are willing to pay a premium. On the contrary, non-loyal customers only focus on the economic sacrifice and are therefore more likely to spend more time searching for cheaper offerings (Srinivasan et al., 2002).

Over time, research has had a hard time agreeing on one definition for customer loyalty thus, the concept remains ambiguous (Watson IV et al., 2015). However, loyalty has been defined as “a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product or services consistently in the future” (Oliver, 1997:392). Since there is not only one definition of customer loyalty, research has agreed on two primary elements of customer loyalty, behaviour loyalty and attitudinal loyalty (Chaudhuri, & Holbrook, 2001; Srinivasan et al., 2002; Watson IV et al., 2015).

3.2.1 Behavioural and attitudinal loyalty

Behavioural and attitudinal loyalty has been conceptualised as the traditional approaches of loyalty (Härtel & Russell-Bennet, 2007), thus loyalty has been understood as customers repeat purchase behaviour (Srinivasan et al., 2002), relationship and identification to a brand (Erdogmus, & Cicek, 2012; Watson IV et
Research argue that the concept of behavioural and attitudinal loyalty enables brands to understand customer loyalty (Brandyopadhyay & Martell, 2007).

Behaviour loyalty, refers to the action taken by the customer to get involved with the brand (Cottley, Collier & Stodnick, 2008; Balakrishnan et al., 2014; Watson IV et al., 2015). The action can be repeated purchase decisions which has a significant impact on brands’ profitability. However, research fail to recognise that repeated purchase decisions can be based on situational constraints and habits which does not explain customer loyalty (Watson IV et al., 2015). Instead, behavioural loyalty can be interpreted as “the consumer’s tendency to repurchase” (Härtel & Russell-Bennett, 2010:2). A customer’s loyalty towards a brand can thereby be based on the action to repurchase products with or without a positive attitude towards a brand. Nevertheless, when discussing loyalty, behavioural loyalty has been criticised as insufficient when attitudes are not being addressed (Brandyopahyay & Martell, 2007). Once attitudinal loyalty is addressed, research has shown that customers are more likely to develop brand loyalty due to the transformation of attitudinal to behavioural loyalty (Cottley et al., 2008).

Attitudinal loyalty, refers to the attitudes people create towards someone or something (Watson IV et al., 2015), which is the approach, preference and perception a customer has of a brand (Cottley et al., 2008). Strong attitudinal loyalty originates from evaluations and the influence in others purchase decisions, but also the feeling of not wanting to switch to competitors even though the offer is better (Watson IV et al., 2015). Therefore, attitudinal loyalty can be explained by the commitment towards a brand, the preferences and the intentions to purchase (Härtel and Russell-Bennett, 2010). Attitudes towards a brand are usually measured by how customer perceive the whole brand and its attributes (Brandyopahyay & Martell, 2007), which in turn can reflect behaviours such as the probability to purchase from a brand (Hong & Cho, 2011). However, this attitude or probability does not include customers repeat purchase behaviour. By creating attitudinal loyalty, customers are more likely to recommend and persuade others to use the brand which creates a positive and more favourable brand image (Izogo, 2016; Hong & Cho, 2011).
3.3. Social network

Social networks have enabled the interaction and exchange of information between people all over the world (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016; Musial & Kazienko, 2012). Brands have included social networks in their RM as an effective and efficient tool to develop and maintain relationships with customers and develop loyalty (Carlson & Lee, 2015). The benefit for using social networks for communication and marketing has resulted in brands being able to reach customers and develop relationships through RM messages (Duffett, 2017).

Further, social networks allow people to share information and impact one another’s purchasing decision (Fahy & Jobber, 2015), which can be profitable for brands that use social network as a platform for communication (Duffett, 2017). The impact social networks can have on customers purchasing decision can be described through Fahy and Jobbers (2015) buying decision-making process. The first level of the process is the Indicator which refer to the person who starts to consider a purchase. The second level is the Influencer, which refer to the person who tend to persuade the decision to purchase. The third level is the Decider, which is the person with the power to take the final decision to purchase. The fourth is the Buyer, the person who complete the purchase and the fifth, the User, which is the person consuming the purchased product. This model simplifies the meaning of using influencers and influence marketing on social media platforms (Fahy & Jobber, 2015), thus influencers on social media have the ability to impact and convey trustworthy messages to their followers and impact the purchase decision (Khamis et al., 2017).

Social networks can be described as the communication among personal connections, such as family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances (Godson, 2009; Musial & Kazienko, 2012). The social in social network, consist of sharing information with others while network consist of relationships (Godson, 2009; Kiss & Bichler, 2008). Today, social networks often refer to informal networks that can take place on online social platforms (Musial & Kazienko, 2012; Godson, 2009). Informal networks make it efficient and convenient for people to connect and interact online, thus it becomes possible to reach people from all over the world (Von der Weth, Abdul &
Kankanhalli, 2017). Musial and Kazienko (2012) describes informal network as digital relationships between people who share common interest. Likewise, one can also argue that informal networks online represent virtual communities of people sharing and connecting through the same activities (Musial & Kazienko, 2012; Ismail, 2017; Von der Weth et al., 2017). Informal networks allow brands to connect to these communities on different platforms on social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn & Twitter (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016; Musial & Kazienko, 2012; Von der Weth, Abdul & Kankanhalli, 2017; Kiss & Bichler, 2008).

3.3.1 Social Media

Social media has, since its breakthrough in the early 19th century (Shah, 2016), had a rapid growth which changed the methods of communication and connection between people and brands (Erdogmus & Cicek, 2012; Vanmeter et al., 2012; Balakrishnan, Dahnil, & Yi, 2014). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010:61) explain social media as “a group of internet-based applications that builds on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and it allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content”. According to Jaakonmäki et al. (2017) social media users reached 2.22 billion in 2016 and is anticipated to increase to 2.27 billion users by 2019. The reasons why social media has had a significant growth (Hamilton et al., 2016; Laroche et al., 2012) is firstly due to the fast and effective communication abilities for users (Vanmeter et al., 2015; Hamilton et al., 2016), secondly it enables interaction and sharing of information (Vanmeter et al., 2015; Ismail, 2017), and thirdly it allows users to reach a broad range of other users from all over the world (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Users on social media, post, share and like various content such as profiles, news and information (Khamis et al., 2017; Jaakonmäki et al. 2017). Many users join social media platforms in order to meet their need for belonging with other users who share a common interest, but also to become a part of a social network (Laroche et al, 2012). However, users on social media do not only connect with other users, research has shown that more than 60 percent of the millennials interact with brands on social media platforms (Hamilton et al., 2016).
The growth of social media and its large user-base has enabled brands to use social media platforms for marketing purposes in order to establish relationships with customers and develop customer loyalty (Vanmeter et al., 2015; Hamilton et al., 2016; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Jaakonmäki et al. 2017; Erdogmus & Cicek, 2012). Statistics from 2014 reported that 97 percent of brands used social media as a marketing platform (Vanmeter et al, 2015). The marketing methods brands practice on social media are inter alia, promotion, branding, market research and customer relationship management activities (Jaakonmäki et al., 2017). Research has shown that brands who use social media platforms for marketing purposes efficiently, receive positive outcomes such as increased brand recognition, loyalty and profitability (Duffett, 2017; Jaakonmäki et al, 2017; Keegan & Rowley, 2017). However, in order for brands to stay active and efficient on social media, brands must constantly find new innovative ways to interact and connect with potential and recurrent customers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Jaakonmäki et al. 2017).

The largest platform on social media to date is Instagram (Russmann & Svensson, 2016) which by 2017 reached a total of 800 million monthly users (Balakrishnan & Boorst in, 2017). Instagram is a platform created for users to upload and share pictures and videos of their everyday life (Rocha & Radclyffe-Thomas, 2016; Russmann & Svensson, 2016; Ismail, 2017). The user-base of Instagram consist of posters who share pictures and videos, and followers, who subscribe and interact by commenting or liking pictures and videos. Users with a large follower base have the ability to influence its followers (Khamis et al., 2017). These types of users are called influencers (Erdogmus & Cicek, 2012). Brands use influencers on Instagram for marketing purposes in which the influencer promote the brand by sharing personal opinions and information about the brand (Erdogmus & Cicek, 2012).

3.4 Influence Marketing

The growth of informal networks and social media platforms such as Instagram, have resulted in marketers using influence marketing as the new way of digital marketing (Abidin, 2016). Influence marketing has evolved due to marketers’ knowledge in the power of messages which is shared by people who do not have a stake in the product.
they recommend (Brown & Fiorella, 2013). Influence marketing can be interpreted as the identification and usage of influencers in a target market to make a significant impact on others (Jaakonmäki et al., 2017). Influencers, are people who impact and convey messages to their followers in various ways. For example, influencers on Instagram can share photos of themselves with products from brands together with a personal opinion about the product. Through paid collaborations, influencers can promote products in which they convey messages in favour of the brand (Jaakonmäki et al., 2017). However, influencers can spread information about the brand through dissatisfaction or by bad mouthing the brand (Vanmeter et al., 2015). Influence marketing is also used with the aim to develop long-term relationships with potential and current customers in order to create customer loyalty (Brown & Fiorella, 2013).

By using influencers as a marketing tool, brands are able to raise awareness about the brand, directly communicate to potential and current customers, but also understand and listen to customers’ requests (Rocha & Radclyffe-Thomas, 2016). According to Rocha and Radclyffe-Thomas (2016) “brands that target a younger generation are more likely to succeed with its marketing on Instagram”, since, approximately 90 percent of Instagram users are under 35 years old.

Research has shown that in order for brands to market effectively through influencers on Instagram, brands need to collaborate with influencers suitable for the brands’ image (Brown & Fiorella, 2013; Jaakonmäki et al., 2017). To be able to choose the right influencer, brands need to consider different factors, such as the influencers’ popularity and the industry they operate in (Forbes, 2016). An influencer’s follower base can determine how successful a collaboration will be. Hence, the number of followers an influencer has reflects how influential she/he is and whether followers will comply with the influencer’s recommendations or not (Forbes, 2016; Jaakonmäki et al., 2017). Other factors that determine if a collaboration will be successful depend on the influencer’s level of interaction with followers, the frequency of posts and the amount of referral links. Therefore, brands need to choose influencers that are relatable to both the brand’s and influencer’s audience (Forbes, 2016). By choosing the right influencer and targeting the right audience, brands can make customers more
likely to connect to the brands’ beliefs and respond to the promoted campaigns, which enables effective collaborations (Forbes, 2016; Rocha & Radclyffe-Thomas, 2016).

3.4.1 Customer Life Cycle Continuum

An influence marketing model with the aim to describe relationships towards customers, is the Customer Life Cycle Continuum (Brown & Fiorella, 2013). Customer life cycle continuum embraces the balance of customer acquisition and customer development (Brown & Fiorella, 2013). The balance between these elements begin by influencers acquiring customers, and brands developing long-term relationships to create loyal advocates of the brand. The customer acquisition process consists of Awareness, Nurturing, Desire and Purchase, and the customer development process consist of Satisfaction, Loyalty, Advocacy and Referral (Brown & Fiorella, 2013).

The first stage of the customer life cycle continuum is awareness which is driven by influencers who are recognized as advocates and loyal towards the brand (Brown & Fiorella, 2003). Awareness refers to the audience research, which identifies potential customers who are susceptible to the awareness built for a brand or a product. The second stage, nurturing, addresses the importance of building strong relationships with customers, which influencers can achieve through personalized content and sharing of information. At this stage, influencers need to understand the relationship with followers in order to make the move towards the next step easier (Brown & Fiorella, 2003).

Further on, the third stage conversion refers to a follower’s desire and the step taken towards a purchase decision (Brown & Fiorella, 2003). Conversion occurs when influencers monitor followers’ conversations and find the opportunity to influence their purchase decisions. The fourth stage, satisfaction refers to customers’ thoughts and feelings about the purchase. This stage is very critical for brands since it determine customer's retention or turnover. Brands must therefore acknowledge that customers have moved from prospects to purchasers, and make sure that customers feel that they made the right purchase decision and are satisfied (Brown & Fiorella, 2003).
The fifth stage, loyalty correspond to a customer who is satisfied with the entire experience with the brand and is thereby likely to repurchase (Brown & Fiorella, 2003). Loyal customers share their opinions and recommendations about the brand, however only when asked. Therefore, it is important to expand the relationship with customers towards the next stage in the customer life cycle continuum, advocacy. Advocacy refers to customers who are highly involved with the brand and share information about the brand frequently. Furthermore, advocates are identified as the most important source when making an impact on customers’ purchase decision. The last stage Referral, addresses the importance of using earned advocates instead of persuaded advocates, in order to acquire and retain customers in the customer life cycle continuum (Brown & Fiorella, 2003).

3.4.2 Personal branding

The use of social media has become important for brands when branding themselves, since social media can impact brands reputation (Kim & Ko, 2011). Social media enables brands to inform, remind and entertain customers, which is important in branding (Vinerean, 2017). In a social media context, branding can also be personal (Gad, 2000), thus individuals also need to focus on their brand identity in order to become memorable in a market full of brands. Therefore, personal branding is relevant for this study, thus it has become a central factor when influencers reach followers on Instagram (Khamis et al., 2017).

Branding has over time had the purpose to, through marketing strategies, build trust and differentiate brands from competitors, but it has also become key in building relationships and developing customer loyalty (Godson, 2009; Laurell & Parment, 2015; Khamis et al., 2017). According to Khamis et al., (2017:192) “[a] brand signifies a certain quality or idea associated with a commodity which ostensibly simplifies the consumer’s decision-making”. It has also been described as “a name to which a set of associations and benefits has become attached in the consumer’s mind. This name could be that of a product, a service, a corporate entity or even an individual” (Amoako & Adjaision, 2012). Branding enables brands to form attitudes and emotional connections which can affect customers attitudes and their purchase
decisions (Picket-baker & Ozaki, 2008). Furthermore, branding enables the development of valuable relationships based on customers trust and association to the brand (Godson, 2009). Brands should therefore focus on branding the relationship (Godson, 2009), in order to earn loyalty among customers (Gad, 2000).

Personal branding can be defined as “a personal identity that stimulates precise, meaningful perceptions in its audience about the values and qualities that a person stands for” (Montoya, 2002:15). Central aspects of personal branding refer to individuals’ ability to express an individualistic approach towards its audience (Khedler, 2014), maintain a strong public image and influence customers purchasing decision for commercial gain (Khamis et al., 2017). Personal branding, has therefore a significant connection to influencers (Laroche et al., 2013), thus it enables influencers to stand out and become successful on Instagram (Khamis et al., 2017). Research argue that personal branding requires the same effort as for brands in order to become memorable for customers and achieve loyalty.

3.5 Conceptual Model

To the best of our knowledge, research has not provided or explored a model applicable to the exploration of the development of loyalty through collaborations between influencers and brands on Instagram. Therefore, a conceptual model has been designed to gather and guide the empirical data and answer the research questions of this thesis (Figure 1.). Our model is grounded in the theoretical review presented in this chapter and the theoretical dilemmas we aim to find solution to. The conceptual model consists of three steps which through collaborations on Instagram, aims to describe how loyalty develops towards the influencer, brand or both.

The first step in the conceptual model emphasizes the importance of the Match between the two parties, influencer and brand. A match means that the brand’s identity corresponds to the influencer. The collaboration has to be designed to reflect the brand as much as the influencer in order to reach both the brand’s customers and the influencer’s followers (Brown & Fiorella, 2017). In order to make the collaboration effective for both parts, the collaboration must match the brands aim of promotion.
and the influencers personal branding (Forbes, 2016). The match can in turn determine if the customer/follower will develop antecedents of loyalty towards the influencer, brand or both, through a collaboration.

The second step, Antecedents of loyalty, is identified as three interrelated factors that could develop loyalty among customers/followers. The first antecedent, Custom content, is about the adoption of content in a suitable matter which indicates shared posts that customers/followers are open to receive (Brown & Fiorella, 2017). During a collaboration, the influencer will create content by posting their own pictures of a brand or product (Jaakonmäki et al., 2017). The influencer need to post personalized pictures frequently in order to reach and keep customers/followers on Instagram (Brown & Fiorella, 2017). This takes us to the second antecedent which is Trustworthy. Influencers can through the match with the brand and their brand identity create an environment where they can share trustworthy messages when posting a picture, thus these messages are more reliable than commercial once (Godson, 2009). The influencer’s trustworthiness will determine if the customer/follower will pursue a purchase and thereby develop loyalty towards the influencer and/or the brand (Godson, 2009; Khamis et al., 2017). The third antecedent is Customer interaction. This antecedent refers to the amount of interaction, such as comment and likes on a collaboration post (Forbes, 2016). Interaction between customers/followers and influencers/brands could develop relationships which thereon lead to loyalty (Ismail, 2017).

The third step of the conceptual model is Behavioural and Attitudinal loyalty, which is the outcome of the first and second step in the model. Behavioural loyalty refers to the action taken by a customer/follower to get involved with an influencer, brand or both (Cottley et al., 2008; Balakrishnan et al., 2014; Watson IV et al., 2015). The action can be perceived as the tendency to repeat purchases regardless of the attitude towards the brand or influencer (Härtel & Russell-Bennett, 2010). However, behavioural loyalty cannot be discussed without including attitudinal loyalty, thus the attitudes towards a brand or influencer effects behaviour loyalty (Brandyopahyay & Martell, 2007). Attitudinal loyalty refers to the attitudes a customer/follower have
towards an influencer, brand, or both (Watson IV et al., 2015). The attitudes signify the approach, preference and perception a customer/follower have of a brand or influencer (Cottley et al., 2008). By understanding customers’/followers’ behaviours and attitudes towards a brand and influencer, this research can reveal customers/followers behavioural and attitudinal loyalty (Brandyopahyay & Martell, 2007) and thus to whom the loyalty has evolved.

By analysing the empirical data produced from our focus groups, the research will be able to understand loyalty towards the influencer, brand or both. Furthermore, the gathered data enables the research to distinguish where the loyalty leads. The conceptual model is used as a framework for the data collection and analysis of produced empirical data in Chapter 5 and 6.

![Conceptual Model: Development of Loyalty through Collaborations between Influencers and Brands](image)

*Figure 1. The conceptual model; Development of loyalty through collaborations between influencers and brands*
4. Case presentation

This chapter presents the chosen influencer, Kenza Zouiten Subosic, which is used as the main topic when conducting the empirical findings. The case presentation encompasses facts about Kenza, such as her career as a blogger and influencer. Additionally, information is presented about her collaborations with brands and how these collaborations have been constructed.

Kenza Zouiten Subosic is one of the most successful influencers in Sweden with a number of 1.7 million followers on Instagram (Zouiten-Subosic; 2017b; VA, 2017). Kenza started blogging as a 15-year-old and quickly became a well-known name in the blog world. As a 16-year-old, she started her first company Kenza Zouiten AB which has had a steady growth ever since (Zouiten-Subosic, 2017a). In 2013, Kenza launched a digital fashion brand, Ivyrevel, together with Aleksandar Subosic, Dejan Subosic and Gustav Springfeldt. Despite a rough start, 20 percent of the family owned fashion brand got purchased by Sweden’s biggest fashion brand, the H&M group, in 2015 (Wisterberg, 2016).

Kenza is born and raised in Stockholm with roots from both Sweden and Morocco (Zouiten-Subosic, 2017a). Today, she lives in central Stockholm with her husband, Aleksandar Subosic and her dog, Mani. On her blog, Kenza state that she is very passionate about her friends, family, fashion, travel, and intend to follow her dreams and live life to the fullest. Apart from being a blogger, Kenza is known for being an influencer, model, entrepreneur, fashion designer and tv host. Moreover, she is known for her collaboration with brands such as Jofama, H&M, Guldfynd, Google and Puma, but also for her participation on the Swedish dancing show “Let’s Dance” in 2014 (Zouiten-Subosic, 2017a).

Her first collaboration was in 2009 with the clothing company Jofama, where she created a jacket collection called Jofama by Kenza (Zouiten-Subosic, 2012). The collaborations have thereon been based on the creation of collections of fashion items and jewellery. Today, she is present with her second collection of sportswear for Puma. Kenza’s collaboration with Puma started in 2017 to enhance women’s true self-
esteem through the “Do You” campaign. This second collection is a move towards a longer collaboration for the two parties (Baaam, 2017). Furthermore, Kenza has a new ongoing collaboration with Schwarzkopf where she will be their spokesperson for a campaign over the upcoming six months (Nilsson, 2018).

In line with the development of new apps and social platforms, Kenza’s blog has not been enough to keep her followers updated. She has extended her social network by using platforms such as Instagram, Twitter and YouTube, which increased the possibility to influence more people. Furthermore, this extension contributes to significant profit, hence influencers can earn up to 100,000 Swedish krona per collaboration (Wisterberg, 2017a; Wisterberg, 2017b). According to the annual report 2017, the profit from Kenza’s blog and Instagram profile resulted in 4,6 million Swedish krona (Allabolag, 2017) which makes her one of the most earned influencers in Sweden (VA, 2017).
5. Empirical Method

The 4th chapter of this thesis contains the chosen research design, strategy and the method used to produce empirical data. Furthermore, this chapter includes the course of action, such as time horizon, participant selection, focus group guide and data analysis.

5.1 Research design and strategy

The appropriate research design for this study is an exploratory research, which explains the relationship between different phenomenon. The aim with conducting an exploratory research is to resolve causations to phenomenon and produce as much empirical data within the problem area as possible (Olsson & Sörensen, 2011). The use of an exploratory research, will thereby enable this research to explore how brand loyalty is influenced by brands use of influencers, what influence follower’s loyalty towards influencers, and if this loyalty will impact brand loyalty. Bryman and Bell (2015) stress two strategies for conducting a research; qualitative or quantitative. A qualitative research strategy refers to the understanding of relationships between different factors and the social view of individuals, while a quantitative research strategy seeks to identify and connect factors from an objective reality. This exploratory research will be studied through a qualitative strategy in order to produce qualitative data in line with the purpose of this thesis and understand loyalty from customers perspective (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The reason why the research will be conducted through this approach is due to the aim of exploring and understanding loyalty connected to collaborations between brands and influencers.

5.2 Time horizon

Time Horizon is described by Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2012) as either longitudinal or cross-sectional. The longitudinal time horizon studies a phenomenon and its changes during a long period of time. On the contrary, the cross-sectional time horizon studies one phenomenon during a short period of time (Saunders et al., 2012; Bryman & Bell, 2015). Due to the fact that this thesis explores the phenomenon of customers loyalty connected to influencers and brands during a short period of time, the chosen time horizon for this thesis is the cross-sectional. Moreover, this thesis will
produce data through focus groups, which also calls for the cross-sectional time horizon since it is considered to be the most convenient time horizon for focus groups (Hansson, 2011).

### 5.3 Data collection

Empirical data can be produced through primary or secondary data (Olsson & Sörensen, 2011). Primary data refers to data collected by the researcher for the purpose of the study, while secondary data refers to already gathered information by other researchers for other purposes. For this exploratory study, primary data has been produced through focus groups in order to explore the dilemma of loyalty from customers' point of view.

### 5.4 Focus Groups

Focus groups is used as an interview method with the aim to produce empirical data from unrelated individuals in small groups (Wibeck, 2010; Justesen & Mik-Meyer, 2011; Berg & Lune, 2012). The method can be used to study content such as individuals’ opinions, thoughts, perception or the interaction between these individuals (Wibeck, 2010). By using this research approach, researchers are able to explore why individuals think and perceive as they do about a certain subject (Ahrne & Svensson, 2016). Individuals can in turn become enlighten of their own thoughts and realise concerns when they contribute and listen to discussions in the focus group. This enables the research to comprehend a greater understanding of individuals perception of collaborations between influencers and brands on Instagram. Conducting focus groups is thereby the most suitable method in order to produce data and explore the aim of this thesis.

Commonly, individuals tend to vary between 5-10 participants in each focus group (Wiberg, 2010; Olsson & Sörensen, 2011) and depending on the complexity of the subject, more groups will be required (Wiberg, 2010). This research aimed to have three focus groups with five participants in each group. However, since the timeline of this thesis was limited and turn downs occurred, three groups were carried through with a total of 11 participants. Turn downs occurred due to the complexity of
scheduling and losing participants in last minute. Bryman and Bell (2015) state, when conducting research in a limited extension it is suitable to implement fewer focus groups with less participants in order to produce proper empirical data. Therefore, we were able to produce sufficient empirical data even though loss of participants occurred.

5.4.1 Participant selection
When selecting participants for the focus groups it is important to find individuals who understand and can relate to the subject in focus (Wiberg, 2010). The choice of participants was therefore based on three criteria. Firstly, the individuals needed to be between 15-34 years of age, as brands mainly target customers between this range of age on Instagram (Rocha & Radclyffe-Thomas, 2016). Secondly, the individuals needed to be active users of Instagram in order to understand the functions of the platform and the usage of influencers on Instagram. Thirdly, the individuals had to follow the influencer of topic, Kenza Souiten Zubosic, over the last year, so that the participants were well-informed about her.

Before we approached possible participants, an invitation was written where the aim of the study and the terms of participation was explained. This invitation was thereafter sent to a student forum from Kristianstad University, with the goal to reach students who were willing to participate in a focus group. When we did not receive any messages of interest, we began to search for participants by own hand through Kenza Souiten Subosic’s followers on Instagram. Approximately 30 followers that we knew personally were approached. This sampling method can be recognized as convenience sample, which means that participants are approached wherever they can be found and according to their availability (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Since other methods were not effective in this research, convenience sample was used in order to reach and gather participants. When gathering participants, scheduling became a constrain due to participants unavailability. A total of 15 participants accepted to contribute in a focus group interview. However, when the focus group occurred, only 11 participants were able to participate due to sickness and other obstacles. The loss of participants resulted in two groups of four and one group of three participants. Ten
out of eleven participants were female, and one participant was male, and the range of age varied between 20-27 years old (Table 1).

Table 1. Focus group participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus group</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Followed Kenza the last year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. May 3rd</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. May 8th</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. May 8th</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.2 Focus group guide

The focus groups were conducted with the use of a semi-structured interview guide (Appendix 1), which contained three discussion topics that were guided by the case study of Kenza Zouiten Subosic. The reason why only one influencer was chosen, is due to the aim of conducting in-dept discussions between the participants. The first topic addresses influencers on Instagram through questions about influencers in general and further questions about Kenza. These questions were asked to understand the participants antecedents of loyalty through a collaboration, which refers to the second step in the conceptual model (Figure 1). The questions aimed to receive answers to what participants do and do not want to see on the influencers’ Instagram page, and the importance of interaction on collaboration posts. The second topic contains questions regarding collaborations on Instagram, which enables the understanding of the participants’ attitudes towards a collaboration. The questions asked in this topic intended to comprehend the participants attitudinal loyalty based on the antecedents of loyalty, which refers to the second and third step in the conceptual model (Figure 1). The questions were asked to understand the participants’
perception and approach to collaborations which Kenza has had during the last year. The third topic discusses questions about the participants’ behaviours towards a collaboration. Within this topic we aimed to seek empirical data regarding the match between influencers and brands, but also the participants purchase behaviour through a collaboration. This stage refers to the first and third step in the conceptual model (Figure 1). In order to comprehend participants’ perspective of collaborations between brands and an influencer, photos from Kenza’s Instagram were used (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2).

### 5.5 Data analysis

In order to collect data and ensure that no data is lost, it is important to record and transcribed every word said during the discussions (Richard, 2005). Every focus group were video- and audio recorded to be able to see and hear which participant was speaking, which made the transcription easier. The transcriptions were completed after each focus group and took approximately three hours per group to transcribe and resulted in a total of 35 pages.

*Round one* in the data analysis begun by coding the transcriptions in order to find topics and reduce irrelevant data to ease the analysis process. Coding can be done through different methods (Richard, 2005), which all enables the material to be divided and put in selected categories (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The material was coded by topic, since every discussion created several topics which were interesting to present. The questions and the conceptual model was used as a guidance to be able to highlight relevant quotations in the material and create topics. The topics identified were the match, antecedents of loyalty and loyalty. This method also resulted in the reduction of 40 percent irrelevant material. *Round two* continued by categorising the coded material that had the same meaning which resulted in seven categories. The answers from the participants with the same meaning could therefore be categorised into the same topic. However, when responses were given similarly to the same question, interpretations had to be made in order to categorise the material and identify the topic. Likewise, when the participants gave different responses, interpretations were made carefully in order to create topics and emphasize differences in opinions.
Round three consisted of analysing and comparing the categorised and coded material with the conceptual model. The material was processed in order to highlight similarities between theory and the empirical data, to create new codes, which corresponds to a deductive research approach. Round four, which was the last step in our data analysis, continued by finding material which did not correspond to the conceptual model. Theses deviations, together with other findings, were categorised and coded, which corresponds to an inductive research approach.

5.6 Trustworthiness and authenticity

Measurements that are important for researchers and which determine the quality of the study refers to reliability and validity (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Reliability refer to “the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable”, while validity address “the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research” (Bryman & Bell, 2015:49-50). These criteria are important in a quantitative research thus they are connected to measurements. Therefore, the criteria have been criticised in its relevance concerning a qualitative research. Research argue that these criteria need to be altered in order to be applicable in a qualitative research, which resulted in two alternative criteria, trustworthiness and authenticity.

Trustworthiness consists of four principles; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Credibility refers to the described social reality and if this description is in line with the studied participants perception of the reality. Before the focus groups, we begun by carefully inform the participates of the aim and subject area of this research in order to establish credibility. Furthermore, we aim to establish credibility by providing profound descriptions of the findings in Chapter 6. Transferability addresses the question of whether the findings of a research can be transferred to another study or not. To be able to transfer, the study has to provide thick descriptions of the findings in the research, which this thesis aims to provide through the case presented in Chapter 4 and the findings from the three focus groups in Chapter 6. Dependability refers to the importance of keeping complete records of the research process, such as transcripts, drafts, interview guides and other important material, so that peers can access it and review the material if needed. The
material used in this thesis has been saved online and at different devices to provide dependability. Confirmability stresses the researchers’ good faith when conducting the research, thus it has not been affected by the researchers’ personal agenda (Bryman & Bell, 2015). To establish confirmability, the material used in this thesis have been supervised and discussed throughout the research process.

Authenticity refers to principles with general issues concerning the research, such as *fairness* and *ontological* authenticity. Fairness is concerned with producing necessary data by choosing participants suitable for the study, while ontological authenticity refers to the better understanding of the studied phenomenon, in which the participant should contribute to (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The participants in this study was chosen through three criteria that had to be fulfilled in order to participate in our focus groups which in turn ensured that a deeper understanding of the studied subject area was obtained.

### 5.7 Ethical consideration

When conducting a research, ethical considerations must be taken to account, thus we as researchers have an obligation to produce empirical data ethically. Researchers often need to examine the life and mind of people which makes it important to certify people’s rights, prosperity and privacy. Ethical considerations regarded throughout this thesis are: *informed consent*, *confidentiality* and *anonymity* (Berg & Lune, 2012).

Informed consent refers to informing the participants of their prosperity and choice of participation. Within this consideration, it is also important for us as researchers to ask ethically correct questions, and thereby not violate participants integrity (Berg & Lune, 2012). In order to fulfil informed consent, we started our focus groups with informing the participants of the purpose of the study and how the data will be used. Moreover, the questions were asked openly so that participants who felt comfortable could participate as much as they wanted. Confidentiality and anonymity is about eliminating participants identity from the findings presented in the thesis so that the participants remain anonymous (Berg & Lune, 2012). To remain confidentiality, we
asked the participants for their approval to recording the focus groups and to use the recorded data only for the purpose of this research.

5.8 Methodological limitations

Limitations that could affect the transferability of this research refers to the time limitation, the participants gender and the number of participants. Due to the time limitation of 14 weeks, this thesis could not encompass a broader exploration of the studied phenomenon. Furthermore, the participants gender is considered as a limitation, thus the result could have been different if more males had participated in the focus groups. A reason why few males participated were due to the complexity of finding participants, which we also consider as a limitation in this thesis.
6. Findings

Chapter 6 discusses the findings of the produced data from the focus groups. This chapter analyses the findings in each step of the conceptual model, the match, antecedents of loyalty and loyalty, as a basis for further discussions.

6.1 Analysis of focus groups

The focus groups discussed collaborations between brands and influencers through different perspectives. The different perspectives on collaborations resulted in findings which enabled the research to fulfil its purpose, which is to explore how collaborations between brands and influencers on Instagram impact brand loyalty and the loyalty towards the influencer.

6.2 Match between influencer and brand

The match between influencer and brand were discussed through the participants perception of collaborations. The participants emphasised the importance of establishing genuine and personal collaborations that corresponds to both the influencer and brand. As expressed by participant C:

“It should be personal, not those mass-collaborations, they are boring [...] because you do not know if it is genuine and if she really like the product herself”

This assertion implies that the participant is negative towards “mass-collaborations”. Instead, brands should choose influencers that make the collaboration personal and genuine. The participants showed a negative attitude towards brands who collaborated with multiple influencers within the same social group, making the collaborations less authentic. However, the main insecurity of collaborations was to make the match believable and in line with the influencers image. As expressed by participant J:

“As for example, Nicole Falciani, 95% of her Instagram is just paid collaboration, and it is also about things that do not go together, which does not match her personality. It is just completely scattered sheds and they are doing collaborations about what ever. It is so transparent and just too much. You have to choose collaborations that suit your lifestyle”

This statement indicates that the participants felt less interested in collaborations when an influencer posted multiple collaborations from the same brand. The collaborations that gave the participants the best impression of a match, was collaborations who were personal and in line with the influencers style. The participants wanted to see
collaborations from brands that she/he normally would wear on a daily basis. When the match between influencer and brand was successfully made, the participants became more interested to proceed into further actions towards both the brand and the influencer.

6.3 Antecedents of loyalty

During the three focus groups and after getting familiar with our material, we discovered that some of our findings corresponded to the three interrelated factors, custom content, trustworthy and customer interaction, which needed to be fulfilled in order to develop loyalty. However, our findings show that the participants value other factors as well in order to develop loyalty.

6.3.1 Custom content

The first antecedent, custom content, was discussed among the participants through what they would like or not like to see on an influencers Instagram page, and by discussing their preferences in pictures (Appendix 2). The participants main reasons for following influencers were for inspiration, the beautiful pictures and the interest to follow the “dream life”. Thereof, the participants would like to see more personal pictures such as pictures where influencers show their preferences in fashion, and pictures that represent their lifestyle. Thoughts on this subject was express by Participant D:

“It should be clothes that they want [...] and reflect their own style”

The participants agreed on that they like less when influencers post pictures that are staged and pictures that contain collaboration products. However, the participants’ attitudes towards collaborations changed when posts from collaborations where not obvious, such as picture 7 (Appendix 2). The picture shows Kenza holding her dog dearly, and on her wrist, she has a Daniel Wellington watch. The participants I and G, who discussed in two different focus groups, had similar opinions about this picture.

“This shows how good she is at putting collaborations in her everyday life. Like that one with the dog. It is more personal. You would like to see it as if she really uses the product”

Female Participant I, Focus group 3
"It is not fun when it gets too obvious, then it is better with, like the one with the dog. Rather that they make it a bit less visible”

Male Participant G, Focus Group 2

The participants did not think this picture was from a collaboration which made them like this type of collaboration. Therefore, the main concern of collaboration posts among the participants were when the collaborations were obvious and not personal. Moreover, the participants were asked to identify six collaborations out of 12 pictures from Kenzas Instagram page. All of the participants identified three exact images of collaborations, picture 2, 6 and 12 which clearly showed the product of the collaboration (Appendix 2). Some of the participants reactions were:

“Spontaneously, I think that you do not add as much attention to the product pictures such as YSL and Daniel Wellington [...] I understand that it can be difficult to get all the products in one picture, but at the same time you would have liked the picture more if you had seen a picture where you see that she uses the product.”

Female Participant J, Focus group 3

“It does not mediate any impressions in the same way as the personalized pictures. I mean the makeup from YSL are only products. When there is no human in the picture, it will be a bit... not good, because people add the positive energy to the pictures.”

Female Participants I, Focus group 3

These statements indicate that participants have a negative attitude towards collaborations that only contain products, where the influencer have not put the product in a personalized context. Therefore, the influencer should according to the participants, include herself more in each collaboration picture in order to grasp customers’/followers’ attention and affection to create custom content.

6.3.2 Trustworthy

A collaborations’ trustworthiness was discussed during the focus groups through pictures of collaborations and other posts. The participants questioned the genuineness of a collaboration thus it is difficult for the followers to know if influencers like what they recommend and use the products in their everyday life. During the discussions, participant J shared her thought on the subject:

“The one with YSL, if I had seen the one with the marble background, I would not associate it with Kenza. Because she does not use so many cosmetics in general because she is very natural, but it works when she's wearing it, because then it is another thing”
The participants rather see the influencer wear the products from a collaboration than to see a picture of the products. As discussed previously, if the influencer puts the products in context and use them personally, collaborations can become more trustworthy. However, some participants thought that a collaborations’ trustworthiness can depend on how trustworthy the influencers is perceived to be. During the discussions about Kenza, participants explained her as being “down to earth”, “real” and “not fake” and that she seems to be vary fastidious when it comes to the brands she collaborates with. As expressed by Participant H:

"It depends on which bloggers it is, like Kenza, she is quite picky with who she actually chooses to work with, because she is so well-known she only gets the best collaboration”

The participants opinion about collaborations varied depending on their perception of the influencer, which in turn determined whether they trust the collaboration posts or not. Another aspect that was discussed as a factor of trustworthiness is if the influencers have searched for brands that might collaborate with them or if the brand has contacted the influencers. While discussing this matter, Participant F stated:

"I still think that most of them reflects her, because when she works with Gina Tricot, she often writes that she has always been interested in clothes, always like wearing clothes from Gina Tricot as well. I think she still has a lot that she stands for and should”

The participants felt that if the influencer motivates their choice of collaboration and stand for what the collaboration holds, the participants would become more susceptible towards the collaboration. However, when the influencer did not motivate the collaboration, participants became uncertain if the influencer really liked the product they recommend or if she/he only recommend it because of the collaboration. As Participant D shared:

“Influencers get clothes from a company, post it and then we never see those clothes again, because they do not really like them. That’s just to earn money. It should be clothes that they really want”

The statement indicates that the participants were doubtful in the presentation of collaboration products, thus the participants perceive that some influencers mainly collaborate with brands for financial gain and not for their preference in the products.
6.3.3 Customer interaction

The third antecedent of loyalty was discussed when the participants expressed if they like or comment on an influencer’s posts, or whether they think it is important for an influencer to interact with her/his followers or not. While discussing the level of interaction among the participants, it was evident that the participants did not comment or thought of doing it, as participant E expressed:

“You do not know her, so why should you comment on her pictures?”

This statement indicates that the participants rather not interact with people they do not know even if they follow them on Instagram. Even though the participants did not make comments themselves, they thought that interaction between influencers and followers is essential in order to show appreciation for those who follow and to prevent followers from unfollowing. Accordingly, Participant G stated:

“Yes, I think it’s important with interaction. It feels like many people do it to show appreciation, because they have so many followers and they do not want to lose them.”

Moreover, all of the participants like posts from time to time, especially when the pictures look good or when it is from a special event in the influencers life. Participant H explained her liking habits as:

“Occasionally when you feel like it you press “like”, for example, when she got married”

This explanation shows low interaction on the collaboration post which mainly consist of infrequent likes on pictures. The majority of all participants from every focus group agreed to this behaviour, that is occasional likes and no comments on Kenzas pictures.

6.3.4 Other findings; Personality

Beyond the findings which corresponds to the conceptual model, the material also shows findings of a factor that we perceive could have an impact on the relationship and the development of loyalty. The factor which we found interesting was that participants want to see the influencers beam personality even through collaborations. This subject was discussed by Participant I and Participant H from two different focus groups.

“I think humour is an important factor when you follow a person, you do not want to follow a stiff person”

Female Participant J, Focus group 3
"She's one of those fashion bloggers who is down to earth, the others are a bit likes, well, very superficial, she's still real in some way"

Female Participant H, Focus group 2

This signifies that by showing personality in form of humour and other characteristics when sharing pictures and collaborations, participants felt that the relationship between brand/influencer and customer/follower could become evident.

6.4 Loyalty

Discussions about how connected the participants were to either the influencer or brand varied tremendously. In the beginning of each focus group interview, almost every participant described their connection to the influencer as fairly vague. Although, as the discussions developed more and more indications of loyalty surfaced among the participants. The participants were updated with all of the latest and past information about Kenza and knew which brands she had done collaborations with.

6.4.1 Behavioural loyalty

Behavioural loyalty was discussed in the focus groups through questions that explained their behaviour. Through discussions about how long the participants had followed Kenza it was shown that majority of the participants had followed Kenza over many years. While discussing the topic participant J stated that:

"It would feel weird to not follow her after so many years"

This statement indicates that the time of following the influencer has an impact on behavioural loyalty towards the influencer, thus the follower does not want to stop following the influencer. The time of following the influencer could also impact how updated followers are about what happens in the influencers life. Participants describe how they have built up a personal connection after years of following Kenza. Participant K describes her personal connection to Kenza as:

"I keep track on her, if not better than what I do with some of my friends"

This description indicates how involved the participant has become with the influencer through time. Additionally, the participants affection towards the
influencer developed a desire to purchase products the influencer posts. As described by participant A:

“You look forward to purchase the product when seeing it on the influencer. I bought a pair of earrings just because I thought they were so cute on the influencer”

Participants felt inspired by an influencer to buy the products that the influencer posted. However, some of the participants did not pursue a purchase through collaborations, yet they still had intentions to purchase or kept the product in mind for a future purchase. As participant I stated:

“It may take six months until I need a product, and then you remember the product from the Instagram-post”

This statement signifies how customers/followers has kept the product from the collaboration in mind for future purchase, which in turn indicates behavioural loyalty towards the brand. Furthermore, behavioural loyalty can be recognised through participants discussion about whether the participants were interested in discount codes because of the influencer or brand. Some participant expressed:

“For me, I think that if I like a brand and an influencer post about it, it only reminds one of this brand that I like. The influencer has just attracted me to the brands webpage, and then I may buy something other than what the influencer posted”

Male Participant G, Focus Group 2

“Sometimes I can, if I have checked something on Gina Tricot, and then she puts out a discount code, clearly, I use it”

Female Participant F, Focus Group 2

These statements indicate that customers/followers do not make a purchase because of the influencer, but because of their preferences in the brand. Additionally, the participants already seem to have built up an interest towards the brand, which gets emphasised once the influencer post about the brand. As described by Participant F:

“Yes, many influencers have collaborations with Na-Kd, so there is always a discount to use. So that is why I have purchased over and over again. I have done it several times, same with Gina Tricot”

This indicates that when participants were reminded of a brand it influenced their action to make a purchase or re-purchase.
6.4.2 Attitudinal loyalty

Attitudinal loyalty was addressed in the focus groups through various discussions. The participants attitudinal loyalty was identified through their perception and attitudes towards collaborations. As presented previously, when participants discussed their thoughts about collaborations the common expression was that they disliked collaborations in general. Even if participants had negative attitudes towards collaborations they still enjoyed some of the collaboration pictures that Kenza posted on her Instagram page, which thereby did not affect their attitudinal loyalty towards Kenza. The participants preferred pictures that were personal, obscure and not staged, even though they were collaborations. As expressed by participant I:

“It becomes more personal when the influencer uses the product and that it is not just because of the brand that gave her the products which she/he is supposed to promote. Just as the book, that one was okay because she recommends the book, but otherwise it is quite meaningless.”

The expression indicates that participants became susceptible towards collaboration posts even though they had a negative attitude towards collaborations. When the influencer put the brand in a context, the participants changed their perception of collaborations. Likewise, the participants perception of influencers had an impact on participants attitude towards collaborations. As participant I explain:

“On the other hand, I feel inspired by it. Influencers’ sell products better if they make collaborations that are personal and not just because”

Participants showed a negative attitude towards influencers who collaborates with brands who do not correspond to the influencers personality, which affected the participants attitudinal loyalty towards influencers negatively. Accordingly, participants discussed the importance of choosing brands which influencers associate themselves with. Participants felt that influencers had to motivate their choice of collaboration, in order to create positive attitudinal loyalty towards influencers’ collaborations. As referred to participant F’s statement:

“I still think that most of them reflects her, because when she works with Gina Tricot, she often writes that she has always been interested in clothes”

This statement describes how Kenza develops positive attitudes among the participants, by making the collaboration genuine and believable. Participants positive attitudes through genuine and believable posts keeps them motivated to follow the
influencer, which could impact their attitudinal loyalty. Through discussions on this subject, participant I expressed:

“I unfollow influencers who do not give me anything but Kenza inspires me, so it is still worth staying there”.

The attitude expressed in this statement indicates that participants follow influencers who inspire them. On the contrary, participants attitudes towards collaborations changed when brands made collaborations with whom ever. Participant D stated in a discussion:

“I think so, it is not collaborations on things that the influencer really like. I want to know what they like. They are not allowed to choose the clothes themselves because everyone is advertising the exact same clothes”

This statement signifies that participants feel less susceptible towards the products used in multiple collaborations, which in turn could impact the participants’ attitudinal loyalty towards the brand negatively.
7. Discussion

This chapter discusses the highlights from the findings in the previous chapter aligned with theoretical notions from the theoretical framework. Lastly, an elaborated conceptual model will be presented which enable the exploration to answer the research questions of this thesis.

When analysing the empirical findings, we noticed that this research confirms the importance of the Match between influencers and brand. The conceptual model addresses the match between the influencer and brand, as the match between the two parties’ brand identity (Brown & Fiorella, 2017). The focus groups emphasised the importance of creating collaborations that are genuine, personal and corresponds to both the influencer and brand. However, participants did not prefer brands that collaborate with multiple influencers simultaneously. As Forbes (2016) argues, brands need to be aware of influencers chosen industry and popularity when selecting the right influencer to collaborate with. Furthermore, some participants where less interested in collaborations that has been posted by the influencer multiple times. Such deficiencies can affect how successful the match will be in the eyes of customers/followers, since an unsuccessful match might not impact customers purchase decisions (Jaakonmäki et al., 2017). Based on the empirical findings, an unsuccessful match between the brand and influencer will impact customers’/followers’ attitudes towards both the influencer and brand. The change in attitudes could in turn affect a customer’s/follower’s approach, preference and perception of the influencer and brand, which could have a negative impact on loyalty (Cottley et al., 2008).

Once a successful match has been established between a brand and influencer, the antecedents of loyalty can be addressed. According to the theoretical findings in this thesis, there are three antecedents of loyalty that can impact the loyalty toward the brand and influencer.

The first antecedent, Custom content refers to the influencers sharing of content which the customer/follower is open to receive (Brown & Fiorella, 2017). The empirical
findings shown that participants would rather see content of personal posts that reflect the influencers choice in fashion and life style. Personal posts were discussed to be less staged and not obvious collaborations. According to Brown and Fiorella (2017), an influencer should post personalized pictures to be able to keep and reach customers/followers. However, our findings show that some influencers do not put collaboration posts in a personalized context which could impact customers’/followers’ perception of collaborations. The theoretical review presents the importance of custom content which the findings in this research validates.

The second antecedent, Trustworthy explains the importance of trustworthy collaborations in order to develop loyalty, which the findings confirm. The trustworthiness depends on customers’/followers’ perception of the brand and influencers brand identity (Godson, 2009). According to the findings from the focus groups, it was shown that participants’ perception of influencers collaboration posts has an impact on influencers’ trustworthiness. Participants felt that influencers needed to clarify why they collaborate with brands and how these collaborations reflect the influencers lifestyle. Hence, participants did not know if the products recommended by the influencer were products that she/he normally would use. Jaakonmäki et al. (2017) states that influencers with a large number of followers, such as Kenza, can influence followers’ attitudes and make them more susceptible towards recommendations. The participants had followed Kenza during a long time which made them trust and be more susceptible towards recommendation she made, even though they were negative towards collaborations posts. Khamis et al. (2017) state that the trustworthiness of a collaboration post will impact customers’/followers’ intentions to purchase. Since participants perceive Kenza as inspirational and trustworthy, it made participants consider making a purchase.

The third antecedent Customer interaction, denotes the interaction between customer and influencer, such as comments and likes on posts (Forbes, 2016). According to Ismail (2017) customers’/followers’ interaction on posts is supposed to develop loyalty towards influencers and brands. However, the findings show that the participants only liked influencers’ posts occasionally, and did not comment, since
participants rather not comment on post from people they do not know. This finding indicates that customer interaction may not be an antecedent of loyalty. Nevertheless, the participants felt that interaction on post is important, but from the influencers point of view. According to the participants, influencers should interact with customers/followers in order to show them gratitude for following. The findings show contradictory indications of customer interaction, since participants neglect to interact on collaborative posts but notifies the interaction from influencers.

The third step of the conceptual model is Loyalty through Behaviours and Attitudes. As described in the conceptual model, behavioural loyalty denotes the action to get involved with a brand (Cottley et al., 2008; Balakrishnan et al., 2014; Watson IV et al., 2015). This action could be recognized from the findings as the participants commitment to follow the influencer trough time. The time of following an influencer shows how involved the customer/follower is in the influencers life. As Härtel and Russell-Bennett (2010:2) state, behavioural loyalty can be described as “the customer’s tendency to repurchase”. Behavioural loyalty in this case, refers to followers’ tendency to keep following the influencer on Instagram. Furthermore, participants explained that their involvement could impact their purchase decisions, thus they get inspired by the products the influencer use. However, some participants did not make a purchase at the time as the collaboration, even though they got inspired to purchase they kept the product in mind for a future purchase. Moreover, participants purchase decisions could be affected by the discount code of a collaboration, where the participants were more interested in the brand than the influencer who post the discount code. Participants preference in the brand made them use the discount codes in order to make a purchase or re-purchase, which in turn indicates behavioural loyalty towards the brand. Accordingly, the action to make a purchase or re-purchase signifies behavioural loyalty (Watson IV et al., 2015).

Attitudinal loyalty refers to the attitudes a customer/follower has towards an influencer, brand or both (Watson IV et al., 2015). The attitudes signify the approach, preference and perception a customer/follower has of a brand or influencer (Cottley et al., 2008). Attitudinal loyalty was identified in the findings when products were put
in a context that were in line with the influencers personal identity. Participants felt positive attitudes towards collaborations when the influencer posted pictures of items that she/he normally would use. Consequently, attitudes among participants changed when the influencer collaborates with brands that do not correspond to the influencers’ image. However, when identifying attitudinal loyalty towards brands, the findings show that brands who collaborate with multiple influencers simultaneously could create a bad perception of the brand, due to overexposed product advertising. Since, customers’/followers’ perception is based on their evaluation of the brand (Brandyopahyay & Martell, 2007; Härtel and Russell-Bennett, 2010), a bad perception could impact the attitudinal loyalty towards influencers/brands.

### 7.1 Review of the conceptual model

In order to conclude the findings of this thesis, a review of the conceptual model was made (Figure 1). The analysis shows that the steps, *Match, Antecedents of loyalty* and *Loyalty* in the conceptual model was in line with the findings. However, some modifications had to be made in order to clarify how to develop loyalty through collaborations and where the loyalty leads, to the influencer, brand or both.

The first modification was made in the antecedent *Customer interaction*, thus the findings of this research did not find support that customer interaction impact the development of loyalty through collaborations. While theory describe that customer interaction has an impact on loyalty (Forbes, 2016; Ismail, 2017), findings in this research indicate that participants hardly interact on collaboration post. However, findings highlight the importance of influencers’ interaction with customers/followers. As the findings of this thesis indicate that customer/follower and influencer do not mutually interact with each other, customer interaction may not be an important antecedent of loyalty in this research. Nevertheless, the research denotes another factor that could have an impact on the development of loyalty towards influencers and brands, which is presented as the second modification.

The second modification refers to influencers’ sharing their *Personality* through pictures and messages on Instagram, which is framed in the updated conceptual model
(Figure 2). When influencers show their personality, followers feel a stronger connection to the influencer, thus they get to know the influencer on a deeper level. As Chiu et al. (2005) states, in order to develop long-term relationships, customers must enhance their perception of value. By valuing the relationship, customers/followers are more prone to become loyal (Gad, 2000; Chiu et al., 2005). Based on the findings, influencers can create value for customers/followers when they share their personality, which in turn could develop loyalty.

Figure 2. The new conceptual model; Development of loyalty through collaborations between influencers and brands
8. Conclusion

This chapter starts with a summary of this thesis which provides answers to the research questions that was stated in chapter 1. Further, this chapter addresses discussions about the theoretical contribution, practical implication and critical review for further research.

8.1 Summary of thesis

This thesis aimed to explore how collaborations between brands and influencers on Instagram impact brand loyalty and the loyalty towards the influencer. In order to fulfil this purpose, the research is able to answer the two research questions: How is brand loyalty influenced by brand’s use of influencers? What influence followers’ loyalty towards an influencer, and does this loyalty impact brand loyalty?

Through a qualitative research and an abductive reasoning, the study was able to produce findings through three focus groups which was guided by a conceptual model and case study about Kenza Souiten Subosic. The theoretical review indicates that brands and influencers need to match, create custom content (Brown & Fiorella, 2017), shear trustworthy messages (Godson, 2009) and interact with customers/followers in order to develop loyalty (Ismail, 2017). These factors are established in the conceptual model which consist of the Match between influencer and brand, Antecedents of Loyalty and Loyalty. The findings of this thesis show both similarities and differences in the conceptual model and the development of loyalty. The similarities confirm the importance of the match, custom content and the trustworthiness of posts, as factors that develop loyalty through collaborations. However, two modifications were made, due to the differences in antecedents of loyalty, in order to clarify the development of loyalty. The first modification was to change one antecedent of loyalty, Customer interaction, as the findings did not support customer interaction as a factor to the development loyalty. Instead, the second modification, Personality was identified as a new antecedent of loyalty. Personality refers to influencers sharing their personality through posts which enables customers/followers to create a deeper relationship with the influencer, thus they get to know the influencer on a personal level. Since our findings emphasises the
importance of personality on collaboration posts, this factor could be considered as an antecedent of loyalty.

The result showed that brand loyalty is influenced by brands use of influencers when influencers post personalized pictures about the brand (Brown & Fiorella, 2017). The posts should inspire and remind customers/followers of the brand which the influencer can accomplish by putting the brand in a custom context and sharing discount codes (Watson IV et al., 2015). The influencer can influence customers’/followers’ preferences in the brand in order to make them more likely to purchase or re-purchase, which in turn can impact their brand loyalty (Ismail, 2017). Additionally, the findings show that brands use of multiple influencers can cause overexposure and impact customers’/followers’ perception of the brand, which thereon can affect their brand loyalty negatively. Moreover, the result showed that followers’ loyalty towards an influencer is mainly influenced by how long the they have been following the influencer. The time of following, determine the involvement and knowledge of the influencer, which in turn can impact their desire to purchase products the influencer post. The desire to purchase indicates how followers’ loyalty towards an influencer can impact brand loyalty (Brown & Fiorella, 2017). Another factor that could impact followers’ loyalty towards influencers, is the match between the brand and influencer (Forbes, 2016). Influencers must choose brands who correspond to their personality and lifestyle in order to make the collaboration trustworthy (Godson, 2009). Accordingly, followers become more likely to develop preferences to the brand which could impact brand loyalty (Härtel and Russell-Bennett, 2010).

8.2 Theoretical contribution

As the aim was to explore how collaborations between brands and influencers on Instagram impact brand loyalty and the loyalty towards the influencer, this study mainly adds three theoretical contributions to the field of loyalty in influence marketing.

The first contribution, consist of the conceptual model which explore followers’ development of loyalty towards influencers and brands. The conceptual model was
developed to explore the development of loyalty towards influencer’s followers, since studies neglect findings in this area (Brown & Fiorella, 2013; Russmann & Svensson, 2016; Ismail, 2017). Previous research mainly focus on corroborating the impact social media activities have on customer loyalty (Ismail, 2017) such as followers’ engagement on social media (Abdini, 2017) and influencers’ self-presentation (Forbes, 2016; Khamis et al., 2017). The findings of this thesis which is guided by the conceptual model, suggest antecedents that could impact customers’/followers’ development of loyalty towards brands/influencers.

The second and third contribution refers to modifications within the antecedents of loyalty from the conceptual model. Our empirical findings on the antecedent Customer interaction showed that customers/influencers barely interact on collaborative posts. However, it was found that influencers are expected to interact with customers/followers. Research state that interaction, such as comments and likes, is a factor that is important in the development of loyalty (Forbes, 2016; Ismail, 2017). Even though theory states that interaction is important, the research of this study could not find support that customer interaction indicate the development of loyalty. Moreover, findings identified Personality as a new antecedent of loyalty, thus all 11 participants from the focus groups described this factor as an indicator of the development of loyalty towards the influencer.

8.3 Practical implications

Notwithstanding, the practical implications of this thesis are connected to the case of, Kenza Zouiten Subosic, the findings aims to aid marketers who use influence marketing in order to establish relationships with customers and develop loyalty through Instagram.

The first practical implication found in this thesis refers to brands awareness of how they will be presented by the influencer. The findings show that brands need to be aware of how the brand is presented by the influencer, in order to avoid negative attitudes towards collaborations on Instagram. Collaborations should be presented in a personalized context where both the influencer and brand are portrayed equivalent.
The second implication emphasizes the importance of not collaborating with multiple influencers simultaneously. As the findings propose in Chapter 6, brands should be conscious when making collaborations with influencers within the same social group so that customers/followers do not see the same collaboration post repeatedly. Hence, brands can avoid creating collaborations customers/followers will become less interested in. The third and last practical implication addresses the influencer during a collaboration. To prevent followers from unfollowing and instead develop attitudinal loyalty towards the influencer, the influencer should motivate the choice of collaboration (Watson IV et al., 2015) in order to make the collaboration more trustworthy and authentic.

8.4 Critical review and further research

Even though the aim of this research is to contribute to the development of loyalty through collaborations on Instagram, further research is of interest. Firstly, this research was conducted with a limited number of participants of mainly females. Hence, further research on multiple participants with both male and female could be of interest, to test the findings of this thesis. Secondly, the focus groups were guided by a case study of one particular influencer. Further research on multiple influencers could be of interest in order to examine the transferability of the findings. Thirdly, further research could study customer interaction in-depth to be able to investigate if customer interaction is an antecedent of loyalty on Instagram. Likewise, in-depth research on personality calls for further investigation since the findings of this thesis indicates this factor as an antecedent of loyalty.
Bibliography


Rocha, A. & Radclyffe-Thomas, N. (2016). How TOMS’ “one day without shoes” campaign brings stakeholders together and co-creates value for the brand using


Appendix 1 – Focus group interview guide

Welcome to this group interview and thank you all for participating!

Before we start, we would like to inform you that this group interview will be audio and video recorded and used as empirical data for this research. For the safety of your integrity, the data gathered from this interview will remain anonymous when presenting the findings and only used in the presentation of the findings to the purpose of this research.

The agenda for this group interview is to discuss certain questions regarding collaborations between brands and an influencer, Kenza Zouiten Subosic, on Instagram. The questions are asked with the aim to create an understanding of your perception and attitudes towards the collaborations. We would like for you to speak freely about the different topics and contribute as much as you can to the discussion.

1. We would like you to start by introducing yourself and tell us a little about why you follow influencers and how many you follow and why.
   - How long you have been following Kenza and why?
   - What do you know about her?

On this piece of paper, we would like you to fill in what you would like to see and not see on an influencer’s Instagram page.
   - Is it important that the influencer interact with you as a follower?

We would like you to describe your connection to Kenza.
   - Do you like or comment Kenzas posts?
   - Do you talk about Kenza in social contexts?
     - If so, how often?
     - What do you talk about?
We are now going to show you 12 pictures retrieved from Kenza’s Instagram page. We would like you to pick out 3 pictures that you favour the most.

- Which pictures did you choose?
  - Why did you choose them?
- How does these pictures make you feel? Inspired, happy, empowered or how would you describe this feeling?
  - Why did you not choose the other pictures?
  - Why did you not like them or like them less?

2. As you all may have noticed, many influencers have started to make collaborations with brands. When an influencer collaborates with a brand, he/she gets payed or compensated with products to post a picture with or without a promotion-code, also called discount code. The post aims to recommend the product or brand and influence followers to make a purchase.

We would like you, as a group, to identify 6 pictures that reflects your view of a collaboration. Why did you choose these pictures?

- Did all of you agree on these pictures?
- (What would you say symbolizes a picture for a collaboration?)
  - What needs to be and what should not be in this picture?
- Do you like collaborations? Why? Why not?

We are now going to revile which of the posts are collaborations.

- Are you surprised by the result?
  - Why did or did you not think these posts were collaborations?

We would like to know what you think of collaborations.

- Do you think it is a good or bad idea to use collaborations?
- Do collaborations on Instagram affect you, in what way?
3. We have chosen 4 pictures from 7 different collaborations Kenza has done with brands during the last year. We would like you to look at these pictures and discuss which collaboration you find the most “appealing”, and why.

- Do you think there is a collaboration that does not correspond to your perception of Kenza? Why?
  - Do you feel that these pictures correspond to both the brand and the influencer?
- Are you interested in the “promotion code”, that is being offered?
  - If yes, is it because of the influencer, the brand or both?
- Have you purchased from a collaboration? Has Kenza affected you into a purchase? Can you give examples?
  - What was the reason to purchase?
  - Have you increased your purchasing habits towards this brand?
Appendix 2 – Focus Group posts

All pictures are retrieved from Kenza Zouiten Subosic Instagram page.

1

2

3

4
Appendix 3 – Focus Group posts
All pictures are retrieved from Kenza Zouiten Subosic Instagram page.

Collaborations with Daniel Wellington
Collaborations with Ideal of Sweden

kenzas
Betalt samarbete med idealofsweden

kenzas
Betalt samarbete med idealofsweden

kenzas
Betalt samarbete med idealofsweden

kenzas
Betalt samarbete med idealofsweden
Collaborations with Ivyrevel

[Images of models wearing Ivyrevel outfits]
Collaboration with Visit Dubai
Collaboration with Yves Saint Laurent Beauty
Collaborations with Gina tricot
Collaborations with Puma