Identifying influencers on Instagram

Important factors to consider when identifying influencers to use for sponsorships and collaborations

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We hope you enjoy our thesis!

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ABSTRACT

Title: Identifying influencers on Instagram: Important factors to consider when identifying influencers to use for sponsorships and collaborations.

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Keywords: Identifying influencers, Sponsorships, Collaborations, Instagram, Influencer identification model, Social media, Social media marketing.

Background: The growth of the Internet and social media has led to companies considering the use of influencers in sponsorships and collaborations on Instagram. The subject has been problematized and the gap found is a need for a framework combining different factors when identifying influencers.

Research Question: From both a company- and consumer perspective, which factors are important to take into account when identifying an influencer for sponsorships and collaborations on Instagram?

Purpose: The purpose is first to identify and incorporate important factors discussed in previous research into a proposed framework, which aims to be used when identifying influencers to sponsor on Instagram. Second, after conducting the empirical research, the framework is extended depending on the new collected information.

Theoretical framework: Background theories and concepts that lay the foundation to influencer marketing are presented. Also, previous frameworks regarding identification of influencers are introduced. The theoretical framework chapter is concluded with a proposed framework alongside introducing the factors.

Methodology: Abductive research strategy is used as well as a method triangulation, using both a qualitative and a quantitative approach. The study is an explorative research due to conducting both a documentary analysis and a questionnaire.

Findings: The factors studied have shown to be of different importance for companies and consumers. The findings indicate that there are multiple types of influencers. The Updated influencer identification model consists of seven important factors; ideal, trust, popularity, productivity, managing sponsorships and collaborations, information content and visual aspect.
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1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to provide a presentation of the background information for this study, starting with an introduction of the importance the Internet has in today’s society; resulting in a rapid growth of social media use. This increased growth has led companies considering the use of influencers, which is discussed and problematized through previously conducted research and later concluded in a knowledge gap. Furthermore, the purpose of the study is presented as well as the proposed research question.

1.1 Problem background

In today’s fast-changing environment, the growth of the Internet has led to the emergence of social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), which has become important for companies’ marketing (Evans, Phua, Lim & Jun, 2017). Social media is defined as Internet based applications that allow people to exchange content with other like-minded individuals. It relies on user generated content, which means that the content published is directly created by its users and not by professionals (Penni, 2017). Therefore, using social media has been noticed to be effective in regards of the company’s marketing strategy (Alalwan, Rana, Dwivedi & Algharabat, 2017). Social media marketing can for example be through brand pages, electronic word-of-mouth and sponsored ads. Sponsored advertisement used by companies is called influencer marketing (Evans et al., 2017). This has gained attention and become a topic of interest during the last years (Liu et al., 2015). The concept of this strategy is to sponsor or collaborate with influential people online who in return share a company’s brand-related content in their social networks (Boone, 2017; Evans et al., 2017). Thus, the information is spread both within and between their networks, with the primary goal to reach the target audience (Evans et al., 2017).

The growing importance of the Internet also affects the individual consumer and has become a ubiquitous part of their lives (Liu et al., 2015). The majority agree that it facilitates the everyday life because of the easy access of information (Jai, Burn & King, 2013). Since the Internet empowers the flow of information and communication, it has become a very important factor for a company’s economic growth (Borges, Hoppen, & Luce, 2009) and offers a good marketing opportunity for companies to make use of. Not only does it engage people in conversations about the company, it also offers a great opportunity for the company to spread their content to millions of customers and boost brand awareness (Barreda, Bilgihan, Nusair & Okumus, 2015; Iankova, Davies, Archer-Brown, Marder & Yau, 2018). It enables communication and interaction that have not been possible before, both with consumers as well as other companies (Liu et al., 2015). This has led to changes in a company’s behavior, which can be seen within its marketing strategy (Yang, Pang, Liu, Yen & Tarne, 2015).

Deciding to use influencers as a part of a marketing strategy has its advantages such as influencers being linked to a large number of consumers. Using a specific influencer leads to the company targeting and communicating towards a greater crowd, both in a short period of time as well as being low in cost, in comparison to traditional marketing such as advertisement
and broadcast (Evans et al., 2017; Hu, Lin, Qian & Sun, 2018). Influencers are also often seen as being well-informed about the experiences of a product or being heavy-users of it and can therefore function as persuasive experts within their network. Furthermore, they have the ability to have a strong normative influence, which leads to greater pressure on others to follow (Hu et al., 2018). Despite these advantages, there are criticism that have appeared within the subject of influencer marketing. This criticism mentions the possibility that some posts published by influencers are seen as being unpaid when in reality they are sponsored by companies. This has in turn led to stricter guidelines and a need for higher transparency, to be able to define which posts that are sponsored or not (Evans et al., 2017). Another issue is the important role that trust plays when using influencer marketing. Since social media advertising takes place online, users cannot interact directly with each other, which can lead to uncertainty and disbelief. Trust is therefore crucial when identifying an influencer (Liu et al., 2015).

Along with the growth of the Internet, social media and influencer marketing, it is important for companies to be aware of the effect of electronic word-of-mouth, e-WOM (Bao & Chang, 2014; Boone, 2017). E-WOM is a statement, positive or negative, made by a person that is visible on the Internet, such as an influencer. If influential individuals highlight a specific site, e-WOM can develop a strong social identity among customers towards that website (Yoo, Sanders & Moon, 2013). The concept of e-WOM can have both greater and longer impact than traditional marketing activity due to the opportunity to reach and target a suitable crowd for a company in a fast and easy way. It also reduces the need for marketing expenses since the marketing is done online through the users on social media and creates the ability to attract new customers and therefore offers the company an opportunity for increased revenue (Kassim & Ismail, 2009; Trusov, Bucklin & Pauwels, 2009). However, negative word-of-mouth online can result in the opposite effect, with customer attitudes impacting the purchasing intentions and affecting the firm’s brand image (Balaji, Khong & Chong, 2016).

As stated above, the Internet has an inevitable presence in today’s environment through channels such as social media, influencers and e-WOM, which companies can make use of when planning their marketing activities. The use of influencer marketing as a marketing technique has arisen and grown rapidly. A social platform where influencer marketing is commonly used is Instagram, which is a mobile-based social media app where users share photos and videos. Since the concept influencer marketing is fairly new, there is a possibility that there is not enough knowledge within companies about influencer marketing and not enough updated information from a theoretical point of view in this area of research. This thesis strives to contribute to the existing literature by presenting and highlighting important factors when identifying influencers within influencer marketing. In the following sections, the issue of how to identify an influencer is presented and examined through different methods. This concludes in a proposed framework, which will contribute both in the practical and the theoretical field of how to identify influencers for sponsorships or collaborations.
1.2 Problem discussion
In this section, previous research in this area is explained, discussed and summarized. Through studying previous research, the problem is viewed from a practical, an empirical and a theoretical point of view, which ultimately leads to the knowledge gap. Three areas that have been apparent while studying previous research regarding influencer marketing are: (I) quantification, (II) maximization and (III) influencer identification (Khan et al., 2017; Peng et al., 2018). This thesis is focusing on the identification of influence, in terms of choosing which influencer to use in sponsorships and collaborations.

Previous research concerning (I) quantification of influence have focused on the influencer’s characteristics, which needs to be quantified and analyzed in order to understand the effect of the influence. A general problem within previous research is the difficulty to do the quantifications in an objective manner (Khan et al., 2017). Still, it is important to understand the concept to find out what impact an influencer have, and thereby how companies can use social network as a communication tool to reach their customers. It is important to discover how the company should use the platform to influence their customers in the most effective way (Barreda et al., 2015; Iankova et al., 2018). The issue with quantification of influence has become very popular to study and there is extensive research made. However, there are still a lot of research that have to be conducted since it is fairly new, considering the fast-changing environment in social networks. Several frameworks have been developed in order to analyze and measure social influence and are often dependent on combinations of different attributes. Some of these that have been addressed in previous research are number of followers, recognition, activity and possibility of impacting others. These frameworks are looking at how much information related to a topic that exist in the network by the relative authority of individuals, through the spread of information or through interaction between users within the social network (Peng et al., 2018).

(II) Influence maximization is discussing how the influence from an influential person is spreading within a social network and how this could be further enhanced (Khan et al., 2017). It is important to maximize influence because it could decrease a company's marketing expenses due to the spread of information by users online. It could also give the company an opportunity to spread positive information with the benefits that comes with influence. Maximization is in literature defined as choosing a few influencers who are most likely to spread information through e-WOM (Roelens, Baecke & Benoit, 2016). Peng et al. (2018) mentions that influence maximization refers to how to find members in a network who maximizes the influence within a social network. There have been several algorithms proposed that can be used in online marketing to calculate how to gain the greatest influence. The algorithms aim to solve the influence maximization problem, which is to find a set of nodes that maximize the influence within a social network in a given model (ibid.).

Also presented in the literature is the issue of (III) influencer identification, which is important when companies strive to attract and target new potential customers or when to reach their current customers in the most efficient way. The challenge within this field is to identify influencers who match the company’s values and opinions, and who influence the customers’
attitudes and behavior in a desired way (Roelens et al., 2016). To be able to succeed with this, important factors concerning the influencer needs to be discussed and analyzed. This will further function as a guideline in the process of the identification (Li & Du, 2014; Roelens et al., 2016). Previous studies have been focusing on the identification of bloggers in the blogging community. A blogger could be seen as a type of influencer due to their ability to express opinions on a platform regarding different social topics and influence other bloggers with advice or guidance. They also have the ability to influence the public at large, as well as the individual blog reader with opinions regarding products or brands (Khan et al., 2017). Other subjects that have been researched are the position of the influencer, the persuasiveness, the trustworthiness, the popularity and the productivity of the influencer. Several different models have been developed within this subject (Kayes, Qian, Skvoretz & Iamnitchi, 2012; Khan & Daud, 2017; Khan et al., 2017; Li & Du, 2014; Li & Du, 2017; Liu et al., 2015; Peng et al., 2018), which are further developed within the literature review chapter. However, since it is a new research field, there are still more research that has yet not been conducted regarding influencer identification. Furthermore, companies are not only interested in if an influencer is currently a good opinion leader, they also consider whether the influencer will maintain their influence in the future (Liu et al., 2015).

There are practical problems found within the research area of identifying influencers to use in marketing, which needs to be extended further. According to McCormick (2016) it is important to understand where and how consumers sees and experience the marketing from the company. The author also claims that it is crucial to take into consideration the way an item is purchased, especially if it is bought on the Internet (ibid.). Due to the fast changes of social network over time, it is important from a practical perspective, to be able to react to these changes quickly (Peng et al., 2018). This may result in lack of knowledge and experience within the company, which in turn can create uncertainty in how to work with and how to gain the most effect out of using an influencer. Previous literature call for studies that investigates opinion leaders’ e-WOM in social media in order to characterize how they influence marketing and sales (Bao & Chang, 2014). Another dilemma from a practical point of view is for companies to distinguish an active user from an influential user (Khan et al., 2017). An active user may publish regularly and have a great number of followers, still, this does not mean that the user is influential and suitable enough to be sponsored by a certain company. In conclusion, more research is needed regarding how companies identify effective influencers with better accuracy (Liu et al., 2015; Zhu, 2013).

An empirical problem in the field of influencer marketing is the challenge for researchers to conduct a study because of the structure on social networks, which often is sparse and informal at the same time and the great diversity of platforms makes the empirical problem even more complex (Khan et al., 2017). This results in insufficient data available to conduct a valid research. There is nowadays a lack of empirical research in the field of influencer identification to make the subject more versatile. Therefore, it is important to make full use of the information that is available to understand how people influence each other on social platforms such as Instagram.
From a theoretical point of view, previous research suggests that there is a problem regarding the lack of models that combines important factors to consider when identifying influencers (Khan et al., 2017; Peng et al., 2018). The field of influencer marketing is still limited since it is fairly new. Therefore, models combining important factors need to be developed in order to increase the understanding within the subject (Peng et al., 2018). It is necessary to enhance models that involve marketing through influencers on social media platforms, which could be accomplished by investigating how consumers reflect about the subject (Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014). There is a need of developing models regarding factors such as credibility and self-presentation, which is relevant for e-WOM in an online setting (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). An area that calls for more research is finding the influencers who are influential in different social media platforms, since a lot of research have focused only on influential bloggers (Khan et al., 2017). Li, Lai and Chen (2011) also suggest that the existing models on influencer identification should be extended in order to discover potential influencers and that other factors should be embedded in the model.

Against this background, this study is focusing on companies in the retail sector offering products such as clothes, accessories and makeup, more specifically, companies that sell products that in some way can contribute to a desired ideal that the influencer promotes and that their followers strive to achieve. As previously mentioned, as an empirical problem, studies within the area of influencer marketing are needed on different social platforms. This study is examining the identification of influencers on Instagram, which is one of these social platforms. The subject is shown to be relevant considering that previous research mentions that social media is an important marketing channel today and that it is vital to identify the right influencer to use and to have an efficient social network-based marketing strategy (Liu et al., 2015). Due to the short history of influencer marketing, the research field is still unexplored (Peng et al., 2018). From a company perspective, identifying influencers might produce measurable results from the marketing activities as well as contributing positively to brand equity (Booth & Matic, 2011). Given the importance and influence of concepts such as social media, e-WOM and influencers, this is clearly a timely and relevant subject to investigate. This is also seen through the increasing amount of research within this area of influencer marketing. Still, against the presented background, there are some areas within the subject that should be extended further. The knowledge gap identified in this study is that there is a need of frameworks that combines the important factors to consider when a company is identifying influencers to use in sponsorships or collaborations on Instagram.

1.3 Purpose and research question
As previously mentioned in the problem discussion, there are models which both measures, identifies and tries to maximize the social influence. Still, there is a need of more models combining factors in order to identify influencers to use for sponsorships or in collaborations, as well as contributing with new empirical data reflecting today’s fast-changing environment within the area of influencer marketing. Also, there is a need for studies on different platforms and this study aims to examine the area of research on Instagram. The purpose is to identify important factors discussed in previous research. Thereafter, the study aims to explain the important factors within the context of identifying influencers on Instagram by incorporate the
factors into a proposed framework, to use in the empirical research. After conducting the empirical research, the framework is extended depending on the new collected information. The aim is ultimately to create and develop a framework combining important factors as an alternative for companies in the retail sector to use when sponsoring and collaborating with influencers on Instagram. The created framework also contributes theoretically by developing existing literature in the subject of identifying influencers on Instagram. The research question that is used and examined in this study is:

*From both a company- and consumer perspective, which factors are important to take into account when identifying an influencer for sponsorships and collaborations on Instagram?*

### 1.4 Delimitations

**Company- and consumer perspective**

In this thesis, the perspectives researched and reviewed are two-dimensional, using both a consumer perspective as well as a company perspective. Using both perspectives gives a solid theoretical and empirical background to build the proposed framework on. It offers a good understanding of how both the consumer and companies think when using influencer marketing on Instagram.

**Retail sector**

Today, influencer marketing is one of the most eminent trends within marketing. It is a topic in time, but most likely it will continue to prosper in the future as well. The main reason is that it is one of few marketing trends that works for every industry (Brown, 2017). This research is limited to the retail sector and products which in some way are visual outwards. The chosen companies sell products such as clothes, makeup and accessories, which can contribute to a desired ideal.

**Instagram**

An important marketing tool in today’s online setting, is for companies to use social networks to promote their brand. This thesis is delimited by examining the influencer marketing on the social platform Instagram. According to Evans et al. (2017), Instagram is amongst the most popular social media platforms to use when conducting influencer marketing online, with over 800 million users (Instagram, 2018) and is a “photo- and video-sharing mobile-based social media app” (Evans et al., 2017, p. 139). The reason for its popularity is that it offers companies an opportunity to find and use influencer whose followers is the target audience for the company and whose niche interests align. There are several ways a company can collaborate with influencers, such as hosting and documenting events, product placements or sharing sponsored content (ibid.).

**Sponsored influencers**

This thesis is delimited to examine influencers who are sponsored by or collaborates with different companies and are posting the collaborations or ads on their Instagram account. Influencers can be defined as “people with a high online status in an online social network” (Liu et al., 2015, p. 34). The influencers are a marketing opportunity that a lot of companies are using today since they are linked to a large number of consumers. The use of influencers leads
to the company targeting and communicating towards a greater crowd in a short period of time (Hu et al., 2018; Evans et al., 2017). This study excludes influencers who do not engage in paid collaborations or sponsorships with companies on Instagram.

1.5 Key concepts

**Influencer**
Influencers can be defined as “people with a high online status in an online social network” (Liu et al., 2015) and have the ability to affect communities, which revolves around a like-minded interest, found in the digital environment by mediating messages. These messages, due to the digital environment, can easily be disseminated and often has a viral effect (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014).

**Influencer marketing**
Influencer marketing is a marketing concept in which companies are sponsoring and collaborating with influential people online in order to reach the consumers. The marketing is spread to channels such as blogs, video channels and other social media which are platforms where this new form of influential individual is seen. The company is using the person’s influence to engage the audience and increase the sales as well as limit the marketing expenses. Many consumers today base their purchasing decisions on inspiration found among other consumers. They are inspired from people that have an ideal they want to achieve, and this is what companies are perusing through influencer marketing (Boone, 2017).

**Sponsorships and collaborations**
Sponsorships have been defined as “an investment, in cash or in kind, in an activity, in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that activity” (Meenaghan, 1991 s. 36, as cited in Wagner, 2016). In these types of collaborations, companies, also known as the sponsor, make investments by providing the influencer cash or products and services in exchange for a created value for the sponsoring company. Often, this value is in form of the company influencing an audience and therefore creating a connection that could generate future income (Hessling, Åsberg & Roxenhall, 2018).
1.6 Disposition

• Chapter two provides relevant theories within the area of influencer marketing. Firstly, the background theories and concepts are presented, which lays the foundation to influencer marketing. Secondly, previous frameworks regarding identification of influencers are introduced. Based on factors found within these frameworks, a model (Influencer identification model) consisting of six important factors was developed.

• Chapter three presents the chosen methodology that includes an abductive research strategy as well as a triangulation, using both a qualitative and a quantitative approach. The study is explorative and is examining the subject by conducting both a documentary analysis and a questionnaire. Ethical issues as well as validity and reliability of the data collected are discussed.

• Chapter four presents the empirical material collected through the documentary analysis and survey. The empirical data is based on the six factors within the Influencer identification model.

• Chapter five analyzes the result of the study in two steps. Firstly, the empirical data collected from the documentary analysis and survey is analyzed. Secondly, based on the previous analysis in this section, the Influence identification model is updated and further developed.

• Chapter six presents the conclusions based on the result as well as answering the research question. Also, the theoretical and practical implications, limitations and suggestions for future research are presented in this section.
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter is providing relevant theories for the subject of study to create a knowledge foundation. It begins with a presentation of theories and concepts associated with influencer marketing, followed by a description of previous frameworks regarding the subject. Also, different factors to consider when identify the right influencer is presented. Finally, the chapter concludes with a proposed framework combining these factors is introduced.

2.1 Background theories and concepts to influencer marketing

A theory widely discussed in previous research is social comparison theory, which explains to what extent a person looks to and is affected by the behavior of others (Festinger, 1954). Self-evaluation can only be accomplished by a comparison with others. It is a driving force which creates feelings of belonging to a group and feelings of correctness and satisfaction. People tend to join groups which are emphasizing the same opinions and have the same characteristics as themselves (ibid). When it comes to who to use as a reference, people often are careful and selective in order to maintain a positive self-evaluation. Previous studies also confirm that closeness with others increases the pain of comparison and the pleasure of reflection. This can be explained by the comparison process and the reflection process, which often can be seen within social behavior. The comparison process is when the self is outperformed by another person on a task high in relevance. The reflection process is when the self is outperformed on a task which is low in relevance, which leads to an increase in positive self-evaluation (Tesser, Millar & Moore, 1988). More recent studies indicate that comparison to idealized models can contribute to either contrast or assimilation in self-evaluation. Meaning to either contradicting your self-evaluation or fully converging your self-evaluation to the idealized model, which often stands for certain standards. It is therefore important for advertisers to take these factors into consideration when composing ads (Häfner, 2004).

Tajfel (2010) presents the social identity theory which refers to how an individual identify him- or herself in regard to perception of the personal identity as well as the social identity. Personal identity involves individual traits and achievements, while social identity is about group affiliations. The theory is about how people use group networks in order to define a self-concept and categorize oneself and others. This in turn leads to the split between ingroups and outgroups. Individuals identify with the ingroup and not with the outgroup. The individuals compare their own group with other groups in order to gain superiority and thereby it becomes an important part of the self (Rodriguez, 2013).

Another theory discussed in previous literature is social impact theory, which Latané (1981) describes as how individuals influence and are influenced by each other. The social impact can be explained by individual’s feelings, thoughts and behavior, which are affected by the presence or actions of other individuals. The social impact can be described as a combination of the following factors: strength, immediacy and number of source of impact. Strength explains a group’s power to persuade individuals. Immediacy is the closeness between individuals in regards of space and time. The number of sources explains how many people that impact individuals (Chang, Zhu, Wang & Li, 2018). The emerge of social media has made it easier
than ever to be influenced by others because of the accessibility of information (ibid.). This is a way to clarify how social impact theory is applied in today’s society. To influence and be influenced by others is based on the concept of reference groups. This area is further discussed in the next section.

2.1.1 Reference group
From a historical perspective it is evident that the characteristics of humans are grounded from evolutionary roots. Humans are social beings who live in a social environment, dependent on others. Humans have an inner strive to be seen and accepted by others and are therefore constantly comparing themselves with people in their surroundings. This type of behavior is also visible in a consumer setting where customers interact with each other, guiding and evaluating products or brands (Hammerl, Dorner, Foscht & Brandstätter, 2016). In many cases, customers use reference groups in the decision-making process to receive advice when making a purchase (Hoonsopon & Puriwat, 2016). A reference group is an individual or a group, actual or abstract, which provide importance to an individual’s opinion, ambition and behavior (Park & Lessig, 1977). The use of a reference group can be explained and referred to the human behavior within social contexts and the need of group belonging, which will influence our actions (Hammerl et al., 2016).

In the existing literature, reference groups are explained and categorized in different ways (Hoonsopon & Puriwat, 2016). Firstly, a family can be a reference group. It has been shown that the influence of a reference group can differ depending on if it is delivered from a family member or a member from a peer group (Childers & Rao, 1992). Childers and Rao (1992) also emphasize the concept of celebrity spokespeople. Celebrities and experts have the capacity to function as a reference group as well. Because of their popularity and knowledge, they can make an impact on the customer’s decision choices (Tan, 1999). Lastly, reference groups can be explained by the role that influencers have in regards of affecting the public opinion (Watts & Dodds, 2007).

Individuals can be influenced by people we know; however, it may also be people who we want to be associated with or can identify with. Successful individuals or individuals that are appealing in one way or another can function as an aspirational reference group. Often customers admire these, but do not share the same group belonging. These people possess aspirational qualities that are attractive to the customer and by associating them with a product or brand, this product or brand will take on the same aspirational qualities. Individuals can also be influenced by people that they can identify with and share group belonging with, called identification reference groups. This influence is based on those who share similarities with each other. Individuals tend to admire qualities of others who have the same belonging and therefore they prefer same products or brand as that person (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard., & Hogg, 2013).

Park and Lessig (1977) illustrated reference groups through three different categories from the customers’ perspective. These are informational influence, utilitarian influence and value-expressive influence. The information influence is when the customer seeks information
regarding a brand. This can be given, as mentioned before, by for example experts, family
members, work colleagues or a well-known celebrity. The utilitarian influence describes when
the customer is influenced by preferences from people in their social environment. The
customer strives to satisfy possible expectations that other people in their environment have.
The value-expressive influence is when the customer decides to make a purchase because it will
enhance the self-ideal, how other people perceive him or her. Then the customer feels that those
who previously made a similar purchase possess desirable attributes (Park & Lessig, 1977).

Another way as to how reference groups may impact consumers is that they can be persuasive
and exercise certain power. The concept of social power is explained as to the degree a person
is able to make someone else do something, thereby that individual has power over other
persons. One way to exercise power is by referent power. It is when a person admires another
person’s characteristics and therefore tries to copy the behavior. In a marketing context, this is
important because consumers change their behavior in order to identify with a referent
(Solomon et al., 2013).

2.1.2 Opinion leadership
A person who is able to have an impact on others’ attitudes and behaviors can be seen as an
opinion leader. These individuals’ recommendations have a greater power in affecting other
people than other individuals, since they possess a social power. They possess specific
knowledge, are socially active and interconnected in a community and have legitimate power
(Solomon et al., 2013). The influence from opinion leaders can be seen as a two-step flow model
of influence. This model is also called influential hypothesis, which explains that the influence
from opinion leaders is driven by the mass of influenced individuals. The second step is
therefore when the influenced individuals continue to spread the information gained from the
influencer. In this kind of influence network, the influenced individuals communicate the
information among each other, as well as in a dialogue with the opinion leader (Watts & Dodds,
2007). In an online setting, opinion leaders become more powerful. Instead of only reaching
the closest community, they now reach and influence people all over the world in an instant,
due to their strong communication network. People generally see the online opinion leaders as
trustworthy and credible (Solomon et al., 2013).

2.1.3 Influencer marketing in social networks
Influencer marketing within social network is known as social influence. Social influence refers
to when people change their behavior due to the influence of other (Li, Zhang & Huang, 2018),
and in this case, the influence of others online. A mobile social network is “networks where
individuals with similar interests converse and connect with one another through their mobile
phones and/or tablets” (Peng, Yang, Cao, Yu & Xie, 2017, p. 146). These types of networks
have a great impact on to what extent individuals in social networks can connect with each other
and engage in different social groups. By having these networks, it enables individuals to
influence one and other with opinions, experiences and information through words, pictures,
sound or videos (Peng et al., 2017).
A social network consists of nodes, which is the members of the network, who are somehow connected to each other either by shared experiences, interests or shared hobbies (Solomon et al., 2013). This therefore acts as an optimal place to conduct targeted marketing, due to the nodes sharing similar preferences, and sharing electronic word-of-mouth communication (Li & Du, 2017). Especially, within social network, members are communicating more closely and more frequently with each other making social media a prosperous place for e-WOM (Wang, Yeh, Chen & Tsydypov, 2016). This also adds to the social object theory which suggest that online communities get strengthen if a relationship is activated between objects and people. An object, in this context, is seen as the primary function and the common interest, which has brought the people together (Solomon et al., 2013).

Within online communities there are important characteristics which define and shape communities and the nodes within them. As previously mentioned, collective interest is an important characteristic. Also, conversations, level of participation and crowd power are important within the context of influencer marketing and sharing content online (ibid.). Communication is extremely important since it contributes to the existence of communities as well as allowing the nodes to speak more openly and increasing social groups. It has also led to an increasement in the emotional, social and verbal intimacy within friendships (Subramaniam & Razak, 2014). The level of participation of the nodes in a social network has its roots in the identification with a community, which then lays the foundation of the amount of engagement seen from the members (Martínez-López, Anaya-Sánchez, Molinillo, Aguilar-Iglesias & Esteban-Millat, 2017). When getting the consumer to participate, and therefore show engagement, it can promote word-of-mouth communication which companies should make use of by replying, posting and participate in other online activities within their brand community (Wu, Fan & Zhao, 2017). It is also of importance to recognize crowd power that when groups work together they may be smarter than the individual self. This recognition has led to businesses updating and modifying their business plans in order to involve their community members. Social media has therefore led to a fundamental change in how consumers and marketers communicate, instead of communicating to customers, they now market together with them (Solomon et al., 2013).

2.2 Existing frameworks to identify influencers
In this section, previous frameworks regarding the identification of influencers to use in sponsorships and collaborations are presented. The literature review is focusing on finding which factors previous studies have considered when identifying an influencer for marketing. Liu et al. (2015) proposed a framework in which they review the factors trust relationships and review domains in a specific time frame. It is important to reflect about trust when identifying influencers since consumers’ purchasing decisions are affected by trust among users in social networks. Further, they used social identity theory to empower the framework and found that users prefer to interact with their ingroup members within a domain. However, if they do not identify with these members, they change and conform to another group. With this framework, the influencers within a specific domain are more effectively identified. Liu et al. (2015) found that there were three categories of influencers that could be defined within a specific domain and used in marketing, which in this research are defined as emerging influencers (the new and
upcoming influential persons), holding influencers (the influencers that have a strong influence today) and vanishing influencers (the influencers that no longer executes strong influence). What category the influencer belongs to, is based on the influencers popularity across the life cycle (ibid.). Another framework with trust as a primary factor was developed by Aghdam & Navmipour (2016). The framework is based on trust relationships between users and strive to identify the influencer with the highest trust value, with the aim to facilitate which opinion leader to use in online social networks. The two factors used are trust evaluating and opinion leader selection, which are based on structural and social similarity between users and are looking at the total trust value from users’ comments to measure the strength of trust relationships (ibid).

Kayes et al. (2012) conducted a research regarding the position an influential blogger has within a blogging network. The authors also discussed what value the identification of an influential blogger could bring to a company, such as providing them a deeper understanding of concepts and trends or presenting information to other bloggers, which can further increase the number of spokespersons for the company. The framework is measuring centrality in a network based on different centrality metrics. Centrality is defined as “the quality or state of being central” (Merriam-Webster, 2018). The contribution of the research was that some bloggers have more influence on other bloggers in the network, depending on their position. Furthermore, the bloggers that are influential within the network forms a connected group, which do not involve the non-influencer bloggers (Kayes et al., 2012).

Li and Du (2014) developed a four-phase framework to identify opinion leaders’ influence on other users within micro-blog communities as well as examining their persuasiveness by analyzing positive and negative attitudes. The factors examined were divided into eight categories: a blogger’s published blogs, the number of followers/friends, a blogger’s followees, the number of followers in a specific group compared with the total number in a network, if the blogger have high affiliation with a specific community, centrality/in-centrality, betweenness centrality and lastly closeness centrality. The findings were that it is important to consider the preferences of the opinion leader to distribute the most effective flow of information. Also, it was found that positive opinions are more persuasive than negative opinions and that positive opinion leaders work more actively in spreading the message compared with negative leaders are with spreading the negative message. Finally, that if the negative opinion leaders change their attitude toward a more positive, it can improve positive message distribution (Li & Du, 2014).

Li and Du (2017) created a framework that proposed how companies can identify opinion leaders and maximize the influence of their message. The framework consists of four parts; information preparation, blogger identification, blogger classification and message diffusion. In the information preparation stage, collection of blogger information such as the number of followees vs followers, blogger type and gender were made, as well as a network construction using bloggers post and repost relationships. The second part of the framework, blogger identification, combines the above factors into eigenvectors to be able to systematically collect the retrieved data into a model. The third part, blogger classification, uses the model to analyze
and cluster the data. The fourth part, message diffusion, the authors studied a chosen network and the nodes within that network to estimate information dissemination. When analyzing the dissemination of information Li and Du (2017) analyzed the influence of a message retrieved from bloggers. However, the authors emphasize the importance of identifying opinion leaders to estimate the influence of their message. The properties of bloggers and the network that they are active in acts as the two components to use when identifying opinion leaders (Li & Du, 2017).

Khan et al. (2017) developed a classification based on existing models regarding the identification of influential bloggers. The models are divided into feature-based and network-based models. The feature-based models are focusing on characteristics among the bloggers and their blog posts. The network-based models are looking at relationships between users on social platforms. Feature-based models has factors such as blog post recognition, activity generated by a blog post, the length of the post, age of the blog post, age of received comments, number of outlinks, uniqueness, blog post’s contents, information related to the user, number of visits to a blogpost, blogger activeness, relation of responses or received comments in a blogger’ thread, blogger popularity and blogger productivity. In the network-based models, the factors that are commonly researched are: post-reply relationship, cluster finding and ranking, interpersonal similarity, amount of information propagated, position of an influential blogger, centrality, proposing social roles and responsibilities, influence diffusion, influence style and the context of exerted influence.

The subject of influence identification is also discussed by Khan and Daud (2017) who developed a model concerning how to identify influential bloggers based on productivity and popularity features. To do so, they used various factors regarding the two terms. Productivity concerns the blog posts and specifically the activity, consistency and length of the posts. To measure popularity, the blogger’s impact within the blogging community, and with factors such as recognition, authority and novelty were used.

Below is an own-constructed framework presented, called Influencer identification model that is based on factors from the background theories, which are social comparison theory, social identity theory, social impact theory, theories within the area of reference groups, opinion leadership and influencer marketing. In adherence to these theories, factors from previous research regarding identification of influencers have also been incorporated in the framework. When creating this own-constructed framework, all the factors found have been compiled, interpreted and categorized into six important factors, which are; ideal, trust, centrality, popularity, productivity and information content.
2.3 Important factors when identifying influencers

In this section, the important factors to consider when identifying influencers for sponsorships and collaborations are presented, as seen in the *Influencer identification model*. The factors are developed from studying previous frameworks and models, and then categorized and divided into the following six factors: ideal, trust, centrality, popularity, productivity and information content.

2.3.1 Ideal

An influencer’s opinions and lifestyles are perceived as an ideal for many customers who aspire to follow the recommendations and reviews given through different social media platforms such as Instagram. To reach these ideal lifestyles, customers will imitate the decisions of the influencers they have idolized when making a purchase, copying what to buy or where to go. In this way the customer’s ideal self, who they would like to be, will congruent with their actual self-image which furthermore will enhance their self-esteem (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Companies therefore have to take this factor into consideration when choosing what influencers to use. The influencer has to have opinion leadership which is in line with the company’s value and product (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). This is also in accordance with social identity theory, which explains that when an individual identifies themselves with a social group it does not only lead to unselfish behavior, but it results in increased self-esteem and aspiration. Ultimately, greater identification will lead to the consumers showing more involvement with the brand and a greater brand commitment (Yoshida, Gordon, Nakazawa, Shibuya & Fujiwara, 2018).
2.3.2 Trust
In an online social network setting, trust can be defined as; “trust in a person is a commitment to an action based on a belief that the future actions of that person will lead to a good outcome” (Al-Oufi, Kim & El Saddik, 2012, p.13173). Trust also helps to identify which persons to share information with, communicate with and form friendships with (ibid). Therefore, when influencers operate within an online social network, and create relationships with people who have similar interests as them, they form a user trust network. These trusted and reliable influencers then have the potential to influence consumers into listening to their recommendations and ultimately purchase the recommended product (Liu et al., 2015). However, it is important to keep in mind that consumers have different personal opinions and experiences, which affects the trust relationship between them and the influencer. The trust value varies and therefore personal biases should be considered by companies instead of looking at global ones (Al-Oufi et al., 2012). Previous research show that influencers are often connected to trust in order to make an impact. Customers are more likely to copy purchase decisions from those they find trustworthy and reliable in order to get products and services that fulfills the expectations that the customer have gained from the influencer (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). The influencer’s social network itself will also expand by being seen as trustworthy, which will make them more desirable for companies.

2.3.3 Centrality
Centrality is a common term within the subject of social network and social influence, which often is discussed concerning social media. Social influence refers to individuals’ behavior changing due to other people in a network. These changes are depending on factors such as how strong a relationship is among members in a network, the network distance and characteristics of the members in a network (Gandhi & Muruganantham, 2015). The influence in social networks can also be measured by the relative authority of the members in a network and by the spread of information (Peng et al., 2018). Centrality and influence power in social networks are closely linked together. However, a person could be seen as influential for some people and non-influential for others. For this reason, the importance of a person in an online social network surrounding should be measured by influence related factors (Kang, Kraus, Molinaro, Spezzano & Subrahmanian, 2016), such as the status in a network. A research has been conducted regarding informal leaders and their social power from a social network perspective. The findings were a positive and effective influence leadership based from an interaction of leader-member tie and centrality (Wang, Chen & Yu, 2017). By using network centrality measurements, it was revealed that highly influential bloggers were well connected in a core and the not so influential bloggers where in the outskirts. These bloggers are more unlikely to connect with each other (Kayes et al., 2012; Tang & Yang, 2012).

2.3.4 Popularity
Popularity refers to the influencers impact within a community with regard to factors such as recognition and authority (Khan & Daud, 2017). In turn, these factors can be measured through variables such as numbers of followers, comments and likes. Previous research states that having a high number of followers does not always guarantee success, but it can be seen as a
starting point when searching for the right influencer as well as striving to maximize the reach within the target audience (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017; Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014). The number of followers that an influencer possesses have an effect of the consumer’s attitude towards the influencer, such as likeability. However, an important previous finding is that it is not the number of followers that is the most important, but the audience that the influencers reach, in terms of activities and interests (De Veirman et al., 2017). It is therefore important for companies to take notice that the influence is only a means to an end, and not the end product itself (Pophal, 2016). People with a lot of followers online can act as a bridge between the company and the potential customer. Another aspect regarding the discussion of followers is the ratio of followers versus followees, due to previous research stating that the likeability for an influencer may be negative if they only follow few accounts but have a large number of followers (De Veirman et al., 2017). Companies should therefore acknowledge who the influencer itself chooses to follow online. Also, the number of comments and likes on the published content is a sign on popularity and authority. It does not only lead to brand popularity but is an important metric for managers to be aware of, as well as influencing the financial outcomes and marketing (Swani, Milne, Brown, Assaf & Donthu, 2017).

2.3.5 Productivity
An influencer is considered to be productive when initiating numerous blog posts both regularly and consistently. An important aspect to take into consideration when measuring productivity is how active the influencer is in regards of initiating new posts which in turn affects other users. Activity is also referring to the amount of sponsorship and collaborations posted by an influencer. It is also argued that when an influencer shows more activity they are considered more influential than non-active influencers (Khan & Daud, 2017). Another important aspect is consistency, where previous research shows that an influencer that are consistent with their blog posting are seen as more influential individuals than an influencer who lacks in consistency. Lastly, post length is an important factor to take into consideration in regards of an influencers productivity. Post length is a measure of the blogger indirectly by measuring the eloquence of content that the influencer publishes (ibid.).

2.3.6 Information content
In regards of information content, many of the previous studies have emphasized the issue of what content being shared on social networks and the continuity of the release of information. It is common that the content revolves around the influencer’s own thoughts and actions. When the influencer actively releases information content, more specifically information regarding their personal lives, they might be seen as more influential (Li & Du, 2014). Companies collaborate with influencers in order to strengthen the information content quality to the consumers. The information quality will be further strengthened if the influencer shares a connection to the content (Chang, Yu & Lu, 2015). This could be, for example, if the influencer is a heavy user of the product promoted or has a broad knowledge regarding the experience of the product (Hu et al, 2018; Ruiz-Mafe, Bigne-Alcaniz, Sanz-Blas & Tronch, 2018). Furthermore, if a collaboration is organized, it is important for the customer to be provided with outlinks to the companies’ websites or blogs (Chang et al., 2015).
A sponsorship, that is a paid post of information content between a company and an influencer, has based on previous research shown not to affect the customers attitude toward the recommendation content in a negative way (Lu, Chang & Chang, 2014). According to Lu, Chang and Chang (2014) it is important for the customer to believe in the information given, which the influencer needs to keep in mind when presenting the information. Thus, the content presented must be credible, have arguments of good quality and come from a credible source in order to influence the customer (Nunes, Ferreira, Sabino de Freitas & Ramos, 2017). The persuasiveness will be enhanced by characteristics such as reliability of the content, the timeliness, comprehensibility and the accuracy of details. Another essential aspect within the factor of information content is the relevance of the message to the receiver, the potential customer. The relevance can be examined depending on if the followers have been influenced to purchase the product or not (ibid.). Also, the relevancy of the information content could be seen not only to the customer, but companies and brands. When companies select influencers, it is important to find a match between the brand and the information content shared. If the content is relevant to the brand, the brand communication process will be increased by targeting the most essential audience (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014).
3. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methodology used in this thesis is presented and motivated. The method choices are based on the research subject together with the research question and the aim of the study. Both a qualitative and a quantitative research design have been used. Thus, both designs are accounted for in detail, including research approach, literature review, the research methods, validity and reliability and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research approach

The study was based on an abductive approach and the design of the research was an exploratory study. It consisted of both a qualitative and a quantitative research design. The qualitative research was conducted by a documentary analysis on Instagram and the quantitative research by an online survey. The purpose of combining two methods was to view the problem from two perspectives, both from a company perspective as well as a consumer perspective. The method chosen enables to further develop the Influencer identification model as well as strengthen the results.

3.1.1 Research strategy

When conducting a study there are different research strategies to use to interpret the reality. One of these strategies involves what method to use when relating the reality to the theory (Jacobsen, 2002; Patel & Davidsson, 2011). This can be accomplished through three different methods which are inductive, deductive and abductive approach (Jacobsen, 2002). The inductive approach is when the author proceeds from a human interpretation. Thus, collecting relevant information from the society beforehand without any expectations and afterwards systematically finalize the gathered information (ibid.). Data is collected without a stated hypothesis from previous theory and the data collection is only based on the chosen problem formulation for the study. Later, the data is analyzed in order to find connections and thereby create a general hypothesis (Hartman, 2001). The deductive approach differs by beginning with an objective view. When using the deductive method, the author is, opposed to the inductive approach, initiating the research with gaining preconceived expectations regarding the research subject based from previous literature. The expectations are afterwards compared with the collected information to examine if they are corresponding with the reality (Jacobsen, 2002). The deductive approach is often based on hypothesis that is derived from previous observed facts and later tested against observations made in the study (Hartman, 2001). This study was conducted by firstly collecting existing literature as a basis for the empirical study. Later the empirical data was used to develop frameworks and theories. Neither the inductive or the deductive approach were used because the study do not aim to test hypothesis, still previous literature was used as a basis and a new framework was developed. The research strategy in this study is defined as a combination of the two strategies, which is an abductive approach (Patel & Davidsson, 2011).

The primary function of the abductive approach is that the empirical data and the theoretical framework are consistently adjusted and further developed throughout the research process (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2007). The first step of the process is to establish a suggested
theoretical structure based from previous literature. This structure is later tested along with new empirical data, which develops the suggested theory into becoming more applicable. One limitation with this approach is that the use of hypotheses or previous literature may limit the researcher in not being sufficient open-minded and thereby exclude possible interpretations (Patel & Davidsson, 2011). Still, this method was chosen in order to provide the most relevant and applicable theories and empirical data in order to fulfill the aim of developing a framework, *Influencer identification model*, which includes important factors when identifying influencers to sponsor or collaborate with on Instagram. When using an abductive approach, the study was not limited to predetermined theory choices or strictly bound to a certain way of conducting the study. The framework has continually been updated with new information collected and therefore gained a deeper understanding of the subject.

3.1.2 Method approach

Based on the research aim and research question, it is important to decide what form of research that is suitable for the subject studied. A research can be designed in several ways depending on the extent of existing literature and knowledge within the research area. There are four main research designs; exploratory, descriptive, explanatory and normative studies. The *exploratory* study is suitable when there is limited knowledge in the existing literature and the aim is to explore the subject and find a fundamental understanding. The *descriptive* study is used when there is existing literature within a subject and the aim is to describe patterns and gather facts occurring. The *explanatory* study, however, seeks for a deeper understanding within a subject and strives to both explain and understand a phenomenon. Lastly, the *normative* study aims to point out areas that could be studied further within the existing literature (Björklund & Paulsson, 2003). An exploratory research method was chosen for this thesis since the existing literature of influencer marketing is limited and the aim is to explore the area further. The intention of the study was not to set final conclusions within the chosen subject, as should have been done in other method choices. Instead the aim was to get a better understanding of the subject by establish the framework - *Influencer identification model* and thereby contribute to the field of research. The disadvantage with an exploratory study is that the empirical data collection may not represent a wider population, which is why the research cannot be generalized. However, since the exploratory research do not provide final conclusions, it is an effective method to lay a foundation to a research area that can be studied further.

When collecting data for a study there are two method approaches, qualitative or quantitative. Which method to choose is based on the data required in the study and the proposed research question (Jacobsen, 2002). The methods refer to how the data is generated, processed and analyzed (Patel & Davidson, 2011). A *qualitative* research approach is suitable when the aim is to create an explanation for a phenomenon in order to gain understanding (Jacobsen, 2002). It is performed by seeing the reality through the eyes of the participants. Often it is an inductive approach, in which the theories are developed as the research process emerges. This method could therefore be used when creating new theories instead of testing existing ones (Smith, 2013). Qualitative methods are used to collect soft and verbal data, through for example interviews and verbal analyses (Patel & Davidsson, 2011) when the researcher is having limited knowledge about what to search for within the subject. It is therefore often the situation, or the
people observed that determines the information acquired, contributing to the data being adjusted to gain the desired result. A qualitative research can be conducted in different methods for example through focus groups, case studies, observations or the most common method, interviews (Jacobsen, 2002). In this study the qualitative research was conducted through a documentary analysis. The information was collected from a number of selected individuals and the theories were further developed based on the data collected from the research units. A negative aspect with qualitative research is that it could be hard to generalize the result because of the limited number of research units (ibid.). A generalization was neither possible in this study, instead the aim was to develop new theories based on a number of companies.

A quantitative method is suitable to use when having previous knowledge about the researched subject and when the research question is clear and well-defined. Knowing what to research is a prerequisite in order to reassure that the questions asked, alongside with the possible answers, are in line and relevant with the subject (Jacobsen, 2002). This results in the approach being a deductive process due to the questions being developed through the previous acquired knowledge. This can lead to the researcher predicting and generalizing the understandings and explanations of the research (Smith, 2013). When conducting a quantitative research, the aim is often to amplify the reach and spread to gain as many respondents as possible. Thus, opting for generalization, but having many respondents will also result in a limitation of depth in the research. A quantitative research is often done in the form of a questionnaire (Jacobsen, 2002). This was also the quantitative method used in this study and it was conducted with the aim to get a broader view of the consumer perspective.

Previous research shows a growth in using both a quantitative and a qualitative approach within one study (Smith, 2013). To use both methods is a good way to test if they are reliable and valid, and if both methods gives the same conclusions the result can be seen as strong (Jacobsen, 2002). This research was based on a combination between the two methods and they were performed simultaneously throughout the process to be able to test and compare the approaches to each other. Also, this enables to view the subject from a consumer as well as a company perspective, which is in line with the delimitations of the study. The use of both methods, conducting a documentary analysis as well as a survey, results in a triangulation. A triangulation can, with the information collected from a quantitative approach, contribute with inputs to the qualitative approach in the study. The combined results from the methods are used to expand and give the analysis more depth as well as adding validity (Patel & Davidson, 2011). By triangulating data, and reviewing the collected information through multiple methods, it adds credibility to the results found. Since it is done through multiple studies and not a single study, it also limits and reduces the potential of biases (Bowen, 2009).

3.2 Literature review
The structure of the literature review in this study was based on the chosen research strategy, being an abductive approach. As previously mentioned, the approach suggests to primarily establish a theoretical structure (Jacobsen, 2002), which in this study consisted of the Influencer identification model. To create this proposed framework, a broad and thorough literature review was made of secondary data within the subject of influencer marketing. Books and scientific
articles have been used, which were found in databases such as ScienceDirect, Sage, Emerald Insights and Scopus. The literature review contributed with knowledge regarding what researchers previously have focused on when studying a subject as well as which theories and methods that have been used and what the findings were. The review gave an opportunity to find which areas that are unexplored and could be studied further (Bryman & Bell, 2013), thus leading to a knowledge gap. The literature review revealed that several different theories have been studied regarding identifying an influencer, however, there is a need of combined frameworks that could be provided as an alternative for companies using influencer marketing.

By conducting an extensive literature review, the researcher is confirming his or her knowledge in the field of research, bringing trustworthiness to the study (Bryman, 2011). In this thesis, the literature review led to dividing the theoretical chapter into three parts. First, information regarding the background theories and concepts within the subject was found. The initial phase of the literature review revealed three major research areas within influencer marketing; quantification, identification and maximization of influencers and the area of identifying influencers was chosen. Based on this, additional research was collected with new relevant articles to receive a deeper knowledge in the chosen area. Already existing models regarding identification of influencers were found and presented. From the background theories and the existing models, important factors were collected and divided into six categories within the Influencer identification model. These six factors acted as the basis for the empirical research, with a matrix for the documentary analysis and categories within the questionnaire, see appendix 8. The final part of the theoretical chapter presents these six categories and provides an in-depth information of each factor.

A critical part within the literature review is the use of secondary sources. It is important to keep in mind and be cautious about the fact that the source originally is presented and used for a different purpose and to answer a different research question (Trueman, 2015). There is a risk that the information could have been interpreted in a certain way, which makes it directed towards the specific subject of that research, and therefore may not be applicable for this study. Since influencer marketing is an “in-time” topic, which constantly is changing and developing, another bias for this thesis is the age of the sources. Even though the existing literature is offering a great amount of research conducted only a few years ago, the information could be inaccurate to the present reality.

3.3 Documentary analysis

A documentary analysis, according to Bowen (2009, p. 27), “is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating document - both printed and electronic material”. The method is a sort of qualitative research with the aim to observe and pay attention to a chosen subject or topic. This is accomplished when a researcher interprets and analyze firsthand or secondhand documents and thereafter categorizing the content in order to gain a deeper understanding (Bowen, 2009). This documentary analysis was conducted by studying posts on Instagram both visually and by looking at the content as well as for example the mean value of comments and likes. To conduct a documentary analysis on Instagram differs from conducting a traditional documentary analysis due to the content. Traditionally the data is collected through
bookkeeping, annual reports, newspaper or a conversation between persons in writing (Jacobsen, 2002). Before conducting a documentary analysis, there are four steps that have to be taken into account. The first step is to determine if the documentation has been produced from a firsthand source or a secondhand source. The second step is to evaluate the sources’ reliability and trustworthiness by analyzing who the receiver of the message is. The third step is to analyze who the sender is and the fourth, and final step, is to determine the quality of the sources used for documentation (ibid.).

The difference between a firsthand source or a secondhand source is that a firsthand source participated at the time the documentation happened or was produced, whereas a secondhand source is information from a person who was not an attendant (Jacobsen, 2002). In accordance to the purpose of the study and the Influencer identification model, the documentary analysis was focused on firsthand sources, thus the influencers are posting firsthand information on their Instagram. Still, it is important to note that the information produced from the influencer also can be seen as a secondhand source if they are posting information directly from a company.

The second step in the documentary analysis process is to evaluate the reliability and trustworthiness of the source used, which is done through investigating who the receiver of the message is, which in this case was the followers of the influencers. When conducting this step in the process, it is important to separate between public sources or private sources. A public source is information which is intended to reach a large audience and are intended to make a special impression by a certain situation. A private source, on the other hand, is information with the intention of not being published at all (Jacobsen, 2002). Since the use of an influencer, as a marketing tool, is with the intention of reaching a large audience, the documentation analyzed in this thesis was viewed as a public source.

The third step is to analyze who the sender of the message is, which is done through separating a personal source from an institutional source. A personal source is when the information is retrieved from a sole individual as the only source and an institutional source is when the information is published from a collective, e.g. a company (Jacobsen, 2002). When using influencers on Instagram as a documentation, the information is published from a single individual thus making it a personal source, but as mentioned before the information in sponsored posts comes from a company, which is an institutional source.

The last step, determining the quality of the source used, is done through evaluating what knowledge and competence the author of the information may have. In regards of personal sources, which was an influencer in our case, it needs to be evaluated whether the information written is done by an individual who possesses good knowledge of the subject or not (Jacobsen, 2002). Since the delimitation in this thesis was to use sponsored influencers, there is a risk that the influencers possess limited information about the product they advertise since the main objective could be the earnings and not the actual product. But, in regards of institutional sources, the assessment over quality is done through analyzing to which level the institution might have a self-interest and credibility (ibid.). Since the influencers used are sponsored by
the companies, there is likely to exist a self-interest within the company since influencer marketing is a part of their marketing strategy with the goal being to make a profit.

3.3.1 Sampling
As mentioned previously, the first step is to decide if the sources used comes from a firsthand source or a secondhand source (Jacobsen, 2002). In this study, the sources used were produced from a firsthand source, since most of the data consists of information that the influencers have shared themselves, about themselves. This means that the data collected for the documentary analysis was of quality and considered to be trustworthy. The sampling for the documentary analysis was accomplished in a two-step process. The first step was to select a number of companies and the second step was to select influencers used by these companies. In this study, 15 companies were selected. The selection was based on a purposive sampling, where the researcher identifies research units that pursuit characteristics that are relevant for the study (Bryman, 2011). The companies were selected based on three criteria:

- Companies established or located in Sweden.
- Companies using influencers for marketing on the social platform Instagram.
- Companies operating in the retail sector, i.e. selling products such as fashion and makeup. More specifically, companies that sell products that in some way can contribute to a desired ideal that the influencer promotes and that their followers strive to achieve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company number</th>
<th>Product offer</th>
<th>Influencer number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company 1</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>Influencer 1A-1E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company 2</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>Influencer 2A-2E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company 3</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>Influencer 3A-3E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company 4</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>Influencer 4A-4E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company 5</td>
<td>Shoes</td>
<td>Influencer 5A-5E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company 6</td>
<td>Accessories</td>
<td>Influencer 6A-6E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company 7</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>Influencer 7A-7E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company 8</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>Influencer 8A-8E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company 9</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>Influencer 9A-9E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company 10</td>
<td>Accessories</td>
<td>Influencer 10A-10E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company 11</td>
<td>Beauty</td>
<td>Influencer 11A-11E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company 12</td>
<td>Watches</td>
<td>Influencer 12A-12E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within each company, five influencers were chosen, which acted as the base from where the information was collected from. This concluded in a total number of 75 influencers from 15 different companies. The empirical data was collected from the social media platform Instagram, which also was based on a purposive sampling. In order to identify influencers that were relevant to this study, some criterias were established. The influencers were selected based on these criterias:

- The influencer has collaborated with or been sponsored by the company on Instagram.
- The collaboration was posted within the time period 1\textsuperscript{st} of February 2018 - 1\textsuperscript{st} of April 2018.

### 3.3.2 Data collection

The data was collected through Instagram where each influencer’s profile was analyzed. The collection was based on the six factors from the \textit{Influencer Identification model}; trust, ideal, centrality, popularity, productivity and information content. Within these factors, two to three variables connected to the factor were chosen to focus on while collecting the data. The variables were based on the previous literature in the theory section of each factor. Below is a figure presenting the six factors and the variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust/Ideal</th>
<th>Interplay with their followers</th>
<th>Suitability to the company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>\textbf{Centrality}</td>
<td>Events/Networking/ It-spots</td>
<td>Presence of other influencers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textbf{Popularity}</td>
<td>Number of comments</td>
<td>Number of followers/followees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textbf{Productivity}</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Number of sponsored posts (overall/for the company)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textbf{Information content}</td>
<td>Information regarding sponsorship</td>
<td>Presentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The factors \textit{ideal} and \textit{trust} were examined by looking at the interaction between the influencer and its followers in order to see if the followers comment on the influencer’s posts in ways that
shows that the influencer is seen as a role model or ideal to the follower. Also, it was studied if the followers are asking questions or share a lot of information in the comments, which can be a sign that they feel that the influencer is trustworthy and reliable. To which extent the influencer is answering to questions and comments can also be a sign of its reliability. The opposite was also studied, such as if the influencer got negative comments or did not answer back to questions, which can be a sign that the followers do not see the influencer as an ideal or as trustworthy. The other variable studied within this factor is how suitable the influencer is to the sponsorship. This is relevant because in order for the influencer to represent the values of the company, the person needs to have an ideal that matches with the company and thereby creating trust. The factors trust and ideal were combined because these are factors that analyze the influencer as an individual, and not only the sponsored posts. Also, from a company perspective, these factors were difficult to get a perception of because their importance is determined by the consumers.

To examine the centrality of the influencer, the number of events or “it-spots” that the influencer participated in were studied together with the number of other influencers that could be seen in the posts published on the influencer’s personal Instagram-page during the studied time period. Also, the overall position and status the influencer had in their network were valued. Popularity was examined based on the number of followers/followees and the number of likes and comments that the influencer received. In order to study the number of comments and likes, the mean value of the number of likes and comments within these two months were calculated based on the total number of likes or comments divided with the number of posts during the time period.

Productivity was referred to how active the influencer is regarding how many posts the influencers make, how many sponsorships the influencers have in total and how consistently the influencers publish posts on their Instagram-page. Information content was measured in how much information the influencer shares in their posts and how personal that information was. The variables used to examine this factor were how much information the influencer shares about the sponsorship and how the influencer writes the captions regarding how long and personal the influencer is within the post. The data for each company was collected in tables, which can be found in appendix 8.

3.3.3 Data analysis
In the documentary analysis the data gathered from each company was analyzed based on the six factors presented in the Influencer identification model. The data collected from the different influencers on Instagram used by each company were categorized into variables within each factor, which then were interpreted based on the numbers or content in each variable, presented below in table 3.3. The analysis of the data collected have been conducted through a two-step process. In the first step, the data was analyzed to examine if the variable was high, medium or low in comparison to the results from the other influencers and companies. For example, if the influencer has a high number of followers, comments and likes, the variables within the factor popularity were then considered to be high. The second step was to examine if the factors were considered to be primary or secondary. For example, if the factor popularity has shown to be
high among the majority of influencers used by a company, the factor was categorized as a primary factor for that company.

In the first step the variables for each influencer were divided into scores that are either high, medium or low based on an interpretation of the content and numbers collected from the documentary analysis on Instagram. When there were two variables within a factor and both variables scored the same result, then that was the final score of the variable. However, if one of the variables were low and one high, this resulted in a total score that was medium. But, if one of the variables was high or low and the other medium, medium was seen as neutral and the score was determined by the dominant score. When there were three variables within one factor the score was determined by the predominance of one factor. If an influencer had one score of each within a factor, it resulted in a medium score.

When examining the variables that were based on content and interpretation of the information collected, it was determined by a comparison of the data collected from the different influencers and thereby the score was decided. The variables that were based on numbers were also determined based on interpretation of the comparison between the different influencers. The limits for each variable is shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centrality</th>
<th>Low: $X \leq 0$</th>
<th>Medium: $1 \leq X \leq 2$</th>
<th>High: $X \geq 3$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Events/Networking/It-spots</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of other influencers</td>
<td>Low: $X \leq 0$</td>
<td>Medium: $1 \leq X \leq 2$</td>
<td>High: $X \geq 3$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popularity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of comments</td>
<td>Low: $X &lt; 30$</td>
<td>Medium: $30 \leq X &lt; 100$</td>
<td>High: $X \geq 100$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of followers</td>
<td>Low: $X &lt; 10 000$</td>
<td>Medium: $10 000 \leq X &lt; 100 000$</td>
<td>High: $X \geq 100 000$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of likes</td>
<td>Low: $X &lt; 1000$</td>
<td>Medium: $1000 \leq X &lt; 10 000$</td>
<td>High: $X \geq 10 000$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Low: $X &lt; 30$</td>
<td>Medium: $30 \leq X &lt; 60$</td>
<td>High: $X \geq 60$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of sponsored posts</td>
<td>Low: $X &lt; 5$</td>
<td>Medium: $5 \leq X &lt; 10$</td>
<td>High: $X \geq 10$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Low: Less than every other day</td>
<td>Medium: Every other day</td>
<td>High: More than every other day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3 – Own-constructed table of guidelines to analyze variables*

In the second step of the documentary analysis the different factors were determined to be primary or secondary for each company based on the scores for each influencer within each factor. The predominant score among the five influencers studied for each company determined if the factor was primary or secondary. In order to be a primary factor, the high score had to be predominant. If the score high was even with the other scores, it became a secondary factor. A spread in the total score between high, medium and low implicates that it is probably not of great importance for the company and thereby it was considered to be a secondary factor.

### 3.4 Survey

In this thesis, the use of a quantitative method was in the form of a questionnaire. A questionnaire is an opportunity for the researcher to ask the respondents specific questions with predetermined answers collecting primary data to use in the development of a framework, in line with the proposed purpose of the thesis (Jacobsen, 2002). The method was chosen to be able to reach the public opinion regarding which important factors a sponsored influencer should possess.

When including predetermined answers in a questionnaire, it forces the research unit to answer within the questionnaires’ defined frames. By conducting a survey, primary data is collected. In contrast to qualitative research, a quantitative questionnaire requires a lot of preparatory work, but instead the analysis is less time consuming (Jacobsen, 2002). In the preparatory work it is important to concretize the definitions that the survey aims to measure. The questions have to be designed in order to avoid unwanted results. Lastly it has to be decided in which context the survey is conducted in (ibid.).

The first step is to concretize the concepts that is used in the survey in a process called operationalization and thereby make it measurable. It is important to pinpoint the definition of the concepts used in order to get comparable answers, otherwise the research units can interpret the concepts very differently. The operationalization is a process that requires both a lot of knowledge as well as own imagination (Jacobsen, 2002). In this study, the survey aimed to measure factors that are abstract such as trust and ideal. In order to get comparable answers from the respondents and thereby be able to measure the abstract concepts, one way is to use multiple questions. In this questionnaire, four questions were used for each factor to make the definition of the concept as clear as possible. Before introducing each factor and the questions that follows, a definition of the factor was presented to the respondents in order to clarify how that specific factor was used in this study, which results in comparable answers.

The second step is to design the questions and the answers. When designing questions, it is important to decide whether to use a question formulation or a statement (Jacobsen, 2002). In this research the questions were formulated as statements, which is a way to make the
respondents take a stand. Regarding the answers, the measurement scale should be clearly defined. There are three forms of measurement scales, which are nominal, ordinal and interval. A nominal scale can be used to categorize answers in different groups. In an ordinal scale the answers can also be ranked. Lastly, in the interval scale there are equal intervals between the different alternatives (ibid.).

In this research, a Likert-scale was used, which is a scale that measures a series of attitude-related propositions (Chyung, Roberts, Swanson & Hankinson, 2011). It is debated which measurement scale the Likert-scale belongs to. Some researchers mean that it is an ordinal scale, which implies that it is possible to both classify and rank the answers. Others mean that it is an interval scale and in order for this to be applied there have to be levels with equal intervals (Chyung et al., 2011). In this study it was necessary to classify and rank the answers to find out to which extent the different factors for identifying influencers are important. A Likert-scale was used in order to get reactions from respondents on a statement and was used to measure attitude-related propositions with the answers ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with a midpoint (Chyung et al., 2011). An attitude is “a lasting, general evaluation of people (including oneself), objects, advertisements or issues” (Solomon et al., 2013, p. 292). The purpose of this survey was therefore to evaluate what consumers value as important regarding sponsored influencers on Instagram.

When using an uneven point Likert-scale, the middle point represents a neutral opinion between disagreement and agreement, offering the respondents a choice to not take a stand. However, previous research has discussed if the midpoint really is used in the way it is intended. Sometimes a respondent can choose the midpoint even though their true opinion is not neutral. Another problem is that respondents can use the midpoint as a “dumping ground” when they find the items unfamiliar or ambiguous. Also, respondents sometimes choose an answer that is seen as more socially accepted, which can create biases in the results (Chyung et al., 2011). It is argued that it, despite the criticism, is important to include a midpoint. One solution discussed is to increase the number of steps when using a midpoint, and several researches have seen an increasement of respondents answering more accurately due to this (ibid.). Therefore, the answers in this questionnaire consisted of a seven-point Likert-scale, instead of a five-point Likert-scale, which ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree, making the midpoint four, equal a neutral opinion.

Lastly it is possible to include questions with open answers. By doing this, qualitative data which can be very detailed is collected. One way to do this is when an overview of all possible answers does not exist (Jacobsen, 2002). Open answers were in this research used to find new important factors when identifying influencers, which might not have been discovered in previous literature or previously studied from a consumer perspective.

3.4.1 Sampling
The last step when conducting a survey is to decide in which context the data will be collected and who the respondents will be (Jacobsen, 2002). This study took place in an online setting and the survey was posted on Facebook. The choice to use questionnaire as a quantitative
research method, results in a direct reflection of the actual population’s opinion. The respondents are a sample from the population which have been randomly selected (ibid.). The criterias to be a part of the population and thereby a part of the survey were:

- The individual is using Instagram.
- The individual is following influencers who are publishing sponsored posts.

Three questions were used to exclude those who did not belong to the population nor matched the criterias presented above. If a respondent answered “no” to the control question that was if they have an Instagram account, he or she was directly sent to the end of the questionnaire and was therefore not presented with the following questions or had the opportunity to answer any of them. This resulted in a total of 75 respondents that participated in the survey, however a number of 67 respondents fulfilled the criterias to be in the population. Thereby, the answers from those 67 respondents were used when further analyzing the data.

### 3.4.2 Data collection

The data from the respondents was collected through posting the questionnaire on Facebook, both in Facebook groups with members reflecting the typical population as well as on the authors private Facebook profiles. This was done with the aim to take advantage of existing opportunities. The questionnaire consisted of seven sections based on the six important factors. The first section contained general questions such as age and gender, as well as the control questions in accordance to the above-presented criterias that determined if the respondent was a part of the target population. The control questions defined if the respondent was using Instagram, how often they used it as well as if the person was following influencers on Instagram. Also included in the first section were two questions with open answers that were asked in order to reach the public’s opinions regarding the importance of the six factors presented in the *Influencers identification model*. It also offered the opportunity to notice underlying factors that had not been apparent while studying each of the six factors previously in the literature review. These questions therefore provided answers with opinions regarding why the respondents chose to follow specific influencers as well as which attributes they found most important with those influencers. In the following six sections of the questionnaire, each of the factors were examined through four questions posted as statements. The answers were designed according to a seven-point Likert-scale. The questions within each of the factors were based on previous literature presented in the literature review and specifically the factors in the *Influencer identification model*. In order to confirm that the questions posted in the questionnaire were relevant, the questionnaire was submitted to a test group consisting of four individuals before it was posted online. The result from the test group contributed with comments and feedback leading to adjustments in some of the statements.

### 3.4.3 Data analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire can be classified and ranked because of the use of a Likert-scale. The analysis was conducted by looking at frequencies and then presented in diagrams. The use of the software SPSS, a statistical package for the social sciences, was used to look at descriptive statistics and thereby analyze the mean values as well as the standard
errors from the data collected in the questionnaire. The standard error is measuring the standard deviation of the distribution of a sample relative to the actual mean of a population. It is thereby measuring how accurate a sample reflects the population (Investopedia, 2018). This acted as a basis of the consumer perspective on how customers are influenced on Instagram, thus provided indications of the importance of the six factors used in the Influencer identification model. Also, the questions with open answers, which offered a possibility for the customers to write in their own words what draws them to a specific influencer, were analyzed in order to find other factors that may be of importance when identifying which influencer a company should sponsor on Instagram. In order to interpret the answers from the open questions they were categorized and divided into different themes. The answers are used to strengthen and update the important factor within the Influencer identification model.

3.5 Validity and reliability
When conducting a research, it is important to always aim to minimize issues about validity and reliability. This is important to be able to consider the findings and conclusions as trustworthy. Validity represents if the research measures what it is supposed to measure. Reliability refers to examine if the results of the measurement can be considered to be accurate (Jacobsen, 2002). More in-depth information regarding the two concepts are presented below.

3.5.1 Internal validity
Internal validity is about the validity of the research result. There are two ways to test the results’ validity, either through verifying the research and the produced conclusions against other individuals (e.g. face validity or method triangulation) or to critically examine the actual results (e.g. to control if the sources used are appropriate and if they contain reliable information). The first approach, to test the validity of the research result by verifying the research and the produced conclusions against other individuals, can be done through either face validity or method triangulation. Face validity is when respondents used in the research are confronted in order to validate the results found. There is also the possibility to conduct meetings where the used respondents have an opportunity to discuss the conclusions. Also, it is possible to send out a preliminary report to some of the respondents and ask for their commentaries on it (Jacobsen, 2002). Method triangulation is when the same research questions is used in two independent method approaches in order to test the results against each other. This method was used to test the internal validity in this thesis through the use of both a qualitative documentary analysis as well as a quantitative questionnaire. The use of two method approaches strengthens the validity of the results if the two approaches reaches the same conclusion. The second approach, to critically examine the actual results, was also used to test the internal validity in this thesis. It was done through critically examine if the right respondents have been used along with examining if the respondents have provided information that was useful for this research. When examining the information provided from the respondents, it was important to consider what knowledge the respondents may have about the subject researched, and the respondents’ willingness to provide accurate information (ibid.).
3.5.2 External validity

External validity relates to what degree the results from the research can be generalized and can be tested through two forms of methods. The first method is to generalize the data from a small selection of research units into theory. The second method is to generalize a phenomenon’s frequency. Therefore, a small selection of research units may, to a certain degree, also be transferable and therefore generalize to a larger selection of units (Jacobsen, 2002). Since the research in this thesis was fairly limited, both regarding the subject of influencer marketing and the empirical data only being based on one social network platform, Instagram, a generalization was difficult. However, conducting a survey with a larger selection of research units gives the opportunity to generalize to some degree. Since the purpose of the study was both to contribute to the field of research regarding influencer marketing as well as producing a framework to use when identifying which influencer to use, some generalization has been done by creating a framework companies can make use of when identifying influencers on Instagram to use for sponsorships and collaborations. However, it is important to take into account that the study cannot be generalized to full extent when used by companies or in future research based on the framework presented in this thesis. This is explained by the limited amount of research units, the use of only one platform and only researching a short time period in the empirical research. This may result in different outcome depending on how the user interpret the framework.

3.5.3 Reliability

Reliability relates to critically examine if the conducted empirical research might be the cause to the results found. The aim is to avoid that the research results are somewhat dependent on the researchers, so the research can be replicable. For a research to be replicable, it means that it can be conducted at another time by another researcher and the results will be the same as the original results using exactly the same methodology (Jacobsen, 2002). When using questionnaire as a method approach, there are several aspects to consider that might influence the results if not conducted accurate. In designing the questions to include in the questionnaire, it is important to not have questions that might be leading, ambiguous or having multiple questions that are asking for the same answer (ibid.). In this thesis, the questions were designed as statements, and the aim was to eliminate the possibilities of having leading, ambiguous or similar questions. There was also a risk that the respondents lack knowledge about the researched subject, but due to the use of a Likert-scale in this questionnaire, it offered the respondents a possibility to choose the middle alternative, if unsure what to answer. Regarding the documentary analysis conducted in this thesis, the authors have maintained objective and critical throughout the process of collecting the data used and therefore avoided biases to affect the result.

3.6 Ethical considerations

According to Jacobsen (2002), an important aspect when conducting a study is for the researchers to be open-minded and remain objective in their thoughts and feelings regarding the subject. The researchers should be value-free and not attempting to produce a predetermined result for the study. The findings should be addressed as truthfully and correctly as possible, and not be influenced by nothing other than the truth.
When conducting a research that involves data collected from the public, there are other aspects to also keep in mind. The ethical considerations are often divided into three categories; informed consent, privacy requirements and requirements to be correctly reproduced. Since this thesis was collecting data through a survey and a documentary analysis, it is of importance to protect the respondents’ interests (Jacobsen, 2002). Concerning the document analysis, all companies were anonymous, and the data was handled with confidentiality. In the survey, the respondent voluntarily decided whether to participate or not. The respondents should also have information regarding the purpose of the survey and how the data is used (ibid.). This information was provided in the beginning within the questionnaire. To ensure that the respondent do not adjust their answers to the purpose, sufficient information was given. However, it is still important and crucial that the purpose was understandable and reached the respondents.
4. EMPIRICAL DATA

The empirical data chapter consists of the empirical data collected from the two method approaches; a documentary analysis conducted from a company perspective and a survey conducted from a consumer perspective. The six factors within the Influencer identification model has acted as the basis for collecting the data.

4.1 Findings from documentary analysis

In this section the chosen companies are presented, and the important factors are studied by looking at different influencers in order to get a perception of the reasons for the companies to choose these specific influencers to sponsor. To get an overview of the empirical data, each section begins with a short company description and describes the main value of the company. This is relevant in order to see if the chosen influencers match the values of the company. Furthermore, the six factors within the Influencer identification model have been studied in depth through different variables within each factor. The company description is followed by presenting the empirical data collected from each company divided into the different factors. To conclude the results collected, according to the table 3.3, each section ends with determining whether the factor is considered a primary or a secondary factor. This creates an overview of the influencer identification of each company. All empirical information collected from each company is provided in appendix. After presenting all 15 companies, the empirical data section is concluded in table 4.1, summarizing the importance of each factor, primary or secondary, from a company’s’ point of view. Also, additional findings from the documentary analysis are presented in the final section.

4.1.1 Company 1

Company 1 was established in Sweden in 1997 and is active within the fashion sector internationally in 30 countries. The company provides trendy clothes and accessories for style conscious women. The company’s values are positivity, willingness and drive. The company also have a passion for fashion in order to commercialize trends, which makes it possible to provide customers an opportunity to stay up to date with the latest fashion. The company brings up the importance to always look forward and make use of simplicity both in design and in the everyday life. The complete data collected from the five influencers used by Company 1 is found in appendix 8.1.

Ideal/Trust

The influencers used by Company 1 almost only get positive comments. There are some negative among those with a high number of followers, but this is hard to avoid. There are few questions among the comments, mostly regarding where different clothing is from. There are no personal questions or comments left by the followers. The influencers with a lot of followers and comments almost never answer the comments or questions and thereby they score medium on this factor. Those influencers with fewer comments do answer back and especially to the questions, therefore they score high. Looking at the match between the influencers and the company, all the influencers mainly focus on posting content about fashion and is also by many seen as ideals and a big inspiration when it comes to fashion. The influencers are also posting
about their lifestyle and travelling, but the clothes they are wearing are always most important. This is perfectly in line with the values of Company 1 that aims to provide the latest fashion and trends to the customers and thereby, looking at the factors trust and ideal, Company 1 is using influencers that can be seen as ideal as well as trustworthy, which indicates that this is a primary factor.

**Centrality**
Influencer 1A and 1E have a high respectively a medium score of centrality because they are spending time with other influencers who are present on their social platform as well as participating in events such as photoshoots, sponsored travels and own collections. These influencers have a high position and status in the influencer network. Influencer 1B has a high position as well. The remaining influencers have a low score of centrality. Centrality is thereby considered as a secondary factor for Company 1.

**Popularity**
Influencer 1A has over 1 million followers as well as a great amount of likes and can therefore be seen as having a high level of popularity, still Influencer 1A only has 200 followees itself. Also, Influencer 1B and 1E have over 100 000 followers and around 10 000 likes and can therefore also be seen as having a high level of popularity. The other two influencers, Influencer 1C and Influencer 1D, have over 10 000 followers and around 500 likes, which corresponds to a medium respectively low level of popularity. Looking at the comments there is not that much difference between Influencer 1A, 1B and 1E who have around 100 comments. However, Influencer 1C and 1D only have around 10 comments on each post, which together with the low level of likes makes these influencers low in popularity. It is apparent that Company 1 is using influencers that predominantly have a high level of popularity among followers, which indicates that popularity is considered to be a primary factor.

**Productivity**
The influencers used by Company 1 have during the two months posted between 41-108 posts, which ranges from medium to high in regards of activity. Also, the consistency of the posting among the influencers are high among all of them except influencer 1B. Regarding the number of sponsored posts, the majority of the influencers have around 20 sponsored posts during the two months which is high in this variable, except from Influencer 1B who has a low score. Overall, the majority of the five influencers used by Company 1 have a high level in the factor productivity which indicates that this is a primary factor when Company 1 identifies influencers.

**Information content**
Regarding the presentation, all of the influencers have short captions and do not share a lot information about their personal life. This variable therefore has a low level among the influencers. Looking at the sponsored posts, all of the influencers are presenting the collaboration and the company, as well as hashtag and presenting outlinks. All of them also explains what they think about the products and how they are using it, therefore this is seen to be at a high level. Together, these variables give all of the influencers a medium level of the
factor information content and thereby this factor is considered to be secondary for Company 1.

4.1.2 Company 2
Company 2 runs one of Scandinavia’s biggest online shops within the fashion sector. It was established in 2005 and was then one of Sweden’s first fashion stores online. In the start it offered a small supply of exclusive and expensive clothes. Today, Company 2 has grown much broader and offers a wide range of party outfits, high heels and accessories to create a personal and luxury style. The complete data collected from the five influencers used by Company 2 is found in appendix 8.2.

Ideal/Trust
The influencers used by Company 2 only get positive comments. There are few questions, mostly regarding where different clothing is from. There are no personal questions or comments left by their followers. The influencers with a lot of followers and comments almost never answer back to the comments or questions, but some of the influencers that have fewer comments answers back. Looking at the match between the influencers and the company, all the influencers mainly focus on posting content about fashion and are also by many seen as ideals when it comes to fashion. Influencer 2D does not post a lot about fashion, thereby the match between this influencer and the company could have been better. Regarding the factors trust and ideal, Company 2 is using influencers that can be seen as ideal as well as trustworthy, which indicates that this is a primary factor.

Centrality
Influencer 2A has a high level of centrality because 2A is spending time with other influencers who are present on the social platform as well as participating in events. Also, 2A has an own collection together with Company 2. The other influencers are having either a low or medium level of centrality. Influencer 2C has a high position in the network, still 2C has a total level that is medium because there has been no participation in events or time spent with other influencers during the two months. Centrality is thereby considered as a secondary factor for Company 2.

Popularity
Only Influencer 2C has a high level of followers, still the overall level of popularity is medium based on the amount of likes and comments. Even though Influencer 2C has the highest number of followers, Influencer 2C also has the lowest number of followees. Also, influencer 2A has a medium level of popularity because 2C has a high score of comments as well as medium score of likes and followers. The other influencers have a low score of popularity based on the small amount of likes and comments. Overall, Company 2 has chosen to use some influencers that are popular in terms of having many followers, but still some of the influencers have fewer followers which indicates that the factor popularity may not be of great importance. Therefore, popularity indicates to be a secondary factor for Company 2.
**Productivity**
The majority of influencers used by Company 2 have during the two-month period studied posted around 60 posts. Influencer 2C has posted 118 posts, while Influencer 2D only has posted 18 and thereby has a low score. Also, the consistency of the posting among the influencers are high, except from Influencer 2D. Regarding the number of sponsored posts, the majority of the influencers have around seven sponsored posts during the two months studied. Influencer 2B has a high score and Influencer 2C has a low score regarding the amount of sponsored posts. Overall, the majority of the five influencers used by Company 2 have a high score in the factor productivity which indicates that this is a primary factor when Company 1 identifies influencers.

**Information content**
Regarding the presentation, all of the influencers use short captions and do not share a lot information about their personal life. Looking at the sponsored posts, all of the influencers presents the collaboration and the company as well as hashtags and presenting outlinks. They also explain what they think about the products and how they are using it. In conclusion, all of the influencers have a medium score on this factor due to the short presentations and thereby it is considered to be a secondary factor for Company 2.

**4.1.3 Company 3**
Company 3’s business idea is to get inspired by their passion for trends and it love for fashion. The company was established in 2011 and has grown a lot since the start. The complete data collected from the five influencers used by Company 3 is found in appendix 8.3.

**Ideal/Trust**
Regarding ideal and trust, Company 3 is using some influencers that is not directly in line with their business idea and thereby they may not be seen as ideal and trustworthy. The influencers used by Company 3 only get positive comments, but they are not personal and most of the influencers only answers few of the comments left by their followers. Looking at the match between the influencers and the company, only Influencer 3B is posting mainly about fashion. The other influencers studied are posting more about lifestyle and sometimes the content is very mixed. Therefore, these influencers are not a good match for the company to collaborate with. Despite this, Influencer 3C has written “Influencer of Company 3” in the biography on 3C’s Instagram. Ideal and trust, as a factor, is therefore considered to be a secondary factor.

**Centrality**
Almost none of the influencers used by Company 3 are posting about participation in events, spending time with other influencers or having a high position in their network. Only Influencer 3B is participating in two events and therefore has a medium position in 3B’s network. Centrality is thereby considered to be a secondary factor for Company 3.

**Popularity**
Influencer 3B has a high number of followers, still the overall level of popularity is medium based on the amount of likes and comments. Influencer 3A and 3C have a medium mean score.
on the amount of comments. All of the influencers have a relatively high number of followees considering their number of followers. Overall, Company 3 has not chosen to use influencers that are popular in terms of having many followers, comments and likes. Popularity is therefore considered to be a secondary factor for Company 3.

**Productivity**
The influencers used by Company 3 are not very active in terms of posting and neither consistent in their posting. Influencer 3A has only posted four times during the two months whereby one of these was a sponsored post from the company. Influencer 3E has posted nine posts and five of these were sponsored posts. Regarding the amount of sponsored posts Influencer 3B and 3C are scoring high. Overall, the majority of the five influencers used by Company 3 have a low level in the factor productivity which indicates that this is a secondary factor when Company 3 identifies influencers.

**Information content**
All of the influencers have very short captions and are not personal in their posts. Looking at the sponsored posts, all of the influencers are presenting the collaboration and the company with outlinks. Only Influencer 3B explains details about the products, the other influencers only write a short sentence or do not present at all. In conclusion, the influencers have a low or medium level of this factor and thereby it is considered to be a secondary for Company 3.

4.1.4 Company 4
Company 4 opened as a small skate shop in a small city in Sweden in 2002. Since then it has grown and is today Scandinavia's biggest and best web shop selling urban fashion. It is focusing on selling clothes that are fashionable, sporty and has a street vibe. The complete data collected from the five influencers used by Company 4 is found in appendix 8.4.

**Ideal/Trust**
Regarding the factors trust and ideal, Company 4 is using influencers that can be seen as ideal as well as trustworthy. The influencers used by Company 4 only get positive comments. Influencer 4B and 4E answer some of the comments, while Influencer 4C answer most of the comments. The other influencers do not answer comments at all. Looking at the match between the influencers and the company, only Influencer 4B does not match with the company because the style is not that sporty and street as the ideal of the company. Overall the influencers scores high on this factor, which indicates that this is a primary factor.

**Centrality**
None of the five influencers are showing other influencers on their Instagram and only one of the influencers have participated in some kind of event. Influencer 4A and 4E have a medium position in the network based on their number of followers and likes. Still, all of the influencers are having a low level of centrality in total. Centrality is therefore considered to be a secondary factor for Company 4.
Popularity
Influencer 4A and 4E have a medium number of followers, which corresponds to a much higher number than the other influencers used by the company. All of the influencers except Influencer 4A have relatively high numbers of followees. The number of likes is low for all the influencers and only Influencer 4D has a high level of comments. Therefore, popularity, based on the number of followers, likes and comments, is considered to be a secondary factor.

Productivity
Influencer 4C is very active in posting and is also posting consistently, often more than once a day. Influencer 4A is relatively active and is posting almost every day. The remaining influencers are low in activity and are posting only a few times per week. Regarding the amount of sponsored posts, Influencer 4C scored high by having 40 sponsored posts, including 15 sponsored posts by Company 4. The other influencers have either a medium or low score. Overall, the majority of the five influencers used by Company 4 have a low or medium score in total which indicates that the factor is secondary.

Information content
All the influencers have a very short caption and are not personal in their posts, except from Influencer 4E who sometimes has longer and more personal captions. Looking at the sponsored posts, all of the influencers are presenting the collaboration with the company as well as providing outlinks to Company 4’s Instagram-page. Influencer 4A also include details about the products, while the others only write a short sentence or only provided outlinks to the company. Thus, the influencers have a low or medium score on this factor and thereby it is considered to be a secondary factor for Company 4.

4.1.5 Company 5
Company 5 was established in Sweden in the 1950’s and provides the best within shoe fashion. It has collected the best from Sweden’s leading shoe retailers in one shop and provides both trendy, comfortable and functional shoes. Company 5 tries to target all price ranges and all ages, styles and needs. The complete data collected from the five influencers used by Company 5 is found in appendix 8.5.

Ideal and Trust
Company 5 is using influencers that can be seen as both ideal as well as trustworthy. The influencers used by Company 5 only get positive comments and the majority of the influencers are also frequently answering back to them. Regarding Influencer 5A, the followers are asking lot of question and are also sharing personal information about themselves and their life. All of the influencers are suitable for the company. Influencer 5A, 5B, 5D and 5E are posting about lifestyle and family life in particular. This is suitable due to Company 5 targeting people in all segments. Influencer 5C differs a bit from the others by being focused on fashion. In conclusion all of the influencers score high on the factors, which indicates that ideal and trust are considered a primary factor for Company 5.
Centrality
None of the influencers studied are participating in any events or networking and only Influencer 5C are showing other influencers on 5C’s Instagram. Influencer 5C is also the only influencer who has a high position in the overall network and influencer 5E has a medium position in the network. Still, all of the influencers are having either a low or medium level of centrality in total and thereby the factor is considered to be secondary.

Popularity
Influencer 5A, 5C and 5E have a medium number of followers and the remaining two influencers have a low score. The three influencers also have the highest number of followees compared to the other two influencers. The number of likes is low for all the influencers except Influencer 5E who has a medium score. Regarding the number of comments, Influencer 5D and 5E, are the only influencers that does not have a low score. This indicates that the factor is considered to be secondary for Company 5.

Productivity
The Influencers used by the company are active in publishing posts and Influencer 5B, 5C and 5E have a high activity level. Only Influencer 5D has a low level by only posting 24 times during the two months period. Also, all of the influencers except Influencer 5D is very consistent in their posting and are often posting more than once a day. Regarding the amount of sponsored posts, the influencers have a high score except Influencer 5A and 5B who have posted two respectively four sponsored post in total during the two months studied. All of the others have posted over ten sponsored posts. Overall, the majority of the five influencers used by Company 5 have a high score in total, which indicates that the factor is primary.

Information Content
All of the influencers have personal captions except from Influencer 5C, but the captions are varying in length. Looking at the sponsored posts, all of the influencers are presenting the collaboration and the company with outlinks as well as presenting the product along with their personal opinions. Due to the personal captions and the details about the sponsorships, the majority of the influencers receives a high score and thereby this factor, information content, is considered to be primary for Company 5.

4.1.6 Company 6
Company 6 is selling mobile phone cases, mobile wallets, mobile phones, power banks and charging cables, which in this study have been categorized as accessories since many of the influencers that are using the products choose products adjusted to their style and clothing. The company was established in 2013 and their idea is that the products should not only have a functioning purpose by protecting the phone, it is likewise as important how the product is designed. The company values the fashion industry highly and is striving to bring current trends within both fashion and interior design into the design of the products. The company’s three main keywords are quality, function and high standard. The complete data collected from the five influencers used by Company 6 is found in appendix 8.6.
**Ideal/Trust**

All influencers have a relatively good interplay with their followers in their network. The majority of the comments are positive, however, two of the influencers with a high number of followers, Influencer 6A and 6D, are receiving some negative comments. There is a clear distinction between the influencers, looking at who is answering back to comments and questions. The influencers with a lot of followers and comments almost never answer back to comments, and those with fewer followers are answering comments only left from other influencers. Those with the least followers are answering questions from both other influencers as well as the followers. Looking at the match with the company, all of the influencers, except Influencer 6E, scored high, meaning that they are a match for the company and its values. The majority are focusing on fashion, interior and lifestyle and are keeping up with the latest trends, which is an important part for Company 6. This makes the factor ideal and trust a primary factor for Company 6.

**Centrality**

Three of the influencers, 6A, 6B and 6D, scores high in both the studied variables within the factor centrality. They have a high status in their network, are often seen at “it-spots” and socializing with other influencers. The other two influencers, Influencer 6C and 6E, scored low due to not having a high status and are not seen with other influencers at these popular places. The factor centrality is not as strong as ideal and trust, however, it is still considered to be a primary factor for Company 6 looking at the total score of the influencers.

**Popularity**

Three of the influencers, 6A, 6B and 6D are scoring high in all three variables with a great number of followers, comments and likes. The influencers who are scoring low are Influencer 6C and 6E. Influencer 6C has a medium number of followers, however, Influencer 6C is not receiving many comments or likes, making the variables score low. Influencer 6E has less followers with only 6000, however the highest number of followees. Influencer 6E also has a fewer number of likes, however, the number of comments is relatively high. This result makes the factor popularity considered to be primary for Company 6.

**Productivity**

All influencers scores relatively high in all three variables within the factor productivity. The variable activity is ranging between 53 and 97 posts, making the influencers’ consistency either high or medium. The influencers used are therefore posting at a minimum every other day and at most several times per day. The number of sponsorships is also high. All of the influencers have more than ten sponsorships within the two months studied, except Influencer 6B, who has nine sponsorships or collaborations. Thus, having four influencers scoring high on the variables and one scoring medium, the factor productivity is considered to be a primary factor.

**Information content**

The variables in this factor are information regarding the sponsorship and the presentation. The results of these variables have been varying, with all influencer having a high score on one of the variables and a low score on the other variable, thus making the overall score a medium.
All of the influencers, except Influencer 6E, have short and impersonal captions making them score low. Influencer 6E provides long and personal captions making Influencer 6E score high, however, the information regarding sponsorships and collaborations is presented in an unclear and confusing manner, resulting in a medium score. Information content is therefore considered to be a secondary factor for Company 6.

4.1.7 Company 7
Company 7 is focusing on clothing, jewelry and shoes, which makes it a fashion company. The company was established in 2015 and has since then grown very fast, being one of the 20 fastest growing companies in Europe. Knowledge in both fast and high fashion has led to the company striving to be one of the top leading fashion companies in the world. Company 7 is working a lot with social media and presenting the latest trends. The products are shown on the trendiest influencers and celebrities around the globe. It is important for Company 7 to break old existing molds and show their followers that it is important to dare to be unique and to stand out. The complete data collected from the five influencers used by Company 7 is found in appendix 8.7.

Ideal/Trust
In the factor ideal and trust, all of the influencers used by Company 7 scored high in both variables. They are all influencers working with fashion, traveling and lifestyle making them a good match with the company’s values and goals. Many of the influencers chosen by Company 7 already have an own produced collection with the company, which strengthens the match. Regarding the interaction with followers in their network, most of the influencers are receiving positive comments. There are some negative comments left on Influencer 7B and 7D’s posts, due to having a large following. Influencer 7A is the only influencer that is answering comments and questions from both followers and other influencers. The other influencers are mostly answering comments and questions from other known influencers. Based on this result, the factor ideal and trust is considered to be primary.

Centrality
All of the influencers used by Company 7 have a high status in their network. All influencers, except Influencer 7E, have posts with other well-known influencers, ranging from two to 16 posts. Even though Influencer 7E does not have any posts with other influencers present, 7E has a high status and have been seen at typical “it-spots” shooting for an own collection. Influencer 7C has a total number of 16 posts with friends and has been seen at seven event and “it-spots”, which is an indication of a high status. Also, Influencer 7A has a high amount of posts during these two months, being at eight events or “it-spots”. Thus, the factor centrality indicates to be primary for Company 7.

Popularity
Looking at the number of followers, all influencers have a high value ranging from 1,3 million to 160 000 followers and with followees ranging only from 200 to 900. Even though the number of followers is high, not all influencers have high mean values of comments and likes. Influencer 7A has 180 000 followers, however, only a mean value of 7524 likes and 15 comments. Influencer 7C also has a high number of followers, 160 000, but the mean values
are not very high either. This in comparison with Influencer 7B that has a mean value of 360 comments per post and 61046 likes, which makes Influencer 7A and 7C score low. Overall, the values are relatively high making the factor popularity considered to be primary.

**Productivity**

Influencer 7B and 7C have posted 97 and 111 posts in total within the two months studied, meaning that they are often posting several times per day. Influencers 7B and 7C also have a high value of sponsored posts, making them score high. Influencer 7A and 7E are posting consistently, however, the number of sponsorships is not very high. Influencer 7D has a high number of sponsored posts, but the amount of posts is only 47 within the two months. Since three of the influencers are having a medium score, the factor productivity is considered to be a secondary factor.

**Information content**

The results in the factor information content are varying, looking at the two variables information regarding the sponsorship and the presentation. Regarding the presentation of the posts, Influencer 7A and 7D have majority of the posts written with long personal captions making them score medium on this variable. The other influencers have short and not very personal posts making them score low. Looking at the information of sponsorships, Influencer 7A and 7E have presented their own collections in a well presented way. The other sponsorships are not as clear, making the variable being medium. Influencer 7B and 7D have high scores in the variable with well-presented information. Lastly, Influencer 7C scored low in this variable due to unclear information. Overall, the factor indicates to be secondary because of the large range of different scores.

**4.1.8 Company 8**

Company 8 was established in 2015 and is selling products within the fashion sector. The products range from red carpet dresses and bodycon dresses to swimwear and makeup. The founder of Company 8 is a clothing designer and the aim with the company is to be able to show the founder’s style and creativity through the products. The three keywords used by the company are effortless chic, glamorous and beautiful, which describes Company 8’s idea to go beyond basics. It is important for Company 8 to design products that embraces the female body and to do this for reasonable prices so that every woman can take part. The complete data collected from the five influencers used by Company 8 is found in appendix 8.8.

**Ideal/Trust**

The Influencers 8A, 8B and 8C, are all good matches for the company. They are focused on fashion and beauty, which is important for Company 8. Influencers 8D and 8E are not as focused on fashion in their posts on Instagram, however, since the company is producing clothing that every woman can be a part of, they are still a match. Regarding the interplay with followers, Influencer 8A, 8B and 8C are having mainly positive comments, but they do not answer comments left by their followers. The remaining influencers, Influencer 8D and 8E are also getting positive comments, but their interaction is much better, making them score high on the variable. Overall, the factor is considered to be primary.
**Centrality**
Influencer 8A has scored high in all variables with a high status in their network. Influencers 8B and 8C are both seen at three events or “it-spots” respectively, but they do not have as high status as Influencer 8A, making them score medium. Influencer 8D and 8E are scoring low in all three variables. They are not seen at any event or with some other influencers, resulting in a low level of centrality. Since the majority of the results are medium or low, the factor centrality is considered to be secondary.

**Popularity**
Looking at the number of followers, 8A and 8C have a large following. They also have high mean values regarding comments and likes. Their results are high in all variables making them score high overall. Influencer 8B, 8D and 8E, however, are not scoring as high. Influencers 8B and 8D are having a medium number of followers and scores medium in all variables except influencer 8D who only had a mean value of 16 comments per post. Influencer 8D is therefore scoring low on the variable comments. Influencer 8E is scoring low on all variables. This result indicates that the factor popularity is secondary.

**Productivity**
Influencers 8D and 8E both scored low in all three variables within the factor productivity. They have both under 30 posts during the two months, which also makes their consistency low. Influencer 8D and 8E have also under five sponsorships during the time period. Influencer 8A also scored low in sponsorships and consistency, however Influencer 8A has a number of 36 posts making the score medium. In total, Influencer 8A scored low in the variables. Influencer 8B and 8C both scored medium, which thereby makes productivity considered to be a secondary factor for Company 8.

**Information content**
Influencers 8B and 8C both scored high due to their well-presented information regarding the sponsorships. They have both long and short captions that sometimes are personal making them score medium. With one high variable and one medium resulted in a high score. The other three influencers, 8A, 8D and 8E scored low since their posts often are short and not very personal. This result indicates that the factor information content is a secondary factor for Company 8.

**4.1.9 Company 9**
Company 9 is selling all sorts of products within fashion and clothing. The company was established in 2013 by a well-known influencer together with the influencer’s husband. The company started with the goal of becoming the world’s biggest digital fashion house and to keep developing the fashion industry. The Internet and social media are important tools for Company 9, which are convinced that the digital perspective is the key to the future. The company is inspired by contrasts, opposites and is happily mixing all sorts of trends. Strong independent women that looks good both online as well as offline are a strong inspiration for Company 9. The complete data collected from the five influencers used by Company 9 is found in appendix 8.9.
**Ideal/Trust**

All influencers used by Company 9 scored high in total regarding this factor, except for Influencer 9C who scored medium. Looking at the match-up, all influencers except Influencer 9C were a good match with the company. The influencers who were a match have a focus on fashion, beauty, travel and/or lifestyle, which is relatable to the company and its values and goals. Influencer 9C has limit its Instagram-page to only focus on lifestyle, which is why the match is not ideal. Regarding the interaction with followers, all influencers except Influencer 9E, are answering questions and comments from their followers. Overall, all the influencers can be considered to be trustworthy and being ideals for their followers, thereby the factor indicates to be primary.

**Centrality**

The results in the factor centrality are low in almost all variables. The influencers used have a low status and are not very well-known within their networks. None of the influencers have, during the time period of two months studied, shared any posts when being seen at events or “it-spots” and it is only Influencer 9B and 9D, who have published posts with friends or other influencers. The variables are rated low for Company 9; therefore, centrality is considered to be a secondary factor.

**Popularity**

Regarding the factor popularity, the influencers’ numbers of followers, comments and likes generally are low. Even though the number of followers is relatively low, three of the influencers have a high number of followees ranging up to 1500. Influencer 9B has a medium number of followers, 17 000, and also have a medium mean value regarding comments and likes. Influencer 9A, 9C and 9D scores low on all three variables. Lastly, Influencer 9E has a medium number of followers being a total of 13 000, however, only a mean value of four comments per posts and 131 likes, which results in a low score. Overall the factor popularity indicates to be secondary for Company 9.

**Productivity**

Regarding the activity and number of posts, the influencers used by Company 9, have posted from 7-38 posts within the time period of two months, resulting in a low score. Since the number of posts are low, this also means that the consistency of posts is scoring low as well. Influencer 9A and 9E has the fewest posts and have only posted a low number of posts the first month studied and then nothing for the whole second month. The other influencers are posting with three or four days in between, which equals a low score. The number of sponsorships is varying between the influencers. Influencer 9D and 9E have two sponsorships thus scoring low in this variable, while influencer 9B has done 16 sponsorships and therefore scores high. Overall, the total score of the variables results in the factor productivity to be considered as secondary.

**Information content**

Looking at the information regarding sponsorships and collaborations, all influencers except Influencer 9A score high. The information is well presented and clear with both hashtags and outlinks. Influencer 9A is not consistent with mentioning that it is an ad, making the score only
being medium. Regarding the variable presentation, the scores are lower. Only one of the influencers, Influencer 9B, has personal information. The other influencers have short and not very personal captions. Even though the result from the variable regarding information about the sponsorship is high, the low results from the variable presentation concludes the factor information content to be considered as secondary.

4.1.10 Company 10
Company 10 is Sweden's leading jewelry company found in 1951 with over 120 boutiques in Sweden. The company is selling a great range of jewelry in gold and silver as well as watches and other products. The aim is that the company should provide something for everyone. Based on Company 10’s core business idea, the company strives to inspire and satisfy all people's basic needs by providing them and other appreciation. Company 10 does this by studying and understanding their customers’ needs, and thereafter offer products at the right price, quality and service. The complete data collected from the five influencers used by Company 10 is found in appendix 8.10.

Ideal/Trust
Looking at the suitability, influencers 10A, 10B and 10E are working with fashion and beauty making them score high on the variable. The other two influencers, 10C and 10D are mostly posting content about lifestyle making them score medium. However, since Company 10’s values is providing products for everyone, the influencers are still a match. Influencer 10A and 10C scores high on the variable interplay with followers, since they often receive positive comments and are answering most of them back. The other three influencers, Influencer 10B, 10D and 10E, also receives a majority of positive comments, however they are not answering comments back or having interaction to the same extent as Influencer 10A and 10C, making them score medium. Overall, the scores are generally high for all influencers, resulting the factor ideal/trust to be considered as a primary factor for Company 10.

Centrality
The result of the factor centrality is varying for Company 10. Influencer 10A and 10C scores low with no post of friends or other influencers, nor any events or happenings. Their status is also low in their network. Influencers 10B, 10D and 10E, however, are all scoring high on both variables and have a much higher status in their network. Influencer 10B has been to four events and “it-spots” and has been posting pictures with six other well-known influencers. Influencer 10D has been to six events and posted content with six influencers or friends. Lastly, Influencer 10E has been to seven events and “it-spots” and has posted with 16 other influencers or friends making 10E having a high status. Thus, the factor is considered to be primary for Company 10.

Popularity
Looking at the variable number of followers, all influencers except Influencer 10A, are scoring high with a range from 150 000 to 690 000 followers. Influencer 10A is having 20 000 followers making 10A score medium. Even tough Influencer 10A has the lowest number of followers, 10A has the highest number of followees. Influencer 10A also has a low score on the number of comments with a mean value of only six comments per posts and 340 likes. Influencers 10B,
10C and 10D are scoring high in both variables. Influencer 10E has a high number of followers, but not as many comments and likes as the others and is therefore scoring medium on these variables. Based on this result, popularity is considered to be a primary factor for Company 10.

**Productivity**

All influencers are scoring high in the variable of number of posts ranging from 68 to 111 posts, which indicates that the influencers are posting more than once a day, resulting in a high consistency. Regarding the number of sponsored posts, Influencer 10A, 10C and 10D are scoring high with a total of ten, 15 and 13 sponsorships. Influencers 10B and 10E are scoring medium with eight and five sponsorships. Thus, this indicates that productivity is a primary factor.

**Information content**

Two of the influencers, Influencers 10B and 10C, scored high in both variables with the majority of the posts written with long captions that are very personal and good presented information regarding the sponsorships. Influencer 10E scored low in both variables with short and impersonal captions and unclear information about the sponsorships. The remaining influencers, Influencer 10A and 10D scored higher on one of the two variables making the overall rating for the factor information content considered to be primary.

**4.1.11 Company 11**

Company 11 is the world-leading company within subscriptions for beauty products. The company was established in 2011 and now operates in ten countries and collaborates with over 600 international brands. The company’s aim is to guide its subscribers on a voyage of discovery in a world filled with beauty, offer inspiration and share their experience of beauty. The service is a box filled with beauty products delivered to its customers’ home once a month. With this box, every detail is well thought out and it strives to create a special beauty experience that reinforces the elements of what beauty is about; a feeling, discoveries and inspiration. The products offered in the box is a mix of both small, niche brands as well as bestsellers from big brands. The complete data collected from the five influencers used by Company 11 is found in appendix 8.11.

**Ideal/Trust**

All five influencers only received positive comments from their respective followers. Influencer 11A did only respond back to comments left on one post during the entire time perspective studied. Influencer 11B answers back to almost every comment left by followers in some posts, and in other posts, the influencer does not reply back at all. Influencer 11C responds to almost all the comments and questions left by the influencer’s followers. Influencer 11D and 11E do not reply back to the followers’ comments. The match between all five influencers and Company 11 is very good. In collecting the data from the influencer’s individual Instagram-pages, it was apparent that each individual influencer cares for its appearance in regards of make-up and skincare products. Influencer 11A also offers tips and inspiration to its followers. Thereby, the factor ideal/trust are considered a primary factor.
Centrality
In regards of the factor centrality, all the influencers studied in relation to this company showed a low position in their network. All influencers, Influencers 11A to 11E, did not participate in any events or “it-spots” that could increase their networking. They also did not share any posts, photos or videos, that showed an interaction with other influencers or people that somehow possess a level of influence. Therefore, the factor centrality is considered a secondary factor.

Popularity
The numbers are very different between the influencers, ranging with a mean value of 3-48 in regards of the comments. Influencer 11E and 11B had the highest mean scores with 48 and 33 comments, while Influencer 11A, 11C and 11D had the lowest scores with three, six and three comments. The number of followers differs from each influencer; however, they have in common that the number of followers is 2 600 to 7 200. The mean score of number of likes are very alike between the influencers with a range of 214 to 311, with the exception of Influencer 11C, which only had a mean score of 94 likes. The factor popularity is considered as a secondary factor.

Productivity
The activity of the influencers varied, ranging from eleven posts up to 73 published posts in the time period examined. Thus, the consistency with Influencer 11D and Influencer 11E is not existing, with not that many published posts and not on a regular basis. However, Influencer 11B and 11C posts on a regular basis and shows consistency in publishing posts several times per week. Influencer 11A only shows a partly consistency with publishing two to three posts per week. The numbers are considered as high on Influencer 11A to 11D, thus making this factor considered to be a primary factor.

Information content
The information about the sponsorship that the influencers share with their followers, includes a short description of the sponsorship, outlinks to Company 1’s Instagram-page as well as the sponsored product. In case of the influencer having a discount code, then that is also included in the caption. Influencer 11C adds to the above information with personal opinions and how well 11C relates to the product and how it is used by the influencer alongside with tips to the followers of the influencer. In regards of the general captions Influencer 11A, 11D and 11E write very short captions and not very personal, however Influencer 11B and 11C write both short and longer captions, but personal, thus scoring high. Information content therefore is considered to be a primary factor.

4.1.12 Company 12
Company 12 is a company specialized in producing watches. The company was founded in 2011 and is now represented in 36 countries. The concept is a timeless and classy watch, which can be worn on all occasions by all genders all over the world. The company’s beliefs are to use clean lines, keeping it simple and letting the product speak for itself. The complete data collected from the five influencers used by Company 12 is found in appendix 8.12.
**Ideal/Trust**
Influencer 12B, 12D and 12E only received positive comments and respond to almost all of the comments and questions left by their followers. Influencer 11A and 11C also received positive comments, but only respond back to some comments and questions left by their followers. The match between the influencers and the company is relatively good regarding Influencer 12A and Influencer 12B, and very good regarding the other three influencers. Therefore, this factor can be considered as a primary factor.

**Centrality**
The centrality measures are considered low on all five influencers studied since none of the influencers participated in any events, networking or “it-spots” during the time period that empirical data was collected. Nor did any of the influencers include or mention other people that can be defined as influencers in their published posts. The factor centrality is therefore considered to be a secondary factor.

**Popularity**
The number of comments, measured in a mean score, were low on all five influencers, 12A to 12E, due to the mean scores being under 30 comments. Influencer 12D and Influencer 12E presented a low mean score regarding the number of followers, with 4 900 followers and 7 400 followers each, while Influencer 12A to 12C presented a medium mean score ranging from 17 000 followers to 76 300 followers. In regards of the number of likes received on the influencers published posts, the mean scores were both low and medium, ranging from 290 comments to 2828 comments. This leads to the factor being considered as a secondary factor.

**Productivity**
The amount of published posts was relatively low regarding all influencers, except Influencer 12D, which scored medium. Influencer 12A published the least amount of posts with a total of five posts during the two months studied while Influencer 12D published the highest amount of posts, with a total of 59 posts. Thus, making only Influencer 12D scoring high on the consistency of publishing posts, while Influencer 12D and 12E received a medium score and Influencer 12A and 12C received a low score. It was also Influencer 12D along with Influencer 12E that had the highest number of total sponsored posts with 19 and 13 sponsored posts respectively. The results of these three aspects make the factor productivity a secondary factor.

**Information content**
All the influencers included a short information about the sponsorship, as well as providing outlinks to Company 12 and a discount code that their followers can use on the company’s website. Regarding the caption on all other posts that were not sponsored, Influencer 12A, 12C and 12D provided a short caption but personal in comparison to Influencer 12B and 12E which only included a short caption or only an emoji. Thus, making information content to be considered as a secondary factor.
4.1.13 Company 13
Company 13 is a company selling clothes and beauty products online. The company was established in 2003 and is now active in over ten countries. It offers its customers a broad collection of 700 different brands, in every category there is, alongside with distributing its own collections as well. The company’s vision is to become number one in the Nordic countries within online fashion for youthful, trendy and outgoing girls. The complete data collected from the five influencers used by Company 13 is found in appendix 8.13.

Ideal/Trust
All five influencers receive only positive comments and Influencer 13B, 13D and 13E sporadically answer back to their followers’ comments and questions, while Influencer 11C responds back to almost all of the comments and questions left by 11C’s followers. Influencer 13A and 13B receive a large amount of comments on each post published. It was apparent that the comment field was not solely used for comments and questions but rather as a place where the followers tagged their own friends and thus not leaving a comment directly towards the influencer. The data collected leads this factor to be considered as a primary factor.

Centrality
Influencer 13C and 13D did not participate in any events, networking or “it-spots”, nor did they mention other people in their posts that could be considered as influential people. However, Influencer 13A participated in one event together with Influencer 13B, which was a photoshoot for Company 13 in Jamaica where the influencers acted models for an upcoming campaign. Influencer 13B also participated in two other occasions that can be considered as networking in which the influencer produced their own collection with two other companies. Influencer 13E participated in four networking events in total, which includes shooting a campaign for a headphone company, hosting training boot camps for Influencer 13E’s female followers. This in turn, resulted in a collaboration with another company for the boot camps as well as created and has an own collection with Company 13. The position the influencers have in their network are considered to be high on three influencer, and low on two, thus making the centrality factor considered to be a primary factor.

Popularity
The number of comments the influencers received resulted in a high mean score for Influencer 13A and 13B due to the mean score reaching an amount of over 100 comments. Influencer 13C, 13D and 13E scored a low mean score since the comments they received were under 30 comments respectively. Influencer 13A and 13B also got a high mean score regarding the number of likes, while Influencer 13C and 13D got a low mean score and Influencer 13E got a medium score. In regards of the number of followers, Influencer 13A, 13B and 13E had a number of followers count above 10 000, which is considered high. Influencer 13C and 13D had 29 400 followers and 23 200 followers, which resulted in a medium score. The above data results in making the factor popularity be considered a secondary factor.
Productivity
Influencer 13A, 13B and 13C published more than 60 posts during the two-month time perspective studied, which resulted in a high score. Influencer 13D and 13E published a total of 48 and 51 posts, making their activity score medium. In regards of both the number of sponsored posts as well as the consistency in publishing posts on all of the influencer’s individual Instagram pages, all five influencers scored high. The amount of sponsored posts were over ten posts each and the consistency was reflected in the influencers posting up to several posts per day. The factor productivity is therefore considered to be a primary factor.

Information content
All five influencers studied within Company 13 scored high in how they presented the sponsored posts on their Instagram pages. The captions consisted of short information about the sponsorship alongside providing outlinks to the company sponsoring the posts. In regards of the general captions on the published posts that were not sponsored, Influencer 13A and 13E scored high with having short captions yet personal. Influencer 13B, 13C and 13D scored medium with only having short captions or only including an emoji within the captions. Information content, as a factor, is therefore considered to be a primary factor.

4.1.14 Company 14
Company 14 is a Swedish e-commerce store that concentrates on fashion for young adults and trendy women, and offers the latest fashion of clothes, bags and accessories. The company was established in 2012 with the aim to focus on the Scandinavian and European countries and is one of the fastest growing fashion chain stores in Scandinavia. Its goal is to inspire girls with their supply of products and their engagement and presence on social media. The complete data collected from the five influencers used by Company 14 is found in appendix 8.14.

Ideal/Trust
All five of the influencers studied, 14A to 14E, only receive positive comments, however Influencer 14A, 14B and 14C only respond to some comments and questions left by their followers. This in contrary to Influencer 14D and 14E, which respond to almost every comment left by their followers below every published post studied. The two latter influencers therefore scored high in regards of comments and questions, while the three first mentioned influencers only scored medium. In regards of how well the influencers match with the company, all five scored high and the match was very good. Therefore, the factor ideal/trust is considered to be a primary factor.

Centrality
None of the influencers participated in any events, networking or “it-spots” during the studied time period, resulting in Influencer 14A to 14E scoring low. In regards of the influencers mentioning other influencer, it was only Influencer 14B and 14E that included one, and therefore scored medium. Centrality as a factor is therefore considered as a secondary factor.
Popularity
The number of comments resulted in a low mean score for Influencer 14A, 14B, 14D and 14E, with all four influencers reaching below 30 comments. However, Influencer 11C scored a mean above 30, thus resulting in a medium score. The number of likes resulted in a low mean score for Influencer 14A, 14B, 14C and 14E, and a medium mean score for Influencer 14D. In regards of the number of followers all five influencers, scored low, since none of the influencers had over 100 000 followers, even though all of the influencers have relatively high number of followees. The factor popularity therefore is considered to be a secondary factor.

Productivity
Influencer 14A and 14C published a total amount of posts that were below 30 posts, which equals a low score. However, Influencer 14B, 14D and 14E scored a medium score by posting more than 30 posts but less than 60 posts in total. The number of sponsored posts were low for all five influencers, with almost every sponsored post being Company 14’s. The consistency showed among the influencers in publishing posts were high regarding Influencer 14B, 14D and 14E, medium regarding Influencer 14A and low regarding Influencer 14C. Productivity is therefore considered to be a secondary factor.

Information content
The information provided by the influencers in the sponsored posts included short information about the sponsorship alongside providing outlinks to the company sponsoring the post, thus resulting in all five influencers scoring high. The general captions provided by the influencers were short and therefore Influencers 1A, 14B, 14C and 14D scored medium, except for influencer 14E that also had short captions yet personal. Information content is therefore considered to be a primary factor.

4.1.15 Company 15
Company 15 is a Swedish fashion company that has focused on representing the modern women at any stage of her life. The aim is to offer its customers the latest trends in affordable clothing. The company was established in 2007 and are now represented in over 250 retail stores in Europe. The complete data collected from the five influencers used by Company 15 is found in appendix 8.15.

Ideal/Trust
All five influencers studied within Company 15 only received positive comments, however Influencer 15B is the only influencer that does respond back to almost all of the comments and questions left the influencer’s followers. Influencers 15A, 15C, and 15D only respond sporadically back to their followers’ comments and questions, while Influencer 15E does not reply back at all. Influencer 15B is the only influencer scoring high, while the other influencers scored medium. The match between the company and the influencers resulted in a high score and a good match with influencers 15A, 15D and 15E, while influencers 15B and 15C only scored medium due to the match-up being relatively good. The factor ideal/trust therefore is considered to be a primary factor.
Centrality
Influencer 15C was the only influencer that did participate in an event and therefore scored medium. The event consisted of a photoshoot with Company 7. The remaining influencers, 15A, 15B, 15D and 15E did not participate in any events, networking and “it-spots” and therefore scored a low score. It was also Influencer 15C that was the only influencer that included three other influencers in its post by including them in the pictures, tagging and providing outlinks to the other influencer’s individual Instagram page. Influencer 15C therefore score a high score, while Influencer 15A, 15B, 15D and 15E scored low. Centrality is therefore considered to be a secondary factor.

Popularity
The mean score for the number of comments are below 30 for Influencer 15A, 15B, 15C and 15D and are therefore considered to be low. But, Influencer 15E had a mean score of 2077 and thus scoring high. The number of followers equals low score for Influencer 15B, 15C and 15E due to the influencers having less than 10 000 followers. Influencer 15A and 15D both scored medium regarding the number of followers, since they both had more than 10 000 but less than 100 000 followers. The number of likes resulted in a low mean score for Influencer 15A, 15B, 15C and 15D and medium for Influencer 15E. Popularity is therefore considered to be a secondary factor.

Productivity
Regarding the activity and the total amount of published posts between the time studied, Influencer 15B, 15C and 15D scored high with having more than 60 posts. Influencer 15A scored medium with 48 posts published and Influencer 15E scored low with only 23 published posts in total. The number of sponsored posts were all above ten posts for Influencer 15A, 15B, 15C and 15E, thus resulting in a high score, while Influencer 15D scored medium with nine sponsored posts. In regards of the consistency of the published posts, Influencer 15A, 15B, 15C and 15D scored high with posting almost every day or publishing several posts per day. Influencer 15E was relatively consistent in publishing posts on Instagram with a couple of posts per week, which resulted in a low score. Productivity is therefore considered to be a primary factor for Company 15.

Information content
All five influencers scored high regarding the information provided about the sponsorship. They all included short information about the sponsorship, provided outlinks to the company sponsoring the post as well as including a discount code that their followers can use. The general captions on all other posts were shorts captions and some included only an emoji, thus scoring low for Influencer 15A, 15C, 15D and 15E, while Influencer 15B scored medium with having short captions yet personal. Information content is therefore considered to be a secondary factor.

4.1.16 Result documentary analysis
In the table below, the results from each company are compiled. The table is showing an overview of which factors that are primary and secondary respectively for each company based on the five influencers studied. Even though a factor is defined as secondary there may be results
within the variables indicating that the company to some degree still are considering the factor. Regarding the ideal and trust the result was that all companies except Company 3 indicated to view this factor as primary based on the findings within the variables. Looking at centrality this factor was found to be primary for four companies. Also, popularity indicated to be enough significant to be primary for four companies. Productivity was found to be primary for seven companies, indicating this being an important factor from a company perspective. The study indicated that six companies found information content to be primary and thereby also a factor relatively important from a company point of view.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ideal/Trust</th>
<th>Centrality</th>
<th>Popularity</th>
<th>Productivity</th>
<th>Information content</th>
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*Table 4 – Own constructed table of primary and secondary factors in the documentary analysis*

4.1.17 Additional findings

The collected empirical data from the documentary analysis also provided indications regarding the factors that previously had not been included in the *Influencer identification model*. An aspect that was found when conducting the documentary analysis on Instagram, which is important to consider when identifying an influencer, is how the influencers *manages*
sponsorships. This is important in regards of presenting the information about the sponsorship in a correct manner, how many sponsored posts there are overall on an influencer’s Instagram and how consistent the different sponsorships are.

4.2 Findings from survey
In this section, the results from the published survey are presented. The six important factors from the Influencer identification model are in this section studied from a customers’ point of view. The number of respondents that participated in this survey were a total of 75, but due to the criterias presented previously in the methodology chapter, a number of 67 respondents were used. To get an overview of the empirical data, the results are presented in forms of diagrams. Firstly, the section with the general questions is presented along with the answers from the open questions. Secondly, the results from all six factors are presented, in the same way as they were divided in the questionnaire, with six sections representing each factor in the Influencer identification model along with four statements within each section. Thirdly, the section is concluded with additional findings and factors that were identified while compiling the empirical data from the questionnaire. The completed questionnaire including both statements and open questions is found in appendix (see appendix 8.16).

4.2.1 General questions
In this section, the result from the general questions are presented. The first three questions reflect the criterias used in order to eliminate respondents that were not part of the target population and are compiled in individual pie charts. All the respondents included in these charts have answered in line with the criterias and were thereby a part of the target population. Following are the answers of the two open questions, which are categorized and presented in different themes. The aim of the two questions were to reach the public’s opinion regarding why they choose to follow a specific influencer as well as which attributes they found important with that influencer.

![Gender division chart](image)

*Figure 3 – Gender division*

The results regarding the gender division of the respondents are that 50 respondents are women and 17 are men. This mean that the percentage of women that answered the questions in this survey are approximately 75 percent and 25 percent are male respondents.
The majority of respondents are between the age of 16-25, with a total of 51 respondents out of 67 being in that category. The second largest category is 26-35, with a total of 11 respondents being in that age category. There are four respondents that are between the age of 46-55 and one respondent within the category 56-.

The result of the statement “I use Instagram... (e.g. looking through the feed, publishing posts, commenting and liking posts)” is that 60 out of 67 respondents answered that they use their Instagram daily. A total number of five respondents answered that they use their Instagram three to six days per week, which resulted in the second highest alternative. The remaining two respondents answered that they use their Instagram one or two days per week.
4.2.2 Open questions

What are the reasons for choosing to follow these persons?
The answers to this question have been divided into four main categories, based on the content written by the respondents. The four categories reflect the respondents’ choice to follow these influencers, seen from different aspects. The main categories found within the answers for this open question are the following:

- Ideal
- Information and advice
- Entertainment and humor
- Visual effect

The category ideal was frequently appearing within the answers left by the respondents. It involved that the respondents saw the influencer as an inspiration, as having similar values as themselves or as being a role model. Also, the respondents answered that they chose to follow an influencer to have an insight in the influencer’s life. In regards of inspiration, the respondents were inspired by content such as fashion, interior, health, food, music and travels. Concerning the similar values, the respondents thought it was important that the influencer informed and discussed current societal issues as well as having good values.

In the second category, information and advice, the respondents answered that they chose to follow the influencer in order to receive information and advice about products, services, lifestyle and family life. The respondents wanted information and advice within similar aspects as the content they got inspired by, e.g. fashion, food and travel. The third category, entertainment and humor, showed that the respondents chose influencers that are humoristic in their way of writing posts as well as the content they publish. The influencers can entertain their followers by showing content of, for example, places they have the opportunity to visit because of their job as an influencer.

The last category, regarding visual aspects of the respondent on an influencer’s Instagram page. The most frequently answered aspect was that the respondents chose influencers that have pictures and videos on Instagram that are of good quality. The answers also showed that the respondents favored influencers that have a well thought out feed with pictures that are coherent with each other, e.g. has the same effect layered on the original picture.

What do you consider to be important attributes for an influencer to have?
The answers collected for this question have been divided into eight main categories based on the content left by the respondents. The eight main categories consist of different aspects, which reflects the attributes the respondents’ think is important for an influencer to have, and are as follows:

- Activity
- Popularity
• Relevancy
• Visual effect
• Personal
• Entertainment and humor
• Trustworthiness, awareness and experience
• Ideal

Activity was shown to be of value due to the respondents referring to the importance of an influencer that posts often and consistently. It was also shown to be important among the respondents that the influencer is spending time on creating content that is well thought out in connection to publishing these posts on Instagram on a regular basis. Also, some of the respondents found it important that the influencer was popular and had a lot of followers. It was also apparent among the respondent’s answers that they appreciate influencers who posts content that is relevant and coherent and in line with the followers’ interest.

An aspect many of the respondents found important was what is visually shown on the influencers Instagram. This concerns the quality and appearance of the pictures, as well as if the pictures in the feed is coherent based on the editing, the colors and the actual content within a post. It was also shown that the respondents considered it being an important aspect that the influencers were personal in their captions and posts. This included showing a lot of their personal - and everyday life in order to get an insight and thereby get to know the influencer on a deeper level. Many of the respondents thought that another important aspect among influencers is to contribute with entertainment as well as having humor and self-distance when writing a caption.

Lastly, it was important for the respondents that the influencer is trustworthy and confident in the posting. It was important for the respondents that the influencer was well informed, honest and open with their followers. The respondents valued if the influencer had the ability to express themselves with arguments that are built on facts from a scientific basis. This is in line with the last category, ideal, which was a common aspect mentioned within the answers left in the questionnaire. The respondents thought it was important to be able to identify themselves with, and relate to the influencer, as well as the influencer having good intentions and an inspiring personality to look up to.

4.2.3 Ideal
In this section the answers to the statements regarding ideal stated in the survey is presented in a column chart. Also, the mean value and the standard error for the result on each statement is presented in order to get a clearer perception of the derivation of the responses. The statements concern the importance of the influencer being an ideal or identifiable as well as how this affects their buying behavior.
The result of the statement “I follow influencers that I can identify with” was that the largest group, containing 25 respondents, answered a five on the presented Likert-scale. It was only two respondents who answered that they strongly disagreed with the statement. Overall, there were more respondents who answered that they agreed, than it was respondents who disagreed. This is in accordance with the mean value, which was 5,19 indicating that the majority of respondents considered this statement to be agreeable. The standard error was 0,169, which shows how the sample mean differs from a mean value from the population. The spread is small and thereby the mean value of 5,19 can be seen as a good representation of the population.

The result from the statement “I follow influencers that represent a lifestyle that I aim to have” seemed to be quite uneven when looking on the column chart, however, only one respondent answered strongly disagreeing and only one answered a two on the Likert-scale. A total of 16 respondents strongly agreed with the statement and nine respondents answered a six on the scale. Overall, the result showed that the majority of respondents did lean more towards agreeing with the statement than disagreeing. The mean value was 4,99, which shows that the majority of the respondents agreed to the statement. Also, the standard error was quite low on this statement and thereby indicates that the mean value is reflecting the actual population.

Mean value: 5,19
Standard error: 0,169

Mean value: 4,99
Regarding the statement “I purchase products that influencers use, who represent a lifestyle I aim to have” the largest group consisted of 20 respondents that answered that they strongly disagree with the statement. 44 respondents out of the 67 answered the statement leaning more against disagreeing than agreeing, with only nine respondents leaning towards agreeing. Looking at the mean value, which was 2.82, it shows that the respondents do not agree to this statement. The spread of responses was slightly wider regarding this statement, reflecting a bit more uncertainty in the sample.

Mean value 2.82  
Standard error: 0.187

The result of the statement “By purchasing these products, I feel that I get closer to the ideal I aim to have” shows that the majority of the respondents answered that they strongly disagree with the statement given. A total number of 25 respondents answered a one on the scale and 15 respondents a two on the scale, making a total amount of 40 respondents that disagreed with the statement. There were only three respondents that answered a six or a seven on the scale, which shows clear indications that the respondents more disagrees than agrees with the statement. This is also confirmed by the mean value, which shows that the majority of respondents disagree to this answer, with a mean value of 2.52. The standard error is 0.2 which
means that there is a spread which may show that the sample mean is not representing the population.

Mean value: 2.52
Standard error: 0.200

Overall, the result showed that ideal is important from a consumer perspective based on the influencer being someone to identify with and that possesses a desired ideal. However, the result showed that the customers buying behavior was not affected by ideal since the majority of respondents disagreed to the statements proposing that they bought products the influencer use and thus felt closer to the influencer by having these products. In conclusion this factor has significance for who the consumers choose to follow on Instagram, but not when they are buying products.

4.2.4 Trust
In this section the responses to the statements about trust is presented. The result is shown in column charts. Also, the mean value and the standard error are derived. The statements concern what makes an influencer trustworthy as well as the importance of being trustworthy.

![Column Chart](image)

Figure 10 – “I find influencers to be more trustworthy if they share similar interests as me”

The majority of the respondents answered a four or higher on the above scale, which shows that the respondents were more agreeing to the statement “I find influencers to be more trustworthy if they share similar interests as me”, than disagreeing. A total number of eleven respondents answered a four on the scale and 51 respondents answered higher than a four, thus showing agreement with the proposed statement. There were only five respondents that did lean more towards disagreeing with the statement. This is also shown by the mean value of 5.24, which confirms that the majority of respondents agreed with this statement. The standard error was 0.170 indicating that the result was valid and can be reflected in the population as well.

Mean value: 5.24
Standard error: 0.170
The largest group, with a number of 31 respondents, answered that they strongly agreed with the statement “I find influencers to be more trustworthy if they share similar values as me”. The second largest group chose a six on the scale with 17 respondents. It shows clear indications that the higher numbers on the scale were of significance. This is confirmed by the sample mean value which was 5.97, which shows a clear majority agreeing to the statement. Also, the standard error indicates that the mean value is reflecting the population as well, based on the limited spread.

Mean value: 5.97
Standard error: 0.155

The result on the statement “It is important for me that I find the influencers I follow to be trustworthy” showed to be very agreeable with a total of 40 respondents strongly agreeing. The second largest group chose a six on the scale, which show clear indications that the respondents are more agreeing than disagreeing with the statement. The mean value was 6.15, confirming that the majority of people strongly agreed to the statement. This is also reflected in the standard error, showing that the spread was low and thereby valid in the population.

Mean value: 6.15
Standard error: 0.164
The result on the statement “If I find the influencer to be trustworthy, I will purchase the products that they use” is very varying and there are no clear indications of the significance of this among the respondents. Still, the highest amounts of answers are a three on the scale and a five on the scale. The mean value was 3.76 and the standard error 0.228, which also indicates that the result has a wide spread, and thereby the result is difficult to determine.

Mean value: 3.76  
Standard error: 0.228

In conclusion, the result shows that trust is an important factor from a consumer perspective seen to the high mean value of the responses in three out the four statements. The respondents find it important that the influencers they follow are trustworthy as well as seeing them as more trustworthy if they have the same interests and values as themselves. It is less significant when it comes to buying products they use.

4.2.5 Centrality
In this section the result from the responses regarding the statements of centrality is presented in a column chart as well as in sample mean value and standard error. The statements concern the influencers relationships within networks as well as their social activity within those networks.

Figure 13 – “If I find the influencer to be trustworthy, I will purchase the products that they use”
The largest group consisting of 20 respondents answered that they strongly agree with the statement “It is important for me that influencers have a good relationship with their followers”. The second largest group answered a six on the scale consisting of 14 respondents. Overall, the result shows that the majority of the respondents do agree with the statement. This is confirmed by the mean value which is 5,13. However, the standard error is quite high indicating a wide spread among the respondents, which can be a sign of not being representable in the population.

Mean value: 5,13
Standard error: 0,214

![Figure 15](image1.png)

*Figure 15 – “It is important for me that influencers have a good relationship with other influencers within their network”*

The result on the statement “It is important for me that influencers have a good relationship with other influencers within their network” is rather uneven. Most of the respondents answered a seven and a five on the scale, however, there are no clear indications for the result to be predominant on either end of the scale. The mean value, as well as the standard error, confirms that the result has a wide spread and thereby being difficult to determine.

Mean value: 4,15
Standard error: 0,253

![Figure 16](image2.png)

*Figure 16 – “When an influencer is seen among other influencers within their network, it makes him/her more attractive”*

The result of the statement “When an influencer is seen among other influencers within their network, it makes him/her more attractive” is very varying and there are no clear indications of the significance of the statement among the respondents. Still, the highest amount of answers
is a one and a five on the scale, thus leaning more towards disagreement. The mean value, as well as the standard error, confirms that the result has a wide spread and thereby being difficult to determine.

Mean value: 3.42
Standard error: 0.223

![Figure 17 – “When an influencer is often seen in social events, it makes him/her more attractive”](chart.png)

The result of the statement “When an influencer is often seen in social events, it makes him/her more attractive” is very varying and there are no clear indications of the significance of the statement among the respondents. Still, the highest amounts of answers are a three, four and five on the scale. The mean value, as well as the standard error, confirms that the result has a wide spread and thereby being difficult to determine.

Mean value: 4.00
Standard error: 0.236

Overall the result of centrality is somehow difficult to interpret, which indicates that there are no apparent patterns found among the respondents’ answers. Some respondents find the statements important regarding an influencer as others disagrees with the statements. In conclusion, this factor thereby may not be of significance from a consumer perspective.

4.2.6 Popularity
In this section the responses to the statements regarding popularity are presented. The result is shown in column charts. Also, the mean values and the standard errors are derived. The statements concern the importance of an influencer being popular based on the number of followers, likes and comments.
Regarding the statement “When an influencer has many followers, it makes him/her more attractive”, the result was quite uneven with no clear indications on either side of the scale. The largest group of respondents chose either a one, four and five on the scale. Thereby, the statement may have significance for some respondents, whilst not for others. This is also confirmed by the mean value, which is 3.69 and the standard error which is 0.231. They indicate that the spread is wide and thereby the result may not be valid and representable among the population.

Mean value: 3.69
Standard error: 0.231

The statement “When an influencer follows many people, it makes him/her more attractive” indicates, based on the answers, being of low importance since the majority of respondents have answered below 4 on the scale. This is also shown by the mean value of 2.75, which indicates that the majority of respondents found this statement to be of low importance. Still, the standard error was quite high, indicating that the sample mean may differ from the mean in the population.

Mean value: 2.75
Standard error: 0.203
The result of the statement “*When an influencer receives many likes and comments, it makes him/her more attractive*” was very varying and there are no clear indications of the significance of this among the respondents. Still, the highest amounts of answers were a one and a six on the scale. This is also confirmed by the mean value which was 3.70 and thereby close to the middle, as well as the high standard error, which was 0.245.

**Mean value:** 3.70  
**Standard error:** 0.245

Regarding the statement “*I find an influencer that often is sponsored by companies as more attractive*”, the majority of the respondents answered a one, two or a three on the scale, which indicates that the respondents do not see influencers that are sponsored by multiple companies as more attractive. The mean value of 2.85 also confirmed that most respondents disagree to the statement. Still, the standard error is quite high, meaning that the result may not reflect the whole population.

**Mean value:** 2.85  
**Standard error:** 0.209

In conclusion, the factor popularity is showing low importance from a consumer perspective. Still, the standard error is showing a wide spread within the responses, which is a sign that there are some respondents finding the factor being of high importance and that the answers collected
in the questionnaire might not reflect the whole population. Overall, due to the factor being quite varying among the respondents, it signals being of low significance.

4.2.7 Productivity
In this section the result from the responses regarding the statements of productivity is presented in column charts as well as in sample mean value and standard error. The statements concern the influencers’ activity, consistency and accuracy in their posting on Instagram.

There is a clear indication that the respondents agree to the statement “It is important for me that an influencer updates his/her Instagram with new posts on a regular basis”, which indicates that it is of importance for an influencer to update with new posts regularly. A great majority of the respondents answered higher than a four on the scale. This is also shown by the mean value, which is 5.52, confirming that the majority of respondents is in fact agreeing to the statement. The standard error is 0.148, which is quite low meaning that the sample mean most likely is also valid within the whole population as well.

Mean value: 5.52
Standard error: 0.148
The result indicates that the respondents agree to the statement “It is important for me that an influencer sets aside enough time in order to create a presentable and an overall good Instagram profile” with a large majority answering higher than a four on the scale. The mean value was 5.39, which is a sign that the respondents finds this statement of significance. Also, the standard error was 0.178, which confirms that this result may reflect the population as well.

Mean value: 5.39
Standard error: 0.178

Figure 24 – “It is important for me that an influencer is consistent regarding which companies to get sponsored by”

The result on the statement “It is important for me that an influencer is consistent regarding which companies to get sponsored by”, shows a clear indication of the respondents agreeing with the proposed statement. The majority of respondents answered a seven on the scale. This is also confirmed by the mean value being 5.61 and the standard error being 0.187.

Mean value: 5.61
Standard error: 0.187

Figure 25 – “It is important that an influencer is active in communicating with her/his followers”

Regarding the statement “It is important that an influencer is active in communicating with her/his followers” there is indications of this being of importance since the majority of respondents are agreeing by answering higher than a four on the scale. The mean value was 5.04 and the standard error 0.177, which is a sign that the result is quite accurate both in the sample size as well as in the population.
Mean value: 5.04
Standard error: 0.177

In conclusion, this factor seems to be of importance from a consumer perspective, based on the result on all four statements. The consumers find it important that the influencer is updating their feed often as well as being accurate and has spent time perfecting each post before publishing it on their Instagram page.

4.2.8 Information content
In this section the result from the responses regarding the statements of information content are presented in charts as well as in sample mean value and standard error. The statements concern the influencers’ presentation in their posting on Instagram, specifically how personal the influencer is, how relevant the content is to the followers and how the influencer presents the information regarding their sponsorships and collaborations.

![Bar chart](image)

*Figure 26 – “I am more influenced by influencers who share content about their personal life”*

The result on the statement “I am more influenced by influencers who share content about their personal life” show that there are clear indications that the respondents do agree with the statement. The most predominant answers were a five, six and seven on the scale. The mean value is 5.67 and standard error 0.152, which shows that the majority agree to the statement and that the spread is limited.

Mean value: 5.67
Standard error: 0.152
The result of the statement “It is important that influencers share information on where I can find additional information regarding the sponsorship” is very varying and there are no clear indications of the significance of this among the respondents. Still, the highest amounts of answers are a one and a six on the scale. This is also seen in the mean value, which is 4.54 and quite close to the middle. The standard error is 2.53 and thereby the mean value most likely is not reflecting the population.

Mean value: 4.54
Standard error: 2.53

The result on the statement “It is important for me that influencers can stand for the sponsored posts on Instagram” showed a very clear result with 45 of the respondents answering a seven on the scale, showing that they strongly agree with the statement. The second largest group, consisting of 15 respondents, answered a six on the scale, which further strengthens the result. This is also confirmed by the mean value being 6.45 and the standard error being 0.135.

Mean value: 6.45
Standard error: 0.135
Regarding the statement “It is important for me that influencers share content that is relevant to their followers”, there was a strong indication of the statement being of significance among the higher numbers on the scale. A total of 27 respondents answered a seven on the scale, which show that the statement is of importance. This is also confirmed by the mean value, which is 5.60. The standard error is 0.191, which shows that there are some spread in the responses and that it may differ some from the population.

Mean value: 5.60  
Standard error: 0.191

The factor information content is found to have be of significance from a consumer perspective based on the respondents considering that the statements presented below this factor are predominantly agreeable.

4.2.9 Additional findings

The collected empirical data from the survey, specifically from the open questions, also provided indications regarding factors that previously had not been included in the Influencer identification model. The new aspects found when dividing and categorizing the answers provided by the open questions within the questionnaire, were the visual aspect and the entertainment aspect. The visual aspect is important in regards of the quality and appearance of the pictures and videos on the influencers’ Instagram page, as well as the coherence in the feed in terms of editing and diversity of content. The second factor found was entertainment, which includes having humor and self-distance within the captions below the posts as well as the knowledge in how to entertain their followers.
5. ANALYSIS
The analysis section is divided into three parts. The first part consists of an analysis of the empirical findings from the documentary analysis, which is viewed from a company perspective. The second part consists of an analysis of the empirical findings from the survey, which is made from the consumers’ perspective. The last part, based from previous results, is the new Updated Influencer identification model, presented and discussed.

5.1 Documentary analysis

5.1.1 Ideal/Trust
In the documentary analysis, the factors ideal and trust were observed together due to the difficulty of analyzing them separately from a company perspective. Ideal and trust are factors that more often are viewed from a consumer perspective since it is the customers that value the influencer as an ideal or being trustworthy, and not the companies. The factors, however, are still important for a company based on that the influencers identified for collaborations need to represent the ideal the company stands for and also to be trustworthy in order to give reliable information about the company’s products. Therefore, the factors were still included in the documentary analysis and viewed from a company perspective as well. The findings have shown that all companies except Company 3 got ideal and trust as a primary factor, which indicates that the companies studied have chosen to use influencers that are trustworthy and seen as an ideal and thereby in this research it is identified to be an important factor.

The factors trust and ideal are determined by the consumers’ perceptions of the influencers, which in turn are shown in their actions. The companies want to use influencers who are seen as ideal and as trustworthy by the consumers. However, it may be difficult from a company perspective to identify these since it is based on consumer perceptions. In the documentary analysis, the actions of the customers are measured within the two variables chosen, which are both tangible and clear thus showing if the influencer possesses these qualities. Both variables are possible to see from a company perspective when identifying which influencers to use in sponsorships. However, there may be several other variables to use when measuring the factors trust and ideal. When conducting this type of research, it is difficult to examine the factors in a more detailed way, instead there are much clearer results when examining ideal and trust from a consumer perspective.

Ideal was measured based on the influencers’ interaction with their followers and their match with the company. Regarding the interaction, ideal was shown through the followers’ positive comments about the post’s content. When the followers show appreciation towards the influencer it may be a sign of the followers seeing the influencer as a role model or an ideal they want to achieve. This is in line with what is stated by Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) who discussed that customers will aspire to follow recommendations and reviews given on the influencer’s Instagram as well as seeing them as opinion leaders. The positive comments about the influencers’ lifestyle and style indicates that the followers aspire to achieve the ideal and thereby find the influencers to be opinion leaders. The positive comments can also be a sign of
the followers identifying themselves with the influencer and thereby are positive to the posts published on the influencer’s Instagram. This is also in line with the social identity theory, which explains that when a consumer identifies with a social group, it results in increased self-esteem and aspiration (Yoshida et al., 2018). Thereby these positive comments, based on consumers’ identifying themselves, will lead to them aspiring to reach the ideal of the influencer.

The documentary analysis, which was based on statements from previous literature, identified the importance of the factor ideal among the companies. From a company perspective, ideal is important since the consumers tend to copy what to buy based on who they see as opinion leaders (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). The majority of the influencers used by the companies received positive comments from their followers, which indicates that they have attributes that are desired by consumers and thereby seen as ideal. However, some of the influencers studied had generally few comments per post from their followers, which often were fewer as well, thus it may not be possible to determine their role as ideal solely from this point of view. The influencers that have considerably fewer followers could still be seen as an ideal for those who follow, but since they do not reach that many people it could from a company’s point of view be hard to avoid the fact that it is more uncertain to use these influencers since the possibility for them to be seen as an ideal is lower. For a company who want to reach a large target audience that will copy what the influencer buys, it is more uncertain to choose influencers that are seen as opinion leaders by less people. Companies choosing this type of influencer may signal that ideal is not a factor they consider as important or that they perhaps do not think about at all.

Another pattern discovered regarding comments is that the influencers with the highest amount of comments, also are the most popular ones, based on the number of followers and their position in their network. When having a high popularity and a large number of followers, it may be hard to avoid negative comments which also was seen in the study. Overall, the influencers receiving a lot of comments are often seen as ideal by a large audience and thereby it is beneficial for companies to do collaborations with these, which is in line with previous literature presented, stating that consumers copy ideal lifestyles by buying products these influencers use (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Some of the influencers used by the studied companies are receiving many personal comments, in which the followers are writing about their personal life, e.g. different problems, events and personal questions. The influencers that receive personal comments are often sharing a lot of personal information about themselves and their family in their published posts, which could explain receiving more personal comments by establishing a closer connection to their followers. These influencers, who have a close relationship to the followers, often exercise a large influence on their followers by being seen more as a friend instead of an inaccessible person online. Their followers most likely identify themselves with these influencers, which is in line with previous literature that implies that they will show a greater brand commitment when identifying with the influencer (Yoshida et al., 2018). Therefore, these influencers are better to do collaborations with if the company is providing products relevant for the influencer and its followers lifestyle.
The other variable studied within the factor ideal was if the influencer was a suitable match with the company’s values and business idea. The suitability was measured through whether the influencer could be considered as a match with the company’s values and products offered. Previous literature reveals that it is important for companies to reason about if the influencers they collaborate with has an ideal that is in line with the companies’ values (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). In the documentary analysis, an influencer was viewed as a match with the company if they, for example, posted content that was in line with the company or had a following, which was within the company’s target audience. This is important since the company strives to earn as much as possible from the collaboration and therefore the influencer’s followers have to be the same as the company’s target customers. Based on previous literature, this is of high significance for companies to consider when identifying influencers to sponsor, because unless they are a good match or have an opinion leadership in line with the company, the result wanted from the collaboration will not be achieved (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). When the company use influencers, who match their values and focus, it is a greater possibility that the followers are interested about the content within the sponsorships and collaborations. There is also a greater possibility for the company to reach their target audience if they choose relevant influencers, which therefore will enhance the request of the company’s products.

The majority of the influencers were a match with the company, however, there were some companies that probably did choose influencers with no consideration to whether they were a match or not. This signals that these companies do not consider this factor as significant or do not consider it at all. Many of the influencers have a focus on fashion and have gained a high status thanks to their personal style to the extent it being almost viewed as a trademark, that others want to follow and achieve. These influencers are often highly respected for their style and a company collaborating with these influencers might get direct effects, such as spreading the products and influence targeted customers to make purchases to a greater extent. This aligns with what is discussed by Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) who state that influencers seen as ideal often are idolized by consumers and thereby purchases are made in order to enhance the consumer’s self-esteem. To enhance self-esteem is a strive for all people, making the products which are used by influencers with values in line with the company, highly desired by consumers idolizing these ideals. Still, influencers not as influential as the ones mentioned above, can be a good match based on their fashion content and them being seen as ideal for some. However, there are some influencers identified in this study who are not a good match with the companies they are collaborating with. In some cases, they are lacking a fashion focus, still they are sponsored by a fashion company. Others are posting about fashion but have a completely different style than the company and thereby is not in line with the company’s ideal. These influencers are also often very low in activity and have a low number of followers. The companies choosing to work with influencers that not are a match, may not get the result desired from the collaboration. They may only be interested in reaching a large amount of people in a fast way or perhaps they want to target a new group of customers. However, if the aim is to target new customers there still have to be a purpose and an elaborated plan in order to succeed. The companies with an aim to reach a wider audience of everyday people have shown to often
use influencers that have content focusing on family. Thus, reaching multiple segments of the market, which will lead to an extended reach for the company’s product.

The factor trust was also measured based on the two variables; the influencers’ interaction with the followers and their match with the company, however it was analyzed from a different perspective. Instead of looking at whether their followers were leaving positive comments, which intended that the influencer was seen as an ideal, the variable was analyzed based on if the followers asked questions to the influencer or if the influencer answered the comments and questions left under each post. Based on previous literature, trust helps to identify which persons it is possible to communicate and share information with (Al-Oufi et al., 2012). If followers comment, share information and ask questions to influencers it is indicating that they see them as trustworthy. If there are many questions regarding advice for e.g. different products or other topics, it can be seen as an indication that the followers think the influencer is trustworthy enough to provide valuable answers and thereby relies on the opinions given. This is also confirmed by Aghdam & Navmipour (2016) who state that influencers can be identified based on their trust relationships between users on Instagram as well as that the trust value can be seen in the users’ comments. When a follower considers an influencer to be trustworthy, by asking questions and leaving comments, it shows that the followers rely on the recommendations left by the influencer. Thus, the influencer makes an impact on their followers when sharing and posting about their collaborations or sponsorships with companies, which may conclude in consumers buying products used by reliable influencers. This is in line with Liu et al. (2015), stating consumer purchasing decisions are affected by trust among users in social networks.

A pattern discovered while conducting the documentary analysis was that the influencers with most comments also were the most popular ones, based on the number of followers and their position in their network. However, these popular influencers do not answer back to their followers to the same degree as the influencers with fewer comments, which indicates that the trust relationship between the users is weaker. The comments that they do respond sporadically back to are often left by other influential people, thus strengthening their position in their network. Still, the influencers with a lot of comments and followers are seen as legitimate and reliable based on their position and status in their network, whilst being a match with the company’s values. This also aligns with previous theory mentioning that influencers have the ability to make an impact, which mean that the influential influencers also are connected to having high trust (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). In turn this trust affects consumers to buy products used by these influencers. The influencers with fewer comments, but who have a personal content on their Instagram almost always answers back to all the comments and questions left under each post, which is a sign of them having a closer interaction with their followers which in turn creates a greater trustworthiness towards these influencers. They form a trust relationship and almost create a friendship, which influence the followers to listen to recommendations and purchase recommended products (Al-Oufi et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2015). Still there are some influencers with few comments who do not answer back at all, which can result in them not being as trustworthy and reliable since they do not possess any legitimacy based on their status or do not show a close connection to their followers.
The variable analyzing the match between the company and the influencer, was in regards of the factor trust, measuring how relevant the influencer’s content is in regards of the company. If there is a match between the influencer and the company there is a greater possibility that the influencer is seen as trustworthy since they then possess opinion leadership which provides legitimate power (Solomon et al., 2013). As mentioned above, in general the influencers used by the companies are a good match since they are focusing on the same subjects as the companies and thereby have followers who are a target for the company.

5.1.2 Centrality
Based on the results in the documentary analysis, the factor is seen as a secondary factor to the companies rather than a primary factor. It was only four out of the 15 companies that had centrality as a primary factor. The factor centrality was in the documentary analysis measured based on three variables; events and “it-spots” visited, presence of other influencers and lastly the influencers’ position and status in their network. These variables have been chosen because they give an overview of the influencer’s overall position within its network based on both their own actions, for example what places they choose to visit, and by their friends, who they choose to surround themselves with. Centrality refers to that people with similar characteristics conform and become alike within a network and the influence in this kind of group is measured by the members authority. Thereby leading to a lot of influential people with high authority are gathered in a network core (Gandhi & Muruganantham, 2015; Kayes et al., 2012; Peng et al., 2018). The last variable, an influencer’s position and status in their network, is included because an influencer could have an overall high status in a network even though the influencer does not visit any events or socialize with other well-known influencers. However, based on the findings, these variables are often associated with each other in some way.

The result in this factor showed that only few of the companies used influencers that participated in these kinds of happenings. However, in these events only a small number of influencers participate, and it is often almost the same participants every time. Almost only influencers with high status and position in the network get the opportunity to visit these “it-spots”. This aligns with theory saying that the most influential influencers are connected in a core (Kayes et al., 2012). Looking at the second variable it is determined by the presence of other influencers on the chosen influencer’s Instagram. The result is that almost the same influencers who are participating in different events also spend time with other influencers and include them in their Instagram posts. These influencers are again compiled in a core within the network and based on the third variable, they can be seen as having a high position and status within the network they operate in. From a company perspective, when identifying influencers to use this is beneficial based on a lot of influential influencers are gathered in the same place and they are therefore easy for companies to identify. Also, these influencers often have an influence leadership based on their position in the network (Kang et al., 2016). Thereby they also are beneficial for companies in terms of having desired ideal and high influence. Regarding the variable concerning which position or status an influencer has in a network, there are some influencers not spending much time with other influencers or participating in events that are
considered as having high status. These influencers already have a high status and opinion leadership that they do not need to participate in these activities to maintain their position.

Among the companies, some have chosen to sponsor influencers who are scoring low on all three variables. These influencers have a low status and position in the network and companies who have decided to use these indicate to not prioritize centrality as an important factor. In conclusion, the factor centrality may be important from a company’s point of view because when companies choose influencers with a high status, they will reach a large number of customers since these influencers often tend to have a greater number of followers. A person that follows an influencer that has a high status will consequently also get in contact with the other influencers that spend time together and visit the same event. This means that the influencers that spend time together often share the same kind of followers. However, in this research the result was that only four companies did have centrality as a primary factor indicating being of great importance when identifying influencers to collaborate with. These companies have mainly chosen influencers who have a high status and position. Still, the majority of the remaining companies observed have also used some influencers that have a high level of centrality but in general their sponsored influencers do not possess these attributes and thereby the overall factor becomes secondary, despite finding the factor important to some degree.

5.1.3 Popularity
The factor popularity indicated to be a secondary factor for most of the companies observed in the documentary analysis, with only four companies out of the 15 indicating the factor to be primary, while the others consider it as a secondary factor. The variables used to measure this factor was the number of followers vs followees, the number of likes and the number of comments that the influencers received during the time period studied. The three variables have been chosen to determine the influencer’s popularity against its followers, which is referring to e.g. the influencers recognition and authority (Khan & Daud, 2017). The number of followers often indicates the level of popularity that the influencer has, the two other variables confirm if the followers only follow the influencer or if they show their interest in the influencer by liking and commenting. However, a high level of followers is according to De Veirman et al. (2017) and Uzunoglu and Kip (2014) not a guarantee to success but rather that the audience the company reach that is of importance. Thereby, from a company perspective it is beneficial to have a high number of followers, still it is important to examine that the followers are the right target audience for it to be most beneficial.

Looking at the number of followers, comments and likes among the influencers used by the companies there is a great variation. It is clear that some companies find it more important to use influencers who have a large range and a great audience while others have chosen influencers more dependent on other factors. Even though the factor popularity has shown to be secondary for the majority of companies, the results have still shown that many of the companies studied are using at least some influencer that has a high number of followers as well as many likes and comments. The main reason using influencers that are defined as popular is that the company can reach the target audience in a very fast way. It is also an easy way to
reach new customers. This is confirmed by previous literature, which also states that it is a good starting point when searching for the right influencer to use (De Veirman et al., 2017; Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014). However, in order to maximize the effect, it is not enough to only use influencers with a great number of followers, it is important that the followers are in line with the company’s target customers. Thereby using popular influencers with followers in line with the target customers may increase the request of the products visible in sponsorships and collaborations. Using influencers with lower popularity may in some cases be beneficial since the result in the documentary analysis shows that some of these influencers have a higher and more even number of likes and comments in comparison to those influencers with higher number of followers. A pattern noticed among these is that influencers that shares much personal information are getting a lot of likes and specifically comments, which can be explained by them having loyal followers and having a close connection to them, the followers may believe the influencer having high authority. This aligns with Swani et al., (2017) reveal that the number of comments and likes is a sign of having authority and thereby popularity even though the number of followers is lower.

The result also shows that the companies have chosen influencers who differs in terms of popularity, some with a high number of followers, likes and comments and some with a low number, which is also the reason why the factor is secondary for the majority of companies. To use influencers that differ can be beneficial for companies since they reach both the great mass as well as the loyal and dedicated followers. However, the most influential influencers with the highest status and position are still having the highest level of both followers, comments and likes. As previously mentioned these influencers are very beneficial to collaborate with because they both have great range as well as active followers who are affected by the influencer. These influencers tend to often be more careful when selecting which sponsorships and collaborations to be a part of, which thereby makes it a challenge for those companies that are not as well-known as some others. This could be a reason to why a majority of the companies studied only consider popularity as a secondary factor. Another type of influencers identified are those who have a low level on popularity based on all three variables. These neither contributes with a great nor a loyal target audience in line with the companies’ target and thereby these influencers are not beneficial to use. The companies still deciding to use this type of influencers indicates to not find the factor popularity important.

Previous literature also discusses the ratio of followers versus followees due to the literature stating the influencer might receive a negative likeability when only following few accounts when having a large following (De Veirman et al., 2017). Almost all influencers studied in the documentary analysis had a large ratio between their followers and followees, with the followees being much lower than the followers. Whilst previous literature states that this might result in a negative likeability, the factors trust and ideal which indicates the likability of an influencer, was considered to be important in this study. Since the ratio of followees was low among the studied influencers it is indicating to have low importance. It is therefore not an important factor for companies to take into consideration.
5.1.4 Productivity

The factor productivity had a quite even result regarding if the factor is considered to be primary or secondary, and a total of seven companies had productivity as a primary factor. The factor was measured based on three variables; activity, number of sponsored posts and the consistency of the posts. According to Khan & Daud (2017) influencers that have a high level of activity and consistency are seen as more influential than those having a low level. The reason may be that these productive influencers receive loyal followers since it may be more interesting to follow someone who posts often. Productive influencers thereby are more likely to get active and loyal followers. In turn, influencers with high productivity may be beneficial for companies to use since they exercise great influence on customers. Also, in this study the variables activity and consistency have shown to have a connection. It has shown that influencers that have a great amount of posts during the two months, tend to also show consistency in their posting.

On the other hand, those influencers that have a small amount of posts during the two months, do not show consistency in their posting. The last variable measures how many sponsorships and collaborations the influencer have done during the two months, which aligns with previous literature mentioning this being an important part of activity (Khan & Daud, 2017).

The result in the documentary analysis shows that a lot of the influencers used are having high levels in terms of activity and consistency, still there are some variation seen to the different companies. This may indicate that some companies do not find the factor to be important. These companies might be only interested in reaching a great crowd and spread their products. These companies are the ones also not considering using popular influencers and do not choosing influencers with congruent values. A pattern found in the study is that popular influencers are found to be high in activity and consistency as well. This is in line with previous theory since these influencers are according to Khan and Daud (2017) seen to be more influential and thereby gaining loyal followers. These influencers are often having social media as job and therefore a consistent and active feed is necessary. As mentioned above these influencers are very influential and are beneficial to use in collaborations. Many less popular influencers are as well very active in their posting on Instagram and thereby they maintain a loyal following, who becomes influenced. Still, there are some influencers identified that are not as active and the risk by using these influencers is that they may not be seen as influential and they may neither reach a great audience since they are posting rarely, thus is not as visible in the followers feed on Instagram. Companies using influencers who have less than ten posts per month are probably not considering this factor to be important since this type of influencer is not seen as influential. It is not beneficial to collaborate with influencers with low productivity since the company will not receive the wanted result on the basis that these influencers are not influential enough or reaching sufficient with consumer by posting rarely.

Looking at the number of sponsored posts it is in the documentary analysis shown that there are great differences between the influencers chosen by the companies. Previous literature states that the number of sponsored posts is a way to measure productivity (Khan & Daud, 2017). However, in this research it is clear that influencers who are active and consistent in posting not necessarily have a high number of sponsored posts. This relates most commonly to the most influential influencer having high popularity and a high status. These have already built their
own brand and do not necessarily need to participate in sponsorships. If they do, they are probably very careful in what collaboration to take part in, and often these collaborations may be designing an own collection for the company. The other way around, influencers having low activity and consistency are shown to sometimes have a high number of sponsored posts. Then all of the posts in the influencers feed are sponsored, indicating that they only are interested in participating in paid collaboration. They are therefore not very careful and consistent in the choice of which companies to be sponsored by.

5.1.5 Information content

The factor information content resulted in being considered a secondary factor for nine companies, and a primary factor for six companies out of the 15 companies studied. The factor was measured based on two variables, with the first being what information the influencer published regarding the collaboration/sponsorship and the second being the overall presentation of the content published in each influencer’s feed.

When a company chooses to use an influencer by initiating a collaboration or sponsorship, one reason could be that it aims to strengthen the information content quality to their consumers, and in this case, towards the influencers’ followers. It is previously stated that when an influencer adds personal information or shares a connection to the content, or the products that they are sponsored with, it strengthens the information content further by them being experienced with the product (Chang et al., 2015). Also, when there is a collaboration or sponsorship arranged between the company and the influencer, it is considered to be important to provide outlinks to the company (ibid.). The majority of influencers studied in the documentary analysis presents information about the sponsorship, some short and some more lengthy, provides outlinks to the company’s own Instagram-page as well as include a discount code, if they have one, that their followers can use. The result shows that a majority of the influencers presents information about what they think about the product and how they use it, which strengthen the companies’ spread of the product and possibly the demand for the product. By providing their own personal thoughts or advice to the sponsored products, or if it is a collaboration, their thought and feeling about the company add to the tangibility and for the followers to get a clear grasp what the company stands for or how the product can be used. It is therefore desired by the companies that influencers are clear and personal in their presentation of the products.

When an influencer presents information about the company, it is important to keep in mind that their followers believe in the information given (Lu, Chang & Chang, 2014). They have to present content that are credible and of good quality in order to influence their followers (Nunes et al., 2017). Multiple of the influencers studied both share a picture of the sponsored product as well as explaining how they relate to the product and how it can be used. In regards of clothing items, it is done through presenting the item in an outfit, thus explaining how the products can be used. This results in the influencer being seen as more influential, credible and trustworthy, which is beneficial for the company. When the followers get information about how an item and product can be used in a clear way, it can result in them purchasing these products due to them already seeing in their mind how the product can be used. Still, some
influencers provide very little information about the sponsorship or collaboration, thus the information content was presented in an unclear way. There was no clear information regarding the product, if there really was a sponsorship or collaboration nor did they provide outlinks, thereby they are not seen as credible or trustworthy. These influencers are not beneficial for companies to collaborate with since their purpose with a collaboration is to spread their communication and that their products are clearly presented. Also, the impact will be less among the followers and there is a possibility that they might not want to purchase the sponsored product since they do not find the influencer’s content serious.

Regarding the second variable studied, being the overall presentation of the content published in each influencer’s feed, the result was very varied. According to Uzunoglu & Kip (2014), it is important to find a match between the brand and the information content shared when identifying influencers. If the content is relevant to the brand, the brand communication process will be increased by targeting the most essential audience. The majority of the influencers provided information in line with the products offered by the companies. Still, many of the influencers had only short captions under each published post, and some only captioned the posts with an emoji or simply hashtags. However, on Instagram the information within the picture is often more important than text and thereby a lot of information can be shared through the pictures instead. Therefore, the information can be relevant to the company even though the caption is short and impersonal. Whilst some influencers provided longer and very personal captions, as well as ending each caption with a question to their followers. These were often seen to share a lot of information about their lifestyle and family. Li & Du (2014) states that influencers can become more influential if they are personal in their presentation. It indicates that the influencer is interested in having a conversation with their followers, and to get to know their followers on a more personal level which creates a greater loyalty and thereby they are more influential. This also results in a strengthened information content, which is beneficial for the companies, which they can make use of when deciding which influencer to collaborate with or sponsor. Overall, the posts were very short amongst the influencers studied and not that personal, which may not be beneficial for the companies in regards of the content published nor for strengthening the ties with the influencers’ followers. Yet, as the previous factors has shown, some of the influencers still has a relatively high status in their network and therefore they do not require a personal content. This confirms that information content can be considered to only be of relative importance when identifying influencers for collaboration from a company perspective.

5.2 Survey analysis

5.2.1 Ideal

Ideal was considered to be important from a consumer perspective in regards of the influencer being someone to identify with and someone who possesses a desired ideal. The result also showed significance for who consumers choose to follow on Instagram, but not when they are purchasing products. For a consumer to be able to identify with, and admire the influencer and the influencer’s lifestyle, was shown to be important when choosing which influencer to follow, which was also in accordance with the answers within the open questions. According to the
social identity theory, the identification of an influencer leads to aspiration and therefore also a greater involvement from the follower (Yoshida et al., 2018). To be able to identify with the influencer means that the influencer and the follower share similar interests and lifestyles, which lead to a greater commitment to the collaborations with the aim to achieve the lifestyle and other attributes that the influencer possesses. Additionally, it may lead to an imitated purchase behavior based on what the influencer shows on Instagram, which is in line with Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) who mean that in order to reach a certain ideal, consumers will imitate the influencer by copying, for example what they buy. But the result in this study indicates the opposite. When asked if the respondents purchase products that represents the lifestyle they aim to have and that the influencer use, the majority showed disagreement. However, there may be a possibility that there still is an impact amongst the followers when an influencer publishes posts regarding a sponsorship or a collaboration, irrespectively if the result is a direct purchase or not. The follower receives information about the specific company sponsoring the posts, as well as the specific product, and where to find more information about both the company and the product. This may lead to the possibility that when a follower is in the process of deciding which product to purchase, there is a greater possibility that the follower will purchase the product that an influencer previously has published a sponsored post about, due to already possessing information about that specific product.

Ideal is a factor which is important from the consumers’ point of view, since in order to feel inspired and experience acquisitiveness, the consumer needs to believe that the influencer possess a desired ideal. It is therefore important for companies to be able to identify these ideals by looking at influencers from a consumer’s perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean value</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I follow influencers that I can identify with</td>
<td>5,19</td>
<td>0,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I follow influencers that represent a lifestyle that I aim to have</td>
<td>4,99</td>
<td>0,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I purchase products that influencers use, who represent a lifestyle I aim to have</td>
<td>2,82</td>
<td>0,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By purchasing these products, I feel that I get closer to the ideal I aim to have</td>
<td>2,52</td>
<td>0,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 – Statements within factor ideal

5.2.2 Trust
The factor trust was considered to be of importance from a consumer perspective based on the results from the statements. It was shown, both in the answers to the statements as well as the answers within the open questions, to be important for the consumers that the influencer is trustworthy. Also, if the influencer shares the same interests and values as the consumer, the consumer will find the influencer to be more trustworthy. This result is in line with previous research saying that when influencers create relationships with others that have the same
interests as them, they form a user trust network (Liu et al., 2015). Previous research also explains that the factor trust can help to identify who to share information, communicate and form friendships with (Al-Oufi et al., 2012). When a consumer finds an influencer to be trustworthy, they may be more open and dare to share opinions and thoughts when they are communicating with the influencer by leaving comments. This can lead to the recognition of the same interests and values, which further will enhance the trustworthiness of the influencer since this is an indication that the influencer is alike the consumer. If the influencer would not share the same interest and values as the consumer, then there is a risk that the consumer does not like and appreciate the products recommended by the influencer or their opinions and therefore do not find the influencer to be trustworthy.

The statement concerning if the respondents were willing to purchase products used by the influencer, if seen as trustworthy, showed to be of low importance. This result is not in line with previous research stating that consumers are more likely to copy purchase decisions from those they find trustworthy and reliable (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). There is a possibility that the mean value is low due to the statement being quite harsh formulated. The result could also be explained based on what type of products the consumer is going to buy. When the respondents answered this statement, they may visualize products such as clothing, which not is directly associated with trust. There is a possibility that the result could have been different if thinking about products that are more sensitive in quality and requires that the influencer has legitimacy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean value</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I find influencers to be more trustworthy if they share similar interests as me</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>0.170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find influencers to be more trustworthy if they share similar values as me</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>0.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for me that I find the influencers I follow to be trustworthy</td>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>0.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I find the influencer to be trustworthy, I will purchase the products that they use</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>0.228</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 6 – Statements within factor trust*

**5.2.3 Centrality**

Centrality was not considered to be of importance from a consumer perspective. However, the statement regarding the relationship to the influencer’s followers was considered to be important by a majority of the respondents. The high mean value indicates that this may show that consumers are well aware of the social influence that influencers have and use. Previous literature explains social influence as an individual's behavior changing due to other people in their network, and that it depends on factors such as characteristics of the members in the
network, the strength of the relationship and the network distance amongst these members (Gandhi & Muruganantham, 2015). However, the respondents only really confirmed the strength of the relationship among the members in the network, when showing an agreement towards the importance of an influencer having a good relationship with their followers. The characteristics of the members in the network and the network distance are instead reflected in the second, third and fourth statement in the table below (table 7), with the mean value not showing the statements being of significance from a consumer perspective.

The standard error is rather high on all four statements thus showing that the result has a wide spread and may not be representative for the whole population. This means that some of the respondents still believes that the influencer’s position in a network is of importance, which corresponds with previous literature stating that influence power in a social network setting can be viewed differently among consumers (Kang et al., 2016). Thus, a consumer that is involved and follows many influential people that are members of the same network core may therefore consider it to be more important for an influencer to be seen among other influencers and participate in social gatherings. On the other hand, consumers who are not following multiple influencers may not consider this to be of equal importance. According to Wang et al. (2017), influence leadership positively affects the connection between ties in a network and centrality, meaning that influencers’ ability to influence consumers will increase when they are gathered in a network core. However, this was not thoroughgoingly reflected within the respondents’ answers. Consumers are, as mentioned before, influenced differently depending on their involvement and perception of influencers in a network. If the consumer finds the influencer desirable enough, there is a greater opportunity that the consumer is influenced and thereby more prone to imitate the influencer by purchasing products used or sponsored.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean value</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for me that influencers have a good relationship with their followers</td>
<td>5,13</td>
<td>0,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for me that influencers have a good relationship with other influencers within their network</td>
<td>4,15</td>
<td>0,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When an influencer is seen among other influencers within their network, it makes him/her more attractive</td>
<td>3,42</td>
<td>0,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When an influencer is often seen in social events, it makes him/her more attractive</td>
<td>4,00</td>
<td>0,236</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 7 – Statements within factor centrality*
5.2.4 Popularity

Popularity was not considered to be of importance from a consumer perspective. All four statements within this factor showed the consumers leaning towards disagreement. For the influencer to have many followers was not considered to be important for the consumers, which also was argued for in previous literature. To have a great number of followers could according to the previous research be a good variable to consider as a starting point when choosing an influencer, but it is not a variable that guarantee success (De Veirman et al., 2017; Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014). Thus, the number of followers might be a variable that is more of importance for a company since its aim is to reach a larger audience. However, it does not affect the consumers to the same extent since this does not change the content provided. Instead, it could be more important what type of consumer that chooses to follow the influencer. This might have an effect on what content the influencer publishes, since the content should be relevant to the followers. The second statement has shown not to be important for the consumers either. There is an argument in the existing literature that it might be negative if the influencer has many followers but only follow a few accounts (De Veirman et al., 2017). However, the variables do not seem to be of importance either way since this do not affect the reason why the consumer follows an influencer.

Regarding the likes and comments, the previous literature has discussed that the number could be a sign on popularity and authority (Swani et al., 2017). When an influencer used by a brand receives many likes and comments on posts containing brand information, it is an indication that the product or service is popular within the consumers. The result regarding likes and comments is indicating that this is not significant from a consumer perspective. This is in line with the theory since the likes and comments are a way for companies to evaluate the relevance of the influencer they sponsor. The result also shows that it is not important with the number of sponsorships an influencer posts, from a consumer perspective. This could also be due to being more important from a company perspective since a great number of sponsorships could be an indication that the influencer is suitable for companies.

Still the number of followers, likes and comments may be a sign for the consumers as well as other people finding the influencer to be influential and thereby being an opinion leader. Consumers might therefore find this influencer attractive due to the willingness to become a part of a group alongside the other followers. However, this was not supported in the results of the survey. Overall, the statements for the factor popularity were not important from a consumer perspective, which could be explained by these variables not affecting an individual customer’s reason to why they follow the influencer. It is more the content itself that matters, such as pictures or sponsorships, rather than if other consumers choose to follow the influencer or not.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean value</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When an influencer has many followers, it makes him/her more attractive</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>0.231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When an influencer follows many people, it makes him/her more attractive</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>0.203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When an influencer receives many likes and comments, it makes him/her more attractive</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>0.245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find an influencer that often is sponsored by companies as more attractive</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>0.209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 – Statements within factor popularity

5.2.5 Productivity

The factor productivity was considered to be of importance from a consumer perspective, with the mean values being high on all four statements, thus showing that the consumers agree with it being important that an influencer updates his/her Instagram with new posts regularly, sets aside enough time to create a presentable Instagram profile, being consistent with sponsored companies and actively communicates with their followers. Looking at both the answers to the statements as well as within the open questions in the questionnaire, the respondents showed clear indications that it was of importance that an influencer updates their Instagram on a regular basis as well as being consistent regarding which companies to get sponsored by. Khan and Daud (2017) present that an influencer who shows more activity is considered to be more influential, which can be an explanation to the high mean values on all four statements, that the respondents feel that an influencer who is high in activity insures trust and therefore is more influential. When consumers follow influencers, who are active and post consistently as well as being active in communicating with followers, there is a greater opportunity that they are interested in getting to know the influencer and thereby become a loyal follower. An influencer who updates their Instagram on a regular basis and sets aside time in order to create a good Instagram profile, is more prone to become influential based on the consumers getting involved in their life, which may result in greater trust. If an influencer posts more rarely, there is a risk that followers might lose interest, which in turn may lead to loss of trust and loyalty towards that influencer.

Productivity is also shown by the amount of sponsorships the influencer chooses to be a part of (Khan & Daud, 2017). The consistency of which companies sponsoring the influencer is showing productivity by the influencer spending time on evaluating the companies initiating the sponsorships. It is important that the collaborations are in line with the interest of the influencer’s followers in order to be received positively. This was confirmed by the majority of respondents believing this to be important. Otherwise, the followers might think that the influencer is only interested in the paid benefits from the sponsorship and not based on the follower’s interests, and thereby the consumer might lose trust in the influencer.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean value</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is important for me that an influencer updates his/her Instagram with new posts on a regular basis</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>0.148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for me that an influencer sets aside enough time in order to create a presentable and a overall good Instagram profile</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>0.178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for me that an influencer is consistent regarding which companies to get sponsored by</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>0.187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important that an influencer is active in communicating with her/his followers</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>0.177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 – Statements within factor productivity

5.2.6 Information content

Information content was from a consumer perspective considered to be of importance with the mean values being high on all four statements, which show that what kind of content the influencer chooses to publish as well as how the content is presented is important for the consumers. According to Li and Du (2014), information that is connected to the influencer’s personal life might be seen as more influential. If an influencer shares a lot of information about their personal life, the followers are getting more involved and feel a deeper connection with the influencer. Due to this, the followers become more loyal and may therefore be affected by the collaborations posted since they feel close to the influencer. If the influencer is prepared to share personal information, it also might indicate on a higher level of trust since the influencer’s purpose is to not only write about business related subjects. This was also confirmed in the open questions where many respondents mentioning the importance of influencers being personal since they want to get to know the influencer on a deeper level.

It was also shown in the results that it is important for the consumers to receive further information regarding sponsorships and collaborations, which is in line with what previous research has confirmed (Chang et al., 2015). This is of importance for the consumers in order to perceive the influencer and the collaboration to be trustworthy. If the influencer is meticulous with presenting further information to the influencer’s followers regarding the products within the sponsorships, it may also be an indication that the sponsorships are carefully selected and that the influencer can stand for the content provided. According to Lu, Chang and Chang (2014) it is important for the customer to believe in the information given, which the influencer needs to keep in mind when presenting the information. Often, if the influencer cares for the products and shares some kind of connection to it, the information about the collaboration will receive a higher legitimacy, as mentioned in previous research (Chang et al., 2015). In turn, this enhances the reliability toward the influencer and affects the consumers behavior into buying the sponsored products. In order for the followers to buy the sponsored product, it is not only important to be provided with further information regarding the product, it is equally important that the influencer shares content relevant to the followers in order to gain interest and make an
impact. This was confirmed by the results given from the respondents answering the fourth statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean value</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am more influenced by influencers who share content about their personal life</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>0.152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important that influencers share information on where I can find additional information regarding the sponsorship</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>0.253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for me that influencers can stand for the sponsored posts on Instagram</td>
<td>6.45</td>
<td>0.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important for me that influencers share content that is relevant to their followers</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>0.191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 – Statements within factor information content

5.3 New Proposed framework - Updated influencer identification model

In this section, the updated version of the Influencer identification model is presented. The updated version is derived from findings from the conducted documentary analysis and the survey, which have been analyzed with the purpose to find new perspectives to consider when identifying influencers for sponsorships and collaboration on Instagram. The original Influencer identification model was created based on factors found in previous literature. However, previous studies have not combined these different factors into one framework, instead a majority have focused on only one area (Kayes et al., 2012; Khan & Daud, 2017; Li & Du., 2014; Liu et al., 2015). Also, research is needed in different social platforms (Khan et al., 2017) and this framework is created to function when identifying influencers on Instagram. A model combining the different important factors and focusing on a specific platform is of value for companies since the use of influencers in marketing is becoming more important, and it is thereby needed quick and easy ways to identify the most suitable influencer for each company. Within each factor there are variables found, which function as guidelines in the process of identifying the influencer. These are identified based on previous literature and then further developed in order to be suitable to use when choosing influencers for sponsorships and collaboration on Instagram. Based on the variables, each company can customize them into what is considered to be most important for the specific company. Below, the new proposed framework is presented, called the Updated influencer identification model.
As seen in the new framework there has been some adjustments made compared with the original framework. Based on the findings, ideal and trust were considered to be important both from a company- and consumer perspective, thereby only changes were made regarding the variables within each factor. The factors centrality and popularity indicated to be secondary both from a company- and consumer perspective. Still, there were signs in the result that some of the companies and some of the consumers did find these factors to be of importance, which concluded in the factors not being excluded from the *Updated influencer identification model*. Instead, this resulted in the factors being combined into one united factor, popularity. The two remaining factors from the original framework, productivity and information content, have shown to be of importance from a consumer perspective within the survey. Thereby, these factors are considered to be sufficiently important to include in the framework as individual factors.

There were some additional findings in both the documentary analysis and survey that were noticed on several occasions and therefore needed to be included within the framework. The open questions in the survey gave the respondents an opportunity to give their perspective of what is important when identifying an influencer. The findings resulted in two new factors as well as new variables within an existing factor. A new factor found was the visual aspect of the content that the influencer is sharing. Since the information is spread mainly through pictures and videos on Instagram, it is a matter of course that the consumers get affected by this and thereby, it is an important factor within the updated framework. Entertainment and humor were also shown to be of importance when identifying an influencer from a consumer perspective, which were not included in the original framework. These variables, however, were not as prominent as the visual aspect and were therefore not included as individual factors. Instead,
entertainment and humor are introduced within the factor information content, which discusses the importance for the influencer to be personal. In the documentary analysis, it was included in many different factors how the influencer manages sponsorships and collaborations. This aspect is of great importance since the influencer have to spread the company’s information in a clear and reliable way. Also, a company may evaluate an influencer based on which sponsorships it has been a part of before and how these were managed. It was thereby decided to include this factor in the framework as an individual factor.
6. CONCLUSION
In the final section of this thesis, the findings and conclusions are presented and summarized based on the analysis made in the previous chapter. The conclusions are presented both from a company perspective and a consumer perspective, which is line with the proposed research question. The implications as well as the limitations are also presented in connection with the conclusions found. Lastly, future recommendations for research are suggested.

6.1 Findings and conclusions
It is presented in the introduction that the use of influencers in sponsorships and collaborations on social media is a subject which has arisen and grown rapidly. Since the concept is fairly new, there is evidence that there is not enough knowledge within companies on how to identify which influencers to use in sponsorships or collaborations on different social platforms. Nor is there enough updated information and previous research that combines the different important aspects into one framework. Due to the increased interest in this topic and the need for frameworks combining factors from both a company- and a consumer perspective, in regards of attributes possessed by a sponsored influencer, the study took its starting point in the following question:

From both a company- and consumer perspective, which factors are important to take into account when identifying an influencer for sponsorships and collaborations on Instagram?

- The factors studied have shown to be of different importance for companies and consumers. However, in order to identify influencers that possess attributes, which are important from both a company– and a consumer perspective, a framework combining these perspectives is necessary.
- The findings indicate that companies are inconsistent in choosing which influencers to sponsor or collaborate with. Thereby, multiple types of influencers are identified within this study.
- The Updated influencer identification model consists of seven important factors, which each include variables used by companies in order to identify an influencer to use for sponsorships and collaborations on Instagram.

The purpose of this study was to identify which factors that are important to take into account when deciding which influencer to use in a sponsorship or a collaboration on Instagram. This was viewed from both a company- and consumer perspective in order to create a framework that combines both what consumers find important with an influencer, and what a company finds to be of importance when initializing a sponsorship or a collaboration. The findings showed that some factors are equally important to both companies and consumers, such as ideal and trust, while other factors did not show equal importance. The fact that the importance of a collaboration or a sponsorship are viewed differently from a consumer- and a company perspective is quite evident. A company has different prioritizations of what the result of a sponsorship or collaboration might mean, while a consumer thinks very differently of what might be important for them regarding influencers. However, combining both these
perspectives into a framework assists the company to understand their consumers and to find the most influential influencer for the sponsorship or collaboration to be beneficial. This combined framework of important factors, as an alternative for companies in the retail sector to use when sponsoring and collaborating with influencers on Instagram, was also in line with the purpose of this study. The factors derived from previous literature and presented in the Influencer identification model, together with additional factors found within the conducted empirical research, were combined in the Updated influencer identification model (see table 12).

Findings also showed that companies are incoherent and has different opinions about which influencer they assume to be beneficial to collaborate with on Instagram. It is also clearly shown in the survey that consumers demand different types of influencers based on their interests. In line with the purpose of this study, to find which attributes are of importance for a sponsored influencer to possess, different types of influencers can be identified. Based on the values a company have and its target consumers, different types of influencers are differently suitable for companies. The result shows that some companies and consumers value influencers that have a high level of popularity and status, while others prefer to use influencers that are active in communicating with followers and share a lot of personal information. Findings also show that some companies only aim to spread their communication, by using a type of influencers that neither have a high level of popularity nor are active in communication and sharing with followers. In conclusion, the use of the Updated influencer identification model is a way to identify what type of influencer is most suitable to use based on company values and target customers.

In line with the purpose of this study, which was to develop a framework combining the important factors from both a company- and consumer perspective, the Updated influencer identification model was developed. The model includes a total of seven factors, which is the conclusion of the important factors from the findings from both perspectives. From a company perspective, the important factors are ideal and trust as well as managing sponsorships and collaborations and from a consumer perspective, the important factors were ideal, trust, productivity and information content as well as the visual aspect of an influencer’s Instagram. These factors are, based on this study, the answer to the research question proposed. The factors, which are important from either a company- or a consumer perspective, were combined in the framework in order to function as an overall model when identifying influencers to use in sponsorships and collaborations on Instagram.

6.2 Theoretical implications
Based on the existing field of research within the area of identifying influencers, theoretical problems were found regarding the lack of models combining the important factors when identifying influencers, since the area of research being limited due to it being fairly new. There was also a problem regarding finding influencers who are differently influential on different social media platforms. There are two theoretical implications of this study. Firstly, a study has been conducted regarding influencer identification made on a specific social media platform,
which in this thesis is Instagram. Thereby, this study fulfills the above-mentioned lack found within the previous literature regarding different social media platforms. Secondly, the study contributes theoretically by developing a combined framework of important factors considering both companies as well as consumers. The findings in this study show that there are other factors existing that are of importance, which have not been discussed in previous literature. However, since this study was an explorative research, the Updated influencer identification model can be seen as a foundation when identifying influencers for sponsorships and collaborations on Instagram and can thereby be further developed.

6.3 Practical implications
Previous literature states that there is a practical problem regarding how companies identify effective influencers to use in collaborations and sponsorships. Companies must be able to react to the fast changes due to the development of the Internet and social media, which otherwise may create uncertainty in how to gain the most effect from a sponsorship or a collaboration. As previously mentioned there is a need for models combining important factors which could be used by companies when choosing influencers to collaborate with. This study has made it possible for companies to, with better accuracy, identify which influencers who are suitable and effective for sponsorships. This study also defines which aspects companies should consider in a clear way. The Updated influencer identification model that have been developed helps companies to start reflecting about the factors that have been proved to be important, instead of looking at other aspects which are not significant. By identifying these factors, this study provides companies to, in a faster and easier way, achieve the wanted effects from influencer collaborations. The model makes the companies aware of what consumers consider to be important attributes of an influencer, which makes the influencer more suitable for the company’s target audience.

Finally, the Updated influencer identification model offers companies guidelines when working with the fast-changing social platform Instagram. The model is to some extent possible to customize depending on the companies’ values and purpose with the collaboration. It can also be applied in different contexts and time frames. Overall, this study can help companies enhance the effect of marketing investments that have been made in sponsorships or collaborations on Instagram. However, as mentioned previously, this area is very fast changing and there are multiple factors interacting within the area, which means that the influencer identification process is complex. Hopefully, this study gives insights, ideas and inspiration to companies when identifying which influencer to use for sponsorships on Instagram, making the companies take a different and new approach to the important factors.

6.4 Limitations
In this study, there are some limitations that can be found within the documentary analysis as well as the survey. Firstly, the findings from the empirical data could have been different depending on what variables used within the documentary analysis as well as how the statements within the survey were designed. Secondly, the factors ideal and trust were seen as one factor in the documentary analysis, which can also be seen as a limitation. The conclusion
of this study was the *Updated influencer identification model* that contributes to the research area by combining factor from both previous literature as well as new findings. However, a limitation for this framework is that it has not yet been tested, which could further strengthen the legitimacy of the framework. Also, the possibility to generalize the findings provided in this study is limited, due to the study consisting of a qualitative method with research units that are relatively low in numbers.

6.5 **Recommendations for future research**

The field of research regarding influencer marketing and more specifically identification of an influencer is still very unexplored in many research areas. There is therefore a great possibility for future research within this subject. It is suggested for future research to further investigate the factors that have been discussed in this study in order to reach a deeper understanding of what is important to consider for companies using influencers for sponsorships or collaborations on Instagram. There is an opportunity for future researchers to formulate and design other variables to use within each factor and thereby see if the result would have been different. In connection to this, it is also suggested to test the *Updated influencer identification model* by identifying a potential influencer to use for sponsorships on Instagram based on the framework. Based on the results, further development of this framework or to strengthen the validity of the factors within the framework can be conducted. There are also suggestions for future research to contribute to the theoretical field of research by investigating and examining additional social media platforms, which can contribute to the research gap of what kind of influencer to use on different social media platforms. The study could also be extended by looking at a greater number of companies and influencers in different sectors. From a consumer perspective a more in-depth survey could be performed on a greater amount of research units.
7. REFERENCES


Brown, B. (2017, December 27). Does influencer marketing work better for some industries than others? [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://www.grin.co/blog/does-influencer-marketing-work-better-for-some-industries-than-others


## APPENDICES

### 8.1 Complete data Company 1

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<th>Value</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit</td>
<td>$20K</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td>$80K</td>
<td>Q2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax</td>
<td>$10K</td>
<td>Q1 and Q2</td>
</tr>
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<td>Q1 and Q2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Assets</td>
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<td>Q1 and Q2</td>
</tr>
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<td>Total Liabilities</td>
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<td>Q1 and Q2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
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<td>Q1 and Q2</td>
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*Note: The data represents the financial performance of Company 1 for the first half of the year.*
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8.3 Complete data Company 3
8.4 Complete data Company 4
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<th>Operating Margin</th>
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*Complete data available for previous years.*
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**Note:** This is a sample table. The actual data may vary.
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Note: The table above contains data from Company 1 and Company 2, with respective categories and values.
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*Note: This table requires further analysis to fully understand its context.*
8.14 Title 14

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**Note:** The table continues with more data entries.
8.16 Questionnaire
Due to the fast-changing environment in today’s online settings, the conditions for how companies communicate and reach out to their customers have changed. This has led to the introduction of new marketing techniques, thus changing how a company should conduct their marketing in the most effective way.

A phenomenon that has gained both attention and has become a topic of interest is influencer marketing, which is a marketing technique where companies use and sponsor influential people online in order to reach consumers. Since this marketing technique is fairly new, there is no framework that address the issue of how companies should reflect when deciding which influencer to choose. Our aim is therefore to research which important factors that companies should take into account when choosing influencers to sponsor. To succeed with this, it is necessary to include a consumer perspective in order to find the important factors.

All answers are anonymous.
Thank you in advance for your participation!

General questions

1. Gender
   a. Woman
   b. Man
   c. Other

2. Age
   a. −15
   b. 16–25
   c. 26–35
   d. 36–45
   e. 46–55
   f. 56–

3. I have an Instagram account
   a. Yes
   b. No

4. I use Instagram... (e.g. looking through the feed, publishing posts, commenting and liking posts etc.)
   a. Daily
   b. 3–6 days per week
   c. 1–2 days per week
   d. Rarely
   e. Never
5. I follow people on Instagram who can be defined as an influencer (people with a high online status in an online social network)
   a. Yes
   b. No
6. What are the reasons for choosing to follow these persons?
7. What do you consider to be important attributes for an influencer to have? (Feel free to mention more than one!)

**Ideal**
8. I follow influencers that I can identify with
9. I follow influencers that represent a lifestyle that I aim to have
10. I purchase products that influencers use, who represent a lifestyle I aim to have
11. By purchasing these products, I feel that I get closer to the ideal I aim to have

**Trust**
12. I find influencers to be more trustworthy if they share similar interests as me
13. I find influencers to be more trustworthy if they share similar values as me
14. It is important for me that I find the influencers I follow to be trustworthy
15. If I find the influencer to be trustworthy, I will purchase the products that they use

**Centrality**
16. It is important for me that influencers have a good relationship with their followers
17. It is important for me that influencers have a good relationship with other influencers within their network
18. When an influencer is seen among other influencers within their network, it makes him/her more attractive
19. When an influencer is often seen in social events, it makes him/her more attractive

**Popularity**
20. When an influencer has many followers, it makes him/her more attractive
21. When an influencer follows many people, it makes him/her more attractive
22. When an influencer receives many likes and comments, it makes him/her more attractive
23. I find an influencer that often is sponsored by companies as more attractive

**Productivity**
24. It is important for me that an influencer updates his/her Instagram with new posts on a regular basis
25. It is important for me that an influencer sets aside enough time in order to create a presentable and overall good Instagram profile
26. It is important for me that an influencer is consistent regarding which companies to get sponsored by
27. It is important that an influencer is active in communicating with her/his followers
Information content

28. I am more influenced by influencers who share content about their personal life.
29. It is important that influencers share information on where I can find additional information regarding the sponsorship.
30. It is important for me that influencers can stand for the sponsored posts on Instagram.
31. It is important for me that influencers share content that is relevant to their followers.
Caroline Abrahamsson
Jennifer Lezis Israelsson
Viktoria Nilsson