#Ad: The Effects of Explicit and Stealth Branding on Instagram on Attitudes Towards

Health Influencers and Brands

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Abstract

A recent rise in health and wellness influencers has appeared on Instagram with health and wellness brands aiming to sponsor these influencers' content. To maintain both brand and influencer credibility, various techniques have been implemented into posts that are sponsored in order to "conceal" the branded content and make it appear as user generated content. This leads to questions, such as how does branding impact participants views of influencers, brands, and purchase intention? Does stealthily or explicitly sponsored posts influencer these results? This study conducted a survey with 93 students from the University of Michigan to determine if varying types of branding on health and wellness influencers Instagram posts impact the perception of influencers, brands, purchase intention. It was found that more in all aspects, more positive attitudes were expressed towards influencers and brands in non-sponsored than sponsored posts. Purchase intention was, also, higher in non-sponsored than sponsored posts. These results provide brands and influencers with useful advertising practices to ensure best practices and provides greater understanding of the power of branding online on consumer opinion.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Social media have paved the way for a new occupation: "influencer." Influencers are social media personalities who cultivate online identities and attract numerous followers, who number in the thousands and even millions. Instagram has established itself as the most important social network for influencers, as it enables the most effective interaction with their own network and is the best channel for paid collaboration (Pilgrim, 2019). The network has been growing rapidly since its launch in 2010. Instagram's rising popularity has allowed brands to utilize this social networking platform as a means of marketing their products (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). Brands have the ability to promote their products by hiring social media influencers to advertise the product and show it in use. An individual influencer can be defined as an everyday, ordinary Internet user who has generated a sizeable network of people following them on blogs and social media through the textual and visual narration of their personal lives and lifestyles; who engages with their following in "digital" and "physical" spaces; and who monetizes their following by integrating "advertorials" into their blogs or social media posts and making paid physical guest appearances at events (Abidin, 2016; De Veirman, et al., 2017). In terms of notoriety, influencers lie somewhere between average people and celebrities (Neal, 2017). Influencers endorse products, post daily narratives, and tend to be seen by audience members as both credible and authentic (De Veirman, et al., 2017). Brands will often select specific influencers to promote their products and services, depending on the personal brand that the influencer has created for themselves. This leads to brands becoming identified with an influencer who promotes them, and vice versa, because audiences grow accustomed to seeing the two affiliated online.

The type of content that influencers produce is typically called user-generated content, or UGC. This refers to content created by the influencer (Cheong & Morrison, 2013). Here, influencers have freedom over their content, what they post, and how it is framed. Alternatively, content can be created by brands and producers of products; this is called producer-generated content, or PGC (Cheong & Morrison, 2013). This type of content can be found in posts sponsored by brands. Much of the time, the distinction between the two can be hard to differentiate on social media, yet both UGC and PGC have the potential to influence audiences and market goods and services. For example, depending on how the brand or sponsorship is presented, the fact that a post is sponsored by a brand can be hard to decipher because of stealthy branding, like tucking a brand's name into a string of hashtags. Instagram is crowded with branded content, making it unremarkable to see when users scroll through their newsfeeds (Neal, 2017).

In terms of types of influencers, a rise in "health and wellness influencers" has occurred on Instagram. These are people who post content concerning health, such as clean eating, fitness, and overall healthy lifestyles. Their personal "brand" comprises their daily health activities, and their posts often encourage followers to perform similar behaviors or motivate them to live a healthy lifestyle. Health and wellness influencers share pictures and videos showing their own progress to keep themselves accountable and to receive encouragement from followers (Neal, 2017). Health influencers have credibility due to their "Instafame," making them ideal endorsers for companies that wish to promote health-related products such as healthy food, workout equipment, supplements, attire, and more (Neal, 2017). These brands, in turn, often become associated with the influencer promoting them.

While topics surrounding influencers, health, and Instagram have been studied in the field of communication, for this thesis I studied the credibility of influencers selling health and health-related brands on Instagram. Through an online experiment with three branding conditions (no branding, stealthy branding, and explicit branding), I examined the effect that branding has on responses to influencer posts about health. The online questionnaire presented Instagram users with different Instagram posts from five men and five women of varying racial/ethnic statuses, all of whom had a large enough following to give them the title of "influencer," but not so large that most research participants would be familiar with them. The posts all discussed health and encouraged healthy living in some manner, ranging from clean eating to exercise to overall wellbeing. Participants were asked questions about their trust toward each influencer after viewing. They were also asked if they knew the brands being promoted, and their perceptions of these brands. I tested for differences in sentiments and purchase intentions between Instagram users who viewed (1) user-generated content with no branding, (2) stealthily branded user-generated content, and (3) explicitly brand-promoted content. This project aimed to answer six general research questions: two relevant to attitudes toward influencers, two relevant to attitudes toward brands, and two relevant to intentions to buy branded products. There is relatively little research on attitudes toward influencers and brands at the point of their intersection on social media, but what research exists is summarized below in the literature review, after which specific hypotheses appear.

> **RQ1**: Do people have more positive attitudes toward **influencers** with sponsored or non-sponsored posts?
>
> **RQ2:** Do people have more positive attitudes toward **influencers** with stealthily or explicitly sponsored posts?

RQ3: Do people have more positive attitudes toward **brands** when they appear in sponsored posts versus not?

RQ4: Do people have more positive attitudes toward **brands** when they appear in explicitly versus stealthily sponsored posts?

RQ5: Do people have more intention to **buy** branded products that appear in sponsored posts versus not?

RQ6: Do people have more intention to **buy** branded products that appear in explicitly versus stealthily sponsored posts?

Literature Review

Understanding the Impact of Influencers

Two major theoretical concepts are critical for understanding how sponsored Instagram accounts wield influence over audiences: media literacy and source credibility. **Media literacy** is defined as the ability to reflect on the opportunities and risks of media use (Riesmeyer, Hauswald & Mergen, 2019). Social media have grown rapidly in the past decade, and today they play a prominent role in daily life and influence people's understanding of the world around them. Research shows that when users browse the internet, they trust information about products more when it comes from other consumers as opposed to manufacturers (Cheong & Morrison, 2008). Although blogs are not memorable information sites to consumers, discussion boards, product reviews, and UGC social media posts are viewed as trustworthy and credible sources of product information (Cheong & Morrison, 2008). In turn, gathering information online is becoming easy for many.

When processing information online, it can be difficult for users, especially adolescents, to decipher where the content they are viewing is coming from. For example, adolescents have a

difficult time distinguishing branded versus organic (i.e., unbranded and user-generated) content posted on social media (Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019). In addition, users' emotional response to the content influences how they process it, such that users who experience positive emotions from social media content are more likely to engage with it (Klassen, Borlesis, Brennan, Reid, Mccaffrey, & Lim, 2018). Finally, the type of platform that displays information influences how the content is perceived by users. For instance, content that is perceived as "relatable" is associated with fewer interactions on Facebook but more interactions on Instagram (Klassen et al., 2018). Understanding media literacy and how people process information online allows researchers to better comprehend the power of online influencers.

The second theoretical concept that is critical for understanding influencers and their power is **source credibility**. Source credibility theory originated in the 19th century as a systematic way of describing the communicator characteristics that affect the receiver's acceptance of the communicator's message (Ohanian, 1990). Source credibility is pertinent to an influencer's credibility, reliability, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Rich (2019) outlined five different types of online content associated with high user judgments of credibility: automatically sourced content, suggested/recommended content, peer content, likes, and reputable content (Rich, 2019). These forms make users less critical of content on social media, especially when that content comes from relevant organizations, celebrities, athletes, and commercial brands, the last of which Rich (2019) viewed as the most powerful.

Their visibility and power allow influencers to be viewed as credible and trustworthy endorsers on Instagram (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Their personal experience enhances their credibility, with female influencers having more influence than male influencers on the success of marketing messages (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Young people judge these

online celebrities as credible and have become dependent on them for information (Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019). Users, especially adolescents and young adults, are especially dependent on influencers for information regarding person-specific topics such as health (Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019). Influencer power dictates how users perceive health information, making it an important topic for study.

The theoretical concepts of media literacy and source credibility, combined with research findings demonstrating high perceived credibility for Instagram endorsers, suggest that sponsorship lends a degree of legitimacy to an influencer. Thus, I predicted that sponsored posts would be associated with more positive attitudes toward influencers than unsponsored posts by the same influencers:

H1: Participants will express more positive attitudes toward **influencers** with sponsored posts than the same influencers with non-sponsored posts.

Influencers and Branding

Social media have a major impact on brand image, and UGC has a major impact on hedonic brand image, which is the emotional meaning that consumers develop when considering a specific brand (Bruhn, Schoenmueller & Schäfer). Investigating online branding and brand communication helps identify the role that influencers play in the delivery of market-relevant information, since influencer posts are a method of advertising products. UGC and PGC have varying influences on users' hedonic brand image and general ideology around the brand. PGC tends to have a greater influence on a brand's practical/functional image, while UGC has a larger influence on hedonic brand image (Bruhn, Schoenmueller & Schafer, 2012). User-generated social media communication enhances both brand equity (a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand) and brand attitudes, while firm-created social media communication only

affects brand attitude. Both brand equity and brand attitude have a positive influence on purchase intention (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). This demonstrates that an influencer's UGC is valuable to brands because of the various positive influences it has on users' perceptions of the brand. Online research is an effective way to observe the effects of branded and user-generated communication when studying purchase intention and brand equity because of the ability to recruit a large sample size and obtain real Instagram users' viewpoints (Schivinski, Bruno, & Babrowski et al., 2016).

Brand-related UGC can affect a consumer's perception of a specific brand (Christodoulides, Jevons & Bonhomme, 2012). This leads perceived brand uniqueness to be contingent on how many people follow an influencer (DeVeriman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). This type of content is a mix of UGC and PGC. Consumer perceptions of UGC have a direct positive impact on consumer brand equity. This is especially the case when consumer perception is driven by consumer self-concept (self-expression/identity), brand community (people who are highly invested in a brand), and perceptions of co-content creation (customers working with brand for social benefits) (Christodoulides et al., 2012). When both brand equity and influencer content are strong, the two are able to grow together and maximize marketability.

In spite of the general rule that brands lend legitimacy to influencers, it is important to note that posts that are sponsored by brands may harm attitudes toward the influencer. (Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019). Posts that are clearly sponsored by brands often have fewer likes and comments than organic UGC posts, impacting source credibility because of lower engagement with the post (Neal, 2017). These types of posts also tend to contain fewer positive sentiments from followers about the influencer who posted the content (Neal, 2017). Specific industries also affect the relationship between firms and influencers. For example, within the health industry,

firms have a strong focus on advertising through influencers to promote ideas such as the "ideal" body, mental health, and happiness through targeted supplements and sportswear (Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019). This relationship makes it critical to study how audiences in the health industry view this type of sponsored content and its effects. Based on research summarized above, I expected attitudes toward influencers who post explicitly branded content to be less positive than attitudes toward the same influencers when they post stealthily branded content (that is, content without logos but with a hashtagged brand name embedded in the content). I also expected this difference to apply to attitudes toward brands themselves.

> **H2:** Participants will express more positive attitudes toward **influencers** with stealthily sponsored posts than the same influencers with explicitly sponsored posts.
>
> **H3:** Participants will express more positive attitudes toward **brands** in stealthily sponsored posts than the same brands in explicitly sponsored posts.

Sponsored Posting and Purchase Intentions

Health influencers and branded promotions communicating health-related information have revealed new perspectives on health and new ways for people to learn about the importance of a healthy lifestyle (Rich, 2019). A recent study found that people tend to engage less with health-promotion content than lifestyle content on Facebook and Instagram. Contrarily, people engage with health-promotion content more when it is framed under a lifestyle content lens. (Klassen et al., 2018). The majority of the content posted on social media by health influencers is branded content (Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019). The majority of this content is posted by female influencers creating content about diet, nutrition, and physical activity.

Health influencers typically create content about regimented food intake and exercise routines, as a means to achieve and/or maintain a clearly defined body image (Pilgrim & Bohnet-

Joschko, 2019). These posts are aimed at encouraging a healthy lifestyle and presenting body ideals to audiences. Health brands partner with health influencers to promote and advertise their products. Users are likely to express a higher intention to purchase products from Instagram when the product is placed in the foreground of the image and easily visible to users (Valentini, Romenti, Murtarelli, & Pizzetti, 2018).

Viewers are therefore likely to be receptive to content on social media that promotes actions to live a healthier life, especially because Instagram confronts users with nutritional content almost daily (Riesmeyer et al., 2019). The key action from the perspective of brands is the purchase and regular use of branded products and services. Instagram influencer content has well-established effects on users' buying behavior, with 18-30-year-old women being prime targets (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). Since Instagram is a visual-centric platform, photo quality influences a viewer's purchase intention such that higher-quality images have more influence (Teo, Leng & Phua, 2019). Beyond photo quality and product placement within the image, there is little research on how branded UGC influences purchase intentions. However, I expected purchase intentions for the advertised products in sponsored posts to follow my predictions for attitudes toward brands themselves. Thus I predicted that:

H4: Participants will report greater **purchase intentions** for brands that appear in sponsored posts than the same brands when they do not appear in posts at all.

H5: Participants will report greater **purchase intentions** for brands that appear in explicitly sponsored posts than the same brands when they appear in stealthily sponsored posts.

Method

13

This study was approved by the University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences IRB prior to recruitment and data collection. Two hundred college students were recruited from the University of Michigan's Communication Studies 102 course. Students' primary language was English. A total of 93 students participated in the study, with 15 males, 77 females, and 1 unknown. Eighty-two percent of participants identified as White. All of the students who participated gave consent to engage in this study and in exchange for participating they received course credit.

Participants answered numerous questions in a 30-minute Qualtrics online study. Responses were anonymous and participants were told that the purpose of the study was to find out about their background, the media content they consumed, how they respond to that content, and what they think about the credibility of influencers promoting health on Instagram. Participants were asked demographic questions and questions surrounding their Instagram use. These included questions such as how many minutes per day they use Instagram, how often they seek out health-related content on Instagram, and how frequently they seek out Instagram posts from health influencers (people who maintain accounts for the purpose of posting about health). Participants also used the self-rated health scale developed by Idler and Benyamini (1997) to rate their perceived overall physical health.

Next, participants viewed one of three conditions. Qualtrics randomly assigned each participant to condition, with an even split among all conditions. The first condition was a series of ten different Instagram health influencer posts, all promoting various aspects of health. These were depicted as organic UGC posts. The next condition featured the same ten images, but explicitly branded with obtrusive brand logos. The third condition featured the ten images with "stealthy branding." These posts only contained a hashtag with the brand name, a hashtag with

the word ad and a hashtag with the word sponsored. Images comprised five male influencers and five female influencers of varying race and ethnicity. A sample post manipulation is illustrated in Figure 1. These influencers had a large range of followers including anywhere from 83K to over 6 million. After viewing each image, participants were asked to rate how likable they found the influencer and how much they trusted the influencer. Questions were answered with a five-point scale ranging from not at all (1) to completely (5) (Figure 2).

After viewing the images, participants were told that they were going to be asked questions about brands that were commonly advertised on Instagram. They were presented with a series of brands and questions regarding the brands. All 10 of the brands depicted in the images were on the list. Three brands that were not shown in the images were also included for validity checks. Participants were presented with statements in a table measuring their perceptions of each brand, including whether it makes sense to buy this brand instead of any other, even if they are the same, whether they have a pleasant idea of the brand, and whether they intend to purchase this brand in the future. These statements were taken from Schivinski, Bruno and Dabrowski's (2016) study on consumer perceptions of brands. Statements were answered on a seven-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7) (Figure 3). All measures and stimulus can be viewed in the Appendix.

Results

After data were collected, IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software was used to test hypotheses and the research question. The sample was composed primarily of White females age 19. The sample reported, on average, spending about 45 minutes per day on Instagram. In terms of seeking out health related content on the app, participants averaged seeking out this content about once a month. When measuring how often participants seek out

Instagram posts from health related influencers, the average ranged from once a month to a few times a month. Finally, the sample reported on average that their physical health was good to very good.

The mean of influencer likability variables was 3.09 (*SD* = 0.74) on a scale of 5 (Table 1). Influencers displayed with no branding were rated as having the highest likability (Table 2). Influencers in the explicit branding condition were rated as having the lowest likability. Finally, influencers in the "stealth" branding condition fell between these two, with no significant difference from either of the other two conditions.

The mean of all influencer trust variables was 2.65 (*SD* = 0.84) on a scale of 5 (Table 3) . Similar to the results for influencer likability, influencers depicted with no branding were rated the most trustworthy, with the explicit branding condition having the lowest amount of trust and the stealth branding condition falling between the two with no significant difference from either of the other two conditions (Table 4).

Positive attitudes toward the brands averaged 2.78 (*SD* = 0.88) on a scale of 5 (Table 5). Participants who saw no branding in the image or caption had more positive attitudes toward the brands displayed. Those who saw the explicit branding had the least positive attitudes toward the brands, with the stealth branding condition falling between the two other conditions with no significant difference from either of the other two conditions (Table 6).

Brand purchase intentions were measured separately from other brand attitude questions, as purchase intention is a behavioral proxy for actual purchasing behavior. The purchase intention mean was 2.82 (*SD* = 1.15) on a scale of 5 (Table 7). Results indicated that purchase intention was highest in the no-branding condition. Purchase intention was second highest for the

explicit branding group and lowest among the stealth branding group with a significant difference from both of the other two conditions (Table 8).

Discussion

The first goal of this study was to examine perceived trust and likability of influencers based on the type of branded health content they post on their Instagram profiles. Participants who viewed non-branded posts attributed significantly more trust and likability to the influencers than participants exposed to sponsored posts (both explicit and stealthy). This analysis is pertinent to research question one, which asked whether people have more or less positive attitudes toward influencers with sponsored posts than non-sponsored posts. The results of the analysis do not support hypothesis one, which predicted that participants would express more positive attitudes toward influencers with sponsored posts than with non-sponsored posts. While past literature has found that young people view influencers as credible and become dependent on them for information, it is likely that participants respected the influencers more when their posts appeared to be UGC rather than PGC (Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019).

Research question two dove deeper into the branding issue by asking if people have more or less positive attitudes toward influencers with stealthily or explicitly sponsored posts. Analyses showed that stealthily branded posts were not significantly different from either explicitly branded or unbranded. This finding does not supports hypothesis two, which suggests that participants will express more positive attitudes toward influencers with stealthily sponsored posts than with explicitly sponsored posts. While the results were not significant, the mean fell in the direction of expressing more positive attitudes toward influencers with stealthily than with explicitly sponsored posts, and the issue merits further study, perhaps with a larger sample. This trend is consistent with past literature showing that brand-sponsored posts cast a negative light

on influencers and inspire less engagement with and less positive sentiments about these influencers (Neal, 2017; Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019). This study replicates and builds off of these studies in terms of understanding how sponsorships—and different kinds of sponsorships—impact users' perceptions of Instagram influencers.

The second goal of this study was to examine perceptions of brands based on how they were displayed (or not) in Instagram posts. People who saw non-branded posts reported significantly more positive attitudes toward the displayed brands than people who saw branded posts. This finding is pertinent to research question three, which asked whether people would have more or less positive attitudes toward brands depending on whether they appeared in sponsored posts. The findings align with research showing that brands are viewed more positively and that users engage more with posts when brand-related content appears to be UGC than when it appears to be PGC (Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019).

Beyond this, people in the explicit branding condition displayed the least positive attitudes toward brands, with the stealth branding condition falling between the two other conditions. It is important to note that stealthily branded posts were not significantly different from either explicitly branded or unbranded groups. This finding is pertinent to research question four, which asked whether people have more or less positive attitudes toward brands when they appear in stealthily sponsored posts versus explicitly sponsored posts. Hypothesis three, that participants would express more positive attitudes toward brands in stealthily sponsored posts than in explicitly sponsored posts, was not supported because of the insignificant results. Similar to likability, the mean fell in the direction of stealthily branded posts exhibiting more positive attitudes toward brands than explicitly branded posts, but further study is necessary. This trend is consistent with other studies showing that posts that are clearly sponsored by brands often have

fewer likes and comments than UGC posts (Neal, 2017). The reason for this finding is unclear. It is possible that participants may not have noticed the branding in the stealthily branded condition as clearly as the branding in the explicitly branded condition, making some participants think the stealthily branded condition was UGC. In turn, this thought may have generated more positive engagement with stealthily branded posts than explicitly branded posts. It is also possible that the stealthy branding was noticed and is processed differently, perhaps as a gentler form of branding, than the explicit branding. Either way, these findings expand on past work by showing that the form of sponsorship affects how positively people view brands, with stealth branding coming out ahead of explicit branding.

Because the key action from the perspective of brands is the purchase and regular use of branded products, purchase intention was measured separately. Research question five asked whether people have more or less intention to buy brands that appear in sponsored posts versus when they do not. Results demonstrated that purchase intention was significantly lower for both branded conditions than the unbranded condition Hypothesis four, which stated that participants would report greater purchase intention for brands that appeared in sponsored posts than the same brands when they were not in sponsored posts, was not supported. This finding suggests that not only do people have more positive attitudes toward brands they do not see advertised in Instagram posts, but they are also more likely to purchase these brands. This finding suggests that branding on Instagram may be risky in terms of both explicit and stealthy branding.

Research question six asked whether people intend to buy brands more or less when they appear in explicitly versus stealthily sponsored posts. Analyses indicated that, while not significant, purchase intention was higher among participants in the explicit branding condition than the stealth branding condition. Because the results are not significant, they do not support

hypothesis five, which predicted that participants would report greater purchase intentions for brands in explicitly sponsored posts than in stealthily sponsored posts. While the mean fell in the direction of greater purchase intention for brands in explicitly sponsored than stealthily sponsored posts, further research is necessary on this topic. This was the only result where explicit branding was trending more successful than stealth branding, possibly due to the higher visibility and therefore memorability of the brand in the explicit branding condition.

The results collectively suggest that organic UGC produces more positive attitudes toward both influencers and brands. When influencers appeared to be posting content on their own, participants were more positive about the influencers and the brands than when there was branding involved. This result is consistent with research showing that brand sponsorship often casts a negative light on the influencer (Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019). Young adults, like those in the sample, are especially dependent on Instagram influencers for information about topics such as health (Camacho-Minano, MacIsaac & Rich, 2019; Pilgrim & Bohnet-Joschko, 2019). This study therefore reveals an interesting tension between Instagram users' desire for authentic and helpful health-related content and brands' desire to sell products and services to aid in the pursuit of health. In all respects, explicit branding had more negative impacts than seeing no branding at all. What remains to be discovered in future research is the potential utility of stealth branding. Since results indicated that it was not as harmful with respect to perceptions of influencers and attitudes toward the brand, it still may be a useful tactic, but more research is needed.

Conclusion

Scrolling through Instagram has become more than just a mindless hobby. The platform has become a tool for disseminating information and marketing products. Over the past few

years the number of health-focused Instagram influencers has risen, giving them and the products that they promote a strong voice on the platform (Neal, 2017). This study aimed to explore the credibility of influencers selling health and health-related brands on Instagram as a function of whether they used branding, and the form of that branding. In general, non-sponsored content was associated with the most positive attitudes toward both influencers and brands associated with (but not displayed in) health-related posts. In contrast, purchase intentions were highest among those who saw no branding and lowest among those who saw stealthy branding with explicit branding between the two. These results suggest that branded posts may seem ingenuine and posed, making users suspect the authenticity of both influencer and brand. The findings of the study serve as a resource to both influencers and brands, exemplifying the dangers of producing sponsored posts and critiquing the assumption that the branding approach taken in traditional media will be equally effective in Instagram influencer branding.

Limitations

The present study had several limitations. The first limitation was the sample size. The study had fewer than 100 participants, a majority of whom were under the age of 22, female, and White. The lack of diversity and the small sample size limit the generalizability of the study. This may also explain why some results were not significant. Another limitation was that the sample rated their own health as "good" to "very good." A sample with more variation in self-rated health status might respond differently to health influencers and brands. Lastly, participants may have been familiar with the influencers or brands included in the study, limiting the effect of the brand manipulation and the variability of the attitude measures. However, this possibility was minimized by using influencers in this study who were familiar to relatively few participants. Given the somewhat different pattern of findings for purchase intention, future studies should

measure purchase intention along with attitudes toward brands and influencers when studying

Instagram marketing. Lastly, since marketing is a marathon and not a sprint, it would be useful to

know whether users' attitudes toward influencers affect how likely they are to follow those

influencers and be exposed to future branding on their accounts.
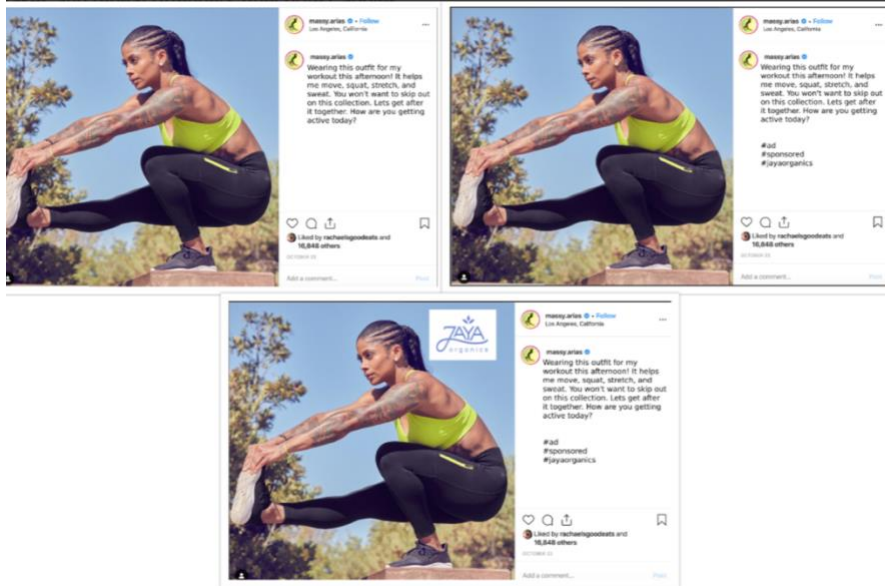
Appendix:

Figure 1:

Figure 2:

Q104 Are you familiar with this influencer?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)
- ○ Not sure (3)

Q105 How likable is this influencer?

- ○ Not at all (1)
- ○ A little likable (2)
- ○ Moderate (3)
- ○ Somewhat likable (4)
- ○ Completely likable (5)

Q106 How much would you trust this influencer's advice?

- ○ Not at all (1)
- ○ A little (2)
- ○ Moderate (3)
- ○ Somewhat (4)
- ○ Completely (5)

Figure 3:

JAYA organics	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neutral (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I am familiar with this brand (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
It makes sense to buy this brand instead of any other brand, even if they are the same (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Even if another brand has the same feature as this brand, I would prefer to buy this brand (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If there is another brand as good as this brand, I prefer to buy this brand (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
If another brand is not different from this brand in any way, it seems smarter to purchase this brand (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I have a pleasant impression of this brand (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
This brand has a good reputation (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I associate positive characteristics with this brand (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would buy this brand rather than any other brands available (9)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am willing to recommend that others buy this brand (10)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I intend to purchase this brand in the future (11)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Table 1:

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean of all likable variables	93	1.00	4.60	3.0909	.73764
Valid N (listwise)	93				

Table 2:

Likableall split at 3

Tukey B[a,b]

CONDITION	N	Subset 1	Subset 2
logo	31	1.4516	
stealth	31	1.6129	1.6129
no brand	31		1.7097

Table 3:

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean of all trust variables	93	1.00	4.50	2.6473	.84075
Valid N (listwise)	93				

Table 4:

TRUSTALL split at 3

Tukey B[a,b]

		Subset	
CONDITION	N	1	2
logo	31	1.2581	
stealth	31	1.4194	1.4194
no brand	31		1.5161

Table 5:

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean of all PosAtts without Intention	93	1.00	4.55	2.7847	.88209
Valid N (listwise)	93				

Table 6:

Mean of all PosAtts without Intention

Tukey B[a,b]

		Subset	
CONDITION	N	1	2
logo	31	2.5514	
stealth	31	2.6720	2.6720
no brand	31		3.1306

Table 7:

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean of all purchase Intention	93	1.00	4.31	2.8174	1.15149
Valid N (listwise)	93				

Table 8:

Mean of all purchase Intention

Tukey B[a,b]

CONDITION	N	Subset	
		1	2
stealth	31	2.5980	
logo	31	2.6005	
no brand	31		3.2536

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