**Influencers, Inclusion and Intentions**

The impact of diversity in influencer marketing on purchase intentions of Dutch beauty consumers

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**ABSTRACT**

With the rising popularity of influencer marketing, research has examined how the purchase intentions of consumers are shaped through identity alignment with influencers on varying social media platforms. The source credibility theory and the concept of homophily are the most prominent concepts in explaining the relationships between influencers, consumers and in predicting consumer behaviors, thus mediating roles were assumed. Although varying factors are examined in prior research on varying platforms, the impact of cultural diversity in TikTok influencer marketing campaigns have been largely neglected. Moreover, the study expected to find a moderating role of topic involvement, where high involvement with diversity had a positive impact on the association between a diverse influencer campaign and purchase intentions. This study thus examined the following research question: *"To what extent does diversity in TikTok influencer campaigns influence the purchase intentions of female Dutch beauty consumers?"*. An experimental survey design was employed for this research, randomly assigning the respondents ($N = 105$) to one of the three conditions. The first condition exposed participants to a video with four diverse influencers, the second showed a video with an influencer who matches their self-reported identity, and the third condition exposed the respondents to a video with an influencer who does not match their self-reported identity. Then, data analysis was conducted with the use of SPSS and Hayes' PROCESS Macro for the mediation and moderation analyses. The between-subjects study unexpectedly revealed that diversity did not significantly affect purchase intentions. Furthermore, the mediating role of credibility and homophily on this relationship are not confirmed, and topic involvement did not serve as a moderator. However, social attractiveness and attitude homophily, which are components of source credibility and homophily, were found as predictors for purchase intentions. In addition, an exploratory analysis showed a significant positive influence of identification on purchase intentions, regardless of the experimental conditions. The study offers valuable insights for marketeers, as the findings highlight the importance of authenticity and personal connections in the engagement of consumers, whereas peripheral cues of diversity only provide surface-level affiliations.

KEYWORDS: *Influencer Marketing, Diversity and Inclusion, TikTok, Purchase Intentions, Identification*

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## 1. Introduction

"Oh, I swear by this product!!!" is a statement often made by influencers on TikTok. Influencer marketing has become a prominent communication strategy for brands to engage with their audiences in modern technology (Lou & Yuan, 2018, p. 58). Social media influencers, also known as self-made celebrities, are content creators with a significantly large following base (Haenlein et al., 2020, p. 11). Moreover, they are specialized in creating content in specific fields such as lifestyle, beauty, food, fashion and travel. Followers of influencers are fellow social media users with similar interests (Belanche et al., 2021, p. 187). These shared interests and other similarities between influencers and followers can reinforce the feeling of a shared social identity, which can influence the behaviors of consumers (Tajfel, 1974, p. 69). The existing and evolving relationships based on similarities between influencers and their audiences offer brands a cost-effective strategy to reach their audiences through these authentic connections (Lou & Yuan, 2018, p. 59). Influencers thus play a key role in the shaping of consuming behavior with their ability to build trust, credibility and relatability with audiences.

Similarly, personalized advertisements play a significant role in engaging consumers on social media platforms, by targeting the characteristics and interests of individuals and thereby reducing the cognitive efforts in purchase decisions for customers (Chandra et al., 2022, p. 1531). Influencer marketing can serve as a form of personalized advertisements, by showcasing needs and characteristics from an audience, depicted by relatable influencers. For example, De Keyer et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of interests in personalization strategies (p. 14). Another study presents how social characteristics such as the use of language and the inclusion of cultural factors can improve persuasive communication strategies (Berkovsky et al., 2012, p. 3). Research presents how highly personalized advertisements have a strong impact on consumer behaviors of adolescents (Walrave et al., 2016, p. 601). Thus, when influencers can reflect distinctive social characteristics, similar consumers can be attracted through this form of personalized advertising. To create effective and inclusive marketing strategies, it is thus essential to understand how several personal characteristics can impact the dynamics between influencer campaigns and consumer behavior.

Distinctive social characteristics are incorporated into modern marketing strategies to reach more consumers (Henderson & Williams, 2013, p. 1). This shift to more diverse marketing strategies, encourages content that can reach wider ranges of audiences through inclusivity and representation. Roberson (2006) explains that diversity consists of observable and non-observable personal characteristics (p. 214). The observable characteristics include gender, age and ethnicity. Non-observable characteristics may include socioeconomic background, personality and education. A representation of minorities including these unique characteristics can reinforce the feelings of belonging to a community, as the consumers have a shared social identity (Ferraro et al., 2024, p. 1344). Thus, an incorporation of diverse characteristics in personalized marketing strategies can

enhance consumer behaviors (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017, p. 3; Farivar & Wang, 2022, p. 7; Ferraro et al., 2024, p. 1343; Onofrei et al., 2022, p. 107; Weismueller et al., 2020, p. 168).

Although characteristics of influencers are essential in shaping consumer behaviors, the different characteristics of social media platforms can also foster varying relationships with audiences (Han & Balabanis, 2023, p. 400). TikTok is a social media platform, where users can create personal profiles, follow other users, and create content. Barta and Andalibi (2021) explain that the features of TikTok promote highly personalized and captivating content, through the primary presence of short videos and its personalized algorithm (p. 22). As discussed by Haenlein et al. (2020, p. 10), TikTok needs to be closely researched as its user base and engagement rates have been increasingly growing, partly due to its entertaining characteristics. Moreover, the rich content that can be offered is expected to have more influence than the textual content offered on other platforms. Previous studies have emphasized the significant role of authentic content created by influencers and its effects on consumer behaviors on other social media platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017, p. 2; Ferraro et al., 2024, p. 1354; Onofrei et al., 2022, p. 107; Weismueller et al., 2020, p. 161). For example, Han and Balabanis (2023) describe how influencers on Instagram are found to score higher on perceived trustworthiness and homophily compared to influencers on other platforms, referring to the authenticity, mutual interests and visual appeal offered by the platform (p. 421). These findings emphasize how varying platforms foster different types of relationships with audiences. However, it remains underexplored how the different characteristics of TikTok that reinforce authenticity, can impact consumer behaviors.

Beauty products can be closely linked to influencer marketing, as influencers promote these products in short videos through tutorials and product reviews (Ehsaei, 2024). In a report by Influencer Marketing Hub (2025), mostly beauty and fashion brands spark high engagement rates in marketing campaigns on TikTok. House of Marketers (2025) highlights an increased grow in personalized beauty content, leading to an increase in purchase intentions (p. 22). Similarities between influencers and consumers are essential for effective beauty content, as consumers are more likely to purchase a product that has been used by and endorsed by someone like themselves (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017, p. 6; Ladhari et al., 2019, p. 2). The brand Fenty Beauty exemplifies how influential it can be to make advertising strategies more inclusive by including diverse individuals in marketing efforts, as consumer attitudes were positively influenced (Burgess et al., 2022, p. 61). Fenty Beauty is a beauty brand founded by the singer Rihanna, and is recognized for its inclusivity in marketing campaigns and their inclusive product range (Wilson, 2020, p. 38).

The demographic diversity of the Netherlands offers a nuanced composition to examine how cultural representation influences consumer behavior. With over 25% of the Dutch population having a migrant background, a significant demographic diversity is emphasized (CBS Netherlands, n.d.). Moreover, this diverse composition can be generalized and applied to similar multicultural societies.

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From a marketing and advertising perspective, this multicultural landscape presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, a sense of belonging and enhancement of brand perception can be fostered by including culturally diverse influencers in marketing strategies (Walrave et al., 2016, p. 600). On the other hand, misrepresentation could be a challenge for brands if their strategies are not reflective of the target audience (Haenlein et al., 2020, p. 13).

From a theoretical and academic perspective, the inclusion of diverse influencers in digital marketing strategies extend existing theories in marketing studies: The Source Credibility Theory (SCT), The Social Identity Theory (SIT) with a focus on homophily and the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) with a focus on the importance of topic involvement. Varying studies have studied the importance of SCT on consumer behaviors, but have neglected how diverse characteristics may impact source credibility (Filieri et al., 2018, p. 960; Ismagilova et al., 2019, p. 6; Lou & Yuan, 2018, p. 61; Masuda et al., 2021 p. 8; Nafees et al., 2017, p. 8). To have a nuanced understanding of source credibility, the role of cultural diversity can explain how shared cultural attributes may enhance a feeling of similarity and therefore impact the credibility of a source. Research shows that other characteristics such as age, gender and interests can enhance the effectiveness of advertisements (De Keyzer et al., 2021, p. 39). In the case of influencer marketing, these factors can increase a feeling of similarity between influencers and consumers and therefore enhance the effectiveness of advertisements (De Keyzer et al., 2019, p. 9). Moreover, similarity and homophily are shown to enhance source credibility and trustworthiness as individuals are more likely to adopt a belief from someone who is perceived as similar (De Keyzer et al., 2019, p. 29; Lou and Yuan, 2018, p. 68). Farivar and Wang (2022) show the significance of social identity similarity on consumers' purchase intentions (p. 7). However, the study does not focus on the different aspects of social identity. With the inclusion of cultural identities, the relationship between SIT and influencer marketing can therefore be tested and refined. Moreover, Stephenson et al. (2001, p. 325) explain that higher involvement with a topic, leads to a higher cognitive effort in processing a message. As such, high involvement with cultural diversity may lead to a higher cognitive effort, thereby increasing its impacts on consumer behaviors (Farivar & Wang, 2022, p. 3). Thus, this study helps to understand the varying roles of cultural diversity in the ELM.

While influencer marketing has become a well-researched topic, the specific impact of cultural diversity in influencer campaigns remains relatively underexplored. Existing literature mostly focuses on the effectiveness of influencers in building consumer trust, authenticity and driving purchase behavior (Lou & Yuan, 2018, p. 58), withholding the importance of cultural representation in influencer marketing. This gap in existing research highlights the need for more understanding of diversity within influencer marketing and consumer behavior. As homophily is proven to be a significant factor in consumer behavior, a focus on cultural attributes within homophily can explain consumer behavior from a different perspective.

Despite the diverse composition of demographics in the Netherlands, there is limited research on the influence of cultural diversity in influencer marketing and consumer behavior from Dutch audiences. Therefore, this study aims to fill these gaps by studying the relationship between culturally diverse influencer campaigns and Dutch consumers' purchase intentions. The following central research question is used for this study: *"To what extent does diversity in TikTok influencer campaigns influence the purchase intentions of female Dutch beauty consumers?"*. This research will be supported with the use of multiple theories, which will be further discussed in the theoretical framework.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The research on the importance of diversity in influencer marketing is supported by a theoretical framework consisting of three theories: The Source Credibility Theory (SCT), The Social Identity Theory (SIT), with a focus on homophily and the Elaboration Likelihood Model, with a focus on the importance of topic involvement (ELM). The theories offer a comprehensive perspective on how diverse influencer campaigns can influence consumer behavior in the Dutch market. The diverse cultural landscape of the Netherlands offers an opportunity to examine how consumers respond to influencer campaigns, according to the SIT and the concept of homophily. It is expected that perceived homophily and identification with influencers can increase perceived credibility, which in turn may influence the purchase intentions of Dutch consumers. Moreover, with the ELM a differentiation is made between consumers who are less involved with the concepts of diversity and inclusion and consumers who are provoked by content that contains diversity. In both routes, culturally diverse influencers can play a role in persuading their audiences. The theoretical perspectives offer a foundation in communication and consumer behavior for this research, but also address gaps in current literature. This theoretical framework supports the exploration of the interplay between cultural representation in influencer marketing and consumer behaviors.

### 2.1 Influencer Marketing and the Beauty Industry

Influencer marketing has become a prominent marketing strategy, as the estimated market size in 2025 of $32.55 billion USD has tripled since the year 2020 (Statista, 2025). With the growth of social media, communications between brands and consumers have transformed into more interactive relationships, by allowing consumers to co-create content (Ladhari et al., 2019, p. 2). In the field of influencer marketing, brands select specific influencers to promote their brand in the curated content from influencers (Lou & Yuan, 2018, p. 58). As opposed to traditional celebrities, influencers are often described as self-made celebrities, gaining recognition through their content on social media (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017, p. 2; Ladhari et al., 2019, p. 2; Weismueller et al., 2020, p. 161). Consumers often follow an influencer, because they have similar interests (Belanche et al., 2021, p. 187). By closely following the influencers' content in addition to having similar interests, this may lead to a friendship-like relationship (Gomes et al., 2022, p. 9). Moreover, influencers are perceived to have certain levels of knowledge in specific fields, such as beauty, lifestyle or travel (Lou & Yuan, 2018, p. 58). Thus, when an influencer endorses products that are related to these specific fields, their opinion is more likely to be adopted as useful information by their followers (De Veirman et al., 2017, p. 801). According to De Veirman et al. (2017, p. 798), this cost-effective marketing strategy has become more influential than traditional efforts, as the curated content is often perceived as highly credible when an influencer with strong ties with their followers endorses products that fits their overall image.

More specifically, Influencer Marketing Hub (2025) has highlighted how mostly beauty brands are leading in popularity amongst other brands. The beauty industry is closely linked to influencer marketing, as the promotion of these products can be visualized by influencers through product reviews and tutorials on platforms such as TikTok (Ehsaei, 2024). Filieri et al. (2023) explain how beauty products are often categorized under the term of hedonic goods. Hedonic goods are products that are consumed for pleasure, self-expression and aesthetics rather than practicality (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982, p. 96). As suggested by De Keyzer et al. (2019), hedonic goods are closely related to the motivations for social media usage, as both are fundamentally used for entertainment purposes (p. 33). Moreover, Han and Balabanis (2023) explain that when identification is high between consumers and influencers, the purchase intention of hedonic products is positively influenced (p. 422). Research (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017, p. 6; Ladhari et al., 2019, p. 2) further emphasizes the importance of influencers in the beauty industry, by exemplifying that consumers will be more likely to adopt information from someone who is similar to them.

The use of influencers as opinion leaders in social media marketing has been proven to have significant impacts on consumer behaviors (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017, p. 5; Ferraro et al., 2024, p. 1354; Weismueller et al., 2020, p. 167). For example, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) show that most of their participants have purchased a product that was endorsed by a perceived trustworthy celebrity through the platform Instagram (p. 4). Moreover, it was found that celebrities who are perceived to be more relatable and similar in lifestyle and budgets, have more influence on consumers' purchasing behavior. The study by Onofrei et al. (2022) highlights how social media interactions between fellow consumers of travel content on the platforms Facebook and Instagram impact source credibility, homophily and content quality, that in turn impact behavioral engagement and purchase intentions (p. 107). The meta-analysis by Han and Balabanis (2023) shows that influencers have a significant impact on consumer behavior, which is mainly led by the perceived credibility and trustworthiness of the influencer (p. 421). For example, the study explains that influencers varying in following size have different impacts on consumer behaviors. The primary platforms emphasized are YouTube and Instagram, as these interactive platforms encourage engagement with the consumers. Mobile applications like Instagram are believed to have a more direct impact on user experience, as the visual and authentic storytelling increase authenticity (Han and Balabanis, 2023, p. 421). Most literature reflects on the importance of influencer marketing and how opinions of influencers may impact consumer behaviors. Oftentimes, it is mentioned that influencers are viewed as credible through varying concepts. These concepts will be further explained in the following sections.

*2.2 Diversity, Inclusivity and the Social Identity Theory*

With the advancements of technology, existing marketplaces have expanded beyond cultures, thus it is important to have an inclusive marketing strategy that speaks to every type of consumer (Henderson & Williams, 2013, p. 1). As described previously, the level of knowledge of an influencer is not the primary factor for impacting communication persuasiveness. In the Social Identity Theory (SIT), it is proposed that a significant part of "individuals' self-identity is derived from their group affiliations and social identities" (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012, p. 393; Tajfel, 1974, p. 69). The group identities can include varying factors such as cultural background, ethnicity, age, gender and overall interests. These affiliations then may shape individuals' attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. Thus, when an influencer's identity aligns with the identities of their audience, it reinforces a sense of a shared social identity, which leads to stronger connections with an influencer (Farivar & Wang, 2022, p. 8). A strong connection between an influencer and a consumer, leads to positive effects on purchase intentions (Farivar & Wang, 2022, p. 7). Thus, the feeling of belonging to an online community has a significant positive impact on consumer behaviors. Moreover, research highlights how authentic narratives through personal characteristics can positively influence the perceived credibility of influencers or fellow consumers, which in turn increases brand credibility and thus positively impacts consumer behaviors (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017, p. 3; Onofrei et al., 2022, p. 107). Weismueller et al. (2020) argue how authenticity can increase purchase intention with the use of influencers whose personal traits and expertise align with the endorsed brand (p. 168). Thus, persuasiveness of communication strategies can be enhanced across diverse audiences, with the inclusion of influencers with varying personal traits.

Roberson (2006) describes that the concept of diversity consists of observable and non-observable personal characteristics (p. 214). The observable characteristics include race, gender, age and ethnicity. Non-observable characteristics may include socioeconomic background, personality and education. Thus, the following description of diversity by Thomas and Ely (1996) captures this multidimensionality: "diversity should be understood as the varied perspectives and approaches" (p. 2) from varying identity groups. Inclusivity is described as the practice of including individuals in environments, where they are valued, respected and supported by making resources accessible and letting them contribute in valuable circumstances (Roberson, 2006, p. 215). Henderson and Williams (2013) describe the essentiality of diversity and inclusion in marketing efforts, by highlighting how certain consumers can feel excluded and neglected when they do not feel represented (p. 3). Moreover, it is highlighted how varying identities of individuals play crucial roles in consumer behaviors, e.g., similar identities are more susceptible to influencing each other.

When diverse influencers are included in marketing strategies, brands can captivate varying communities. For example, Ferraro et al. (2024) find that the use of a diverse virtual influencer on Instagram has positive outcomes on consumer attitudes towards a brand, as it can be seen as more

unique opposed to non-diverse content (p. 1354). Moreover, Zhou et al. (2021) address the issues of cultural barriers in the field of influencer marketing in the Chinese luxury market and argue that an alignment of identities between influencers and audiences, with the use of cultural characteristics, can reduce these barriers and therefore increase consumer behaviors (p. 138).

However, Beckert and Koch (2025) describe the phenomenon of diversity-washing, as it is misleading to promote diversity and inclusivity in marketing strategies, while not fully supporting minorities in other contexts (p. 5). The study further elaborates on the possible misrepresentation of identities, when brands do not fully comprehend the heterogeneity in identities, it can be misleading to present a certain community solely from a monolithic perspective. For example, Oakenfull (2013) describes how gay men and lesbian women are often represented as 'one gay community' in marketing efforts, leaving behind the different perspectives from the two groups and thus not being fully inclusive in their communication strategies (p. 86). As described antecedently, it is thus crucial to carefully select influencers that promote products in authentic ways for the selected target audience, to make influencer campaigns successful (Haenlein et al., 2020, p. 13).

This literature review on diversity within influencer marketing presents how varying audiences can be targeted through the inclusion of influencers with varying personal traits, such as cultural characteristics. When a non-diverse influencer campaign is shown to a broad audience, it is most likely that this does not target every individual in this audience. Therefore, it can be expected that a diverse influencer campaign is more likely to represent multiple individuals in a broader audience, thereby increasing purchase intentions across the audience. Thus, the following hypothesis is formed:

*H1: Consumers exposed to a diverse influencer campaign will have higher purchase intentions compared to those exposed to non-diverse influencer campaigns.*

### 2.3 Source Credibility Theory

The SCT describes that the persuasiveness of a message is significantly influenced by the perceived credibility of its source, such as influencers (Hovland & Weiss, 1951, p. 650). This perceived credibility consists of four elements: expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness and similarity (Lou & Yuan, 2018, p. 61). Pornpitakpan (2004) presents how high-credibility sources are more influential than low-credibility sources across various contexts, such as commercial settings (p. 245).

The concept of expertise refers to the perceived skills, knowledge and experience of the source in a specific context (Han & Balabanis, 2023, p. 396). As described by Ismagilova et al. (2020), the perceived expertise of a source has a positive impact on information usefulness and adoption (p. 3). Filieri et al. (2018) state that when consumers perceive the source to have a high level of expertise, consumers are also more likely to rely on their opinions and thus adapt their

behavior on this information (p. 960). Thus, when a source is perceived to have a high level of expertise, their information is perceived as useful in forming the consumers' opinions and therefore influences the purchase intentions of consumers.

Trustworthiness refers to the level of perceived honesty, sincerity and truthfulness (Lou & Yuan, 2019, p. 61). When trustworthiness is perceived, it is found to have a significant and positive impact on content quality (Filieri et al., 2023, p. 21; Gomes et al., 2022, p. 16). Moreover, Filieri et al. (2023) have found that content quality positively predicts purchase intentions, thus it is important to highlight that trustworthiness is a key element for content quality (p. 22). The results by Weismueller et al. (2020, p. 167) show that trustworthiness has a positive influence on purchase intentions through influencer marketing. Thus, it is expected that when trustworthiness is perceived by the consumer, the source is perceived more credible and a higher purchase intention follows.

The element of attractiveness entails the source's likability or physical attractiveness. For this study, the concept of attractiveness refers to social attractiveness. According to McCroskey and McCain (1974, p. 261), social attractiveness encapsulates the interpersonal attraction of people who are seen to be socially 'likeable'. Research (Masuda et al., 2021, p. 8) shows a strong positive influence of social attractiveness on relationships between consumers and influencers. These relationships are found to be strongly influencing purchase intentions. Moreover, in the study by Han and Balabanis (2023, p. 418), attractiveness is found to have an influence on both purchasing intentions and on engagement behaviors, such as liking, commenting and sharing.

The concept of similarity is the most relevant for this research, as it describes the perceived likeness between the source and the consumer in terms of demographics, values or beliefs (McCroskey et al., 2006, p. 2). Park et al. (2021) have found that similarity, also known as homophily, increases social attractiveness, which in turn impacts consumer behaviors (p. 1060). This concept will be discussed more in depth in the following section (2.4 Homophily).

This framework is particularly applicable to the field of influencer marketing, as consumers often rely on cues that exemplify the perceived expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness and similarity of the influencer to evaluate the usefulness of the information provided by the digital source (Ismagilova et al., 2019, p. 6). Research presents the importance of expertise, trustworthiness and similarity on the trust of followers in influencers and its influence on attitudes toward brands (Lou & Yuan, 2018, p. 68; Nafees et al., 2021, p. 8). Alcántara-Pilar et al. (2024) highlight how perceived expertise appears as the most important factor in perceived credibility of TikTok influencers, followed by trustworthiness and physical attractiveness (p. 11). Han and Balabanis (2023) highlight how social credibility is impacted by the effects of cultural influences. For example, in Eastern countries, trustworthiness, expertise and homophily of influencers who are endorsed by fellow consumers play significant roles in shaping consumer behaviors and attitudes, due to the collectivist nature of these societies. For Western countries, attractiveness and similarity between

influencer and consumer have relatively more impact on consumer behaviors, as this adheres to the individualist characteristics of Western countries (p. 421). This interplay between cultural characteristics and social credibility further highlights the importance of cultural characteristics on the effectiveness of influencer marketing, especially in a diverse society such as the Netherlands. Accordingly, this study aims to find relevant influences of cultural diversity on the perceived credibility of influencers, and its association with purchase intentions from Dutch consumers. Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated:

*H2: A diverse influencer campaign is positively associated with perceived credibility compared to a) a matching influencer campaign and b) a non-matching influencer campaign.*

*H3: Higher perceived influencer credibility is positively associated with Dutch consumers' purchase intentions.*

*H4: The effect of influencer campaigns on purchase intentions is mediated by perceived credibility.*

### 2.4 Homophily

The concept of homophily is a comparable concept to similarity, which refers to the tendency of individuals to favor and trust those who are like themselves in varying areas such as age, gender, education, interests or cultural values (Rogers & Bhowmik, 1970, p. 525). This concept delves deeper in the SIT, as homophily may explain the shared social identities between consumers and influencers. Research shows that when a high degree of homophily is perceived by consumers, the credibility of a message increases and persuasion and behavioral intentions are enhanced (De Keyzer et al., 2019, p. 28; Filieri et al., 2018, p. 965). Ladhari et al. (2019) explain that perceived similarity between a consumer and influencer increases viewing rates and increases the likelihood of purchasing products that are recommended by the influencer (p. 4). Hanks et al. (2017) have found a positive connection between perceived similarity and consumer's connections with brands and therefore positively influences behavior intentions (p. 130). Meaning, when a consumer perceives an influencer who is highly similar to them, the consumer's connection with the mentioned brand becomes stronger and the consumer is expected to have higher behavioral intentions, such as purchase intentions. Furthermore, Rogers and Bhowmik (1970) highlight the importance of homophily on trustworthiness and heterophily on expertise (p. 534). For example, in cases of heterophily, new information from a different source is exposed to the receivers and thus makes communications more effective. However, when homophily is perceived, the source is perceived as more trustworthy, as the information comes from someone who is similar. The study by Djafarova & Rushworth (2017, p. 5) argues how similarity in appearance positively influences similar consumers on behavioral intentions. For example, the study highlights that consumers may imitate behaviors from influencers, e.g., by taking inspiration from them for outfits and social media content (p. 5).

Moreover, Han and Balabanis (2023) argue how perceived homophily can lead to social comparison, which ultimately can lead to similar behaviors, such as buying and using the same products (p. 398). The existing literature on homophily and influencer marketing shows how perceived homophily can improve consumer behaviors through the concept of shared social identities. Thus, it is expected that a matching influencer campaign increases perceived homophily and that homophily has a positive effect on purchase intentions:

H5: A matching influencer campaign heightens consumers' perceived homophily compared to a) a diverse influencer campaign and b) a non-matching influencer campaign.

H6: Perceived homophily positively influences purchase intentions.

H7: The effect of an influencer campaign on purchase intention is mediated by perceived homophily.


### 2.5 Elaboration Likelihood Model and Topic Involvement

To have a better understanding of how consumers respond to influencer campaigns, the relevance of a topic or message to these consumers is essential. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) reveal that when messages are personally relevant to a person, it is more likely for this individual to process the message more extensively, which ultimately can increase the persuasiveness of a message (p. 109). In other words, when a topic or message is personally relevant to a consumer, they will be more likely to process the provided information, thereby increasing the persuasiveness of this message, such as marketing advertisements. However, when topic involvement is low, it is expected that consumers process the message less extensively and rely more on superficial cues.

According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986), involvement with a message is one of the factors that explain how elaborately an individual is going to process a message (p. 81). The theory that examines to what extent individuals process messages, is called the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). As described previously, consumers can process messages in elaborate manners, or more superficially. These two routes in message processing are identified as the central route and the peripheral route. In the central route, carefulness and thoughtfulness are essential in the evaluation of a message, meaning that an individual processes the message elaborately. In the peripheral route, superficial cues and heuristics are emphasized, and less cognitive effort is required (Petty & Wegener, 1999, p. 42). In the context of diversity and influencer marketing, when the concept of diversity is highly relevant to a consumer, this may lead to a more elaborate evaluation of the advertisement, potentially increasing consumer behaviors. However, if involvement with diversity is not as high, peripheral cues such as appearance and similarity may have higher impacts on the consumers.

In Lou and Yuan (2018, p. 61) it is highlighted how source credibility can be a peripheral cue when consumers are less likely to evaluate the content carefully, for example through cues such as

perceived expertise and similarity. However, when consumers are evaluating content thoughtfully through the central route, influencers can also reinforce the consumers' views through source credibility, for example through trustworthiness. Thus, the ELM suggests that both routes to persuasion can be used while implementing diversity in influencer marketing. For example, a diverse influencer campaign can contain meaningful content that aligns with the consumers' views, which leads to the central route. In the peripheral route, the perceived similarity of a culturally diverse influencer may engage its target audience with the theory of homophily. Stephenson et al. (2001, p. 325) emphasize the impact of topic involvement on the importance of the quality of a message in processing messages. It is argued that when a receiver is highly involved with a topic, the quality of a message also becomes more important in the impact on consumer behavior. When involvement with a topic is low, the quality of the message becomes less important, and the importance of peripheral cues increases. In summary, the theory of ELM and topic involvement may explain how consumers process influencer campaigns. When involvement with diversity is perceived high, a diverse influencer campaign is processed through the central route and therefore has higher impacts on consumer behaviors. Thus, this study proposes that topic involvement is a moderator for the impact of diverse content on purchase intentions:

*H8: The influence of a diverse influencer campaign on purchase intention is moderated by involvement with diversity and inclusion.*

**Figure 1.** *Conceptual Model*
Note: Dashed lines indicate a mediated relationship



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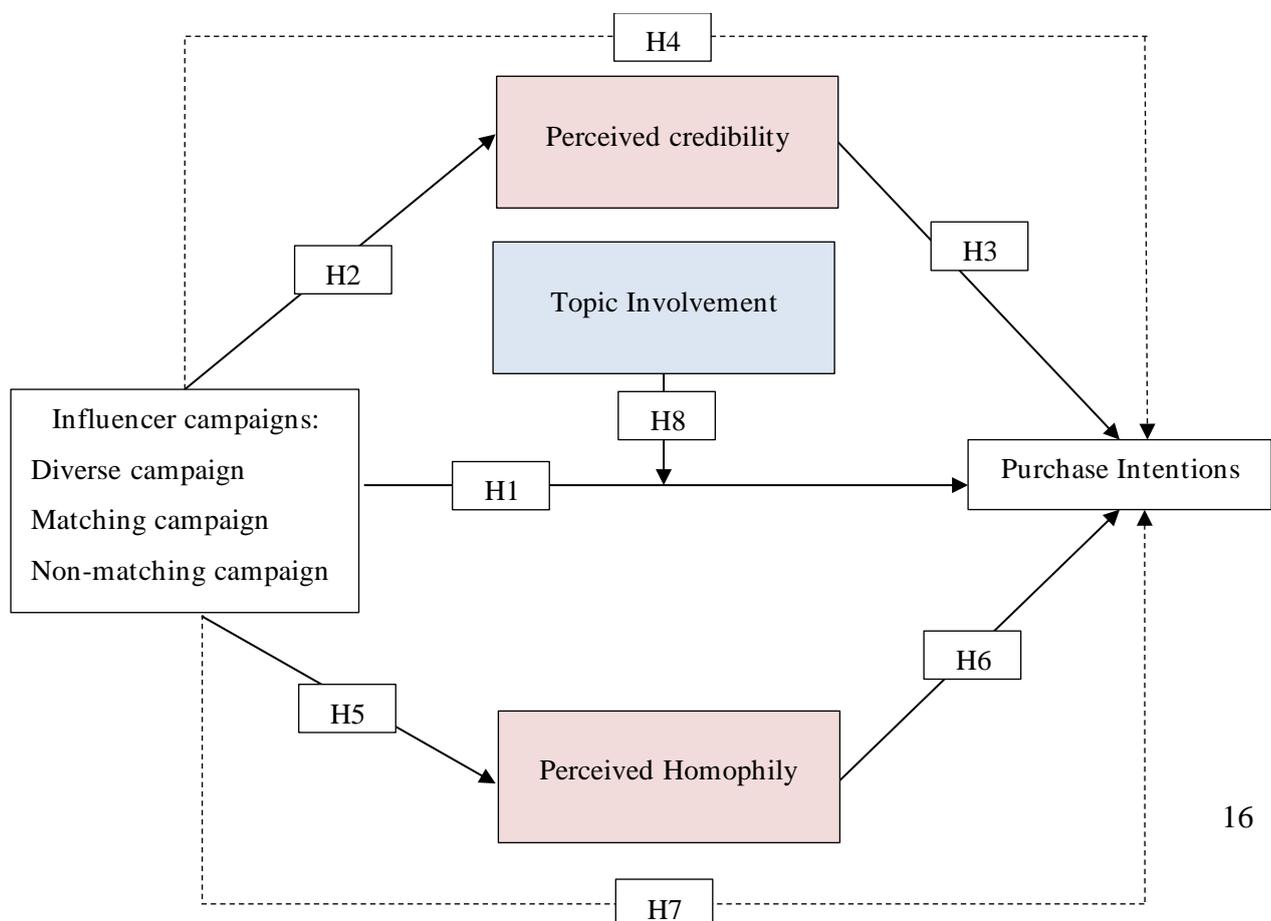
3.  **Methodology**

This chapter outlines the methodology used for this study. In the first section the research design will be discussed and the justifications for this design are presented. Second, the sampling strategy and sample will be described. Then, the operationalization and the measurements of the theoretical concepts will be shown. Subsequently, the procedure of the experiment will be described, and the validity and reliability of the data will be discussed afterwards. Lastly, the data analysis and research ethics of this study will be discussed.

*3.1 Research Design*

A quantitative approach is employed to examine the influence of culturally diverse influencer campaigns on Dutch consumers' purchase intentions, with the mediated roles of source credibility and homophily, and the moderating role of topic involvement. Babbie (2017) describes quantitative research as the collection and analysis of numerical data (p. 423). This approach is most suitable for this study, as quantitative data can develop empirical relationships between the variables (Stockemer, 2018, p. 9). Moreover, this will help analyzing the causal relationships between the variables from a statistical perspective (Stockemer, 2018, p. 8). In the research question, the independent variables are the influencer campaigns, and the dependent variable is the purchase intention of Dutch consumers. To examine the effects of diversity in the campaigns on purchase intention, an experiment is most suitable to explore causal relationships (Babbie, 2017, p. 234). Neuman (2014) explains how experiments can offer powerful insights on causal relationships, by isolating and manipulating the desired variables (p. 283). Thus, this study examines how the manipulation of diversity in influencer campaigns can influence purchase intentions. Moreover, it is examined how the manipulation of diversity impacts the mediating roles of source credibility and homophily, and the moderating role of topic involvement.

The post-experiment survey will be used to capture the large amount of data collected from the target population (Babbie, 2017, p. 256). The use of an online survey allows for a cost-effective data collection. Moreover, as the social media platform TikTok is an online-based application, the use of an online survey is also most appropriate for the target group (Babbie, 2017, p. 286). In combination with a between-groups design, a nuanced perspective on this study is captured. According to Neuman (2014), a between-groups design will facilitate comparisons between similar groups, so that the independent variable can be measured without any external factors, such as differences of the groups (p. 288). A between-groups design is desired for this research, as the three experimental groups can be compared to each other, without the risks of carryover effects or other exposure effects that exist in within-groups designs (Neuman, 2014, p. 288). Moreover, random assignments are essential for comparing groups, as the stability of the research is preserved by distributing the respondents equally. Thus, the study employed a random assignment, where the

participants were assigned to one of the three experimental conditions: the diverse campaign, a matching campaign and a non-matching campaign.

In the three conditions, respondents were exposed to different manipulations of the physical attributes of diversity. Physical attributes are seen as surface level characteristics, as demographics such as ethnicity are directly observable (Beckert & Koch, 2025, p. 2). These characteristics are viewed as primary peripheral cues. As described by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), peripheral cues are essential for persuasive communication when motivation is low (p. 3). Ladhari et al. (2019) explain that when similarities in appearance, attitude and values are perceived by consumers, consumer behaviors are increased. Moreover, the platform TikTok is therefore an interesting platform to examine these effects, as Barta and Andalibi (2021) argue that its algorithm encourages to find connections between similar others (p. 22). For this study, the appearance of diverse influencers in TikTok videos was manipulated, and was expected to influence purchase intention, source credibility and homophily. In the diverse campaign, four physically diverse influencers were shown. For this manipulation, it was expected that varying individuals in the audience could identify with the influencer(s) in this diverse array of people, to instigate consumer behaviors. In the matching campaign, one influencer was shown who matched the identity of the consumer. For this manipulation, it was expected that perceived similarity increases perceived homophily and source credibility, therefore promoting purchase intention. In the third campaign, an individual influencer was shown who did not match the identity of the consumer. It was expected that this campaign would not increase homophily, source credibility and purchase intention.

To ensure ecological validity, eight videos posted by the TikTok account of the brand Fenty Beauty were selected as stimulus material for this experiment. According to Neuman (2014), ecological validity refers to how much of the research resembles the real world (p. 468). With the use of real advertisements that were posted on TikTok, it was expected that participants would respond as they usually would respond to these advertisements. To ensure consistency in the stimuli, all the videos contained influencers that were applying beauty products, specifically lip products. This consistency ensured that every respondent was exposed to similar hedonic products, and there were no differences in attitudes towards these products. Advertisements from Fenty Beauty were selected for this experiment, as the brand offers a broad range of diversity in their advertisements and thus are representative for a diverse consumer audience, such as the Dutch consumers. However, it should be acknowledged that the inclusion of advertisements of an existing brand could have introduced confounding variables. Consumers who were familiar with the brand, may had pre-existing assumptions on diversity in their marketing efforts, possibly impacting their interpretations of the campaigns (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017, p. 86). For example, when respondents from the non-match group are exposed to an influencer who does not match with them or seem diverse, this may conflict with their previous associations with inclusivity and diversity. This conflict may in turn

unintentionally affect source credibility, homophily and purchase intention. However, as the same brand was used for all conditions, the risk of previous associations affecting differences in outcomes were mitigated (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017, p. 86). As possible brand assumptions were constant across the groups, the differences in outcomes could be confidently attributed to the variations in diversity. Moreover, the characteristics of the brand schema of Fenty Beauty promoted ecological validity and therefore could enhance the effectiveness of our manipulations. The variations in diversity portrayals challenged the brand's schema, thereby possibly provoking stronger consumer attitudes.

*3.2 Sample*

For this study, the target population consisted of female Dutch consumers (aged 18 and above), who use TikTok and beauty products. To recruit this population, non-probability sampling strategies were employed. Babbie (2017) describes non-probability sampling as a sampling strategy where a certain portion of the population is selected, using techniques not proposed by the probability theory (p. 195). The sampling method used for this study is a mix of purposive sampling and snowball sampling, aiming to collect between 90 and 120 respondents with a minimum of 30 respondents per condition. These sampling methods are often more accessible as their usage is easier and more cost-effective (Sarstedt et al., 2017, p. 654). According to Neuman (2014), purposive sampling is a strategy where a specific portion of a population is selected for a research, based on a selection of characteristics (p. 274). Firstly, this study focused on female Dutch consumers, as female consumers are the majority of TikTok's user base with 56.2% (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2025). Moreover, the diverse composition of the Dutch population offers a broad perspective on how diverse consumers are impacted by diverse marketing strategies. Lastly, the consumers were expected to be users of TikTok and beauty. These criteria were selected, as it was essential for the advertisements to be as ecologically valid as possible. Babbie (2017) describes snowball sampling as a method where the researcher collects data from their own social network, and this network further collects data from their social networks (p. 197). The survey link to the experiment was distributed through personal accounts, using varying social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook and TikTok targeted towards the Dutch audience, using the Dutch language. Haenlein et al. (2020, p. 10) describe how these platforms are essential in influencer marketing as they target varying consumer segments, and thus the chances of gaining statistical power were increased.

Before cleaning the data, a total of $N = 219$ responses were obtained. The criteria for the inclusion of participants were: (i) a Dutch nationality, (ii) identifying as female, (iii) use of beauty products, (iiii) use of TikTok. The data from incomplete surveys were removed from the analysis. Moreover, data from respondents who failed the factual manipulation check were removed. After

cleaning the data, $N = 105$ participants were included for further analysis. These participants were randomly assigned to three conditions: the diverse influencer campaign ($N = 35$), the matching influencer campaign ($N = 34$), and the non-matching influencer campaign ($N = 36$). As described earlier, 100% of the respondents identified as female, and 100% had a Dutch nationality. The sample included respondents from varying ethnicity groups, with 59% with a European ethnic origin, 27.6% with an Asian ethnic origin, 8.6% with a Western Asian or North African (WANA) origin and 4.8% with a Caribbean or South American (SA) origin. The average age of the respondents was 25.42 ($M = 25.42$, $SD = 5.75$). In table 2, the demographic characteristics are demonstrated per condition.

**Table 1.** *Demographic Characteristics.*

| Characteristics | *Diversity Group* | | | | *Non-Match Group* | | | | *Match Group* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *N* | *%* | *M* | *SD* | *N* | *%* | *M* | *SD* | *N* | *%* | *M* | *SD* |
| Female and Dutch nationality | 35 | 33.3 | | | 36 | 34.3 | | | 34 | 32.4 | | |
| Age | | | 25.77 | 5.26 | | | 26.03 | 7.83 | | | 24.41 | 3.04 |
| Ethnic origin | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Europe | 19 | 54.3 | | | 24 | 66.7 | | | 19 | 55.9 | | |
| Asia | 12 | 34.3 | | | 6 | 16.7 | | | 11 | 32.4 | | |
| WANA | 3 | 8.6 | | | 3 | 8.3 | | | 3 | 8.8 | | |
| Caribbean & SA | 1 | 2.9 | | | 3 | 8.3 | | | 1 | 2.9 | | |

### 3.3 Operationalization

The operationalization of the survey was grounded in the established theoretical framework. Research had presented how homophily can impact consumer behaviors (De Keyzer et al., 2019, p. 28; Filieri et al., 2018, p. 965). Thus, the concept of homophily was measured using varying items, such as items on shared cultural values, interests, likeness and background. Homophily and social identity alignment were assessed using the background homophily and attitude homophily scales from McCroskey et al. (2006, pp. 23-24). Background homophily was measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), including three items (e.g., one item states: "This person's background is similar to mine") (McCroskey et al., 2006, p. 23). Attitude homophily was also measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) and included six items (e.g., one item states: "This person shares my values") (McCroskey et al., 2006, p. 24). The two scales normally consist of twenty-five items in total, however for this experiment, nine items

were chosen. Particular items in the scales were not applicable to the stimuli selected for this experiment, therefore these items were excluded.

The importance of SCT in influencer marketing was emphasized in previous research (Lou & Yuan, 2018, p. 68; Nafees et al., 2021, p. 8). Thus, SCT was measured using the items trustworthiness, expertise and attractiveness. For trustworthiness and expertise, two scales from McCroskey and Teven (1999, p. 95) consisting of ten items in total were used. Both trustworthiness and expertise were measured using a semantic differential scale. A semantic differential scale uses two bipolar adjectives on both ends of a question, where the respondent has an option of seven to ten choices (Stockemer, 2018, p. 45). An example of the trustworthiness item is as follows: "Please select what you think of the trustworthiness of the influencer(s). The closer your answer is to the word, the more certain you are of your selection. (seven choices from untrustworthy to trustworthy)". For expertise an example item is as follows: "Please select what you think of the expertise of the influencer(s). The closer your answer is to the word, the more certain you are of your selection. (seven choices from inexpert to expert)" To measure attractiveness, the social attraction scale consisting of six items by McCroskey et al. (2006, p. 20) was used. Social attraction was measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). An example item of social attraction is: "I think they could be a friend of mine".

Then, the level of involvement with diversity and inclusivity in influencer marketing were measured using the four-item scale of topic involvement by Stephenson et al. (2001, p. 328). The level of involvement was measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). An example of one of the item states: "Diversity and inclusivity in influencer marketing is important to me".

The dependent variable purchase intention was measured using a multi-item scale where respondents indicated their purchase intentions on a 7-point Likert scale according to the scale provided by Prasad et al. (2019, p. 379), consisting of four items. For example, one item states: "I intend to purchase this product/from this brand" and the respondents were expected to respond with a number between 1 and 7 (1 = very unlikely, 7 = very likely).

Two questions were asked to examine whether the manipulation of the experiment was effective. The first question involved a factual manipulation check. According to Kane and Barabas (2018), a factual manipulation check is useful to investigate the attentiveness of the respondent, and thus the internal validity of the data. The question was: "How many influencers did you see?", and the options were one, two, three or four. The correct answer to this question was dependent on the condition the respondents were assigned to, either four or one. The second question was a subjective manipulation check. A subjective manipulation check can describe subjective thoughts from respondents on independent variables and thus examine whether the manipulation of diversity was effective (Kane & Barabas, 2018, p. 237). The following question was asked: "Did you identify with

the influencer(s)?". The respondents could answer with yes or no, depending on their subjective perspectives. It was expected that the respondents exposed to the diverse or matching conditions would report higher on identification opposed to the group exposed to the non-matching condition.

Lastly, four questions were asked regarding the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Questions in this section entailed the following characteristics: age, ethnic origin, how often they use beauty products and how often they use TikTok.

### 3.4 Procedure

The online survey platform *Qualtrics* was used to collect the data. While distributing the link, an accompanying text targeted the audience by asking for female respondents above 18 who have a Dutch nationality, use beauty products and use TikTok. After clicking the link on their own devices, the participants completed the post-experiment survey individually in 7 minutes. The survey started with a page including information about the study, confidentiality of the data and voluntary participation. To ensure that the participants did not become aware of the manipulation of diversity, information about the study was kept generic. Then, the respondents were shown the informed consent form in which they were informed about the confidentiality of their data, the voluntary basis of their participation and were asked for their informed consent before starting the survey. As this study focused on a specified target group, the respondents were asked about their nationality, gender and usage of beauty products and TikTok. If their answers did not match the criteria, they were directed to the end of the survey.

Before applying random assignment, all respondents were shown images of seven individual influencers that appeared later in the seven videos and asked with which influencer they identified most (excluding a screenshot of the diverse video). Then, the participants were assigned to one of the three conditions: the diverse influencer campaign, a matching influencer campaign and a non-matching influencer campaign. Based on their group, one video was shown, and the participants were asked to pay attention to the influencer(s) and the beauty products. After the experiment, they were first asked to indicate the degrees of perceived background and attitude homophily. Then, they were asked to assess the expertise, trustworthiness and social attractiveness of the influencer(s). Subsequently, respondents were asked to indicate their thoughts on diversity in influencer marketing to assess topic involvement. Next, participants were asked to indicate their purchase intention regarding the lip products of Fenty Beauty. A factual manipulation check followed the main questions, to evaluate the attentiveness of the participants. Then, a subjective manipulation check was employed to evaluate the effectiveness of the manipulation. To measure potential variables that could be of influence on the study, some control variables were assessed. The first control variables were questions regarding the demographic characteristics age and ethnic origin. Lastly, two questions measured how often the respondents purchase beauty products and how often they use

TikTok. After finishing the survey, the participants were debriefed about the complete purpose of the study including an explanation on the three different conditions. Moreover, the confidentiality of their data was ensured, and they were thanked for their participation. A complete overview of the final survey can be found in Appendix A.

### 3.5 Validity and reliability

To ensure that the data was reflective of the concepts that this study aimed to measure, validity was ensured in multiple ways. Internal validity refers to the possibility of empirical results not aligning with the true meaning of the measurements (Babbie, 2017, p. 243). As described by Diamantopoulos et al. (2012, p. 434), multi-item scales "outperform single items in terms of predictive validity". Thus, internal validity was ensured by using multi-item scales that have been validated in previous studies. Moreover, the manipulation checks ensured that the interpretation of the manipulation aligned with previous expectations, strengthening both the criterion-related validity and construct validity. With the use of a between-subjects design, there was no risk of transfer of knowledge as opposed to a within-subjects design, further strengthening internal validity. Lastly, by employing random assignment of the participants, the groups were equal and thus able to be compared (Babbie, 2017, p. 244).

The concept of external validity considers whether the outcomes of the research were generalizable and reflective of the general population (Babbie, 2017, p. 245). The utilization of published TikTok advertisements of an existing brand, aligned the stimuli with marketing strategies employed in the real world and thus ensured mundane realism (Neuman, 2014, p. 306). However, this study focused on a specified target group, thereby limiting its generalizability to the overall population. Whereas probability sampling could enhance external validity, Babbie (2017) explained that this sampling method is not appropriate for all studies, due to its feasibility and depending on the objectives of a research (p. 195).

Neuman (2014) describes reliability as the extent to which a measurement of a concept is consistent (p. 212). Equivalence reliability was ensured with the use of multi-item scales, as different indicators were used to measure one construct and thus confirm internal consistency. The statistical measure of the Cronbach's alpha determined the reliability of a scale. The results of the reliability analyses showed that the majority of the factors had an acceptable Cronbach's alpha between .70 and .95, as suggested by Tavakol and Dennick (2011, p. 54). However, background homophily and expertise showed relatively low values, indicating low internal consistency. Although validated multi-item scales were used to increase reliability, the lower values may suggest potential limitations in consistency across measurements of the concepts of background homophily and perceived expertise. In the subsection "Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis", the dimensions of the

concepts were measured and the reliability of the items were assessed through the examination of the Cronbach's alphas.

*Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis*

To explore the underlying dimensions of the nine items on homophily, a Principal Component analysis (PCA) was conducted using direct oblimin rotation based on eigenvalues (>1.00). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of .86 verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, as this exceeds the acceptable minimum value of .60 (Kaiser & Rice, 1974, p. 112). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant, $\chi^2(36) = 428.36$, $p < .001$, thereby indicating that the correlations between items were sufficiently large for a PCA. The resultant model consisted of two factors, which together explained 64.3% of the variance in homophily. The first factor included six items about attitude homophily, which explained 50.7% of the variance. Three items about background homophily loaded onto the second factor, which explained 13.6% of the variance. The factor loadings and the Cronbach's alphas of each factor are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** *Factor loadings, explained variance and reliability of the two factors found for the scale 'homophily'.*

| Item | Attitude Homophily | Background Homophily | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| This person has thoughts and ideas that are similar to mine | .87 | | 3.81 | 1.10 |
| This person has a lot in common with me | .85 | | 3.53 | 1.21 |
| This person thinks like me | .84 | | 3.62 | 1.13 |
| This person shares my values | .81 | | 3.90 | 1.21 |
| This person is similar to me | .69 | | 3.69 | 1.30 |
| This person behaves like me | .69 | | 3.41 | 1.26 |
| This person's background is similar to mine | | .91 | 3.91 | 1.35 |
| This person and I come from a similar geographic region | | .67 | 3.51 | 1.67 |
| This person is from a social class similar to mine | | .60 | 4.13 | 1.39 |
| $R^2$ | .51 | .14 | | |
| Cronbach's α | .90 | .61 | | |

To explore the underlying dimensions of the eleven items on social credibility, a Principal Component analysis (PCA) was conducted using direct oblimin rotation based on eigenvalues

(>1.00). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of .77 verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, as this exceeds the acceptable minimum value of .60 (Kaiser & Rice, 1974, p. 112). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant, $\chi 2(55) = 528.51$, $p < .001$, thereby indicating that the correlations between items were sufficiently large for a PCA. The resultant model consisted of three factors, which together explained 68.6% of the variance in social credibility. The first factor included six items about social attractiveness, which explained 40.3% of the variance. Three items about expertise loaded onto the second factor, which explained 17.3% of the variance. Two factors on trustworthiness loaded onto the third factor, explaining 11.1% of the variance. The factor loadings and the Cronbach's alphas of each factor are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** *Factor loadings, explained variance and reliability of the three factors found for the scale 'social credibility'.*

| Item | Social Attractiveness | Expertise | Trustworthiness | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I would like to have a friendly chat with them | .81 | | | 4.83 | 1.26 |
| They are sociable with me | .81 | | | 4.45 | 1.07 |
| They would be pleasant to be with | .81 | | | 4.69 | 1.04 |
| They seem easy to get along with | .77 | | | 4.61 | 1.06 |
| I could become close friends with them | .76 | | | 3.63 | 1.33 |
| I think they could be a friend of mine | .71 | | | 4.01 | 1.34 |
| Incompetent - Competent | | .80 | | 5.18 | 1.04 |
| Uninformed - Informed | | .79 | | 4.68 | 1.15 |
| Inexpert – Expert | | .72 | | 4.77 | 1.20 |
| Dishonest – Honest | | | -.94 | 4.20 | 1.17 |
| Untrustworthy - Trustworthy | | | -.89 | 4.24 | 1.16 |
| $R^2$ | .40 | .17 | .11 | | |
| Cronbach's α | .87 | .69 | .90 | | |

A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with direct oblimin rotation based on eigenvalues (> 1.00) was used to explore the underlying dimensions of the four items on topic involvement. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of .66 verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, as this exceeds the acceptable minimum value of .60 (Kaiser & Rice, 1974, p. 112). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was

significant, $\chi^2(6) = 212.79$, $p < .001$, thereby indicating that the correlations between items were sufficiently large for a PCA. The resultant model consists of one factor, which explains 68.7% of the variance in topic involvement. The factor loadings and the Cronbach's alphas of each factor are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** *Factor loadings, explained variance and reliability of the factor found for the scale 'topic involvement'.*

| Item | Topic involvement | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Diversity and inclusivity in influencer marketing matters to me | .87 | 5.87 | 1.29 |
| Diversity and inclusivity in influencer marketing is relevant to me | .86 | 5.35 | 1.53 |
| Diversity and inclusivity in influencer marketing is important to me | .82 | 6.00 | 1.12 |
| Diversity and inclusivity in influencer marketing affects me personally | .76 | 4.35 | 1.59 |
| $R^2$ | .69 | | |
| Cronbach's α | .84 | | |

A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with direct oblimin rotation based on eigenvalues (> 1.00) was used to explore the underlying dimensions of the four items on purchase intentions. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of .76 verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, as this exceeds the acceptable minimum value of .60 (Kaiser & Rice, 1974, p. 112). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant, $\chi^2(6) = 277.72$, $p < .001$, thereby indicating that the correlations between items were sufficiently large for a PCA. The resultant model consists of one factor, which explains 68.0% of the variance in purchase intentions. However, the factor loading of the item 'Re-buy' is .295, which is below .3, indicating a relatively small influence on the factor. Moreover, the reliability analysis shows a stronger Cronbach's alpha when this item is deleted, therefore this item is not included in the new variable for the factor 'Purchase Intentions'. The factor loadings and the Cronbach's alphas of each factor are presented in Table 5, with the deleted item between brackets.

**Table 5.** *Factor loadings, explained variance and reliability of the factor found for the scale 'purchase intentions'.*

| Item | Purchase Intentions | M | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| I intend to purchase from this brand | .96 | 4.13 | 1.86 |
| I am willing to recommend others to buy from this brand | .93 | 4.35 | 1.82 |
| I intend to purchase from this brand in the future | .93 | 4.64 | 1.85 |
| (Whenever I need to re-buy a product, it is very likely that I will purchase the same brand) | (.30) | 5.56 | 1.30 |
| $R^2$ | .68 | | |
| Cronbach's α | .94 | | |

### 3.6 Data Analysis

After collecting the data, IBM SPSS 27.0 software was used to analyze the data from a quantitative approach. Before analyzing the data in SPSS, the responses were cleaned, by excluding unfinished surveys, excluding respondents who do not use beauty products and/or TikTok and by deleting those who answered the factual manipulation check incorrectly. After cleaning the data, descriptive statistics were employed to present the characteristics of the sample. To check the attentiveness of the respondents, the factual manipulation check was analyzed using a one-way ANOVA. Then, a cross-tabulation table accompanied by a chi-square test were employed to examine whether there were statistically significant differences between the groups and their reporting on identification. A factor analysis was conducted to ensure the validity of the study's survey construction. After validating the construction, a reliability analysis was performed to ensure reliability using the Cronbach's Alpha. Then, several one-way ANOVA analyses were employed to examine the relationships between the categorical variables: influencer campaigns and purchase intention, expertise, trustworthiness, social attraction, attitude homophily and background homophily (H1, H2 and H5). To analyze the influence of SCT and homophily on purchase intention (H3 and H6), regression analyses were employed to determine the strength of these relationships (Stockemer, 2018, p. 148). The software PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2013) was used to conduct mediation and moderation analyses. First, the mediating roles of source credibility and homophily on the relationship between diversity and purchase intention were analyzed (H4 and H7). Lastly, the moderating role of topic involvement on the relationship between diversity and purchase intention was analyzed (H8).

### 3.7 Ethics

When conducting research in the field of social science, Babbie (2017) argues that researchers should be aware of the shared consensus on ethicality (p. 62). Participants were provided

with an informed consent form where the purpose of the study is broadly stated. In this form, the objective of the study was not explicitly stated as this could influence the effects of the experiment (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017, p. 88). The survey did not contain harmful or sensitive questions, and no harm was inflicted on the participants. The participants were debriefed at the end of the survey, by explaining the purpose of the study and by explaining the different conditions to ensure transparency towards the participants. In the debriefing it was emphasized that participation was voluntary. Moreover, it stated that the data will be kept anonymous and confidential and will only serve for academic purposes. During the process of cleaning the obtained data, all data that could be identified with a respondent was excluded (e.g., IP address, location latitude and location longitude).

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Randomization Check

For this study, random assignment was employed to distribute respondents equally across the experimental conditions. To verify whether the random assignment was successful, the demographic characteristics of the variables age and ethnicity were examined.

To examine the relation between the conditions and ethnicity, a chi-square test of independence was performed. The relationship was found to be not significant, $\chi^2(6, N = 105) = 4.42$, $p = .620$, indicating that there was no significant association between conditions and ethnicity and thus the distribution of ethnicities was not significantly different across the three conditional groups.

The association between the conditions and age was examined using a one-way ANOVA, comparing the means of ages across the groups. The analysis revealed no significant differences in age between the three conditions, $F(2, 102) = .79$, $p = .459$, partial $\eta2 = .02$. The non-match group ($M = 26.03$, $SD = 7.83$, $p = .981$) had a slightly higher mean in age than the diverse group ($M = 25.77$, $SD = 5.26$, $p = .591$) and the match group ($M = 24.41$, $SD = 3.04$, $p = .472$). However, the differences were not significant. Thus, these findings suggest that age was equally distributed across the three conditions, indicating successful random assignment regarding the variable age. The randomization check was effective on both demographic variables, showing that there are no significant differences in ethnicity and age between the three conditions.

### 4.2 Manipulation Check

Two manipulation checks were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the experimental conditions. The analysis of two questions in the survey ensured that the observed differences between the groups could be directly attributed to the type of influencer campaign.

The first manipulation check was a factual manipulation check: "How many influencers did you see?". According to Kane and Barabas (2018, p. 237), factual manipulation checks are most useful to check whether the participants were attentive during the experiment. With a one-way ANOVA, the means of the three groups were compared to each other. A one-way ANOVA revealed that the respondents reported correctly on how many influencers they saw in their assigned conditions, $F(2, 102) = 10816.00$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta2 = .99$. The diverse group reported significantly higher on the amount of influencers they saw ($M = 3.97$, $SD = .17$, $p <.001$) than the matching group ($M = 1.00$, $SD = .00$, $p = 1.000$) and the non-match group ($M = 1.00$, $SD = .00$, $p = 1.000$). The findings show that the factual manipulation check was effective, as the means across all groups are as assumed and the analysis was found significant.

Second, a subjective manipulation check was applied: "Did you identify with the influencer(s)?". Kane and Barabas (2018, p. 237) explain that subjective manipulation checks can describe subjective thoughts from respondents on independent variables. This question aimed to

detect whether the experiment was perceived as intended and if there were differences across the groups in identification with the influencer(s). It was expected that the match group would score the highest on identification, then the diverse group and the non-match group as last. A chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine whether identification with the influencer(s) differed across the experimental conditions. The relationship was found significant, $\chi^2(2, N = 105) = 6.75$, $p = .034$, indicating that there was a significant association between conditions and identification. The results show that the diverse group reported higher on identification (42.6%) compared to the match group (36.2%) and the non-match group (21.3%). These results indicated that the manipulation of diversity was effective, as there were significant differences across the groups. However, the results did not completely align with previous expectations, indicating potential limitations on the manipulation of diversity. The differences in identification between the conditions are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** *Identification differences between experimental conditions.*

|  |  | Identification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | *Yes* | *No* | *Total* |
| Non-Match Group | *N* | 10 | 26 | 36 |
|  | % | 21.3% | 44.8% | 34.3% |
| Diverse Group | *N* | 20 | 15 | 35 |
|  | % | 42.6% | 25.9% | 33.3% |
| Match Group | *N* | 17 | 17 | 34 |
|  | % | 36.2% | 29.3% | 32.4% |
| *Total* | *N* | 47 | 58 | 105 |
|  | % | 100% | 100% | 100% |

### 4.3 Hypotheses Testing

*4.3.1 Diversity in influencer campaigns on Purchase Intentions and Perceived Credibility*

The assumption in the first hypothesis was that a diverse influencer campaign would lead to higher purchase intentions compared to non-diverse influencer campaigns. To compare the purchase intentions from the three groups, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The one-way ANOVA revealed that diversity in influencer campaigns did not significantly impact purchase intentions, $F(2, 102) = .64$, $p = .531$, partial $\eta2 = .01$. The non-match group showed slightly less purchase intentions ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.79$, $p = .916$) than the match group ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 1.91$, $p = .762$) and the diversity group ($M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.50$, $p = .506$), but the differences were not significant. Therefore, H1 is rejected.

The second hypothesis assumed that consumers who are exposed to a diverse influencer campaign would report higher perceived credibility than the two non-diverse groups. This hypothesis

was analyzed using the three factors that were found reliable in the factor analysis: expertise, trustworthiness and social attraction.

A one-way ANOVA revealed that diversity in influencer campaigns did not significantly impact the perceived expertise of influencers, $F(2, 102) = .06$, $p = .944$, partial $\eta2 = .001$. The match group showed slightly less perceived expertise ($M = 4.83$, $SD = .89$, $p = .951$) than the diverse group ($M = 4.90$, $SD = 1.08$, $p = .956$) and the non-match group ($M = 4.90$, $SD = .68$, $p = 1.000$), but the differences were not significant.

A one-way ANOVA revealed that diversity in influencer campaigns did not significantly impact the perceived trustworthiness of influencers, $F(2, 102) = .17$, $p = .844$, partial $\eta2 = .003$. The non-match group showed slightly less perceived trustworthiness ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.05$, $p = .939$) than the diverse group ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 1.21$, $p = .968$) and the match group ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 1.09$, $p = .831$), but the differences were not significant.

A one-way ANOVA revealed that diversity in influencer campaigns did not significantly impact the perceived social attraction of influencers by Dutch consumers, $F(2, 102) = 2.00$, $p = .141$, partial $\eta2 = .04$. The match group showed slightly less perceived social attraction ($M = 4.12$, $SD = .99$, $p = .335$) than the non-match group ($M = 4.43$, $SD = .89$, $p = .854$) and the diverse group ($M = 4.55$, $SD = .89$, $p = .134$), but the differences were not significant. Therefore, H2 is rejected.

In hypothesis H3, it was assumed that perceived credibility positively influenced purchase intentions. As perceived credibility consists of the three variables expertise, trustworthiness and social attractiveness, a multivariate linear regression analysis was conducted. A multiple linear regression was conducted with purchase intentions as dependent variable and perceived social attraction, perceived expertise and perceived trustworthiness as predictors. The model was found significant, $F(3, 101) = 4.98$, $p = .003$, $R^2 = .13$. Social attraction was found to be a significant positive predictor of purchase intentions ($\beta = .29$, $p = .005$), thereby partly supporting H3. Perceived expertise ($\beta = .16$, $p = .131$) was found non-significant, thereby not supporting H3. Perceived trustworthiness ($\beta = -.02$, $p = .849$) was also found non-significant, thereby not supporting H3. Although the overall model was significant, only the dimension social attraction was found significant, therefore partially accepting H3.

*4.3.2 The Mediating role of Perceived Credibility*

The fourth hypothesis assumed that the influence of an influencer campaign on purchase intentions was mediated by perceived credibility. In this analysis, the mediating role of perceived expertise in this relationship was examined. To test hypothesis H4, a simple mediation analysis was conducted using Model 4 of the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2013). The experimental conditions were entered as a dummy-coded independent variable, which resulted in two variables: X1 (*diverse group compared to non-match group*) and X2 (*match group compared to non-match*

*group).* The non-match group was used as a control group. Perceived expertise, perceived trustworthiness and social attraction were added as the mediators, and purchase intentions as the dependent variable.

First, the relationship between diversity and perceived expertise was examined, $F$ (2, 102) = .06, $p$ = .944, $R^2$ = .001. The diverse group did not differ in perceived expertise compared to the non-match group ($\beta$ = -.00, $p$ = .989, $t$ = -.01, CI95% [-.43, .42]), indicating that a diverse influencer campaign did not significantly lead to lower perceived expertise than a non-matching influencer campaign. The match group also did not significantly differ in perceived expertise compared to the non-match group ($\beta$ = -.07, $p$ = .763, $t$ = -.30, CI95% [-.49, .36]), indicating that a matching influencer campaign did not lead to lower perceived expertise than a non-matching influencer campaign. Then, the relationship between diversity and perceived trustworthiness was examined, $F$ (2, 102) = .17, $p$ = .844, $R^2$ = .003. The diverse group did not differ in perceived trustworthiness compared to the non-match group ($\beta$ = .08, $p$ = .737, $t$ = .34, CI95% [-.44, .62]), indicating that a diverse influencer campaign did not significantly lead to higher perceived trustworthiness than a non-matching influencer campaign. The match group also did not significantly differ in perceived trustworthiness compared to the non-match group ($\beta$ = .14, $p$ = .564, $t$ = .579, CI95% [-.38, .69]), indicating that a matching influencer campaign did not lead to higher perceived trustworthiness than a non-matching influencer campaign. Then, the relationship between diversity and social attraction was examined, $F$ (2, 102) = 1.99, $p$ = .141, $R^2$ = .04. The diverse group did not differ in perceived attraction compared to the non-match group ($\beta$ = .13, $p$ = .594, $t$ = .53, CI95% [-.32, .55]), indicating that a diverse influencer campaign did not significantly lead to higher perceived social attraction than a non-matching influencer campaign. The match group also did not significantly differ in perceived social attraction compared to the non-match group ($\beta$ = -.34, $p$ = .159, $t$ = -1.42, CI95% [-.75, .12]), indicating that a matching influencer campaign did not lead to lower perceived social attraction than a non-matching influencer campaign.

Then, the overall model predicting purchase intentions, with the conditions and perceived expertise, perceived trustworthiness and social attraction as predictors was significant, $F$ (5, 99) = 3.22, $p$ = .010, $R^2$ = .14, indicating that 13.99% of the variance in purchase intention was explained by this model. The diverse group did not differ significantly in purchase intentions compared to the non-match group ($\beta$ = .23, $p$ = .308, $t$ = 1.02, CI95% [-.37, 1.18]), indicating that a diverse influencer campaign did not lead to higher purchase intentions than a non-matching influencer campaign. The match group also did not differ significantly in purchase intentions compared to the non-match group ($\beta$ = .21, $p$ = .364, $t$ = .91, CI95% [-.43, 1.16]), indicating that a matching influencer campaign did not lead to higher purchase intentions than a non-matching influencer campaign. Perceived expertise had no significant effect on purchase intentions ($\beta$ = .16, $p$ = .125, $t$ = 1.55, CI95% [-.09, .71]). Thus, perceived expertise did not lead to higher purchase intentions. Trustworthiness had no significant

effect on purchase intentions ($\beta = -.03$, $p = .790$, $t = -.27$, CI95% [-.37, .93]). Thus, trustworthiness did not lead to lower purchase intentions. However, social attraction had a significant effect on purchase intentions ($\beta = .30$, $p = .005$, $t = 2.88$, CI95% [.17, .93]). Thus, social attraction did lead to higher purchase intentions.

The total effect model of diversity on purchase intentions considering both the direct and indirect effects with the mediating variables expertise, trustworthiness and social attraction was non-significant, $F (2, 102) = .64$, $p = .531$, $R^2 = .01$. The diverse group did not differ significantly in purchase intentions compared to the non-match group ($\beta = .27$, $p = .267$, CI95% [-.36, 1.28]). The match group also did not differ significantly in purchase intentions compared to the non-match group ($\beta = .10$, $p = .690$, CI95% [-.66, 1.00]).

The direct effect of the comparison between the diverse group and the non-match group on purchase intentions while controlling for the mediating variables was non-significant, ($b = .40$, $p = .308$, $t = 1.02$, CI95% [-.38, 1.18]). The direct effect of the comparison between the match group and the non-match group on purchase intentions while controlling for the mediating variables was non-significant, ($b = .37$, $p = .364$, $t = .91$, CI95% [-.43, 1.16]). Thus, the direct effects of diversity on purchase intentions while controlling for the mediating variables, are non-significant.

The indirect effect of the comparison between the diverse group and the non-match group on purchase intentions through the mediating variable expertise was non-significant, as the bootstrap analysis with a confidence interval of 95% includes a zero, ($b = -.00$, CI95% [-.16, .17]). The indirect effect of the comparison between the match group and the non-match group on purchase intentions through the mediating variable expertise was non-significant, ($b = -.02$, CI95% [-.16, .13]). Thus, the indirect effects of diversity on purchase intentions through the mediating variable expertise, were non-significant. Thus, no evidence was found for the mediating role of perceived expertise in the association between diversity in an influencer campaign and purchase intentions.

The indirect effect of the comparison between the diverse group and the non-match group on purchase intentions through the mediating variable trustworthiness was non-significant, as the bootstrap analysis with a confidence interval of 95% includes a zero, ($b = -.00$, CI95% [-.16, .10]). The indirect effect of the comparison between the match group and the non-match group on purchase intentions through the mediating variable trustworthiness was non-significant, ($b = -.01$, CI95% [-.22, .06]). Thus, the indirect effects of diversity on purchase intentions through the mediating variable trustworthiness were non-significant. Thus, no evidence was found for the mediating role of trustworthiness in the association between diversity in an influencer campaign and purchase intentions.

The indirect effect of the comparison between the diverse group and the non-match group on purchase intentions through the mediating variable social attraction was non-significant, as the bootstrap analysis with a confidence interval of 95% includes a zero, ($b = .06$, CI95% [-.20, .32]).

The indirect effect of the comparison between the match group and the non-match group on purchase intentions through the mediating variable social attraction was non-significant, ($b$ = -.17, CI95% [-.59, .06]). Thus, the indirect effects of diversity on purchase intentions through the mediating variable social attraction, were non-significant. Thus, no evidence was found for the mediating role of social attraction in the association between the diversity in an influencer campaign and purchase intentions.

As the previous mediation analysis did not include a comparison between the diverse group and the match group to answer hypothesis H4, another simple mediation analysis was conducted using Model 4 of the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2013). The experimental conditions were entered as a dummy-coded independent variable, which resulted in two variables: X1 (*non-match group compared to match group*) and X2 *(diversity group compared to match group).* In this analysis, the match group was used as a control group. Perceived expertise, perceived trustworthiness and social attraction were added as the mediators, and purchase intentions as the dependent variable.

First, the relationship between diversity and perceived expertise was examined, $F$ (2, 102) = .06, $p$ = .944, $R^2$ = .001. The non-match group did not differ in perceived expertise compared to the match group ($\beta$ = .07, $p$ = .763, $t$ = .30, CI95% [-.36, .49]), indicating that a non-matching influencer campaign did not significantly lead to higher perceived expertise than a matching influencer campaign. The diverse group also did not significantly differ in perceived expertise compared to the match group ($\beta$ = .07, $p$ = .775, $t$ = .29, CI95% [-.37, .49]), indicating that a diverse influencer campaign did not lead to higher perceived expertise than a matching influencer campaign. Then, the relationship between diversity and perceived trustworthiness was examined, $F$ (2, 102) = .17, $p$ = .844, $R^2$ = .003. The non-match group did not differ in perceived trustworthiness compared to the match group ($\beta$ = -.14, $p$ = .564, $t$ = -.58, CI95% [-.69, .38]), indicating that a non-matching influencer campaign did not significantly lead to lower perceived trustworthiness than a matching influencer campaign. The diverse group also did not significantly differ in perceived trustworthiness compared to the match group ($\beta$ = -.06, $p$ = .809, $t$ = -.24, CI95% [-.60, .47]), indicating that a diverse influencer campaign did not lead to lower perceived trustworthiness than a matching influencer campaign. Then, the relationship between diversity and social attraction was examined, $F$ (2, 102) = 1.99, $p$ = .141, $R^2$ = .04. The non-match group did not differ in perceived attraction compared to the match group ($\beta$ = .34, $p$ = .159, $t$ = 1.42, CI95% [-.12, .75]), indicating that a non-match influencer campaign did not significantly lead to higher perceived social attraction than a matching influencer campaign. The diverse group also did not significantly differ in perceived social attraction compared to the match group ($\beta$ = .46, $p$ = .057, $t$ = 1.94, CI95% [-.01, .87]), indicating that a diverse influencer campaign did not lead to higher perceived social attraction than a matching influencer campaign.

Then, the overall model predicting purchase intentions, with the conditions and perceived expertise, perceived trustworthiness and social attraction as predictors was significant, $F$ (5, 99) = 3.22, $p$ = .010, $R^2$ = .14, indicating that 13.99% of the variance in purchase intentions was explained by this model. The non-match group did not differ significantly in purchase intentions compared to the match group ($\beta$ = -.21, $p$ = .364, $t$ = -.91, CI95% [-1.16, .43]), indicating that a non-matching influencer campaign did not lead to lower purchase intentions than a matching influencer campaign. The diverse group also did not differ significantly in purchase intentions compared to the match group ($\beta$ = .02, $p$ = .929, $t$ = .09, CI95% [-.77, .84]), indicating that a diverse influencer campaign did not lead to higher purchase intentions than a matching influencer campaign. Perceived expertise had no significant effect on purchase intentions ($\beta$ = .16, $p$ = .125, $t$ = 1.55, CI95% [-.09, .71]). Thus, perceived expertise did not lead to higher purchase intentions. Trustworthiness had no significant effect on purchase intentions ($\beta$ = -.03, $p$ = .790, $t$ = -.27, CI95% [-.37, .93]). Thus, trustworthiness did not lead to lower purchase intentions. However, social attraction had a significant effect on purchase intentions ($\beta$ = .30, $p$ = .005, $t$ = 2.88, CI95% [.17, .93]). Thus, social attraction did lead to higher purchase intentions.

The total effect model of diversity on purchase intentions considering both the direct and indirect effects with the mediating variables expertise, trustworthiness and social attraction was non-significant, $F$ (2, 102) = .64, $p$ = .531, $R^2$ = .01. The non-match group did not differ significantly in purchase intentions compared to the match group ($\beta$ = -.10, $p$ = .690, CI95% [-.99, .66]). The diverse group also did not differ significantly in purchase intentions compared to the match group ($\beta$ = .17, $p$ = .484, CI95% [-.54, 1.13]).

The direct effect of the comparison between the non-match group and the match group on purchase intentions while controlling for the mediating variables was non-significant, ($b$ = -.37, $p$ = .364, $t$ = -.91, CI95% [-1.16, .43]). The direct effect of the comparison between the diverse group and the match group on purchase intentions while controlling for the mediating variables was non-significant, ($b$ = .04, $p$ = .929, $t$ = .09, CI95% [-.77, .84]). Thus, the direct effects of diversity on purchase intentions while controlling for the mediating variables, were non-significant.

The indirect effect of the comparison between the non-match group and the match group on purchase intentions through the mediating variable expertise was non-significant, as the bootstrap analysis with a confidence interval of 95% includes a zero, ($b$ = .02, CI95% [-.13, .16]). The indirect effect of the comparison between the diversity group and the match group on purchase intentions through the mediating variable expertise was non-significant, ($b$ = .02, CI95% [-.15, .22]). Thus, the indirect effects of diversity on purchase intentions through the mediating variable expertise, were non-significant. Thus, no evidence was found for the mediating role of perceived expertise in the association between diversity in an influencer campaign and purchase intentions.

The indirect effect of the comparison between the non-match group and the match group on purchase intentions through the mediating variable trustworthiness was non-significant, as the bootstrap analysis with a confidence interval of 95% includes a zero, ($b$ = .01, CI95% [-.06, .20]). The indirect effect of the comparison between the diversity group and the match group on purchase intentions through the mediating variable trustworthiness was non-significant, ($b$ = .00, CI95% [-.08, .18]). Thus, the indirect effects of diversity on purchase intentions through the mediating variable trustworthiness, were non-significant. Thus, no evidence was found for the mediating role of trustworthiness in the association between diversity in an influencer campaign and purchase intentions.

The indirect effect of the comparison between the non-match group and the match group on purchase intentions through the mediating variable social attraction was non-significant, as the bootstrap analysis with a confidence interval of 95% includes a zero, ($b$ = .17, CI95% [-.05, .57]). The indirect effect of the comparison between the diverse group and the match group on purchase intentions through the mediating variable social attraction was non-significant, ($b$ = .24, CI95% [-.01, .65]). Thus, the indirect effects of diversity on purchase intentions through the mediating variable social attraction, were non-significant. Thus, no evidence was found for the mediating role of social attraction in the association between the diversity in an influencer campaign and purchase intentions.

No evidence was found for the mediating roles of the variables expertise, trustworthiness and social attraction. Thus, there was no support for the mediating role of source credibility in the relationship between diversity in influencer campaigns and purchase intention, thereby rejecting H4.

*4.3.3 Diversity in influencer campaigns on Perceived Homophily*

For hypothesis H5, the assumption was that consumers exposed to a diverse influencer campaign would report higher perceived homophily than the two non-diverse groups. This hypothesis was analyzed using the two factors that were found reliable in the factor analysis: attitude homophily and background homophily. A one-way ANOVA revealed that diversity in influencer campaigns did not significantly impact the perceived attitude homophily of influencers by Dutch consumers, $F$ (2, 102) = 1.30, $p$ = .278, partial η2 = .03. The match group showed slightly less perceived attitude homophily ($M$ = 3.51, $SD$ = 1.01, $p$ = .926) than the non-match group ($M$ = 3.60, $SD$ = .79, $p$ = .466) and the diverse group ($M$ = 3.87, $SD$ = 1.11, $p$ = .278), but the differences were not significant. A one-way ANOVA revealed that diversity in influencer campaigns did have a significant impact on the perceived background homophily of the influencers by Dutch consumers, $F$ (2, 102) = 4.21, $p$ = .017, partial η2 = .08. The non-match group showed slightly less perceived background homophily ($M$ = 3.44, $SD$ = .93, $p$ = .097) than the match group ($M$ = 3.98, $SD$ = 1.03, $p$ = .784) and the diverse group ($M$ = 4.15, $SD$ = 1.24, $p$ = .018). However, only the comparison between the non-match group and the diverse group was significant. Therefore, consumers who were

exposed to a diverse influencer campaign reported higher perceived background homophily compared to consumers exposed to a non-matching influencer campaign. These findings thus partly support H5, therefore H5 is partially accepted.

In hypothesis H6, it was assumed that perceived homophily positively influenced purchase intentions. As perceived homophily consisted of the two variables attitude homophily and background homophily, a multivariate linear regression analysis was conducted. A multiple linear regression was conducted with purchase intentions as dependent variable and perceived attitude homophily and perceived background homophily as predictors. The model was found to be significant, $F (2, 102) = 10.16$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .16$, accounting for 16.6% of the variation in Dutch consumers' purchase intentions. Attitude homophily was found to be a significant positive predictor of purchase intentions ($\beta = .42$, $p < .001$), thereby partly offering support for H6. Perceived background homophily ($\beta = -.02$, $p = .885$) was found to be a non-significant negative predictor of purchase intentions, thereby not supporting H6. Therefore, hypothesis H6 is partially accepted.

*4.3.4 The Mediating role of Perceived Homophily*

In hypothesis H7, it was assumed that the influence of an influencer campaign on purchase intentions was mediated by perceived homophily. In this analysis, the mediating role of perceived attitude homophily in this relationship was examined. To test hypothesis H7, a simple mediation analysis was conducted using Model 4 of the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2013). The experimental conditions were entered as a dummy-coded independent variable, with two variables: X1 (*non-match*) and X2 *(diverse group)*, and the match group as a control group. Perceived attitude homophily and background homophily were added as the mediators, and purchase intentions as the dependent variable.

First, the relationship between diversity and perceived attitude homophily was examined, $F (2, 102) = 1.30$, $p = .278$, $R^2 = .02$. The non-match group did not differ in perceived attitude homophily compared to the match group ($\beta = .09$, $p = .709$, $t = .374$, CI95% [-.38, .55]), indicating that a non-matching influencer campaign did not significantly lead to higher perceived attitude homophily than a matching influencer campaign. The diverse group also did not significantly differ in perceived attitude homophily compared to the match group ($\beta = .37$, $p = .127$, $t = 1.54$, CI95% [-.10, .83]), indicating that a diverse influencer campaign did not lead to higher perceived attitude homophily than a matching influencer campaign. Then, the relationship between diversity and perceived background homophily was examined, $F (2, 102) = 4.21$, $p = .018$, $R^2 = .08$. The non-match group significantly differed in perceived background homophily compared to the match group ($\beta = -.48$, $p = .039$, $t = -2.09$, CI95% [-1.04, -.03]), indicating that a non-matching influencer campaign significantly led to lower perceived background homophily than a matching influencer campaign. The diverse group did not significantly differ in perceived background homophily

compared to the match group ($\beta$ = .16, $p$ = .507, $t$ = .67, CI95% [-.34, .68]), indicating that a diverse influencer campaign did not lead to higher perceived background homophily than a matching influencer campaign.

Then, the overall model predicting purchase intentions was examined, with the conditions, perceived attitude homophily and background homophily as predictors. The overall model showed a significant effect on purchase intentions, $F$ (4, 100) = 5.18, $p$ < .001, $R^2$ = .17, accounting for 17.0% of the variation in purchase intentions. The non-match group did not differ significantly in purchase intentions compared to the match group ($\beta$ = -.15, $p$ = .506, $t$ = -.67, CI95% [-1.06, .52]), indicating that a non-matching influencer campaign did not lead to lower purchase intentions than a matching influencer campaign. The diverse group also did not differ significantly in purchase intentions compared to the match group ($\beta$ = .02, $p$ = .929, $t$ = .09, CI95% [-.74, .81]), indicating that a diverse influencer campaign did not lead to higher purchase intentions than a matching influencer campaign. Attitude homophily was found to have a significant, positive effect on purchase intentions ($\beta$ = .42, $p$ < .001, $t$ = 3.97, CI95% [.38, 1.12]), indicating that attitude homophily led to higher purchase intentions. Background homophily did not have a significant effect on purchase intentions ($\beta$ = -.04, $p$ = .713, $t$ = -.369, CI95% [-.40, .28]), indicating that background homophily did not lead to lower purchase intentions.

The total effect of diversity on purchase intentions considering both the mediating variables attitude homophily and background homophily was not significant, $F$ (2, 102) = .64, $p$ = .531, $R^2$ = .01. The non-match group did not differ significantly in purchase intentions compared to the match group ($\beta$ = -.10, $p$ = .690, $t$ = -.40, CI95% [-.99, .66]). The diverse group also did not differ significantly in purchase intentions compared to the match group ($\beta$ = .17, $p$ = .484, $t$ = .70, CI95% [-.54, 1.13]).

The direct effect of the comparison between the non-match group and the match group on purchase intentions while controlling for the mediating variables attitude and background homophily was non-significant, ($b$ = -.27, $p$ = .506, $t$ = -.67, CI95% [-1.06, .52]). The direct effect of the comparison between the diverse group and the match group on purchase intentions while controlling for the mediating variables attitude and background homophily was non-significant, ($b$ = .04, $p$ = .929, $t$ = .09, CI95% [-.74, .81]). Thus, the direct effects of diversity on purchase intentions while controlling for the mediating variables attitude and background homophily, were non-significant.

The indirect effect of the comparison between the non-match group and the match group on purchase intentions through the mediating variable attitude homophily was non-significant, as the bootstrap analysis with a confidence interval of 95% includes a zero, ($b$ = .07, CI95% [-.24, .44]). The indirect effect of the comparison between the diverse group and the match group on purchase intentions through the mediating variable attitude homophily was non-significant, ($b$ = .27, CI95% [-.08, .78]). Thus, the indirect effects of diversity on purchase intentions through the mediating

variable attitude homophily, were non-significant. Thus, no evidence was found for the mediating role of perceived attitude homophily in the association between the diversity in an influencer campaign and purchase intentions.

The indirect effect of the comparison between the non-match group and the match group on purchase intentions through the mediating variable background homophily was non-significant, as the bootstrap analysis with a confidence interval of 95% includes a zero, ($b$ = .03, CI95% [-.22, .25]). The indirect effect of the comparison between the diverse group and the match group on purchase intentions through the mediating variable background homophily was non-significant, ($b$ = -.01, CI95% [-.17, .11]). Thus, the indirect effects of diversity on purchase intentions through the mediating variable background homophily, were non-significant. Thus, no evidence was found for the mediating role of perceived attitude homophily in the association between the diversity in an influencer campaign and purchase intentions.

No evidence was found for the mediating roles of the variables attitude homophily and background homophily. Thus, there was no support for the mediating role of homophily in the relationship between diversity in influencer campaigns and purchase intention, thereby rejecting H7.

*4.3.5 Moderating role of Topic Involvement*

In hypothesis H8, it was assumed that topic involvement had a moderating role in the relationship between influencer campaigns and purchase intentions. A moderation analysis was conducted using Model 1 of Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro for SPSS to test hypothesis H8. The independent variable was dummy coded, which resulted in two variables: X1 (1 = *diverse group* vs. 0 = *non-match group*) and X2 (1 = *match group* vs. 0 = *non-match group*). Topic involvement was entered as a moderator, and purchase intentions as the dependent variable. For the overall model, significance was found, $F$ (5, 99) = 3.36, $p$ = .008, $R^2$ = .15. Therefore, 14.5% of the variance in purchase intentions could be explained by this model. However, no significant main effect was found for the comparison between the diverse group and the non-match group on purchase intentions, ($b$ = .30, $p$ = .454, $t$ = .75, CI95% [-.49, 1.09]). There was also no significant main effect of the comparison between the match group and the non-match group on purchase intentions, ($b$ = .15, $p$ = .701, $t$ = .38, CI95% [-.63, .94]). The main effect of topic involvement was non-significant, ($b$ = .25, $p$ = .309, $t$ = 1.02, CI95% [-.24, .75]). No significant interaction emerged between the comparison of the diverse group and the non-match group and topic involvement, ($b$ = .33, $p$ = .395, $t$ = .85, CI95% [-.44, 1.10]). The interaction between the comparison of the diverse group and the non-match topic involvement was also non-significant, ($b$ = .43, $p$ = .190, $t$ = 1.32, CI95% [-.22, 1.08]). Thus, the results show that the relationship between conditions and purchase intentions was not significantly impacted by topic involvement, thereby rejecting H8.

*4.3.6 Exploratory analysis of Identification on Purchase Intentions*

The analysis of the subjective manipulation check showed that the results did not align with our previous assumptions of identification across the conditions. To further explore the relationship between identification and purchase intentions, an independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether purchase intentions differed between respondents who identified with the influencer(s) and those who did not. The assumption of equal variances was met, $F (1, 103) = 1.27$, $p = .262$. The results showed that respondents who identified with the influencer(s) had a significantly higher score on purchase intentions ($M = 4.95$, $SD = 1.58$) than respondents who showed no identification ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.73$), $t (103) = 3.19$, $p = .002$, CI95% [.39, 1.69]). Thus, participants who identified with the influencer(s) reported higher purchase intentions. As the subjective manipulation check showed significance, but did not align with the expectations and the independent samples t-test showed significant differences on purchase intentions between the respondents who did or did not identify with the influencer(s), there may have been a direct influence of identification on purchase intentions, regardless of the conditions.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Theoretical Contribution and Implications

This study contributes to the research on influencer marketing, by specifically analyzing the role of cultural diversity in influencer campaigns on TikTok and the effect on purchase intentions from female, Dutch consumers. The research is grounded in a theoretical framework, drawing from the concepts in SCT, SIT, homophily, ELM and topic involvement. Existing literature on influencer marketing has provided evidence on its impact on purchase intention on varying social media platforms, while emphasizing the importance of the SCT, SIT and homophily (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2016, p. 5; Farivar & Wang, 2022, p. 6; Filieri et al., 2018, p. 966; Han & Balabanis, 2023, p. 420; Lou & Yuan, 2018, p. 67). While the results by Ferraro et al. (2024) have highlighted how a diverse virtual influencer campaign on Instagram can positively impact purchase intentions and word-of-mouth intentions (p. 1354), there is limited research on diverse influencer marketing on the platform TikTok. Accordingly, this study expected to find that a diverse campaign would increase source credibility, through the concepts of expertise, trustworthiness and social attraction thereby increasing purchase intention. Moreover, it was expected that a matching campaign would report higher on homophily than a diverse campaign and a non-matching campaign, thereby increasing purchase intentions. Lastly, it was expected that involvement with diversity and inclusion in influencer marketing would moderate the relationship between a campaign and purchase intentions.

Contrary to our expectations and the findings by Ferraro et al. (2024, p. 1354), no significant effects were found for the relationship between diversity in influencer campaigns and purchase intentions. This indicates that diversity alone may not be a key predictor for purchase intention. The subjective manipulation check showed that the respondents identified with the stimulus material, slightly different than expected. The diverse group reported slightly higher on identification, whereas half of the respondents exposed to the match group did not identify with the influencer as expected and the non-match group did identify as expected. These results may indicate that a diverse campaign is more relatable than a campaign where only one influencer is shown, as suggested by Henderson and Williams (2013, p. 1). Although there was no evidence found for the relationship between diversity and purchase intentions, the exploratory analysis did show evidence for a relationship between identification and purchase intentions. These results suggest that identification is a more prominent factor for purchase intentions in influencer marketing, compared to diversity. As described by Beckert and Koch (2025), marketing strategies should avoid diversity-washing by including minorities in meaningful ways (p. 5). Thus, the mere physical representation of diverse influencers may not be a key indicator in creating meaningful impacts on consumers. As prior research has suggested, this study expected to find a positive influence of diversity on the credibility of the source. Unexpectedly, diversity did not significantly impact the three dimensions of the SCT

used for this study. Thus, the visual cues of diversity may not be influential predictors for the credibility of a source. However, source credibility was found to partially predict purchase intentions. Social attraction had a significant, positive impact on purchase intention, whereas expertise and trustworthiness did not. These findings suggest that social likeability may have a more influential role than other factors to predict consumer behaviors, as suggested by Masuda et al. (2021, p. 8) and Han and Balabanis (2023, p. 418). The assumptions regarding source credibility led to the expectation that credibility had a mediating role in the relationship between diversity in influencer campaigns and purchase intention (Filieri et al., 2018, p. 966; Nafees et al., 2021, p. 8). However, no significant effects were found for the mediating role of credibility. Although social attractiveness was found to have a significant effect on purchase intention, the overall assumption that diversity in influencer campaigns had a positive impact on purchase intentions with the mediating role of source credibility, was not supported in this study. This result emphasizes the multidimensionality of SCT and how varying dimensions can have distinct outcomes in varying contexts (Lou & Yuan, 2018, p. 61; Nafees et al., 2021, p. 8; Pornpitakpan, 2004, p. 244). In the context of exposure to singular TikTok videos, the dimension of social attraction may be easier acknowledged and thus easier to assess source credibility compared to trustworthiness and expertise. For the concepts of trustworthiness and expertise, it may require more elaborate content to effectively evaluate these concepts (Han & Balabanis, 2023, p. 400). Petty and Wegener (1999) emphasize the importance of peripheral cues in persuasive communications, when consumers are less likely to assess content elaborately (p. 42). On platforms as TikTok, where visual content is emphasized, peripheral cues like attractiveness can thus be more influential than other variables predicting source credibility.

According to Rogers and Bhowmik (1970), individuals tend to favor others who are similar to themselves (p. 525). Thus, it was expected that consumers exposed to a matching influencer campaign, would report higher on perceived homophily. However, the results showed no significant difference in attitude homophily across the groups. However, the results on background homophily was found to be significantly higher in the diverse group, compared to the non-match group. Thus, the expectation that a matching influencer campaign had a positive impact on perceived homophily was not supported. The results thus indicate that a diverse influencer campaign may have a positive influence on background homophily. Farivar and Wang (2022) emphasize the importance of social identity alignment between influencers and consumers, which leads to positive effects in consumer behavior (p. 7). However, our study found that only attitude homophily was found to be a positive predictor of purchase intention, whereas background homophily was not. Thus, these findings partly support existing research, where homophily and similarity positively affect behavior intentions (De Keyzer et al., 2019, p. 28; Filieri et al., 2018, p.965; Hanks et al., 2017, p. 130; Ladhari et al., 2019, p. 4). The lack of effect of background homophily on purchase intention, may indicate that this

dimension of homophily does not fully reflect social identity alignment, due to its surface-level characteristics and thus does not reinforce consumer behaviors. Whereas the characteristics of attitude homophily, such as shared values may foster a deeper sense of connection (Masuda et al., 2021, p. 5). Accordingly, homophily was expected to have a mediating role in the relationship between diversity in influencer campaigns and purchase intentions. This assumption was not supported in the study, finding that neither attitude nor background homophily had a mediating role in the assumed association. Although there was a significant effect of diversity on background homophily and a significant positive effect of attitude homophily on purchase intentions, there was no indication that homophily had a mediating role in the relationship between diversity in campaigns and purchase intentions.

According to the concept of topic involvement, it was assumed that the influence of diversity in a campaign on purchase intention would be moderated by the level of involvement with diversity and inclusion (Stephenson et al., 2001, p. 325). No significant effects were found to support this assumption. Hence, involvement with diversity did not change the impact of diverse influencer campaigns on purchase intentions. An exploratory analysis was conducted to have a better understanding on the lack of significant effects of our hypotheses. This analysis examined whether identification with influencers had an impact on purchase intention. It was found that participants who identified with influencers, reported significantly higher purchase intentions than those who did not identify with influencers, regardless of the experimental conditions. This result further strengthens the research by Farivar and Wang (2022), where it was found that according to the SIT, identification with an influencer has a positive impact on consumer behavior. Moreover, as this study does not support the effects of diversity on purchase intention, this result may indicate that identification has a more powerful impact on purchase intention, aligning with the finding where attitude homophily partially predicts purchase intention.

### 5.2 Managerial and Societal Implications

Although this study further elaborates on existing theories, the findings also offer relevant insights for marketeers and brands operating in the Netherlands. The insights suggest that merely incorporating visual diversity in campaigns does not necessarily lead to higher purchase intentions. To prevent diversity-washing, brands should invest in authentic content where diverse identities can have meaningful impact, for example with the use of narrative storytelling. Haenlein et al. (2020) propose that influencers should create honest content, that aligns with their pre-existing image (p. 19). For example, when diverse influencers are selected for marketing campaigns, they could align their individual experiences with the products in question to make the advertisement feel honest (Zhou et al., 2021, p. 138). Moreover, it is suggested that identification, social likeability and perceived homophily in attitude predict purchase intentions. Thus, it is essential for brands to

understand which influencers are perceived as socially likeable with the use of trends and to understand what identities the target audience may embody, to have meaningful engagement with their audiences. Weismueller et al. (2020) highlights the importance of authentic content on purchase intentions and suggests a value co-creation method between brands and consumers, where consumers are able to help brands by suggesting influencers who are perceived credible by the audience (p. 168). Influencer agencies may be helpful in selecting fitting influencers for specific marketing campaigns. Moreover, several tools such as *Traackr* (Traackr, n.d.) show the data behind interesting influencer accounts on the most important social media platforms for influencer marketing.

From a societal perspective, diversity and inclusion are essential in marketing efforts. By empowering diverse individuals in campaigns, minority communities can be represented. An underrepresentation of communities can lead to feelings of exclusion and neglection (Henderson & Williams, 2013, p. 3). However, marketeers should be careful of overgeneralizing communities as this can still lead to neglect of minorities (Oakenfull, 2013, p. 86). Instead, thorough market research with help from individuals from minority communities can foster the creations of nuanced and inclusive campaigns.

*5.3 Limitations and Future Research*

This study is not without limitations. Firstly, the findings of this study may not be generalizable to the overall population, due to its sample size ($N = 105$) and the three experimental groups, each a minimum of 30 respondents. As this study had a specified target audience, the sample size cannot be fully representative of the population of TikTok users. If future research aims to study the impact of diversity on the overall population of TikTok users, a more complete sampling frame accompanied with a larger sample size is necessary to draw accurate results to describe this population (Babbie, 2017, p. 205). Secondly, the study was targeted towards the Dutch population, containing its unique cultural dynamics and thus interpret diversity from a different perspective compared to other populations with different dynamics. Moreover, the target audience and stimuli for the study was targeted towards individuals who identify as female. Thus, the study may lack perspectives from varying gender roles and is thus not generalizable to all genders. For future studies, inclusion of other genders in the target audience and stimuli may yield different results, as other genders may respond differently to influencer campaigns (De Keyzer et al., 2022, p. 8; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2016, p. 6). The use of purposive non-probability sampling overall lacks representativeness and generalizability, as the sample is representative and generalizable for the sample group, but may not be representative for global audiences (Sarstedt et al., 2017, p. 652). To increase generalizability, probability sampling methods could be employed, and future research should ensure a larger sample size which is representative of a diverse population. A larger sample size may also have more statistical power as it reduces standard error, which can yield different

results on the dynamics between diversity in influencer marketing and consumer behaviors (Babbie, 2017, p. 209).

Second, the unexpected results from the exploratory analysis where significant effects were found for identification, possibly suggest that future studies could investigate the relationship of identification with influencers on consumer behavior. Moreover, a more in-depth study with a qualitative approach could explore in what ways consumers specifically find identification with the influencers. Moreover, specific items from varying scales were chosen, as not every item was applicable to our study. To measure the variables source credibility, homophily, topic involvement and purchase intention, a broader selection of items for these variables could encourage a more exhaustive research by increasing internal validity, and may thus align better with the true meaning of the measurements (Babbie, 2017, p. 243).

Third, while the study included varying videos of a relatively diverse influencer group, these influencers may not have been representative enough to report on similarity for all respondents. Thus, future research could include a more inclusive collection of influencers, and focus on in-depth content, instead of the sole physical representation of diversity. The subjective manipulation check showed that half of the match group did not identify with their influencer. This indicates that the selected influencers may not have been representative enough for every consumer. Moreover, the videos used for this study included an existing brand, suggesting potential confounding variables. To limit the potential bias regarding brands, future research may include a wide range of varying brands or include a hypothetical brand instead (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017, p. 86). Moreover, the hedonic nature of the products studied in this research may have generated different results compared to a study with a more holistic selection of products.

Additionally, TikTok is a relatively novel and understudied platform compared to other platforms, such as Instagram and YouTube. While research suggests that TikTok should be studied (Haenlein et al., 2020, p. 10), mostly because of its promising future, the differences of the platform could be explored and compared to other platforms in a comparative study. Han and Balabanis (2023) present how the characteristics of varying social media platforms can foster differing relationships with audiences (p. 400). For example, the emphasis on short videos on TikTok and its personalized algorithm, may show greater usefulness of peripheral cues such as attractiveness, whereas the in-depth videos on YouTube may foster expertise. Moreover, this study did not study potential relations between the variables of SCT. The four elements of the SCT can often show interrelations, e.g.: perceived expertise can enhance trustworthiness, whereas perceived similarity can increase trustworthiness, attractiveness and perceived expertise (Masuda et al., 2021, p. 4).

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**Appendix A: Survey**

Block: Introduction (6 Questions)

Standard: Identification (1 Question)

Standard: Instructions (1 Question)

BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements

Group: DIVERSE

Standard: DIVERSE (1 Question)

Group: MATCH

Branch: New Branch

If

If With whom do you identify the most? (You can click the images to see it full-size) Person 1 Is Selected

Standard: MATCH 1 (1 Question)

Branch: New Branch

If

If With whom do you identify the most? (You can click the images to see it full-size) Person 2 Is Selected

Standard: MATCH 2 (1 Question)

Branch: New Branch

If

If With whom do you identify the most? (You can click the images to see it full-size) Person 3 Is Selected

Standard: MATCH 3 (1 Question)

Branch: New Branch

If

If With whom do you identify the most? (You can click the images to see it full-size) Person 4 Is Selected

Standard: MATCH 4 (1 Question)

Branch: New Branch

If

If With whom do you identify the most? (You can click the images to see it full-size) Person 5 Is Selected

Standard: MATCH 5 (1 Question)

Branch: New Branch

If

If With whom do you identify the most? (You can click the images to see it full-size) Person 6 Is Selected

Standard: MATCH 6 (1 Question)

Branch: New Branch

If

If With whom do you identify the most? (You can click the images to see it full-size) Person 7 Is Selected

Standard: MATCH 7 (1 Question)

Group: NON-MATCH

**Branch: New Branch**

**If**

**If With whom do you identify the most? (You can click the images to see it full-size) Person 1 Is Selected**

**BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements**

Block: NON-MATCH 2 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 3 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 4 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 5 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 6 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 7 (1 Question)

**Branch: New Branch**

**If**

**If With whom do you identify the most? (You can click the images to see it full-size) Person 2 Is Selected**

**BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements**

Block: NON-MATCH 1 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 3 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 4 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 5 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 6 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 7 (1 Question)

**Branch: New Branch**

**If**

**If With whom do you identify the most? (You can click the images to see it full-size) Person 3 Is Selected**

**BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements**

Block: NON-MATCH 1 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 2 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 4 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 5 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 6 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 7 (1 Question)

**Branch: New Branch**

**If**

**If With whom do you identify the most? (You can click the images to see it full-size) Person 4 Is Selected**

**BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements**

Block: NON-MATCH 1 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 2 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 3 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 5 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 6 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH 7 (1 Question)

**Branch: New Branch**

**If**

**If With whom do you identify the most? (You can click the images to see it full-size) Person 5 Is Selected**

**BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements**

Block: NON-MATCH  1 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH  2 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH  3 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH  4 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH  6 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH  7 (1 Question)

**Branch: New Branch**

If

**If With whom do you identify the most? (You can click the images to see it full-size) Person 6 Is Selected**

**BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements**

Block: NON-MATCH  1 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH  2 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH  3 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH  4 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH  5 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH  7 (1 Question)

**Branch: New Branch**

If

**If With whom do you identify the most? (You can click the images to see it full-size) Person 7 Is Selected**

**BlockRandomizer: 1 - Evenly Present Elements**

Block: NON-MATCH  1 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH  2 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH  3 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH  4 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH  5 (1 Question)
Block: NON-MATCH  6 (1 Question)

Standard: Homophily (2 Questions)
Standard: SCT (3 Questions)
Standard: Message Involvement (1 Question)
Standard: Purchase intentions (1 Question)
Standard: Manipulation Check (2 Questions)
Standard: Demographics (4 Questions)

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Break

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**Introduction**

Dear participant,

Thank you for your interest in this research. You are invited to participate in this survey, where one TikTok video will be shown, and questions will be asked to evaluate your personal perceptions on influencers and beauty products. The questionnaire will take approximately 7 minutes to complete. Please answer each question carefully and honestly, as we are sincerely interested in your personal opinions. There are no right or wrong answers.

**Confidentiality of data**

Your data will remain completely confidential and is collected anonymously. Your responses will solely be used for academic purposes. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with participating in this research.

**Voluntary**

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you choose not to participate, this will have no consequences. You may also withdraw from the study at any point during or after completing the questionnaire without providing a reason.

**Further information**

If you have questions about this research, in advance or afterwards, you can contact the responsible researcher, Stephanie Lin, 520416rl@eur.nl. If you want to invoke your rights or if you have a question concerning privacy about this study, you can contact Erasmus University's DPO (Data Protection Officer) at fg@eur.nl. If you understand the information above and freely consent to participate in this study, click on the "I agree" button below to start the survey.

Consent Agreement and consent

◯ I agree and give my consent  (1)

◯ I do not agree and do not give my consent  (2)

*Skip To: End of Survey If Consent = 2*

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Break

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Nationality What is your nationality?

◯ Dutch  (1)

◯ Other  (2)

Gender What gender do you identify as?

◯ Female  (1)

◯ Male  (2)

◯ Non-binary  (3)

◯ Other:  (4) _____

◯ Prefer not to say  (5)

Beauty products Use Do you use beauty products?

◯ Yes  (1)

◯ No  (2)

Tiktok Use Do you use TikTok?

◯ Yes  (1)

○ No  (2)

**End of Block: Introduction**

**Start of Block: Identification**

Idenitification With whom do you identify the most? (You can click the images to see it full-size)

○ Person 1  (1)



○ Person 2  (2)



○ Person 3  (3)

○ Person 4 (4)



○ Person 5 (5)



○ Person 6 (6)



○ Person 7 (7)



End of Block: Identification

Experiment Instructions: You will see a video with influencers and beauty products. Please view the video carefully, as your personal opinion regarding the influencers and beauty products will be asked afterwards.

DIVERSE VIDEO **Please watch the video below**

Match 1 **Please watch the video below**

Match 2 **Please watch the video below**

Match 3 **Please watch the video below**

Match 4 **Please watch the video below**

Match 5 **Please watch the video below**

Match 6 **Please watch the video below**

Match 7 **Please watch the video below**

Non-Match 2 **Please watch the video below**

Non-Match 3 **Please watch the video below**

Non-Match 4 **Please watch the video below**

Non-Match 5 **Please watch the video below**

Non-Match 6 **Please watch the video below**

Non-Match 7 **Please watch the video below**

Non-Match 1 **Please watch the video below**

Background Please indicate what you think of the influencer(s)

| | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Somewhat disagree (3) | Neither agree nor disagree (4) | Somewhat agree (5) | Agree (6) | Strongly agree (7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| This person is from a social class similar to mine (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| This person's background is similar to mine (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| This person and I come from a similar geographic region (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

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Attitude Please indicate what you think of the influencer(s)

| | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Somewhat disagree (3) | Neither agree nor disagree (4) | Somewhat agree (5) | Agree (6) | Strongly agree (7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| This person thinks | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| like me (1) | | | | | | |
| This person shares my values (2) | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ | | | | | |
| This person is similar to me (3) | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ | | | | | |
| This person behaves like me (4) | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ | | | | | |
| This person has thoughts and ideas that are similar to mine (5) | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ | | | | | |
| This person has a lot in common with me (6) | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ | | | | | |

End of Block: Homophily

Expertise Please select what you think of the expertise of the influencer(s). The closer your answer is to the word, the more certain you are of your selection.

|  | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inexpert | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | Expert |
| Uninformed | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | Informed |
| Incompetent | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | Competent |

Trustworthiness Please select what you think of the trustworthiness of the influencer(s). The closer your answer is to the word, the more certain you are of your selection.

|  | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (3) | 4 (4) | 5 (5) | 6 (6) | 7 (7) |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dishonest | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | Honest |
| Untrustworthy | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | Trustworthy |

Attractiveness Please indicate what you think of the influencer(s)

| | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Somewhat disagree (3) | Neither agree nor disagree (4) | Somewhat agree (5) | Agree (6) | Strongly agree (7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I think they could be a friend of mine (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I would like to have a friendly chat with them (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| They would be pleasant to be with (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| They are sociable with me (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I could become close friends with them (5) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| They seem easy to get along with (6) | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

Involvement Please indicate what you think of diversity and inclusivity in influencer marketing

| | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Somewhat disagree (3) | Neither agree nor disagree (4) | Somewhat agree (5) | Agree (6) | Strongly agree (7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Diversity and inclusivity in influencer marketing is important to me (1) | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |
| Diversity and inclusivity in influencer marketing is relevant to me (2) | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ | ◯ |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Diversity and inclusivity in influencer marketing matters to me (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Diversity and inclusivity in influencer marketing affects me personally (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Purchase Intentions Please indicate your purchase intentions regarding the lip products of Fenty Beauty

| | Extremely unlikely (1) | Moderately unlikely (2) | Slightly unlikely (3) | Neither likely nor unlikely (4) | Slightly likely (5) | Moderately likely (6) | Extremely likely (7) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I intend to purchase from this brand (1) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am willing to recommend others to buy from this brand (2) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I intend to purchase from this brand in the future (3) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Whenever I need to re-buy a product, it is very likely that I will purchase the same brand (4) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Check 1 How many influencers did you see?

○ 1  (1)

○ 2  (2)

○ 3  (3)

○ 4  (4)

---

Check 2: Did you identify with the influencer(s)?

○ Yes  (1)

○ No  (2)

✳

Age What is your age? (18+)

_____

---

Ethnicity What best describes your ethnic origin?

○ Dutch  (1)

○ Other European  (2)

○ Indonesian  (3)

○ Turkish  (4)

○ Moroccan  (5)

○ Surinamese  (6)

○ Caribbean  (7)

○ Chinese  (8)

○ Iraqi  (9)

○ Syrian  (10)

○ Other  (11) _____

○ Prefer not to say  (12)

---

Beauty products How often do you purchase beauty products?

○ Never  (1)

○ Rarely (once a month or less)  (2)

○ Occasionally (2-3 times a month)  (3)

○ Frequently (once a week)  (4)

○ Very frequently (multiple times a week)  (5)

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TikTok How often do you use TikTok?

○ Never  (1)

○ Rarely (once a week)  (2)

○ Occasionally (2-3 times a week)  (3)

○ Frequently (4-6 times a week)  (4)

○ Daily  (5)

**Appendix B: Conditions of the experiment**



Diverse group:



Match/Non-match 1:



Match/Non-match 2:



Match/Non-match 3:



Match/Non-match 4:



Match/Non-match 5:



Match/Non-match 6:

Match/Non-match 7:

**Appendix C: AI Declaration Form**

Declaration Page: Use of Generative AI Tools in Thesis

**Student Information**
Name: Rong-Rong  Lin
Student ID: 520416
Course Name: Master Thesis CM5000
Supervisor  Name: Dr. Freya De Keyzer
Date: 26-06-2025

Declaration:

**Acknowledgment of Generative AI Tools**
I acknowledge that I am aware of the existence and functionality of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, which are capable of producing content such as text, images, and other creative works autonomously.

GenAI use would include, but not limited to:
- Generated content (e.g., ChatGPT, Quillbot) limited strictly to content that is not assessed (e.g., thesis title).
- ~~Writing improvements, including~~ grammar and spelling corrections (e.g., Grammarly)
- Language translation (e.g., DeepL), without generative AI alterations/improvements.
- Research task assistance (e.g., finding survey scales, qualitative coding verification, debugging code)
- Using GenAI as a search engine tool to find academic articles or books (e.g.,

☒ I declare that I have used generative AI tools, specifically ChatGPT, in the process of creating parts or components of my thesis. The purpose of using these tools was to aid in generating content or assisting with specific aspects of thesis work.

**Extent of AI Usage**
☒ I confirm that while I utilized generative AI tools to aid in content creation, the majority of the intellectual effort, creative input, and decision-making involved in completing  the thesis were undertaken by me. I have enclosed the prompts/logging  of the GenAI tool use in an appendix.

**Ethical and Academic Integrity**
☒ I understand the ethical implications  and academic integrity concerns related to the use of AI tools in coursework. I assure that the AI-generated content was used responsibly, and any content derived from these tools has been appropriately  cited and attributed  according to the guidelines  provided by the

☐ I declare that I have NOT used any generative AI tools and that the assignment concerned is my original  work.

Signature:  [digital signature]
Date of Signature:  [Date of Submission]

instructor and the course. I have taken necessary steps to distinguish between my original work and the AI-generated contributions. Any direct quotations, paraphrased content, or other forms of AI-generated material have been properly referenced in accordance with academic conventions.

By signing this declaration, I affirm that this declaration is accurate and truthful. I take full responsibility for the integrity of my assignment and am prepared to discuss and explain the role of generative AI tools in my creative process if required by the instructor or the Examination Board. I further affirm that I have used generative AI tools in accordance with ethical standards and academic integrity expectations.

Signature: Rong-Rong Lin
Date of Signature: 26-06-2025

**Appendix D: AI Usage Prompts**

Below are examples of questions that were answered using ChatGPT:

1. Can you find me scales that could be useful for this research? e.g, similarity scale, ELM scale, purchase intention scale

2. Can you give examples of hypotheses that align with the concepts of social identity theory, social credibility theory and the elaboration likelihood model?

3. Who is the original writer/founder of the Source Credibility Theory?

4. What is the definition of source credibility according to Hovland?

5. What kind of regression analyses are there?

6. The experimental groups are the following variables in my SPSS data: Diverse_Group, Match_Group, NonMatch_Group. are these still IV's?

7. How can I make one variable for the three conditions? Please show me the steps in SPSS

8. After computing a new variable, can I see which variables it consists of?

9. Why does my moderation analysis not show any means and standard deviations of the variables?

10. What does 'pairwise contrasts of indirect effects' do for moderation?

11. What does this exactly mean in the chi-square analysis for ethnicity? "However, the footnote indicates 80% of cells have expected counts less than 5, which can weaken the reliability of the chi-square test. The test assumes that most expected counts are $\geq 5$."

12. Why is the 'total effect' path different? explain what this path analyzes

13. What is a direct effect?

14. What do I do first - recode the open-text responses or create the new variable with the ethnicities grouped?