THESIS WORK

Mária Haraszti

2019
The Impact of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Perception in the Health and Fitness Industry in Hungary

Mária Haraszti
Msc in Marketing
2019

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Dóra Horváth
Table of Contents

1 Introduction ............................................................................................................... 3

2 Literature review ....................................................................................................... 6

3 Theoretical framework .............................................................................................. 7

3.1 The effect of non-traditional advertising on the contemporary consumer ........ 7

3.2 The definition of influencer marketing .............................................................. 9

3.3 The early evolution of influencer marketing .................................................... 11

3.4 Web 2.0 and the emergence of social media.................................................... 12

3.4.1 The definition and the psychological mechanism of WOM and eWOM . 12

3.4.2 Opinion leadership: dimensions and drivers............................................. 15

3.5 The response of the contemporary consumer to influencer marketing ............ 16

3.5.1 Potential drawbacks of influencer marketing ........................................... 18

3.5.2 Strategies for Influencer marketing .......................................................... 19

3.6 Psychological factors in the health and fitness industry .............................. 19

3.7 The Serious Leisure Perspective ...................................................................... 21

3.8 The Influencer Concept Model ........................................................................ 22

4 Methodology ............................................................................................................ 25

4.1 Research logic and strategy.............................................................................. 25

4.2 Empirical research............................................................................................ 26

4.3 Structure of the interview................................................................................. 30

5 Attitude towards fitness influencers ........................................................................ 32

5.1 Interviewee's profiles ....................................................................................... 32

5.2 Attitudes towards traditional marketing......................................................... 38

5.3 Positive influencer traits................................................................................... 46

5.4 Negative influencer traits.................................................................................. 51

5.5 The needs and interests of fitness influencer followers ................................. 56
5.6 The nature of the different social media platforms for fitness and health influencers

5.7 Characteristics of adequate fitness and health influencer content from the followers’ perspective

5.8 Pre-purchase consumer behavior

5.9 The role of community and interaction

6 Analysis

6.1 Main drivers of influencer marketing

6.1.1 Authenticity and honesty

6.1.2 Motivation and inspiration

6.1.3 Positive, up-lifting attitude

6.1.4 Professionalism

6.2 Main factors of resentment towards influencer marketing

6.2.1 Staged ads

6.2.2 Irrational perfectionism

6.2.3 Involvement in unflattering activities (Showing-off)

6.3 The importance of choosing the right channels and content

6.4 The needs of the target audience: flow, challenges and appearance

6.5 The effect of influencer marketing on the lives of followers

6.6 Differences between generation Z and Y

7 Conclusion

8 References

9 Appendices
The Impact of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Perception in the Health and Fitness Industry in Hungary

1 Introduction

This paper intends to analyze the effect of influencer marketing – as a form of non-traditional marketing – on the perception of the contemporary consumer within the health and fitness industry in Hungary. The main reason for the choice of this topic is the emergence of various forms of non-traditional types of advertising at present times all around the world as a desperate response to the growing resistance of consumers against traditional forms of advertising. Today, more and more brands turn towards the application of creative advertising in order to attract attention and to enhance recall, buying intent and brand recognition. As part of the different types and forms of creative, non-traditional advertising, influencer marketing can be seen as an extremely fresh and continuously emerging form of marketing in the contemporary market places as it provides marketers with the ability and power of reaching out to those segments whose attention is particularly difficult to attract: the late Generation Y and the Generation Z, especially. These generations were born within the age of the Internet, social media and other forms of the latest technological advancements. They are incredibly sophisticated related to technology and most of them are immune to the different forms of traditional marketing. They are less brand loyal and due to the speed of the Internet, they are very flexible and changing in their fashion, style consciousness and different communication channels where they can be reached. (Social Marketing, n.d.)

As the author of this paper and as part of the late Generation Y, I can especially relate to the above mentioned problem marketers face in today’s rapidly changing business environment. Highly saturated markets make it extremely difficult for companies to stand out: Being an average consumer, I am confronted with hundreds, or even thousands of advertisements every week, both online and offline. Everywhere I look or anything I do, the chance that I will encounter an advertisement is extremely high and some of those ads can be very annoying. Fortunately, through the use of adblockers, at least some of the online ads can be eliminated, which on the other hand, makes it even more burdensome for companies to attract my attention, let alone, even make me try their products or services. However, creative forms of publicity can truly attract my attention without
having the feeling that I am only wasting my time. Following influencers on my social media accounts is peculiarly enjoyable for me since every time I am on Facebook or Instagram, I want to see content in which I am interested, where I feel like benefitting from watching or reading those contents, feeling more instead of less afterwards, feeling motivated, happy and contented instead of annoyed and bored.

The choice of the health and fitness industry within this paper can be explained by the extremely up-to-date nature of this industry today. Lifestyle changes and increasing health awareness have resulted in an emerging trend toward healthy food consumption and taking part in fitness activities. Since the late 1970s, the gym and fitness enterprise has emerged as a global industry and an influential socio-cultural phenomenon. According to the International Health, Racquet and Sports Club Association (IHRSA), the fitness industry generated an estimated 81 billion dollars in revenue in 2015, from around 187,000 health clubs all around the world, serving 151.5 million members. It is also estimated that between ten percent and fifteen percent of the population in many Western countries more or less regularly attend a gym and fitness facility, and in young adult segments of the population the numbers are significantly higher. Due to the rapid development of the gym and fitness industry, employment in service-producing businesses focusing on the state of clients’ bodies has increased considerably so that it is one of the fastest growing industries in the labor market, internationally. (Andreasson and Johansson, 2018) Motivation of people to exercise include the improvement of the body-image and self-esteem, the improvement of the health, fitness and strength and to achieve proficiency challenges. Health and fitness is also used to relax and unwind, to socialize with new people and engage with friends. Furthermore, it has a leisure and recreational component as well, but the need for a “prospect of external reward” (such as health/ appearance benefits) is also very important. Thus, the main incentives are stress relief, social and self-improvement, appearance and self-esteem and competence challenge. Additionally, health conscious consumers have been found to be more interested in a more holistic life environment. (Zhang and Li, 2014)

The country of Hungary has been chosen as the geographic area of the research within this paper, because at current time, not many specific (public) researches have been done regarding the topic of this thesis. The behavior and purchase intent of consumers as a response to influencer marketing within the health and fitness industry in Hungary has not been researched widely, therefore, this paper intends to specify and narrow down the
scope of research of influencer marketing to a specific country in order to be able to investigate the effect of influencer marketing on Hungarian consumers (and residents), in particular. Additionally, since the author of this paper is Hungarian as well, her interest to research this geographic area can also be attributed to her intrinsic motivation.

This paper is divided into seven main chapters: the introduction part of this paper includes the purpose and the logic of the theory and also the main findings of this paper. The literature review will follow, introducing the most relevant literature shaping the paper. The theoretical framework will follow, containing the concepts, models, analytical methods and theories which are indispensable to discuss and investigate the central topic of this paper. It will describe models of consumer behaviour and the contemporary consumer, purchase attitudes will be discussed and the background of the evolution of influencer marketing will be presented, as well as its benefits, drawbacks and strategies. Psychological factors in the health and fitness industry will also be depicted. At the end of this part, a “True Influencer Concept Model” was also created by the author, incorporating all the relevant results of the secondary research, depicting the most important success factors of influencer marketing in the health and fitness industry. Next, the research methodology will be explained in details: secondary and primary research (twelve in-depth interviews) signify the bases of this paper. The largest part of this paper will follow: the elaboration of the central topic will describe and evaluate the research topic with the assistance of the concepts and models listed within the theoretical framework, containing the research results as described later in this paper. The analysis will include the investigation of the different patterns and connections discovered during the research, also based on the “True Influencer Concept Model”. Finally, the conclusion will provide a summary of the results of this paper. Direction for further investigation will also be pointed out.

The main findings of this paper include the general negative attitude of consumers towards traditional forms of advertising, however, much more positive sentiments towards influencer marketing. The four main drivers of influencer marketing discovered within the frames of the qualitative research are as follows: authenticity and honesty, motivation and inspiration, positive attitude and professional knowledge. Additionally, the main factors of resentment include staged ads, perfectionism and the involvement of influencers in unflattering activities. Furthermore, considerable differences were found among the different social media channels as described later in this paper. The most
important motivational factors of fitness as a Serious Leisure Activity will also be explained. Consumers’ attitude towards sponsored content will also be presented, beside of analyzing the differences between Generation Z and Y.

2 Literature review

As mentioned in the introduction, the most important literature which shapes the thesis topic will be listed in the following part of the paper. A review of the relevant literature has been performed to address the effect of influencer marketing on consumer perception, especially in the fitness and health industry.

In order to have an understanding of where influencer marketing comes from, Eugene Katz (1987) presents the roots of this type of marketing.

Christian Hotz-Behofsits, Nils Wloemert and Nadia Nabout provide a detailed definition for influencer marketing and discuss the upsides and downsides of this marketing technique, providing the reader with examples, as well. (Hotz-Behofsits et al., 2018)

Glucksman (2017) provides a research about the distinct characteristics of successful influencers and Nam and Dan (2018) add valuable information about the effect of certain qualities of influencer marketing on purchase intentions.

In the Journal for Cooperative Communication (“Journal für Kooperative Kommunikation), Theresa Steven (2018) focuses on the impact of influencer marketing on the decision making process of young consumers aged between fourteen and nineteen years, through the example of the cosmetic industry, since it is a sector, where the bloom of influencer marketing could be first observed.

In the SCMS Journal of Indian Management, Sudha M. and Dr. Sheena K. (2017) analyze influencer marketing within the fashion industry and also the effect of influencers on the consumers’ buying behavior.

Regarding the psychological factors of consumer behaviour within the fitness industry which might also contribute to fitness influencers to be followed, Wen Zhang, Yuhong Li (2014) investigate how consumers see the world and themselves within the fitness
world, explore the relationship of consumers and their social groups, analyze consumers as decision makers and focus on their cultures and lifestyles.

Finally, in the Journal of Influencers (“Influencer Magazin”), Gergő Szabó writes about the structure and changes in the Hungarian market regarding the collaboration of diverse companies and influencers. He also points out expected changes and challenges of the future. (Gergő Szabó, 2018)

Last but not least, Brown (2018) describes important strategies for companies in order to establish a successful plan for working together with influencers.

3 Theoretical framework

Within this part of the paper, all the concepts, analytical methods and theories will be depicted in order to provide a detailed picture about all the relevant aspects of influencer marketing in the health and fitness industry. At the end of this chapter, the author of this paper creates a conceptual model (“The True Influence Conception Model”) based on the listed theories and further research of this paper will follow the structure of this model.

3.1 The effect of non-traditional advertising on the contemporary consumer

Today, the number of advertisements has increased considerably: on an average, one person encounters hundreds or even thousands of ads every day, especially in certain parts of the United States or in Western Europe. That is why consumers have developed resistance mechanisms against these unwanted forms of advertisement. (Jurca, 2013)

Consequently, it is particularly difficult for companies to reach customers through conventional online ads as diverse programs can be used to block these “annoying” messages. Other forms of traditional advertising (TV or radio, for example) are also becoming ineffective since consumers have developed strategies to routinely avoid these ads; furthermore, young consumers are especially difficult to reach through these marketing methods, since they are not likely to be found in front of the TV or next to the radio: these devices are being dismissed by laptops and mobile phones. Additionally, these young consumers - especially the Generation Z – are mightily purposeful when it comes to the consumption of online content, since they were born into the age of the
digital world. (Kozarek, 2018) Thus, companies have to face the pressing challenge of attracting consumers’ attention towards their products or services.

Several factors exist that affect consumer behaviour. Within the cultural factors, culture, subculture and social class have an impact on consumers’ needs and wants and within social factors, reference groups, family and roles and status have an impact on buyers in their decisions. Factors like life cycle stages and age, occupation, economic situation, lifestyle and personality and self-concept contribute to people’s buying decisions. Finally, psychological factors like motivation, perception, learning and beliefs have an impact on consumer behavior. (Vadher, 2014) All these factors will also play an important role in analyzing the results of the empirical research later in this paper.

While buying decision behaviour has not changed considerably in the past few years, the nature of customer relationships has, meaning that today’s companies focus more on building deeper, more direct and interactive relationships through laying a greater emphasis on target marketing instead of focusing on mass marketing. New technologies and communication approaches enable companies to create deeper customer involvement and to develop a sense of community around the brand deploying the opportunities of social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or Youtube. (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012)

Creative forms of marketing serve the goal of attracting consumers’ attention and involving them instead of interrupting or annoying them. However, the question may be posed: why is creativity so effective in the different forms of marketing? The model of the mechanisms of the impact of creativity in unconventional forms of marketing needs to be investigated, in order to be able to find an answer. An interesting example of consumer behavior model is the „Foote Cone & Belding Strategy Planning model“, according to which, some purchasing decisions are based on emotions and others are based on rational thinking. Also, some purchasing is very important to the consumers while others are less important. (Jewler, 1992)

Response Hierarchy Models, like the AIDA model or the Hierarchy-Of Effects Model can also be used to understand the above mentioned question. According to the AIDA model (Figure 1), cognitive activation confronts the perception with an unexpected task through conflicts and surprises, thus, it stimulates the dealing with the offered stimulus. (Huber, Meyer and Nachtigall, 2009) This model includes four stages: first, the customer
is faced with attention (cognitive dimension), then interest is evoked, desire is the next step (affective dimension) and finally, the customer is incited to action (behavioral dimension). Consequently, adverts that evoke desire are extremely successful up to the present. The Hierarchy-Of-Effects Model includes awareness and knowledge (cognitive stage), liking, preference and conviction (affective dimension) and purchase (behavioral dimension) (Sinh, 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>AIDA</th>
<th>Hierarchy-Of-Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognition</td>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>Awareness Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>Liking Preference Conviction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Purchase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1:** Response Hierarchy Models. Sinh, H.C., 2013

3.2 The definition of influencer marketing

In academic research, influencer marketing is found to have various definitions: According to Sudha and Sheena, influencer marketing is a process of “identifying and activating individuals who have an influence over a specific target audience or medium, in order to be part of a brand's campaign towards increased reach, sales, or engagement.” (Sudha and Sheena cited in Sudha and Sheena, 2017) Thus, influencer marketing can be understood as a new form of word-of-mouth marketing, focusing on the social context, as described later in this paper. Influencer marketing builds relationship through trust and authenticity and has the potential to turn audiences into loyal customers. It can be broken into two sub practices: earned and unpaid influencer marketing. The first category means the unpaid, pre-existing relationships with influencers or third party content that is promoted by the influencer to support their own growth on their channels. The second category means paid marketing campaigns like sponsorships or pre-roll advertising. (Sheena and Sudha, 2017)

Another definition is provided by Ki (2019) according to which influencer marketing refers to “the act of partnering with developers of social content.” (Ki cited in Ki, 2019) Influencers have large audiences on platforms like Instagram or Twitter and they satisfy
clients’ preferences through giving opinions about the products. This intricate nature of the networks enabled to connect brands with talent to spread their messages. (Ki, 2019)

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 2:** Brand post opinion. Sheena and Sudha, 2017

According to Steven (2018), influencers possess a heightened level of credibility and a high number of followers. They share different types of content on various channels of social media on a constant basis and they can be categorized into micro- and macro-influencers: micro-influencer have a lower number of followers (according to the publisher “Burda”, they have less than ten-thousand followers in the digital space). This enables them however, to publish more specific content in order to serve niche groups, attracting more credibility. (Steven, 2018). Thus, according to Staden and Niekerk (2018), the goal of an influencer marketing campaign is no longer the extent of the reach created, but the level of engagement between the influencers and their followers. Customer engagement means more than purchase and is described as “the customers’ manifestation of their behaviour towards the brand, which is a result of their key motivational drivers.” (Kumar et al. cited in Staden and Niekerk, 2018)

The price of influencer marketing depends on the potential reach of the specific influencer, thus, they are usually paid in a Pay-per-Post manner. However, the specific prices are difficult to determine. In the frames of a panel discussion with influencers at the WU Wien (Economic University of Vienna), influencer marketing campaigns can be already executed at a cost of EUR 5.000 to EUR 10.000 with the help of a dedicated marketing agency. A price of EUR 100 per Instagram post can be calculated on an average per ten-thousand followers. (Behofsits, Nabout ad Wloemert, 2018) According to Gergő Szabó (2018), CEO of Special Effects Media, an influencer campaign can already be executed beginning from a few thousands HUF in Hungary. However, other price
calculation methods, like Cost-per-Click or Cost-per-Engagement can be applied, as well, depending on the goal of the campaign. (Behofsits, Nabout ad Wloemert, 2018).

3.3 The early evolution of influencer marketing

It seems well-grounded to state that the proliferation of influencer marketing has been greatly enabled by the emergence of Web 0.2 and the social media. However, the roots of influencer marketing go back to the 1940s, when Elihu Katz and Paul Felix Lazarsfeld began their researches regarding the question what influences women’s everyday activities besides of mass media, carrying out the study in the small city of Decatour in the USA. Their findings which were also documented in their book “Personal Influence” published in 1955, included the fact that each investigated group of women included critical individuals who were able to influence the other members of the group through giving air to their opinions. The most important take-away of this study was that some individuals stand out from their groups due to their higher level of receptiveness to diverse pieces of information from all around the world and they also tend to consume mass media in a more intensive manner. The later published “Two steps flow of communication” model of Katz in 1957 argued that previously, the impact of media has been over-estimated, whereas, the power of personal influence has been under-estimated. This model concluded that if a person changes his or her mind shortly before an election, it must be the result of another person’s influence. It has been made clear that the media has a direct influence on the opinion leaders, and most of the information arrives through this “filter” to the other members of the society. (Koren, n.d.) Eugene Katz cites Lazarsfeld in his research paper “Communications Research Since Lazarsfeld” (1987): "mass media are not mainly effective in promoting a specific idea or engendering a stand on a definite issue. What they tend rather to do is to shape for us the picture of the more distant world with which we do not have direct personal contact… Short-term investigations will never be able to trace the way in which, over a lifetime, the mass media accentuate for some people parts of the social world and conceal them from others”. (Lazarsfeld cited in Katz, 1987) He cites the effect of radio on musical taste as examples of long-term effects that should be investigated. (Katz, 1987)

A later study of Merton (1968) distinguishes between opinion leaders who are familiar in one topic and those who are experts in more topics. Valente and Davis has further developed the specification of opinion leaders: the first type includes those whose
publicity is wide-spread, the second type contains those who can be approached the easiest way and the third type includes those who are isolated. (Koren, n.d.)

3.4 Web 2.0 and the emergence of social media

In order to understand the potential of influencer marketing, the development of the Internet and social media has to be understood. Since the emergence of the Internet in 1991, the World-Wide-Web has developed itself to one of the most important venues of private and professional life and the classical sender-receiver model has changed in particular: The role of the passive receiver has dominated the Web 1.0, whereas, today, the sender, as the user of Web 2.0 dominates the platform through the ability of participating actively in the communication and interaction. These developments have changed the communication of companies considerably, leading to a greater role of social media where users can create, process, save and share diverse pieces of information with no regard to time and place. At the same time, users have the opportunity to connect to a group, and as members of these groups, they have the opportunity of taking part in the process of actively shaping this exchange. Thus, social media can be interpreted as a collaborative process of creating sharing, modifying and processing any kind of information without the need of any professional knowledge or infrastructure. As a consequence, in the course of the past twenty years, social media has broken the dominance and the monopoly position of mass media, and therefore, social media offers a new forms of communication, thus, also the basis of influencer marketing. Additionally, the constantly emerging number of users provide a considerable reach, thus, they provide the prerequisite for the success of influencer marketing. (Schönstein, 2018) According to Chaffey and Smith cited in Schönstein (2018), social media “has grown so rapidly because we are social animals. We like to communicate, be part of a community, and interact with each other. So when someone was clever enough to come up with a way to let all your friends know when you discover a new band, or see a great movie - with just one click, then it simply had to be a huge success. It facilitates a fundamental need for communication.” (Chaffey and Smith cited in Schönstein, 2018)

3.4.1 The definition and the psychological mechanism of WOM and eWOM

As it can be seen in the previous chapter regarding the history of influencer marketing, Word-of-Mouth (WOM) was the main medium of influencing other people, that is why there is a connection between WOM and influencer marketing. Consequently,
investigating the rationale behind WOM will reveal the main psychological processes behind influencer marketing. When people are looking for certain products or services, most of them often ask their friends or family members for their advice. According to Hoyer, MacInnis and Pieters, the more risk is involved in the purchase decision, the more time and energy the individuals are willing to spend in finding information. According to Nielsen, ninety-two percent of people are keener on relying on information from family and friends instead of relying on advertisement. (Johansen and Guldvik, 2017) This is the exact phenomenon of WOM which is defined as “oral or written recommendation by a satisfied customer to the prospective customers of a good or service”. (Business Dictionary cited in Johansen and Guldvik, 2017)

In 1966, psychologist Ernest Dichter found that if a consumer thinks that an advertisement is a sales tool rather than an information channel, he feels threatened, and therefore, he or she will use WOM to reassure his or her decision. If the ad is perceived as the atmosphere of WOM (as a friendly and unbiased authority), the consumer tends to accept the recommendation. According to Dichter, the speaker motivation is based on the fact that he or she will talk about a product or service if the talking itself, or the expected action from the listener will create some kind of satisfaction. Speaker motivation is divided into four involvement categories: “Product-involvement” (meaning a pleasurable or non-pleasurable consumer experience which tends to call for mental repetition in the form of speech whenever a fitting occasion offers itself), “Self-involvement” (the consumer self-confirms him- or herself to gain attention and to show connoisseurship), “Other-involvement (the need of the consumer to share the enthusiasm with others and the products or services are used to express sentiments of love, care or friendship), “Message-involvement” (the skepticism and the advertisement consciousness of consumers). The listener motivation’s first condition is that the talking person is interested in him and his well-being; the second condition is that the recommender seems to be knowledgeable and convincing regarding the product. (Johansen and Guldvik, 2017)

According to Kozinets, there are three evolutionary shifts regarding WOM (Figure 3): according to the organic interconsumer influence model, (the simplest and earliest interpretation of consumer WOM), there is an organic interconsumer influence including the communication between two consumers without any direct influence or measurement by marketers. This form is motivated by the desire to help or warn others (about poor service, for example) and WOM is developed naturally among consumers through
advertising and promotions. The second model is the linear model, where marketers became interested in attempting to influence the credible, influential and WOM-spreading consumers. Opinion leaders are used as part of this model. The more recent model is the Network-Coproduction model which was developed in accordance with the Internet, according to which consumers are being regarded as active co-producers of value and meaning, which means that also WOM communications are co-produced in consumer networks. This model’s distinguishing characteristics include that marketers use new tactics to deliberately and directly target the consumer or opinion leader and that market messages are not disseminated into only one direction, but they are exchanged among members of the consumer network. (Johansen and Guldvik, 2017)

Figure 3: The evolution of WOM theory. Johansen and Guldvik, 2017

Regarding the above, we can state that WOM is a powerful way to influence consumers’ choices. In our modern times, eWOM (electronic Word-of-Mouth) has also be proved to be a much more effective form of marketing than traditional ads, showing an advertising elasticity of demand of 0.23. eWOM means all forms of communication between actual and potential consumers on the Internet (for example comments under blog posts, forums
or social media). However, one of its main disadvantages is that it is difficult for companies to have an influence on eWOM. That is why nowadays, companies tend to opt for influencer marketing through which they try to take some form of control over electronic Word-of-Mouth. Today, every member of the more than two billions of users of Facebook is connected with every other user through 3.5 contacts on an average. Consequently, every user can be reached through 3.5 contacts with an ad message or eWOM. Hence, each individual on Facebook has the opportunity to contact most of the population on Earth through the friends of his or her friends. That is why today, influencers have the tremendous power to reach countless individuals through diverse social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Youtube. According to bestseller author Malcom Gladwell, this process can be summarized by ”The Law of the Few”, according to which ideas, products or news can spread like viruses among people. (Behofsits, Nabour ad Wloemert, 2018).

In their latest book “Social Media Marketing: A Practitioner Guide”, Philip Kotler, Svend Hollensen and Marc Opresnik also describe the above processes through the 6C model, originally developed by Parent et. al., which defines six interrelated elements (Cs) that analyze the creation and retention of consumer engagement, from the perspective of the given company: Company and Content (firms seek to pull consumers to their Internet content and to the company itself, however, first, content has to be pushed forward in the chain, where content can be a Facebook product, brand page or a Youtube video, for example), Control (the firm is forced to hand over control of its brand to the online community, who have the opportunity to copy or embed content into their websites, blogs or on their social media walls and they are free to modify, share or comment on it.), Community (the content is pushed over to the community and communication becomes bidirectional) and Customers and Conversations (the circulation of online conversations around the content. (Sarkar, 2017)

3.4.2 Opinion leadership: dimensions and drivers

According to the Megaphone effect, consumers are able to grab the “megaphone” for themselves and to reach out to large audiences. This theory’s limitation is however, that it analyses only bloggers. These persons gain audience by blogging due to the large amount of consumers following their posts. Then, this can be converted into institutional
access and further leveraged, but prior institutional mediation is no longer required for audience access. (Johansen and Guldvik 2017)

According to Myers’ and Robertson’s study about the dimensions of opinion leadership, the power of influencers comes from their perceived knowledge, interest and frequency of discussion about a topic. There is also a two-way process where opinion leaders themselves also tend to receive some influence from others. Opinion leaders are also found to be innovative in the sense of trying out new things. According to Dichter, involvement with the product class is a driver for WOM. However, Richins and Root-Shaffer’s model propose that enduring involvement is expected to result in opinion leadership which in turn results in WOM, however, situational involvement is only expected to result in WOM. Further studies suggest that opinion leadership has the strongest effect when the WOM includes information and advice giving. (Johansen and Guldvik, 2017)

3.5 The response of the contemporary consumer to influencer marketing

According to Nam and Dan (2018), influencer credibility, information quality, the relationship between the influencer and the product and consumer involvement all play an important role in the success of the message and a positive response from the consumers. The study states that there is a positive correlation between influencer credibility and customer purchase intention. Additionally, influencer credibility has the greatest impact on customer purchase intention, hence. Also Messian confirms that there is a positive relationship between purchase intentions and both the consumers’ behaviour towards eWOM information and the components of eWOM, such as information credibility and quality, as described by the Information Acceptance Model (IACM) by Erkan and Evans. The stronger the perceived credibility of online consumer reviews, the higher the purchase intention of consumers. (Messiaen, 2016) Also, Nam’s and Dan’ study revealed a positive correlation between information quality and customer buying intention. Thus, the quality of the information is a significant predictor of information systems, meaning that if consumers perceive the message as useful and of high quality, their trust in the conveyed information will increase. Thirdly, the study proved that links between influencers and products have a positive correlation with customer buying decisions, thus they have a large effect on consumer purchase intentions. Last but not least, there is a positive correlation between consumer involvement and their purchase
decision, meaning that those consumers who often engage with their friend or family recommendations before buying a product, will be easier affected by word-of-mouth on social media than others. (Nam and Dan, 2018)

Also according to Neulinger (2018), individuals and groups, especially those who possess some kind of social power, influence consumers’ decisions. Neulinger (2018) differentiated between membership reference groups and aspirational reference groups. The first term describes the set of people the consumer already knows (family members, friends, for example). In this case, advertisers also use “ordinary people” in their ads as influencers. The second term describes people the consumer does not know, but he or she admires them. To play upon this kind of aspiration of the consumers, advertisers often use celebrities to advertise their brands and to influence potential consumers to buy their products or services.

According to Glucksman’s study (2017), the personality of the influencer plays an important role in his or her success. His study shows that the huge follower base of lifestyle influencer Fink can be partly traced back to her quirky, down-to-earth and relatable impression. Being interactive with the followers is also an important dimension of the success of this form of marketing, as also stated in the previous study mentioned in this paper: this two-way conversation between the influencer and the follower gives advertisements a new dimension that did not exist before, turning the followers to brand consumers. This importance of this two-way relationship is also confirmed by Noonan (2018): through the interaction with their followers, influencers become approachable and motivational. Through commenting, followers can also create a community around the influencer’s ideas, through tagging friends, for example. All this brings like-minded people together.

Also Glucksman’s study reinforces the finding that the authenticity of the influencer is crucial in building successful marketing campaigns: the influencer has to be genuine, honest and open with his or her followers, since this aids the influencer to relate with followers on a new level and helps in building a relationship between followers and brands. Examples include telling fans to apply the recommendations seen in the video in their own lives or responding to comments below the posts. (Glucksman, 2017)

The confidence of the influencer is also mentioned as an important trait when it comes to promoting products of brands, reasoned by the fact that when influencers express
confidence in themselves, it also promotes confidence in the brand. Consequently, this leaves a lasting impression on the followers who consider becoming consumers of the product themselves. Confidence can be shown through both verbal (for example, using words such as “excited”, “amazing” or “success” consistently in videos related to the products or services of different companies) and physical actions (for example, making eye contact with the camera when talking to the followers or speaking with certainty). (Glucksman, 2017)

Taking the above findings into consideration, it can be concluded that influencer credibility, information quality, the relationship between the influencer and the product, the consumer involvement (interactivity) and influencer confidence are important characteristics for influencers to create successful content.

3.5.1 Potential drawbacks of influencer marketing

Beside the already discussed success potential and advantages of influencer marketing, it can have considerable drawbacks, as well. According to Hotz-Behofsits et al. (2018), if the contents produced by influencers are viewed as traditional advertisement rather than beneficial and useful recommendation, trust may decrease considerably. Just like in several countries across the world, Hungary has recently (in 2017) established a rule according to which influencers are responsible for marking every sponsored content they produce as an advertisement in a very clear manner so that it is immediately understandable for followers. If they do not conform to this rule, they are obliged to pay large amount of fines. (Ferenci, 2017) However, the greatest loss would be the loss of their credibility in their follower’s eyes, and thus, the loss of their subscribers and partners. (Hotz-Behofsits et al., 2018)

Furthermore, according to Stevens (2018), influencer marketing can have a manipulative impact on the decision process of teenagers younger than eighteen years old since – being less sceptic and more susceptible to be influenced - they can be manipulated in a more intense manner than people older than eighteen years. Teenagers spend a considerable time with identifying with the contents produced by the influencers and they also regard influencers as their friends since they orientate themselves towards members of higher categories which are greatly represented by influencers, for example.
3.5.2 Strategies for Influencer marketing

There are several strategies which companies can follow when selecting influencers. According to Brown (2018), there are three important Rs in influencer marketing when selecting the given influencers: relevance, reach and resonance. Relevance means that the influencer is relevant for the brand and the targeted niche. This can be checked through their content to see whether they are continuously talking about topics related to the given niche. Attention should be devoted also to the tone, aesthetics and the style of their content which should be in line with the message of the brand and should match the brand’s personality. Reach means the number of people that can be potentially reached through the given influencer in each of the channels he or she is present. Finally, resonance represents the number of people who are interacting with the influencer’s posts through likes, comments or shares, for example.

Companies should first decide which platforms they wish to use to reach their potential customers. Then, they should search for influencers posting in the company’s niche on that platform, through the relevant hashtags and the rankings (in case of Instagram). If their content is also adequate, companies can start reaching out for them. However, it should be considered, that some influencers use fake likes and followers, thus, their posts have to be followed carefully. (Brown, 2018)

3.6 Psychological factors in the health and fitness industry

The importance of the fitness industry has increased significantly over the past four decades, as it has emerged as a global industry and an influential socio-cultural phenomenon. According to the International Health, Racquet and Sports Club Association, this global “movement” generated an estimated 81 billion dollars in revenue in 2015, presenting 187,000 health clubs all around the world and serving 151.5 million members. Studies estimate that between ten percent and fifteen percent of the population in many Western countries more or less regularly attend a gym and fitness facility, and the segment of young adults seem to show even higher numbers. Employment in service-producing businesses focusing on the state of clients’ bodies has increased to such an extent that it is one of the fastest growing industries in the labor market on an international scale. (Andreasson and Johansson, 2017)
Today, fitness and health influencers rule social media channels like Facebook and Instagram, especially, where once fashion and beauty influencers were the leaders. Top international fitness influencers include Michelle Lewin (13.2 Million followers), Jan Selter (12.4 Million followers) and Kayla Itsenés (10.3 Million followers). According to the study by Linqia, influencer marketing budgets are in rise: nearly forty percent of all marketers increased their influencers’ budgets in 2018. (Lestyte, 2018) In Hungary, the fitness culture as well as the healthy lifestyle are trending; since the regime change in in the 1990s, the country has undergone considerable changes related to healthy living. Various gyms, outdoor fitness parks, cycling routes, and similar sports facilities have been built during the last thirty years. Supermarket chains are also partners in providing zero calorie, low fat, whole-grain and lactose and sugar free products, for example, and nutritional supplement companies are also helping health-conscious consumers to complement their fitness regimes. (Peak and Kakócz, 2014)

Additionally, the above mentioned changes and shift towards an increasing health awareness has also resulted in the emerging trend towards healthy food consumption. The demand for organic food products, for example has increased considerably on a global bases: there has been a forty-four percent increase in the market growth rates in sales of organic food and drinks between 2004 and 2006, reflecting strong demands from the United States and European markets. (Quah and Tan, 2008) According to Kinsky (2018), today, consumers demand healthy products with natural ingredients, free from certain elements and no added sugar, for example. Consequently, consumer health concerns are among the top priorities of brands and social media provides a great channel for this new healthy food trend. According to a Global Health & Wellness Survey by Nielsen in 2015, eighty-eight percent of respondents payed more for healthier foods and Generation Z was most likely to do so among the respondents. Also for this trend of healthy eating, social media provides great opportunities, influencers and “ordinary people” using popular hashtags like #food or #foodporn or taking photos of their meals before commencing to eat. Connecting a lot of people around the world, social media made it possible for consumers to chose a healthy diet through following influencers like @deliciouslyella (1.3 Million Instagram followers) or Paleo food blogger @thedomesticman (47 000 followers). Below their posts, followers can ask questions and they receive answers, advices, support and a lot of encouragement in return. This level of engagement is the most important pillar of influencer marketing. (Kinsky, 2015)
The main topic of this paper raises the question behind the facts: what are the specific motivational factors of people to work-out, eat clean, lead a healthy lifestyle, beside of following various influencers in the fitness and health industry? The study of Zhang and Li (2014) tries to answer this question. According to their research, exercise is used to improve body-image and self-esteem, to improve health, fitness and strength and to achieve proficiency challenges. For males, bulking, and not toning (as mainly for women) is the desired outcome, and this gender also likes to socialize and improve self-esteem at the same time. However, consumers often have negative attitudes to fitness due to a lack of satisfaction, enjoyment or frustration with the results, traced back to time pressure, exercise found as boring and lack of energy. They also value price, facilities and convenience. Credibility of sources proved to be an important factor in health and fitness marketing. The social aspect of fitness was highlighted in the study: health and fitness is used to relax and unwind, to meet new people and to engage with friends, although to relax and to socialize as primary motivations were weak. Females tended to use relaxing environments, whereas, males preferred either high energy or relaxing environments. External rewards such as health and appearance benefits as motivational factors are also very important. Additionally, lifestyles that negatively affect health may cause consumers to compensate by exercising in an attempt to compensate potential health problems. (Zhang and Li, 2014)

3.7 The Serious Leisure Perspective

The Serious Leisure Perspective is an important concept to understand the motivational factors behind following a healthy lifestyle. Serious leisure means the “systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer core activity that people find so substantial, interesting, and fulfilling that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a (leisure) career centered on acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience”. (Stebbins cited in Stebbins, 2015) Serious leisure includes three types: amateur pursuits, hobbyist activities and career volunteering. It also displays six distinct characteristics: to persevere (for example, supporting a team during a losing season), to find a leisure career in the endeavor (including turning points and stages of achievement), to show significant personal effort (through training or acquiring scientific knowledge), to exhibit eight durable benefits (namely: self-actualization, self-enrichment, self-expression, regeneration or renewal of self, feelings of accomplishment, enhancement of self-image, social interaction and belongingness, and lasting physical
products of the activity), to experience the unique ethos that grows around each instance of the leisure activity (the spirit of the community of serious leisure participants, as manifested in shared attitudes, practices, values, beliefs and goals) and finally, to identify strongly with the chosen pursuits. Additionally, the Serious Leisure Perspective reveals following personal rewards: Personal enrichment, self-image, self-gratification, recreation, financial return, group accomplishment and contribution to the maintenance and development of the group. (Stebbins, 2015)

Thrills are also part of this reward system. Thrills are „the sharply exciting events and occasions that stand out in the minds of those who pursue a kind of serious leisure.” (Stebbins cited in Stebbins, 2015) Thrill is a crucial element because they motivate the participant to stick with the pursuit hoping to find similar experiences again and again and because they demonstrate that diligence and commitment may pay off. This experience can also be described by the idea of „Flow” originating with the work of Mihály Csikszentmihalyi (1990) exhibiting eight components: the sense of competence in executing the activity, the requirement of concentration, the clarity of goals, immediate feedback, sense of deep focused involvement, sensory stimulation, casual volunteering and pleasurable aerobic activity. (Stebbins, 2015)

Taking the above into consideration, it can be stated that taking part in fitness (and health) activities exhibits the desire of human beings mainly to express themselves, to improve their self-image and their sense of belonging, to show endurance and effort, and to experience the state of flow on a regular basis.

3.8 The Influencer Concept Model

In this part of the paper, “The True Influencer Concept Model” (Figure 4), developed by the author of this paper, will be described in details. The model has been developed based on the above mentioned theoretical framework regarding influencer marketing, especially in the fitness and health industry, and also based on the intuition of the author. This model will also be used in the “Attitudes towards fitness and health influencers” and in the “Analysis” part of this paper in order to analyze the outcome of the primary research conducted in this paper based on the literature and findings of the secondary research. Thus, this model provides a framework for successful influencer marketing in the health and sports industry as based on secondary research. The outcome of the primary research
has showed a high degree of conformity with the presumptions of this model as described in the “Analysis” part of this paper in details.

Figure 4: The True Influencer Concept Model

According to the Model, first, the influencer has to determine his or her passion in order to be truly successful. Internal motivation and joy are crucial factors, since otherwise, his or her activity will not be viable in the long term and it will be full of painful discrepancies, and the state of flow will also not be achieved. Self-expression, as mentioned above, is an important part of serious leisure activities and as outlined by Fruzsí Viszkok in the Hungarian Influencer Magazine (2018), many influencer success stories begin at the level of leisure activities before evolving into successful businesses. At this stage already, the influencer has to determine and stick herself to following traits: passion, involvement and expertise in the given activity, transparency, credibility, honesty in every form of communication, talent and career in the sense of being mentally prepared for failures and challenges. Clarifying his or her individual goals and vision before starting the social media channels and activities is indispensable to building long-term success and confidence without losing sight of the real reason of starting everything and investing energy into it. Additionally, already at the very first step, one has to clarify that being involved in negative actions might damage the whole account considerably, thus, this aspect has to be kept in mind during the whole process and every activity involved in building a successful account.
An excellent fit between the influencer and his or her target audience is the second most important factor in building long term success. Potential followers have to be driven by the same interests and it is crucial to understand their needs, culture, behavior, preferences, interests and passions. Obviously, it is not possible to serve all the members of Facebook or Instagram that is why influencers have to target those specific segments that they find viable to serve.

Additionally, the relevant channels have to be identified since different segments respond differently to different social media platforms. As the recent failure of Facebook’s “LOL” meme platform indicates, the content that might appeal to children under thirteen, is a total failure among teens above thirteen years. (Weill, 2019) Furthermore, the given channel has to be trendy in terms of usage rates and preferable evaluation in order to obtain the best reach.

Fourth, an adequate fit between the content, the audience, the channel and the passion of the influencer has to be enacted. Those followers that came for fitness motivation to the account of the influencer for example, might not be interested in fashion related posts. Therefore, it is important to consider these potential challenges in beforehand and either launch more accounts dealing with diverse topics or focus on just one important topic on just one account, otherwise, followers will be confused. Producing high quality content is key in order to be credible and showing endurance and effort are important since success will not come from itself alone and this way, long term trust will be built as well. Being confident when posting content is very important since – as also proved by studies mentioned earlier in this paper – people tend to trust confident people more. For example, speaking with confidence in video posts, expressing one using confident language or projecting self-trust in photos is key in building trust and winning admiration of followers.

Fifth, dealing with sponsors in the right way has to be kept in sight as more and more followers begin to follow the channel: only those sponsors should be chosen who the given influencers really likes and whose products he or she really uses in order to build transparency. Declining bad offers should not be regarded as forgone profit, but rather as a good decision for keeping the loyalty of the followers. At this stage, honesty not only with the followers, but also with oneself is vital since most followers will immediately sense if the recommendation is not genuine and this might result in the loss of credibility.
and followers might turn away from the account. Additionally, being deeply involved in
the usage of the product or service projects confidence and expertise.

Next, the relationship with the followers has to follow a constant bidirectional flow of
communication, thus, being interactive with the followers is key: for example, tracking
and answering reaction, comments, messages, shares, etc. will slowly but surely build a
sense of community around the brand of the follower. This form of communication has
to be driven by sincere interest in the opinion of the followers as it leads to meaningful
interaction.

Last but not least, monitoring the results enables the identification and correction of
mistakes and the reassurance of the mutual benefits regarding the followers. Tracking
statistics on the various platforms is an excellent method of detecting opportunities,
performance, dangers or mistakes early. Monitoring “competitors” on the different
platforms can also help to observe trends and opportunities.

4 Methodology

This part of the paper will describe the methodology of the primary research conducted
by the author of this paper. The research logic and strategy will be described, next, the
structure of interviews will be revealed and last, details about the realization of the
interviews will be depicted.

4.1 Research logic and strategy

As mentioned, the aim of this paper is to investigate the impact of influencer marketing
on the contemporary consumers’ behaviour in the fitness and health industry within
Hungary. Taking this objective into consideration, the most suitable form of research is
qualitative research involving in-depth interviews. This method of research makes it
possible to get a better and more precise understanding of the respondents’ views,
attitudes and motivation. Additionally, in-depth interviews are suitable to sense subtle
signs, such as non-verbal forms of communication, that written surveys are not able to
detect. It also allows the interviewer and the respondent to interact freely with each other
and to extend the scope of the discussion guide through exploring additional questions.
(Piskóti, 2017)
The goal of the primary research is to gain first-hand information from contemporary consumers through real-time, face-to-face conversations. (The Hartford, n.d.) Thus, in this qualitative research, focus is on verbal and non-verbal communication and qualitative information rather than numbers. Taking the secondary research and literature detailed earlier in this paper into consideration, it is aimed to get new insights about Hungarian consumers with regard to the main topic of this paper. As mentioned above, the “True Influencer Concept Model” will be used as a framework for the elaboration of the interview questions, as detailed later in this paper, and also for the elaboration and analysis of the results of the primary research. Consequently, both the theoretical framework and the new findings will be used to create a better understanding about the consumer behavior of consumers as a response to influencer marketing in the fitness and health industry in Hungary.

Qualitative research is part of a debate, it is basically the unrecorded truth and it tries to capture the „hidden sense through structuring what is said about what is done.” (Banister et al. cited in Horváth and Ariel, 2015, pp.26.). As an important benefit, qualitative research enables the researcher to collect data from respondents in their natural surroundings, in places they are familiar with (for example their homes or universities) and thus, it enables to gather additional information about the individual, his or her experiences and attitudes (Horváth and Ariel, 2015). That is why this research method is an excellent fit with the analysis of the main topic of this paper.

4.2 Empirical research

The empirical research was carried out in February and March 2019 and for the interviews, individuals from the Generation Y and Z were chosen. As mentioned already in this paper, these generations are particularly interested and actively taking part in the world of social media and the latest technology, and their attention is extremely difficult to capture through traditional types of advertising. They are sophisticated related to technology and they are also very flexible in changing the different communication channels where they can be reached. (Social Marketing, n.d.)

Individuals from Generation Y were born between 1977 and 1994 and they basically grew up with all the technological advancements since their early childhood. They are racially and ethnically very diverse and they are extremely independent due to the divorce of their parents or latchkey parenting in many cases. They also feel empowered due to their
overindulgent parents, and they feel secure and optimistic about the future. (NAS Insights, 2006) They are specifically segmented and they are supported by the fast expansion in Cable TV channels, satellite radio, the Internet and e-zines, for example. They are less brand loyal and due to the speed of the Internet, they have developed to consumers who tend to be very flexible in changing in fashion, style consciousness and way of communication. They are often raised in dual income or single parent families and have been more involved in family purchases, regardless if it is a new car or just shopping in the groceries. According to studies, one in nine children of this generation has a credit card co-signed by a parent. (Social Marketing, n.d.) According to Karlsson, Kählvedehed and Sköld (2014), Generation Y has been raised in a very child-centric manner, surrounded by special attention and high expectations from their parents. Consequently, they have a high-level of self-confidence. They are also team-oriented and they are comfortable with socializing. They like to multi-task and they tend to strive for a good relationship with their bosses. They value personal attention, structure and stability and they need challenges and do not boggle at high expectations, but they demand the necessary information and resources in order to perform well. Generally, they are realistic, self-inventive and optimistic and they tend to treat close friends as family members. They also love diversity. That is why Generation Y tends to respond well to influencer marketing due to their broad knowledge of modern technology, their rejection towards traditional marketing, their willingness to be up-to-date and due to the casual way they deal with each novelty they come across in their lives. (Karlsson, Kählvedehed and Sköld, 2014).

Additionally, individuals from Generation Z were also included in the respondents. They were born between 1995 and 2012 and they are convenient in living in a highly diverse environment. They were born into the age of smartphones and also social media, generally. They consume vast amounts of information from many different platforms on a constant basis and simultaneously. They use social media to learn more about products and services before making the purchase. According to studies, they want to engage one-on-one with their organizational leaders and they also prefer one-on-one guidance from their leaders. They value positive relationships at work and also have a desire for human connections despite of their widespread use of digital technologies when keeping contact with others. They are also used to having conversations about finances, money, and debt
earlier as compared to earlier generations. As a result, they tend to start saving for retirement early (in their twenties on an average). This generation desires personalization in terms of communication and they are accustomed to social media, always being connected to Youtube, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and other platforms, not only at home, but also on the go. According to studies, the majority of this generation uses social media to find out more about products. That is why companies should make efforts on engaging them on these platforms. Generation Z is very visual, they need constant stimulation and they need interactivity to not to lose interest fast in ads. They respond well to interactive graphics, photos, and videos. According to one survey, fifty percent of them relies on Youtube to understand and learn more about new products, however, only twenty-five percent indicated they read emails from brands. Due to their constant proximity to smartphones, advertisements and websites that are mobile friendly are the most useful and compelling for them. (Gassam, 2018)

Taking the above mentioned facts into consideration, the research of this paper will concentrate mainly on the late Generation Y and the Generation Z and the differences between these two generations will also be analyzed later in this paper. Additionally, taking into consideration the personal observation of the author of this paper regarding the age-group of individuals who like to work out and are also following several fitness related accounts on social media, the target group of the primary research is individuals between eighteen and forty-five years old. For the in-depth interviews, twelve respondents were selected. According to Mc Cracken, the interviewees should not know special facts or details about the topic, they should represent different demographic categories and they should also be strangers. (Martinsson and Semenescu, 2012) The first two principals were taken into consideration during the research however, regarding the third principle, the author of this paper believes that it is easier and thus, more effective to interview individuals partly from the social network of the author since interviewees are more comfortable to respond to questions coming from people they already know as compared to complete strangers. Additionally, based on the pre-existing knowledge of the author regarding the usual behavior of the respondents, it is easier to detect subtle signs of non-verbal communication which can aid the real interpretation of the answers. However, the research also contains strangers who could be contacted through the existing social network. Out of the twelve respondents, ten were non-professional respondents related to the world of fitness (working out as a hobby), while two were
fitness professionals, holding also fitness trainings. Due to the request of the respondents, nicknames were used in this paper, except for the two fitness instructors: Daniella Dominika Horváth and Evelin Gálík. Table 1 includes all the important information regarding the research topic of this paper, incorporating also those pieces of information which will be referred to in the statements and the analysis of the findings of the research so that important patterns and connections are even more evident. The “passive/active follower” category indicates the degree of activity of the respondents regarding how active they are on the different social platforms, how likely they are to comment below posts or write private messages to the influencers, for example. Passive followers mean individuals who never or seldom comment under posts and active followers represent those who comment regularly or send messages frequently, for example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Passive/active follower</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peti</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>University (Mechatronics)</td>
<td>Software developer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eszter</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>University (Tourism)</td>
<td>Tax Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norbi</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>University (Software developer)</td>
<td>IT Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>University (International Business)</td>
<td>Tax Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>University (Accounting)</td>
<td>Business Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zsófi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>University (Marketing)</td>
<td>Marketing Expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>University (Law)</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Réka</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>University (International Business)</td>
<td>IT Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orsi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>University (International Relations)</td>
<td>Fitness Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>University (Graphic design)</td>
<td>Graphic Designer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniella</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Fitness Instructor/Marketing Expert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additionally to the interviews, Instagram pages of two fitness influencers have been analyzed in details, between 1 January 2019 and 31 March 2019, as part of the primary research. One of these two influencers is a widely known influencer in Hungary, namely Rėka Rubint with more than two-hundred-and-seventy-thousand followers on Instagram. The other Instagram influencer chosen was Daniella Dominika Horváth, a Hungarian fitness trainer (and also PhD student at the Corvinus University of Budapest and marketing expert) with more than two-thousand-and-nine-hundred followers on Instagram. She was also interviewed as member of the twelve respondents. Within the Instagram pages of these two influencers, a qualitative research has been done regarding the content on their accounts and also the comments coming from their followers.

4.3 Structure of the interview

The interview consisted of a set of questions pre-formulated in a guideline to aid the interviewer in leading the conversation and to pose all the important questions that were crucial for the research question. (Boyce and Neale, 206) The questionnaire can be found in the Appendix of this paper. Due to the nature of the in-depth interviews, additional questions were posed where the interviewer had the feeling that precious pieces of information can be retrieved. (Think, n.d.) Also, when respondents were too shy or timid to answer questions in full sentences, additional questions were posed in order to encourage them. All the interviews were conducted in Hungarian since – as already mentioned in this paper – the goal of the research was to focus on Hungary and on the consumer behavior of Hungarian citizens and the goal was to receive answers that were completely consistent with the respondents’ opinion. Consequently, they were given the opportunity to express themselves in the language they knew best which in this case was their mother tongue. Otherwise, choosing another language for the interview might have led to loss of information due to misunderstanding.
The same set of questions were posed to every respondent, however, due to the nature of in-depth interviews – additional questions and extended answers were possible, as mentioned above. The technique of photo elicitation - as an association technique - was also used within the questionnaire in order to increase understanding, while triggering respondents to extend their answers by using their imagination. (Martinsson and Semenescu, 2012). The author of this paper also believes that the usage of visual prompt is inevitable in the case of research about influencer marketing since interviewees are asked to provide their thoughts and feelings at the very moment the visual prompt is shown to them, hence, they do not have to rely only on memories which might fade during the many years, for example. At the beginning of the each interview, the interviewee was ensured that participation was voluntary and any question can be refused to be answered. It was also ensured that the interview was only used for the research and only the interviewer and the supervisor have access to it. Finally, the respondents were told that there were no good or bad answers and just their true opinion and feelings are asked in order to avoid compulsion to conform.

The structure of the interview can be divided into five parts: In the first part, general questions about the respondents themselves are asked in order to get to know their characteristics, hobbies and to get insight into their fitness routines, levels and motivations. The second part includes questions about the general attitude of the respondents towards traditional forms of advertising, including questions such as “What is the best advertisement channel in your opinion? Why?” or “Do you watch out for ads consciously?” The third part is the longest part of the interview, leading the interviewee to the main topic of the research, exploring their attitudes and behavior towards influencer marketing in the health and fitness industry. Starting off with the question “Is there an influential opinion leader in your life?”, respondents are first asked to think about the role of opinion leaders in general in their lives and their general purchasing patterns are also investigated. (“When you consider buying a product or service, but you do not know if it would fit your needs, what do you do as a first step?” or “Do you involve others in your search? If yes, usually who do you involve?”). Their feelings towards sponsored content on social media and their attitude towards fitness and health influencers are also analyzed. In order to further enhance the imagination of respondents and to make the interview more vivid, two videos are showed to them, advertising the same product, but the first one represents a simple company ad and the second one an influencer enhanced ad. The
difference of the various social media channels and the motivation behind following fitness and health influencers is also investigated. The important characteristics and traits of fitness and health influencers and the importance of their gender is also investigated within the questionnaire. The questions especially focus also on the assumed social and altruistic effect of influencers on the mental and physical health of the followers (for example “Have you ever worked out (even if you felt lazy on that day), because you just saw a fitness influencer you follow working out on social media?”). Next, the attitude of followers towards sponsored and non-paid content is investigated, using the photo elicitation technique also in this part. Again, followers’ purchase behavior is assessed, however, this time, focusing on fitness and health products. (“Have you ever bought something because you saw that your favorite fitness influencer uses it? If yes, how often and why?” or “Have you ever felt that the product or service recommended by the influencer was never really used by him or her?”). Finally, the activity level and the need for group belonging and socializing of followers is assessed. In the last part of the questionnaire, respondents are asked what they would do differently as an advertising agency regarding influencer marketing, encouraging respondents to apply their own needs and desires to close potential influencer-consumer gaps. Their knowledge about the Hungarian regulations regarding influencer marketing is also briefly tested. Finally, information about their age, field of study and occupation is requested. As already mentioned, the participants were aged between eighteen and forty-two years because of the reasons presented earlier in this paper and also indicated in Table 1.

5 Attitude towards fitness influencers

In this part of the paper, the findings of the interviews will be presented in line with the “True Influencer Concept Model” depicted in the theoretical framework of this paper. Constant reference to the literature findings of the secondary research – also investigated and presented in the theoretical framework of this paper – will be made in order to compare or validate the findings of the primary research with the secondary research.

5.1 Interviewee's profiles

In the theoretical part, Vadher (2014) has already acknowledged that several factors like culture, perception, lifestyle or occupation affect consumer behavior. Since the research
intends to reveal patterns and connections between the contemporary consumers’ behavior and their personal characteristics as well, first, the main characteristics of the interviewees, their hobbies and fitness routines and their general attitude towards traditional forms of advertising will be presented below.

Peti, 28

Generally, Peti is interested in electronics and modern technical gadgets. In his free-time, he used to ride horses, but today, he does not have time for it. He likes to play on his computer if he has some time and he also like to build electronic gadgets or repair things around the house. He rarely works out, maybe one time per month, but he feels guilty about it and he definitely wants to work-out more since as a software engineer, he basically sits all day in front of computers and he already has some back pain which he thinks could be alleviated by working out. However, he admits that so far, he was not able to find a certain physical activity that would fit his needs and would also motivate him. Once or twice, he has been to TRX suspension trainings, but he did not like the fact that mainly only his arms were very sore after the classes and could not even move them for two days. He would love to find a fitness routine which would be fun and beneficial for his muscles at the same time.

Eszter, 28

Eszter is interested in interior design, horse-riding and cooking, in general. The most important things in her life are her family and her dog she bought recently. In her free time, she likes to go to fitness classes, at about once per week, mostly before or after work. She also likes to cook, and she is also motivated by her eagerness to learn to cook as many things as possible. Regarding working-out, her main motivation is to stay in shape, maybe also to lose some weight and to compensate sitting all week in the office, since she often has to work overtime, additionally. She regards fitness as one of her hobbies, but not more than that. If she had the possibility to ride more often, she would consider doing it on a more professional level, however, according to her, it is extremely difficult to find an adequate place to ride, since she lives in the city and the one stable she found near her was very disappointing to her, since the coaches were very rude and the atmosphere was not agreeable.

Norbi, 38
Norbi likes to experiment with programming and technical gadgets. He likes building robots, as well. The most important thing in his life is his family and his friends. He is also interested in business and financial topics and likes to read articles about these topics in his free time. In his free time, he also loves to ride, he goes every week and according to him, it is the only place where he feels calm and close to nature. Beside of riding, he also works out twice per week in the local gym. His main motivation is to be in shape and to alleviate the negative health effects of sitting in the office whole week. He also has some back problems, thus, he has to train his back constantly, as well, in order to avoid pain. Additionally, he would like to have more muscles, thus, he always challenges himself while working out. Looking masculine is important for him. However, he does not regard fitness as more than a hobby, but he enjoys it very much.

Andi, 31

Andi’s greatest love is dancing, she goes to dance classes three times per week on an average. Additionally, she takes part on master classes, competitions and training camps, as well, since dancing is more than just a hobby for her. She also loves being around people and socializing and dancing provides a great opportunity for that, while training her body, at the same time. Sometimes, she also goes to aerobic, stretching or body art classes, which she considers as complementary classes to dancing in order to improve her flexibility, strength and endurance. She has even found the love of her life during a dance class. Furthermore, she likes to learn new languages.

Bia, 30

Bia loves working out. She did not lead an active lifestyle until a few years ago, however, recently, her love towards fitness has grown considerably. She always wanted to lose some weight and to build lean muscles, however, her job prevented her from having enough free-time to work-out. That is why she changed her job, where she has less overtime and three years ago, she went to her first fitness class and fell in love with working out. She goes four to six times to different fitness classes and the gym per week. Sometimes, she also works out with a personal trainer which she really enjoys, since this way, she is challenged more. She regards fitness as not just a hobby, but as a lifestyle and source of joy, mental and physical health and contentment.
Zsőfi, 24

Zsőfi loves her part-time job at a non-profit organizations which helps the education of sick children and where she has fund-raising activities. The most important thing in her life is her family and her friends and also, to find something that she can enjoy, that touches her shoul every day, like eating good food or watching movies or series that have an impact on her. In her free time, she loves cooking and experimenting with new things in the kitchen. She also has a dog, she likes to spend a lot of time with her, to train her. Zsőfi also loves to consume art, and when she was little, she also used to paint and draw. She plays tennis twice a week currently, however, she does not do other type of regular sport, like going to the gym, for example. But from spring to autumn, she likes to ride her bike a lot and occasionally, she tries out new types of sport with her best friend. She works out because she likes to feel good in her body and she eats a lot, also unhealthy food and working out is about knowing that she does something about her health to feel and look better, however, her goal is not losing weight, definitely. She gets excited when she finds something new, like a new type of sport she can try and she has already tried many sports, including swimming, dancing or playing volleyball.

Alex, 42

Alex had several hobbies during his life so far, he also considers himself as somebody who is interested in various things, and since he is a perfectionist, he loves to put as much effort as he can into everything he does. During his twenties he used to ride horses, he also built a horse farm together with his brother where children could also learn how to ride. Additionally, he used to take part in coach-driving competitions, however, his parents were afraid of him being injured, thus, because of their pressure, he stopped with competing in this area. Besides of being a lawyer, he also completed the music academy degree in classical guitar and he used to teach a lot. His guitar students were very successful, competing in several national and international competitions, but he admits, he was very strict and performance-oriented also with them. Sometimes he goes to the gym, however, beside of work, he does not have much time to work-out at present times. The most important thing in his life is his wife and his family.
Réka, 22

Réka loves her job as an IT consultant and the fact that she can travel due to the nature of her job. She loves her family and also loves the various family events as being part of a large family. In her free-time, she likes to workout, mainly in the gym or if she does not have enough time, at home. She loves running as well, she challenges herself every time to run at a greater pace and also to run more. She takes part in a few running competitions every year, as well. Sometimes, her mother trains with her which she enjoys very much since living in different cities, this gives them an opportunity to spend quality time together. Réka considers running as a bit more than just a hobby, because she likes to compete. She is motivated because of the great feeling after running and also because of the fact that she is able to improve herself, which can be tracked easily, and this boosts her confidence as well.

Orsi, 21

Orsi’s hobby is mainly her job as well, at the moment, since she just finished studies regarding her fitness qualification and she began to coach at a fitness center in Budapest. Training is her life, she regularly visits the gym and participates in various fitness classes, such as boxing, aerobic, cross training or TRX suspension training, for example. She regularly trains for the Spartan race trainings as well which are her favorite competitions beside of running competitions. However, beside her university studies, she finds it also a bit difficult to focus on both her job, hobby and studies at the same time and admits, that studying suffers sometimes due to the lack of time. However, she definitely wants to stay in the world of fitness as long as possible, also as a coach and this way, she loves her life. She loves the feeling after a training, it makes her mind calm and happy and she loves when a woman has some muscles and a toned body. Her opinion is that if somebody starts working out, and stays there, it is difficult to stop, because the mind and the body get used to it. If she has to miss a training session, she gets very upset and uncomfortable.

Mia, 27

Mia loves working out in her free-time, beside of painting. Unfortunately, she has some back problems that is why when she finishes her daily tasks at work and at the university, she opts for working out, because she could not sit more per day. She aims to work-out every second day and she trains mainly at home today, but she used to visit different
training classes earlier, where she learnt a lot so that today, she is able to train herself effectively with the help of her pre-existing knowledge and online videos. She loves TRX, light weight trainings and own-body weight trainings as well, she has already some fitness equipment at home (such as a sit-up bench, an elliptical trainer, a treadmill, dumb-bells or elastic bands). She loves riding as well, however, due to an accident and also due to the lack of time, she does not ride regularly. When she was young, she never worked out, however, since she began to go to therapeutic gymnastics when she was seventeen, she could not imagine her life without sport today. She loves the great, energizing feeling after working out, she loves muscle fever, since it gives her the satisfying feeling that she has done something beneficial for her health. The most important things in her life are her boyfriend and her family.

Daniella, 29

Daniella has three important things that her life revolves around: teaching (at the university), sport and her PhD studies. Working out is an important part of her life since she is a fitness instructor as well, besides being a marketing expert and a PhD student at the Corvinus University of Budapest. However, sport is also her passion. The most important things in her life are her family, jogging and health-conscious life. She likes to cook, especially healthy food. She holds four fitness classes per week, where she is also actively doing all the exercises that she is demanding from her clients, since she intends to motivate them. She works out four to five times a week on an average (plus one or two jogging sessions) and she also takes part in running competitions, like Ultra Balaton, for example. She works out because sport has been always part of her life, it is her passion: her parents were also successful athletes, and they raised her to love sport as well. She has done many types of sports during her childhood as well (like dancing or fencing) and she cannot imagine her life without it. She also uses fitness to get rid of stress. When she holds her fitness classes, it is not only about passion, but her job which she loves: she is dedicated to provide her clients with quality time, recreation, motivation and this needs a lot of attention, active presence and mindfulness. However, she admits, that this is a form of obligation as well, since for example, when she gets ill, she still has to hold her classes the next morning, for example. For all these reasons, working out means much more to her than just a hobby.
Evelin, 26

Evelin has moved to Budapest four years ago, and she also works as a fitness instructor since four years. Sport has always been part of her life (athletics and handball). After university, she decided to become a fitness instructor since she wanted to help others and after completing the necessary qualification, she holds TRX and other fitness classes at “Jógaliget és Fitness Stúdió” in Budapest. She is constantly taking part on extension courses in order to provide the highest quality training to her clients. Being also a receptionist at the same company, she has also gathered further valuable experiences, meeting a lot of clients. Beside of being a fitness instructor, she is also a nutrition advisor. Health and her family play the most important role in her life and she intends to help many people with the help of her professional knowledge. Her hobbies include everything that is related to sports: for example swimming, indoor climbing, squash or hiking. She works out five to six times per week (including her own fitness classes and gym or swimming). Her motivation is to keep herself healthy and to relax. She is very happy about the fact that her hobby and her occupation are basically the same.

5.2 Attitudes towards traditional marketing

Almost all of the respondents had negative feelings towards traditional forms of advertising. They thought that they are intrusive and annoying because they cannot be personalized and they were showed ads that were absolutely not interested in. When asking about advertisement in general, all respondents thought about traditional advertising only, at first.

“Advertising in general? I think about ads on the TV or billboards on the streets. Also Internet ads, ads on Facebook. Yes, I see them quite often, even if I do not really want to.” (Peti, 28, passive follower)

“The first things that comes to my mind is TV ads. They are very annoying. I do not like ads at all” (Eszter, 28, active follower)

“I think about something that is boring, intrusive and something that wants to sell me something that I do not need.” (Andi, 31, passive follower)

“I would say sales (...) like push marketing.” (Zsófi, 24, passive follower)
As it can be seen, social media advertising was also mentioned by a few participants; however, generally, all of them used traits like “boring”, “aggressive”, “annoying” or “manipulative” when thinking about advertisements. The majority of the respondents tried to avoid advertising. They thought that it might be good to know more about certain products, however, ads are not reliable enough to buy a purchase decision solely on them.

“Ads are necessary, but I try to avoid too much of it, especially if they are too aggressive. It is a good way to get to know about the products, but most ads will not describe the quality of the products.” (Peti, 28, passive follower)

“If I see an ad, it does not mean that it corresponds to the reality. Nowadays, companies allow themselves a lot, I have experienced a lot of lies when it came to the real characteristics and performance of the product that was advertised as much better than it is in real life. And I got turned off quickly by these negative experiences.” (Alex, 42, passive follower)

“On the consumer side, they have a strong manipulative effect of course.” (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

According to Mia, Eszti, Réka, Evelin and Zsófi, ads are necessary to increase the awareness about brands and they are important for companies to get out of the crowd.

“Advertisement can be regarded as good or bad, however, from the point of companies, they are surely an important way to stand out of the crowd and make people get aware of their brands and products.” (Réka, 22, passive follower)

“Ads do not bother me generally, I think they are important since this way, brands can reach consumers and I am also happy if a valuable product or service reaches out to me in the form of ads, like now I am into herbal teas, and I am happy if I find a lot of information about them. I also like it, when different training courses are advertised on social media specifically to me.” (Evelin, 26, passive follower)

As it can be also seen in the last citation, some respondents liked the fact that advertisement can be personalized:

“As a marketing student, I really like the direction this is going, with the level of micro-targeting, or real personal targeting and delivering value to each and every customer. (Zsófi, 24, passive follower)
However, it was also pointed out by the same respondent that the noise of advertisement is still too much to digest and process for an average consumer:

“However, I think that there is still relatively much more noise that I receive than actually value of the offering through the advertising coming through my way.” (Zsófi, 24, passive follower)

It has to be mentioned here however, that Zsófi and Réka have encountered marketing during their studies at some point or are marketing experts, so, they are to some extent professionals in this topic.

Some respondents however, were very positive when thinking about advertisement in general, mentioning words like “funny”, “entertaining”, “informative” and “creative”.

“I really love ads, they really entertain me (...) when I was a kid ad I went home after school, the teleshop was always going on the TV, and I remember, I was just sitting there and watching it and I was mesmerized by this type of direct marketing (...) that people are really watching it, me included.” (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

Daniella was really astonished when she discovered as part of the Teleshop marketing team at the Hungarian TV channel “TV2”, how much companies spend on these kind of direct marketing ads.

As the best advertisement channel, mostly, the Internet was mentioned. According to Peti, Facebook ads are a good source of information since they are personalized, he gets a lot of targeted ads and since he loves technological gadgets and often searches for them. According to Bia, the Internet is also a great source of ads since if something gets her attention, she can immediately click on the ad to get more information or she can search for reviews on her phone while on the go:

“I like ads on the Internet very much, since they are less intrusive than TV ads for example, and I can click on them on the go to get more information if I am on my way, so that it is more convenient.” (Bia, 30, active follower)

These attitudes towards advertising are in line with the change of the customer relationships as outlined by Kotler and Armstrong (2012) in the theoretical framework. Today, companies focus more on building deeper, more direct and interactive relationships through laying a greater emphasis on target marketing instead of focusing
on mass marketing. Since many of the respondents mentioned that they like personalized ads, the primary research also proved that the new technologies and communication approaches which enable companies to create deeper customer involvement are greatly needed by today’s consumers.

However, some respondents mentioned that they do not really have a favorite advertisement channel, since ads are always annoying and boring. For example, they also find ads during Facebook and Youtube videos very annoying, it even stops them from watching the video:

“The Facebook, I follow many accounts of famous dancers and I like to watch their videos about their competition performances or master classes. However, many of these videos are interrupted in the middle by ads, and I have to admit that I am so impatient when they interrupt the videos, that I am not willing to watch the video till the end so that I click away. Later of course, I am angry, because I missed a great dance, for example or the opportunity to learn new techniques. So, I do not have any favorite advertisement channel.” (Andi, 31, passive follower)

Regarding the worst advertisement channel, some respondents mentioned the written forms of ads, like the newspaper:

“It is the newspaper maybe, it is not that used anymore, it cannot really reach out to people.” (Peti, 28, passive follower)

The TV was also mentioned by almost all the respondents:

The TV is not the best channel, because people want to focus on the actual TV program and not the loads of ads that interrupt the movies every five minutes. It is so annoying! They are very intrusive!” (Norbi, 38, passive follower)

It is interesting that those, who did not mention the TV as the most intrusive channel, mostly did not watch TV themselves, but used Netflix for example, to watch movies. This knowledge was collected through additional questions as the interviewer expected that there was a reason behind not mentioning this channel due to her personal experiences. The results were in line with Kozarek’s studies (2018), according to which young consumers are very difficult to reach through traditional marketing methods since instead of the TV or radio, they use their laptops and mobile phones.
“Why I did not mention it (the TV)? Well, because I do not have a TV (laughs)! I use my computer to watch movies, mainly because it is cheaper and I do not have to listen to thousand ads during a movie. Also, I can decide what I want to watch and when.” (Andi, 31, passive follower)

Point-of-sale terminals were also mentioned by one respondent:

“I really don’t like point-of-sale terminals, for me, it’s really aggressive, (...) because everything else, I feel like I can skip if I really want to: I can scroll down Facebook, I can scroll down Instagram, I can change the TV channel, I when I shop, I want to get it done fast and I don’t want the noise coming towards me.” (Zsófi, 24, passive follower)

Regarding the favorite ad, some respondents mentioned TV ads, nevertheless:

“There was a TV ad, I think about Budapest Bank which featured a wannabe bank employee, Emese and her crazy ideas. I know I used to rewatch those ads even on Youtube, because I loved how funny those different episodes were, and the actress was also great! It’s a pity they do not make new episodes, because I think many people would love to see her again!” (Mia, 24, passive follower)

When speaking about favorite ads, words like “funny”, “emotional”, “hilarious” and “fascinating” were used:

“I have seen some ads on Youtube before videos about large horses, I think it advertised a beer brand, I do not remember exactly, which one, but I know that they have made several ad clips with those horses, with different story plots, sometimes featuring dogs, as well. I always watched them till the end, because I like horses and the landscape and also the music were fascinating in those ads. Of course, they were also very emotional.” (Norbi, 38, passive follower)

When talking about those ads respondents hate, they were much more active in answering the question:

“Oh yes, there are many ads I hate! (Laughing) For example, there is this ad with Ábel and the medication Fluimucil in which the boy is so annoying when asking “but why” a thousand times in the ad. I remember, even events on Facebook had been created to execute that kid, which I personally find not funny and a bit overreacted, however, it shows how annoying this ad is to a lot of people.” (Réka, 22, passive follower)
“I hate that new Vodafone ad which features children in the role of parents and parents in the role of children which I find ridiculous and the product itself is also very bad and useless: I mean advertising a watch that tracks the GPS coordinates of people, and then thinking your child is safe anytime? That’s crazy, their watch could be stolen or even the children could be kidnapped and their watches thrown away, that’s a very bad idea.” (Eszter, 28, active follower)

Words like “ridiculous”, “annoying”, “boring”, “low-quality” or “revolting” were used when describing those ads. Mia spoke about those ads which encourage working and being active while being very sick, just because one takes some form of medication, which in itself will not make anybody healthy, they only suppress the symptoms and the message of these ads is that people should go to work while being ill, and they do not take into consideration that others will get also ill or the person her or himself will get even more ill.

“(…) I think that these kind of ads are dangerous and revolting since they give the wrong message to people. For example, if I am ill, I do take these medicines, but I am not willing to go to work or to work out, when I have fever, as suggested in those ads. However, this could foster a wrong culture at organizations for example, with very dangerous consequences.” (Mia, 24, passive follower)

This kind of social aspect of ads was also mentioned by Bia and Evelin:

“I hate those ads that advertise unhealthy stuff like chocolate, and they even feature them as a healthy snack for children or for breakfast. I mean why would eating Nutella for breakfast be healthy? And the sad thing is, that people get the wrong education. Children especially are very prone to these ads, they don’t have the necessary critical viewpoint and knowledge to assess these ads and they might get diabetes in their twenties, for example as a result. Also, when I am trying to eat healthy, it is very annoying to see these ads because they do not help my diet, for sure.” (Bia, 30, active follower)

“I hate those ads for example which advertise fruit juices as healthy, saying that they cover the daily C-vitamin need of a person, about which I just laugh as a nutritional advisor. Often, these products do not even contain what is written on them.” (Evelin, 26, passive follower)
Regarding the occupation of the respondents was obvious, that those who were fitness or nutritional experts, were extremely skeptical about the information advertised regarding health-related products. Additionally, marketing experts were concerned regarding the quality, creativity and intelligence of the ads:

“Yesterday, I just saw an ad, I think about “RS bútor”, there was a girl skating with balloons, or something like that, but it was made according to such low quality standards, that I do not understand that if somebody spends a lot of money on ads to be shown at prime time in the TV, why he cannot adjust better lights at least, since that ad is really amateur.” (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

Thus, the type of occupation of the respondents had a clear effect on their views about advertising, which will be further analyzed in the “Analysis” part of this paper.

When asking about the fact whether respondents watch out consciously for ads, some respondents confirmed that they do it always since they want to gather information:

“I don’t trust the content usually, so if I am interested in a product, I always watch out for more ads and reviews. (Peti, 28, passive follower)

“When I am interested in something, for example herbal teas, I do search for them on the Internet, and usually, I see a lot of ads on social media sites, and one ad takes me to the other on Youtube, for example. And I usually watch a lot of them, because there are a lot of vitamin supplements for example, and they are all different, and it makes a huge difference which one I buy in the end, so of course, I want to buy the best one.” (Evelin, 26, passive follower)

Mia also mentioned that if she is interested in a product, she searches for it on the Internet, but she avoids ads, she opts for honest reviews instead:

“In ads, you cannot really see the real characteristics of a product, reviews by real people who bought them already are much more precious! They can save you a lot of money. For example, I always read the consumer comments on “Krémmánia” if I want to buy a new make-up, because I have found that they are extremely honest and reliable.” (Mia, 24, passive follower.)

When two videos were shown to the respondents (advertising the same product, but one was a teleshop ad and the second one an influencer recommendation), the traditional type
of advertisement was viewed as much more pushy and ridiculous. It was also clear that the fitness instructors were much more difficult to convince about the effectiveness or uniqueness of the product:

“In my opinion, the effectiveness of the two machines are the same, you drink the juice anyway, and consuming a lot of fruit that contains a lot of sugar is not healthy at all. I did not like that ad (the traditional teleshop ad), it wanted to convince me so hard, why the product would be good for me, however, me, as a nutritional advisor, it does not have any effect on me. Also, those people who were watching and taking notes in the ad while the juice was made, were ridiculous. (Evelin, 26, passive follower)

“I also have a similar machine, I call it the “magic machine”, maybe its brand is Philips, which works really well, I do every kind of creamy juices like avocado and humus cream in it (…), and when I was watching this ad now, for a minute, I really thought about that maybe I should get this machine? Although, I should not fall for this ad, as a professional, however, it came to my mind that with my own blender, I can do the same cashew nut cream, with the same creamy structure as a result. (...) So I don’t doubt that this ad is good (the teleshop ad), it is credible, the product is tested, but I am not sure that this product is so unique on the market or that another high-quality blender could not do the same. (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

“It feels so scripted (the teleshop ad), and it even doesn’t want to hide that it is scripted, it seems totally fake, I can’t trust it at all.” (Zsófi, 24, passive follower)

Already at this early stage of the interviews, words like “honest” or “reliable” were mentioned which are important characteristics of influencer marketing as outlined by Glucksman (2017) and the Hungarian Influencer Magazine (2018). Respondents were clearly afraid of traditional forms of advertising in terms of not being informed about the real characteristics of products or services and many respondents expressed the need for honesty when watching ads. Additionally, personalized ads were mentioned as useful by many respondents since these ads were not found as annoying or disturbing when speaking about advertisement in general, reflecting earlier research by Kozarek (2018) regarding the diverse programs used to block „annoying” messages, thus, making not personalized content ineffective.
5.3 Positive influencer traits

Several respondents used positive traits like “honest”, “credible”, “fit”, “healthy”, “inspirational”, “happy”, “motivating”, “creative”, “natural”, “rational”, “imperfect”, “enduring”, “motivating”, “professional”, “trendy”, “relevant”, “beautiful”, “sporty” and “correct”. The term “skinny” was also used by one respondent, and since this paper does not intend to decide about the positive or negative nature of these critical physical characteristics, it is important to point out here, that this term for example, is stated under the positive traits in this paper, however, the reason is that the respondent mentioned it as a positive trait and the author of this paper does not intend to judge these diverse approaches since it does not comply with the goal of this paper.

Honesty and credibility was mentioned by most respondents in the first place, when asked about what traits they are searching for in fitness and health influencers.

“I want them to be honest, I want to see their progress, how they reached that state of body they have currently. I am interested in their journey.” (Peti, 28, passive follower)

“It seems so much more natural and organic, that I don’t even think about that I am advertised to, so I just think, oh this is cool, she looks fit, she looks healthy, the thing she makes looks healthy, and the whole thing is just happy in a nice shiny kitchen. (...) I want her to send this message of feeling good. I want them to admit that waking up early is hard, paying attention to diet is hard and honesty is very important! Rêka for example (Rubint Réka), she always comes down honest about being a mum, and when I follow an influencer, I want her to convey the value of feeling good, and not pressuring me. (Zsófi, 24, passive follower)

“I want them to be credible, and I immediately sense if she is not using this or that product, it just comes through.” (Bia, 30, active follower)

“Credibility is very important. I am sure, that in ninety percent of the cases, these follower do not use the recommended products.” (Evelin, 26, passive follower)

“In my opinion, credibility does not change the judgement of the product, however, it reaches out to me in a much better way.” (Orsi, 21, passive follower)

“I think that she is true to herself. I think that also in the previous picture, although, it is not a retouched photo, her stomach is nice (...) I think that she is a fitness model who
has gone through a long path, but she is able to keep that nice body shape. Last time she posted some pizza she was eating, so she is very living, you can identify yourself with her easily.” (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

As it can be seen above, being natural and organic, in terms of not having the feeling that the influencer is actually advertising a product or service, was also important to some of the respondents. The importance of the trait “honest” was also confirmed by Glucksman’s research where the authenticity of the influencer is crucial in building successful marketing campaigns. According also to his findings, an influencer has to be genuine, honest and open with his or her followers. (Glucksman, 2017) Also the Hungarian Influencer Magazine (2018) confirmed that among other traits, credibility and honesty are important in every form of communication.

Some respondents also stated that they wanted the influencers to be happy and joyful:

“For me, a fitness and health influencer should be joyful, but also good looking and fit. If I see that she has a toned body with nice muscles, I will be more motivated to work out, since somewhere in my head, I have the irrational feeling that if I train, I will look the same. Even if I know, that it is not true, since I do not eat well, do not work out everyday day, like them, but still, I try my best.” (Mia, 24, passive follower)

“I like if they are smiling, because it just makes my day. their positive spirit can touch my soul as well, and I like positive vibes around me. For example, when I have no motivation to go to dance class, I just go to Instagram, watch my favorite dancers, and their positive vibes just make my mood much better and finally, I decide to go to that dance class. However, I know how hard it must be for them also to smile all the time, because, at competitions, we also have to smile during our performance, which is very hard, I have to admit.” (Andi, 31, passive follower)

“To have an example in my life that being healthy (...) can keep you happy and that it’s necessary for your happiness and it’s not a struggle. (...) I want them to enjoy eating a banana.” (Zsófi, 24, passive follower)

This need for joy, enjoyment and happiness when following fitness and health influencers can be traced back also to Glucksman’s studies (2017), where it was found that the confidence and quirky personality of the influencer is an important trait when it comes to promoting products of brands, reasoned by the fact that when influencers express
confidence in themselves, it also promotes confidence in the brand. Although, it should be stated that confidence and happiness are not the exact same traits, however, they are undeniably related to each other given the fact that the influencer described in Glucksman’s studies as confident, also seemed to be happy and enjoying what was is doing.

Professional knowledge as a crucial characteristic was very important especially for the two fitness instructors interviewed:

“Rubint Réka does her job well, it’s hard to not to take her into account, she has real knowledge and content behind her.” (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

“There are good and bad influencers, I usually watch many of them on Youtube. For me, what they say is important, for example, it could be that he or she says something which I know is not true, then I immediately cancel her from my list. I also found Tündi Gazdag by accident on Youtube, there are so many nutritional advisors up there. And some of them are on the top, they know a lot, and some are not that good, and I only follow those who tell the truth.” (Evelin, 26, passive follower)

These findings are in line with Messiaen’s (2016) insights confirming the positive relationship between purchase intentions and the information credibility and quality.

Motivation was an important positive trait among non-professional respondents, regarding their fitness knowledge and education. Fitness and health influencers were regarded almost as personal trainers who made the respondents work-out or eat healthy, although they never really met in real life or never had any personal communication.

“For me, it’s really about having somebody, even if he reaches out to me only virtually, to motivate me, when I don’t want to work out, when it would be easier to sit on the sofa and watch the TV, when that chocolate bar is so tempting.” (Norbi, 38, passive follower)

The motivational power and the look of the fitness and health influencers were closely related to each other since many respondents stated that the beauty and the toned body of the influencers motivated them to do something for their own beauty as well:

“I think everybody would love to look like them, maybe not too much muscles, I admit, for women, however, just looking at them makes me feel like working out (...) In videos like this, I love when they show how they are working out, when I can really see their
muscles working and sweating, putting in all that hard work, that really motivates me to get up from the chair, put on my gym clothes and smash my own workout as well.” (Réka, 22, passive follower)

“I have never bought any exact brand because an influencer was recommending it, however, it influenced my habits: for example, I started running, making smoothies, that’s why I got a smoothie maker, but not the exact brand. Or when I saw beautiful yoga pants on some influencer, she made me buy some nice outfit as well, in which then I worked out

Also professional fitness instructors found the motivational aspect of fitness and health influencers as a positive and beneficial trait:

“It’s motivation: when I would eat something that is unhealthy they might hold me back.” (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

Being healthy was stated by many respondents a san important trait, thus, besides of looking nice, being healthy in the inside, both physically and mentally were also very important for the followers:

“One should thrive for something that is healthy, allowing this or that sometimes, however, as a fitness instructor, you cannot allow yourself to let go of your fitness routine” (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

“I want to feel good in my body, mentally as well, and when I follow an influencer, I want her to convey these values to me.” (Zsófi, 24, passive follower)

When analyzing the Instagram pages of the two fitness and health influencers, Réka Rubint and Daniella Horváth, as mentioned in the “Methodology” part of this paper, many of the positive traits mentioned in this part were cited directly or indirectly by their followers as well: Réka’s followers praised her toned muscles, her beauty, her energy and positivity, her endurance and motivating attitude. Some of her followers also commented below her work-out posts, that being inspired by the photo, they also went to the gym right after seeing her post. Two followers praised her look in one of her recent posts, for example (Figure 5 and 6):

“You are so toned, wow!” (Réka Rubint’s Instagram follower)
“Great woman…great Body” (Réka Rubint’s Instagram follower)

“This set is amazing, its colours are great and it fits you wonderfully!” (Réka Rubint’s Instagram follower)

Another follower praised her endurance regarding the fact that she did not stop working out even after the recent death of her father (Figure 6):

“Dear Réka, it is honorable that you work out even in tough times like this” (Réka Rubint’s Instagram follower)
Regarding Réka as their best “virtual” friends was also mentioned in some comments, or as their family members, which will be later analyzed in this paper.

Daniella’s followers also mentioned similar traits, even if they are less in numbers (due to the fact that Daniella does not aim at becoming a large-scale influencer): her beauty and her motivating attitude, mostly (Figure 7)

**Figure 7**: Daniella Dominika Horváth’ Instagram page (Daniella Dominika Horváth, 2019)

5.4 Negative influencer traits

Certain negative traits of influencers had a negative effect on some of the respondents. Several interviewees mentioned that if their favorite influencer was involved in negative actions, they unfollowed them on social media. For example, one of the respondents mentioned that once, she saw in the news that Réka Rubint parked on the zebra while she had an appointment with her manicurist and what is more, she even left two of her children in the car:

“**Yes, once I read that Réka Rubint left two of her children in her car and she was also parking on the zebra. What is even worse, she made all this just because she had an**
appointment with her manicurist. I mean how shallow and unrespectful is this?! Doing your manicure while your children are sitting in the car. First, I did not believe this, but I read many sources telling the same, with photos, so I was so freaked out by this, that I stopped following her on Facebook and Instagram for a while. I don’t want to follow a person whose values exist only in front of her audience, when people are watching, but when she thinks they are not, she does completely different things that are in huge contrast with her positive values that she communicates on her channels.” (Réka, 22, passive follower)

Additionally, some respondents mentioned that - although they did not unfollow those influencers - they began to be more pre-catious and critical about their values and posts later on:

“For example, I see many times on Facebook that Réka Rubint has issues with her negative followers and I am not really interested, since it should be accepted by an influencer that he or she has negative/hating followers as well, but last time, my girlfriend listened to one of Réka’s live videos on Facebook, where she was harassing her negative followers, and I also listened to it, and Réka’s image came across really negatively, it was one of her new sides I have never seen and now I am even more sure that I will never follow her, not even for motivation” (Peti, 28, passive follower)

Some respondents also reflected on the way some influencers are recommending their products:

“I would make the product reviews by the influencers less like a TV ad, but more like a personal experience and I would not post only one video or post, but multiple ones, showing that they are really using the product and have honest opinion about it.” (Zsófi, 24, passive follower)

“For me, also this influencer ad with Réka was a bit staged, you know, nobody has such a perfect and shiny kitchen, I am sure it’s not her own home and she was just hired by an agency to film this ad. She might use this product, since I have seen several times that she has posted content about it, so I am not sure about that, but I would prefer a video where she prepares the smoothie in her own kitchen, even if it’s not that tidy. It would give more transparency for me and I would believe her more. (Mia, 24, passive follower)
“I think that both ads are staged more or less (the Teleshop ad and Rëka Rubint’s ad), and I know that the goal of Rëka’s ad was to make the whole thing more believable, however, I think that for me, it is still artificial. Maybe if she was doing insta stories using that blender, it would me much more believable that she really uses that product.” (Rëka, 22, passive follower)

From the above examples, it can be seen that some respondents regarded influencer ads also as “staged”, “artificial” and “not transparent”. It has to be added here however, that these respondents were mostly professionals regarding the field of marketing (Table 1) and they had already existing knowledge about the working of influencer ads, thus, their additional knowledge might have had a prejudiced effect on their opinion as consumers. It was also interesting to acknowledge that those respondents who have never studied marketing, preferred influencer ads as opposed to teleshop ads, thus, negative traits like “staged” cannot be universally applied to influencers since there was no general agreement among the respondents whether the same ad they all watched was staged or not and whether this was perceived as a negative trait or not.

One respondent mentioned that he lacked the technical explanations from influencers regarding the promoted products, and hence, he was not really helped out by them regarding his decision about buying a product. For example, when the video about Rëka Rubint (recommending the blender) was shown to him, he lacked the technical details about the product:

“It still feels like the general ad, because my problem is that I am still looking for the technical properties and this ad feels more like a recipe, not in general about the product itself. After watching this ad, I still could not decide whether I wanted to buy this product or not, whether it is worth the money or not. I mean, it does not show why this blender would be better than the others on the market.” (Peti, 28, passive follower)

It should be mentioned here as well that Peti’s occupation and general interest is closely related to technology (Table 1), thus, he might have different needs when buying a certain product, than those individuals who place less importance on rational decision making.

Placing followers under pressure was also regarded by some respondents as a negative trait:
“It is hard to find time to work out, and sometimes, when I see that those fitness influencers go every day, even twice or three times per day to the gym and have all this energy and time, I am generally very frustrated. I know I work a lot, and I also know that their job is related to fitness, so if I worked in their industry, my job would also be just to work out all day long, but I still find it frustrating and always have the feeling that I did less than those people for my health today, when I could not hit the gym because of work. I don’t like this kind of pressure.” (Alex, 42, passive follower)

“When I follow and influencer, I want her to imply that feeling good is important and I don’t want her to pressure me.” (Zsófi, 24, passive follower)

The appearance of influencers in terms of looking “artificial”, “artificial”, with “too much make-up”, was also mentioned by several respondents as negative physical traits:

“I would probably never buy this product, it’s the exact type of thing that I was talking before that she is just showing me a product, just no! Also, she is wearing tons of make-up, she probably spent hours on her hair, she pushes out everything that is humanly possible, for me, that doesn’t mean health from any point of view, it’s just, unnatural, artificial.” (Zsófi, 24, passive follower)

“I totally think that she is very artificial. I know her account, I have seen her in many videos, but she is so staged, her speech, her movements, everything is just so unnatural, and this irritates me. Her hair always looks way too perfect, her breasts are unnatural, but really, the way she speaks is the worst part about her. It’s so obvious, that she doesn’t speak like that at home when her followers are not watching. This turns me down, I don’t like influencers who have two faces.” (Andi, 31, passive follower)

“If I was an ad agency, I am sure that I would love the influencer to also show the product in her natural environment, apart from doing the nice photo shooting with the given product, because this way, as a consumer, you can associate yourself much better with her.” (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

The most important negative trait however was the dishonest nature of the posts and the influencers:

“In many cases, I am so sure that the given influencer does not use the recommended product. You can easily feel and see it: for example, if there is only a short sentence
below the post, and you just see the influencer holding the given product, and only once or twice in a lifetime, that’s a sure sign for me that he or she is definitely not using the product. She or he just received a certain amount of money for posing with the product. 

I find this such a ramp." (Evelin, 26, passive follower)

Looking at the comments below Réka Rubint’s posts on her Instagram page, it can be seen, that some people find her luxurious lifestyle as a negative trait, for example. Several comments can be read pointing to the fact that Réka always emphasizes how much she works and how little leisure time she has, and even so, she manages to go to luxurious holidays with her family every month on an average. Furthermore, some followers mention the unprofessional execution of the exercises in her short videos. After the recent death of Réka’s father, several followers criticized that Réka was not mourning her father, due to the fact that she posted her usual workout videos and other posts shortly after the tragedy. For many followers, this resulted in a decrease in trust towards the influencer. Since the original negative comment regarding Figure 8 was deleted by Réka’s management, only one response of one follower to the negative comment will be cited in this paper:

“For the negative commenters, yes, you are right, it is much easier to say that it is easy for Réka rather than working for it yourselves. Jealous idiots. Copy her…ohhh but then, you should work a lot, not only stalk those who managed to do it. I have some bad news for you: with that attitude, you will never accomplish what she did. Réka can be proud of what she has accomplished in life. And that car fits her wonderfully!” (Réka Rubint’s Instagram follower)
Taking the above negative traits into consideration, the findings of Hotz-Behofstits et al (2018) have been enforced also by the respondent’s views in this paper’s primary research: if the recommendations are viewed as artificial, dishonest or traditional advertisement, trust may decrease considerably. Additionally, as described by Sarkar (2017) in the theoretical framework, the influencer (and also the company in contract with the influencer) has to accept that control has to be handed over to the followers since controlling negative comments, especially in case of influencers with several hundred-thousands of followers is very difficult and adequate strategies have to be designed in order to prepare for these situations as it will be elaborated in the “Suggestion” chapter of this paper.

5.5 The needs and interests of fitness influencer followers

In order to understand the needs, desires and interests of the followers of fitness and health influencers, one first has to understand their main motivational factors regarding fitness and health. As already mentioned in the theoretical chapter, taking part in fitness and health activities can be regarded from the Serious Leisure Perspective in the sense that it provides the individual with personal enrichment, self-image, self-gratification, recreation, financial return, group accomplishment and contribution to the maintenance and development of the group and it also enables them to express themselves and to show endurance and effort. (Stebbins, 2015)

These motivational factors (especially personal enrichment, self-image, self-gratification and re-creation), were also revealed in the primary research:

„When I exercise, I feel that I am alive, that I am actually doing something for myself. It feels like I am in control of my body and I love the muscles fever afterwards since it means that I have worked hard for my goals.” (Mia, 24, passive follower)

“For me, working out is about health, to be comfortable with my body image. I like it when I feel good in my body. Unfortunately, I like to eat a lot, also unhealthy food, and working out is about knowing that I have done something for my health, to feel better, so it’s not really about weight loss.” (Zsófi, 24, passive follower)
“My parents also took part in many kind of sports, my father plays football until present times, he also plays tennis, my mum was a volleyball player in the National League, she wanted to become a physical education teacher, but an injury prevented this aspiration of her. Basically, since I was a child, doing sports was always part of my life. for example, I danced, fenced, played handball, generally, as a young person, sport meant a social experience to me as well, thus, it became such a huge part of my life that the question is not really why I do sports but why I would not? However, there was a time in secondary school when I did not really find that type of sport that really brought me joy, and I remember that when I felt that I was left with no legs to stand on, my father made me realize that I should find a hobby. This way, I managed to settle back to my old habits. Obviously, it was a new place, a new city, a new community, I had to learn a lot and doing sports was thrown into the shade somehow. So I began to do aerobics and go jogging again and since then, there is no break in this. Thus, there was always something I was doing, for example, for two years, CrossFit was my life. (...) Working out is part of my life and I don’t even want to know how life would be without it.” (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

The desire to show endurance and effort and to be viewed as a person who is strong-willed, passionate and up to challenges was expressed by some of the respondents as well:

“I like to challenge myself, I am always very happy when I see that I have made progress, when I can lift heavier or run more. It is a great feeling, it gives me a boost of self-confidence and it teaches me to never quit if something doesn’t come easy, you just have to work for it.” (Bia, 30, active follower)

“I like to be viewed as somebody who is not afraid of challenges, even if it something not especially for women. For example, I take part in Spartan Races, I love the thrill, the tough tasks, I love running through the finish line, having dirt everywhere, on my face and clothes, seeing that also men struggle to complete the race. This gives me self-confidence and I don’t want to be considered as somebody who is weak or not up to some hard work, even physical work.” (Orsi, 21, passive follower)

Belonging to a group as a positive and enjoyable feeling was also mentioned by some respondents:
“With my friends, we sometimes take part on the Ultra Balaton races, and it’s such a great feeling to be part of one team, to work together and put our maximum effort into all the practice and also on the race. **It gives me a feeling of belonging to a group where we work towards the same goal and we also have the same passion.**” (Norbi, 31, passive follower)

“When I go riding, I also love the people there: for example, sometimes we ride out together, also with my boyfriend, in larger groups, it is the best feeling ever. Being with my favorite animals, wandering in magical places of our nature, **surrounded by people with the same interests and passions is a wonderful experience every time. It is almost like a dream, just perfect. I wish, I could do this all day long.**” (Mia, 24, passive follower)

The importance of reaching the state of flow as stated by Stebbins (2015) in the theoretical framework was also mentioned by several respondents during the interviews:

“**On one hand, doing sports is my job, on the other hand, it is my passion:** I think it is that kind of activity where you step out and teach people, who come for these sixty minutes because they want to unwind. You have to entertain them, to provide them with quality time, you have to make them relax, to motivate them, you have to attend to them, to make sure that they complete the program and all this requires maximum attention which you give to them, and you can only show this if it is a real attention, you have to watch weather they are doing the exercises in a correct way, during all this, music is on. So **you have to be present at this time to such an extent that there is no other thing that comes to your mind during that one hour.** You are not thinking about what you have to do when you arrive at home, what you have forgotten, who you have to write an email, which students have which problems that you promised them to help in it, what kind of deadlines you have or publications, so, that one hour keeps you in the present time to such an extent that for example mindfulness can explain. **It is such an addiction during that one hour which more than a simple hobby.**” (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

“When I work out, I usually do it with my favorite playlist on, and **time is not present anymore, I totally forget about time, it is just me, the exercises on which I concentrate and the music.** Before every work out session, I try to plan what parts of my body I want to work out, what equipment I want to use for that so that during the actual work out, I don’t have to think about anything. **It like being in a different dimension.**” (Mia, 24, passive follower)
“When I go riding, it is like I was in a different world. You know that stable I went to is basically in the middle of the city, near Keleti station, however, once I step in, it’s totally a different world. The smell of horses hits my nose and from that moment on its just me and these wonderful animals. When I am on their back, it’s such a different presence in the present that I forget all my worries, chores, deadlines, problems, I totally live in the present time. Afterwards, that feeling is so great, my energy levels are up, I am happy and tired, but in a good sense. It’s a magical experience every time.” (Eszter, 28, active follower)

Additionally, as stated in the theoretical framework, the motivation of people to exercise includes the improvement of the body-image and self-esteem, the improvement of the health, fitness and strength and to achieve proficiency challenges as it can be seen in the responses below. It is also used to relax, to socialize with new people and engage with friends as it was mentioned by many respondent in the primary research of this paper as well. The findings also approved that although the leisure and recreational component is important for individuals, the need for a “prospect of external reward” is also crucial. (Zhang and Li, 2014)

“On the other hand, it is a priority to me that this is a way of shaping my body, and since I work a lot, working out also serves as a form of stress relief for me. And of course, it is one of the most important pillar of my life, as part of my job.” (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

“I work out because of my health, I want to stay healthy and fit as long as possible, and it also relaxes me.” (Evelin, 26, passive follower)

“I work out because I like when people say that I have gained some muscles, or lost some weight, so when it is visible what I am doing and for what I am striving for. It is an external reward which I think would feel good for anyone.” (Peti, 28, passive follower.)

When looking at the Instagram page of Réka Rubint, being and feeling happy, being fastidious are important motivational factors, when it comes to working out. Réka is always emphasizing on the fact that running and working out boosts her energy levels instead of putting her down, it is about being close to nature, to feeling the positive vibes of the environment. It also provides emotional support for her, when she feels down and according to her, sport only gives and gives. A frequently stated motto of her is that life
is too short for us to live in a body that we do not like. Eating healthy also is inevitable for her to stay in shape.

In Figure 9, we can read the following caption under her post:

“Working out and running in the nature is the greatest freedom of the soul. My God, I am so grateful that I can be part of that feeling whenever I need it since I am thirteen years old. My energy levels are refilled!” (Réka Rubint)

Figure 9: Réka Rubint’s Instagram page (Réka Rubint, 2019)

Daniella Horváth also wrote about the motivational factors under many of her posts on her Instagram page (Figure 10):

“I cannot even imagine how life is without doing sports... I would be incapable of that! Come to my work out classes and I prove you that due to doing sports you will: (1) be happier, (2) be more energetic, (3) have more self-confidence! The six packs on your abs, the muscles on your arms, the nice shapes will only be side effects!” (Daniella Horváth)
The nature of the different social media platforms for fitness and health influencers

When asking the respondents which was the best channel for advertisement in their opinion, many interviewees mentioned the Internet and social media ads, mostly because this was the most frequently used marketing channel by them and also because of the high degree of personalization:

“I like Facebook ads, because I use a lot of Internet and I get a lot of targeted ads. I love technological gadgets, and usually, I get a lot of ads regarding these stuff which is quite cool because I am really interested in them, I often purchase some of those items advertised on Facebook to me.” (Peti, 28, passive follower)

“For me, it is social media since I don't consumer other types of media.” (Zsófi, 24, passive follower)

“I like Facebook and Instagram ads, mostly because I use social media a lot, I hang there whenever there is some free-time, on the bus, in the elevator, during cooking, so basically, whenever my brain needs some entertainment. And those ads are really
personal, it happened sometimes that I bought those products advertised to me. Of course, not always the exact product, for example, recently, a pink portable USB smoothie blender was advertised to me on Facebook, and I was like ‘wow’ I need this! It looked very cute, portable, and also effective. However, when I sent it to my boyfriend, he talked me out of it, because of its poor technical capabilities. Oh I love him, he is so much more rational than me, and I really need that, because otherwise, I would buy everything. So in the end, he recommended me another type of smoothie maker, which still looked cute and nice, however, it was a much stronger one with a better quality. So we bought that in the end, I it is really amazing, I am glad that I did not buy the one actually advertised. However, thanks to that ad, I found this much better product. ” (Mia, 24, passive follower)

“In 2019, the Internet is the most successful type of channel in my opinion. There are only few people who do not spend much time on the Internet. Of course, I have some clients who do not have a Facebook profile for example, but they have an email address at least.” (Evelin, 26, passive follower)

“I think that social media is a great channel, since it is easy to use, if something interests me, I can click on it and read more, however, if I am not interested, I can just scroll down. I also see what my friends are sharing or commenting on, and since many of my friends have the same interests as me, like dancing, I often see useful videos about dancing shoes for example, or just fitness classes or anything that I am interested in. And usually, I also click on those ads what they have liked, and sometimes, I find something useful I can buy. For example, I found a body art class due to one of my friends, who liked their Facebook page online and this fact popped up in my newsfeed as well.” (Andi, 31, passive follower)

These findings confirm the theory of Behofsits et al. (2018) and „The Law of the Few”, according to which ideas, products or news can spread like viruses among people since also the results of the primary research found that consumers can easily be reached on social media sites like Facebook or Youtube and they value the degree of personalization when it comes to ads. They also pay attention to what their friends on these sites share, like or comment on, thus, those targeted ads have the capability of not only reaching them, but their friends as well, which multiplies its effectiveness without an increase in costs. Additionally, the findings of Social Marketing (n.d.) were also confirmed in this paper
proving that the Generation Y and Z enjoy taking part in the world of social media and the latest technology, and their attention is difficult to capture through traditional types of advertising.

However, it was also observable that marketing professionals were more unbiased when talking about the best marketing communication channel in terms of their broader academic and professional knowledge about the advantages and disadvantages of every channel:

“I think one cannot really define this or that channel as good or bad, however, obviously, we live in the age of the break-through of the online channels. However even there, it is not sure that those people who can be reached on Facebook can also be reached on Instagram and vice-versa, this is greatly influenced by the culture of the given country, the target market of the given product, the product itself. (...) There are some puffed-up sayings like that the age of TV has expired, but I don’t believe in these, because obviously, the type of marketing channels are influenced also by the size of the budget, the goal of the marketing campaign, is it brand building or the encouragement of consumers to buy more, which time of the year the campaign takes place, is it possible to use integrated marketing channels or only one. So I think that choosing the best marketing channels depends on the detailed knowledge about the given marketing situation.” (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

The Teleshop ad was also mentioned as an example for an old-school, but still effective ad in terms of its success in reaching its goals:

“For example, we can say that the Teleshop is a very old-school form of marketing channel, however, if we think about it, companies still pay vast amount of money on Teleshop ads. So that even if the channel is not considered as trendy nowadays, of that ad on that channel can reach its goal, it should be considered as an adequate and great channel.” (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

When asking respondents about the worst marketing channel in their opinion, many of them stated the TV and newspapers or magazines:

“I think its newspapers, they are not really used anymore, nobody reads them today I think. Maybe the TV is also not the best place, because people want to focus on the
actual program and the ads are just intrusive and annoying.” (Peti, 28, passive follower)

“I think it’s the TV: for such a long time, I didn’t have a TV at home, so I didn’t even know what type of commercials there were before, but a few years ago, we bought a TV and now I am bombarded by ads again. It is very annoying, because some films are interrupted by ads every ten minutes, and I am not exaggerating when I say that the ads themselves are longer than the film sequels. Are people even paying attention to TV ads, is it worth that money?” (Mia, 24, passive follower)

“I think it is the TV, it is very intrusive.” (Evelin, 26, passive follower)

Since all the respondents stated traditional marketing (especially the TV was quoted the most frequently) channels as bad, the findings presented by Kozarek (2018) in the theoretical framework were confirmed also by the primary research of this paper with special regard to the generation of the respondents: it is difficult for companies to reach customers through conventional online ads since they are regarded as intrusive. Young consumers are especially difficult to reach through these marketing methods, since they are not likely to be found in front of the TV, for example, as some of the respondents stated that they do not have TV devices at home at all. As stated by Kozarek (2018) and also confirmed by the findings of the primary research, these generations are very purposeful when it comes to the consumption of online content, since they have been born into the age of the digital world.

When looking at the social media channels of Réka Rubint, it can be observed much more people follow Réka on Facebook (more than nine-hundred-thousand followers) than on Instagram (more than two-hundred-thousand followers). She has the lowest number of followers on Youtube (only almost twenty-thousand followers). However, it is interesting to observe that followers are much more active on the Instagram page of Réka (Figure 12) as compared to her Facebook page (Figure 11) despite the much lower number of followers in Instagram: on Facebook, her posts receive between four-hundred to thousand likes on an average, however, her Instagram posts receive between four-thousand and fifteen-thousand likes on an average.
These findings may suggest that followers tend to be more active on Instagram based also on the more easy-going nature of the site as also stated by several respondents in the frames of the interviews:
“On Instagram, it is easy to find content through searching for hashtags, it is much easier than on Facebook. I also think that people post much more content on Instagram, for some reason they are much more easy-going there, maybe it is because of the short living nature of the stories. I feel that people invest more energy into Instagram today, especially those fitness influencers that I follow. On Youtube, on the other hand, I follow them because the videos are longer which I prefer as a fitness instructor as I strive to provide varied and exciting exercises to my clients and from the videos, I get some inspiration.” (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

“I think that Instagram is much more different than Facebook, the same photo from the same person would look weird on Facebook, but cool on Instagram. It’s just that the culture of the two channels is different. People on Instagram are much more easy-going, wild, even crazy as compared to Facebook.” (Bia, 30, active follower)

Taking the above findings into consideration, it can be stated that the nature of the different online marketing channels has a considerable influence not only on the influencers themselves, but also on the behavior of their followers. Generally, they expect more content and also crazier and more easy-going content from the influencers on Instagram as compared to Facebook, and they are more active in reacting to their posts on Instagram due to the different culture of that channel.

5.7 Characteristics of adequate fitness and health influencer content from the followers’ perspective

Regarding the adequate content of fitness and health influencers, most respondents wanted real and honest posts, no matter whether they were non-paid product recommendations or sponsored post. Just one sentence below a photo where the influencer can be seen holding a product was irritating for most interviewees:

“In my personal opinion, but also as a marketing student, I value the effort when it can be seen in the posts, but I am completely discouraged by the little effort stuff. For example, I am irritated if an influencer posts a picture on Instagram, just holding a product and smiling, two lines written below... it’s not enough, this way, these influencers are selling themselves out cheap, and I clearly feel that the given company doesn’t value me enough. But on the other hand, I really enjoy reading and viewing those contents where I really feel that the influencer has tried the product, like ‘hey, I have tried this, it
Several respondents viewed an account as unattractive, if it was full of sponsored content:

“If I was a marketing agency, I would not like to work together with an influencer whose account is full of competing content, and also, if there is no post without sponsored content.” (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

“I find it very unattractive when an account is full of posts tagging various companies, places and so on, for me, it’s like watching the Teleshop. For example, Réka Rubint’t Facebook page is sometimes like that: basically, in every post, she tags some company, beauty, car, sports, travel, entertainment companies, basically everything, electronic companies, restaurants... When she advertises most of these products, I really feel that she was just paid for it, and never used them in real life. For example, she often posts greatly photoshopped, very staged photos about herself in the zoo of Nyíregyháza and writes how much she enjoys being there every now and then. However, for me, it’s so obvious, that she was just there once, namely, when those photos were taken by a professional staff, and she just posts them on a continuous bases as agreed in the contract with the zoo. It’s not ok for me, I really lose my trust in these cases.” (Mia, 24, passive follower)

As it can be seen above, creative, genuine, honest content where the real work and effort behind it can be felt, and also, where there is a good balance between sponsored and non-paid content is a must for influencers if they want to be regarded as attractive and trustful by their influencers. These findings are in accordance with Nam’s and Dan’s study (2018) emphasizing on the importance of credibility and information quality in the success of the message and a positive response from the consumers: if consumers perceive the message as useful and of high quality, their trust in the conveyed information will increase, as also confirmed by the respondents in the primary research.

Additionally, reflecting on the recent trend, where fitness and health influencers began to post photos of themselves showing their smaller or bigger imperfections - such as posing without make-up, eating unhealthy food, showing their stretch-marks or not hiding the fact that their abs are also not always there, because of bloating, for example – has shown
that most respondents were positive about these kind of self-revelation and found it as attractive:

“She is honest about the drawbacks of losing a lot of weight. I like this, because it is trying to be honest, it doesn’t want to fade the truth.” (Peti, 28, passive follower)

“I am really positive about this, accepting the body image is important. Personally, I have realistic expectations towards by body, I see my mum, I know she had two kids, I know what that does to a woman’s body. It shouldn’t come down to not having any cellulite, because if I see on a woman’s face that she is happy, I really don’t mind what her belly looks like. If I see that also fitness influencers have imperfections, struggles that convinces me, because, if they could do it, I can do it as well.” (Zsöfi, 24, passive follower)

“It is good if somebody shares her experiences, after birth or in other situations in order to set an example that nobody is perfect. I think that the appearance of somebody is only secondary, health is the first most important thing. Even with an excess weight of five or six kilograms, one can still be healthy.” (Evelin, 26, passive follower)

However, there were also some more negative opinions regarding the exhibition of imperfections:

“I think that the revelation of these kind of imperfections has become a huge trend nowadays, it is basically a new kind of advertisement that I show you my true self and you have to identify yourself with this as well...and if we show each other all our imperfections, then everybody believes that his or her imperfection is also good and acceptable? And where is the limit of these imperfections? What are those that you can work on and what are those again which you have to accept? I believe that one has to show a real picture, however, I am not sure that one has to attract the attention to every minor flaw, because what is the goal of that? Is it that I want to reassure those people who only see perfection that imperfection also exists and you can and have live with that as well? Since that can be a good and important message for those who only see the flawlessness and he or she is frustrated by that and feels that he or she will never be that perfect. On the other hand however, where is the limit of the acceptance of those imperfections? Since this can have the result that ‘oh then I accept this and that as well, and I am good as I am’. So, I think that everybody needs to decide him- or herself what
is acceptable or not. **I would never share something like this.** Not because I would be ashamed of it, also I would not post any greatly photoshopped photo, because I just want to show the reality. **If I show something, it should be the truth, but in a way in which I love myself, in which I see myself as beautiful.** And in this, there are flaws as well, but **I don’t want to direct attention neither to perfection nor to total imperfection.** I think *these posts nowadays are very staged* searches for details where I always ask myself whether this is an advertisement with a marketing communication goal or is this only the influencer’s own inscape?“ (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

Regarding the above mentioned diverse attitudes towards imperfections, being rational was also mentioned by respondents, in terms of not demanding too much of the followers, but tailoring their messages to the realities of their followers:

“I don’t know too many rational fitness and health influencers, but Réka for example, she tries to actively say that also the little things matter. For example, I used to have a DVD of her where she said that do just a little bit more than yesterday; compared to her husband, who always says that you should totally quit sugar, and so on, **Réka seems to be so much more rational.**” (Zsófi, 24, passive follower)

When analyzing the Instagram page of Réka Rubint, it can be seen that also many followers often express their negative feelings towards too much sponsored content as also mentioned by some of the respondents in the in-depth interviews. One follower wrote, for example as it can be seen in Figure 13:

“I have no problem with sponsored content, because it is part of this world, however, to write that ‘we are proud that they chose us’ is ridiculous, because obviously, you paid for it. In this form, **this is delusive.** Unfollowed. Wishing you the best in the future! (Obviously, I was just a jealous person, peace).” (Réka Rubint’s Instagram follower)
Regarding the findings above, it can be concluded that if the contents produced by influencers are viewed as traditional advertisement rather than useful recommendation, trust may decrease considerably, as also pointed out by Hotz-Behofsits (2018) and Johansen and Guldvik (2017) in the theoretical framework.

However, under many of Réka’s posts, it can be seen that followers not only embrace sponsored content, but they are also actively involved in getting to know the products that Réka is using/wearing, for example. In Figure 14, a comment enquiring information about the coat of Réka can be read, for instance:

“Hey Réka! Where did you buy your coat? You are beautiful” (Réka Rubint’s Instagram follower)
5.8 Pre-purchase consumer behavior

When consumers are considering buying a product, but they are unsure about the purchase, the primary research’s findings also confirmed the findings of Johansen and Guldvik (2017) in the theoretical framework, namely, if consumers think that an advertisement is a sales tool rather than an information channel, they feel threatened, and therefore, they will use WOM to reassure their decisions and that they people are more keen on relying on information from family and friends instead of relying on advertisement:

„I try to look for reviews about the product on the Internet. I may watch some Youtube videos about it. I might also ask my colleagues at my workplace if it’s a product that we are interested in and then, we look it up together or if they have information about the product.” (Peti, 28, passive follower)

„Sometimes, I ask my brothers weather they know something about the given product. I also read many reviews about the product on the Internet, on forums, for example, or I search for Facebook comments on the page of the brand.” (Norbi, 38, passive follower)

„I think I am the most hesitating person in the world when it comes to purchasing something that don’t have much information about. I literally do everything: I ask my boyfriend, if it’s a technical gadgets because he knows the parameters better, then I watch as many videos as possible on Youtube about the product, because there, the
products are not staged, like in ads, I can see them from every angle, also while they are used and so on. I can gather much more information than by just looking at an ad. I also search for reviews on Google and also on Facebook and Instagram. However, the problem with these online reviews is that some of them are paid and it's difficult to spot these paid comments." (Mia, 24, passive follower)

As it can be seen above, consumers tend to not only pay attention to the opinion of their friends or relatives, but they also search for opinion and recommendation on the Internet, as it was also confirmed by Behofsitz-et-al. (2018): eWOM has is a much more effective form of marketing than traditional ads.

Some respondents also mentioned that they search for videos on Youtube about the product, but they mainly trust those influencers who they already know:

“When I watch influencer videos on Youtube, I mainly watch the content of those who I only know. In many cases, we do not know if the influencer was paid or not or whether he or she tells the truth or not. However, I have watched several videos of those few influencers I know since many years, and I have tested their content, so that I trust them now and don’t question their content.” (Alex, 42, passive follower)

“Usually, I watch videos of only those influencers I already follow and from who I have already watched a lot of content. I don’t trust no-name people in general who might have get payed to show this or that.” (Réka, 22, passive follower)

“I pay attention only to those where I know that what they are saying is true. For example, I follow the Youtube channel of Zsolt Domonkos, of whom I have learned a lot also in person, since I accomplished my nutritionist training at his institution (Weider Professional Fitness Trainer). I am also a subscriber of the Fitness World Magazine where also Zsolt is the general editor.” (Evelin, 26, passive follower)

Taking the findings of the interviews into consideration, it can be stated that influencer marketing is a great opportunity for companies in reaching their business goals however, the target audience and the influencers have to be in line with each other with regard to the reputation of the influencer, his or her reach potential and already established visibility.

5.9 The role of community and interaction

Regarding the importance of the role of community, several respondents noted that a sense of community is important for them:
“I like to go to group trainings, because there, you feel motivated by the energy of the group. When you see that everybody is working and suffering, it is much easier to adapt and to push my limits. And at the end, it is a great feeling, when you managed to do all the exercises together!” (Norbi, 38, passive follower)

“I love to work out with my sister, who is a professional trainer. She motivates me, she believes in me even if I think I cannot do something. If I train alone, I often do less than with my sister, my motivation is worse and the training is also much more boring.” (Bia, 30, active follower)

“I like to go to training with my boyfriend or my friends, because we motivate each other, it is much more fun. Also, if others are involved, I feel much more motivated to go, since we have agreed on it, I cannot just say later that I was tired or that I had no motivation to go.” (Eszti, 28, active follower)

“I love the ambiance of the dancing camps, because I have the opportunity to live and train together with my friends who I got to know earlier during the classes, and on the other hand, I have the opportunity to get to know new, like-minded people. I get to know them better, the music, the people, dancing together, it is just perfect!” (Andi, 31, passive follower)

The above comments confirm the theory of Stebbins (2015), according to which it is crucial in a serious leisure activity to experience the spirit of the community and their shared attitudes, practices, values, beliefs and goals and the fact is also confirmed that the contribution to the maintenance and development of the group is important. (Stebbins, 2015) Respondents’ answers were also in line with Zhang’s and Li’s (2014) findings, according to which fitness is also used to socialize with new people and to engage with friends.

However, when asking if they wanted to meet with the influencer or her/his followers in person, almost all respondents reacted negatively:

“I don’t want to get to know them, why would I?” (Réka, 22, passive follower)

“No, just because this platform has been created, where all this can get public attention and where you can communicate – it is basically a new communication channel – apart from that, these people they are just doing their job as I am also doing it. Today, there is
no need to do something valuable in order to be famous on Instagram, consequently, I think that this is a shallow story and people have to treat this accordingly. Just because somebody has several ten thousands followers, they are not stars; of course, many of them are very talented, they have worked hard for their results, it is just that people have to treat these things at their right place.” (Daniella, 29, passive follower)

“No, but if Tündi would arrange a workshop, I would attend it for sure, obviously, her followers would be there as well. But I would not go to a training camp just because a famous influencer is holding it. I am sure that many people attend Rêka Rubint’s camps just because she is famous and they want to meet her and spend a day together with her. I would never do that for sure.” (Evelin, 26, passive follower)

Most of the respondents felt even negative about just interacting with the influencer or the other followers online, through comments, for example:

“I am following them because of their content and I don’t try to get a kind of personal contact” (Peti, 28, passive follower)

“I do not tend to comment, I rather just read the comments. I could not write additional information to the comments most of the time, if I just write that the video is great, it has no sense.” (Evelin, 26, passive follower)

“Very-very rarely, when I am interested for example where this or that product is from, for example, the coat that the influencer is wearing, I comment and ask, however, otherwise, I have no other motivation to comment below a post.” (Mia, 24, passive follower)

Taking the above into consideration, it is interesting to see that the findings of the primary research of this paper regarding the importance of interaction with influencer reveal inconsistency with the findings of the secondary research. The findings of Glucksman’s study (2017) according to which the two-way communication between influencers and their followers is crucial in turning the followers into brand consumers, are not in line with the respondents’ answers. There was a strong tendency among the interviewees to being passive on social media channels when it came to interacting with fitness or health influencers.
However, regarding the Instagram channel of Réka Rubint, it is can be observed that the importance of the community around the influencer is extremely important and it is highlighted by Réka various times. For example, in some of her most recent posts, she emphasizes on the large size of her clients and the power of their positive energy (Figure 15), praises her fantastic community or express her love towards her followers:

“The training room of the Rozsnyai Street has trembled with full house and great energies yesterday evening. People have worked out even on the spectators’ terrace. We have outgrown this train shed as well.” (Réka Rubint)

“Újbuda today morning. A fantastic new community, with whom I can experience the freedom of motion!!! This step-training was great with you today!!! I loved it!!! (Réka Rubint)

“We have united or energies again and that feeling that I sense from the stage... cannot be expressed in words. Thank you for the invitation, the unforgettable memories and the boundless love with which you welcomed me!!!” (Réka Rubint)

Figure 15: Réka Rubint’s Instagram page (Réka Rubint, 2019)

Additionally, in many of her posts, Réka Rubint – and also her followers – emphasize on the family-like nature of their community; she calls her followers and clients her fantastic family (using also hashtags like “bodyreformfriends” in Hungarian), stating continuously how proud she is to have them in her life and also thanking them for being her friends,
some of them even very close friends who she met thanks to her trainings. Also her followers often comment highlighting their family:

“Our ‘little’ family. Love you all!” (Réka Rubint’s Instagram follower)

On the Instagram page of Daniella Horváth, one can also find several posts also emphasizing the importance of the community, praising the power of the group of people training together and supporting each other this way (Figure 16):

“It is great when you smile during the whole class, because you feel the positive energy of the group, it is great, when you see the feeling of success on their faces, but it is also great when you see the fight, almost the surrender, but the, we still make it, together! This is the greatest element of group trainings, that you are pushed by the dynamics of the group! And at the end, the ruddied faces, the sweat, the smile of the satisfied people, the positive feedbacks...that is what is more than great!” (Daniella Horváth)

Figure 16: Daniella Horváth’s Instagram page (Daniella Horváth, 2019)

6 Analysis

In this part of the paper, the most important findings and patterns of the previous chapter will be analyzed, in line with the “True Influencer Concept Model” presented earlier in this paper. Additionally, in every sub-chapter, suggestions will be given, how companies and influencers can best leverage their power, how they can most optimally seize their opportunities and how they can avoid potential mistakes, based on the revealed patterns
of the primary research. The perceived problems along the primary research was for one that the respondents might not have always told the truth, however, if the interviewer felt that this was the case, she tried to approach the question from different angles. Additionally, the following analysis is based on the opinion, experience and attitude of only twelve people, thus, it is not representative for a larger population. This fact has to be kept in mind when reading the results and patterns. Due to the limited length of this paper as a Master Thesis, more respondents could not be analyzed, however, in the future, if the conditions allow, another study researching the same topic could involve more respondents to receive a more accurate picture of the general perceptions. Finally, linked also to the previous problem, not only acquaintances of the interviewer but also strangers should be randomly picked in the future in order to get a wider and more neutral perspective of the researched topic since – when already knowing the respondents – even if the interviewer strives to stay neutral, subliminal prejudices may occur and distort the results.

6.1 Main drivers of influencer marketing

In the following part of the paper, the main drivers of influencer marketing (with special focus on health and fitness influencers) will be analyzed based on the findings of the primary research. Four main characteristics were found as the most important ones: authenticity and honesty, motivation and inspiration, positive attitude and professional knowledge.

6.1.1 Authenticity and honesty

Almost all respondents found authenticity and honesty regarding the behavior of fitness and health influencers extremely important. These traits were also mentioned as the first ones when answering the related questions. Even at the beginning of the interview, where the question was only to talk about advertisements in general, many of the interviewees came up already with the value authenticity and honesty. Respondents were afraid that many of the influencers did not really use the advertised or recommended products in real life which implies a good sense of reality, even at a non-professional level, since not only professional respondents with active marketing knowledge thought this way, however, also those, who had no specific marketing knowledge. Most respondents regarded those posts that were short, simple and which completely lacked any trace of creativity a total failure which also had a negative effect on the advertised brand. Honesty in terms of being
rational about the difficulties of working out, keeping a diet or having physical and mental imperfections is also viewed as important when it comes to following fitness influencers. Respondents could identify themselves better with influencers who were more like an average person with all their problems as well since this gave them an emotional support and trust towards the given influencer.

These patterns were also confirmed by the findings of Glucksman, (2017) and Sheena et al. (2017) according to which an influencer has to be genuine, honest, open and authentic in order to build successful marketing campaigns.

6.1.2 Motivation and inspiration

Followers found it crucial for the influencers to have a motivating and inspiring attitude since the main reason of following them was to lead a healthier life, for most respondents. Several respondents found that their workout was better and more effective due to the exercises shown by the influencers in social media videos, and they were also motivated to work out after seeing these videos, even if they were tired or had no intention to work out earlier. Many respondents found the constant reminding force of influencers to work out and eat healthy as very inspiring and beneficial, since they felt almost like they had a personal trainer and it was easier for them to stay on track this way. However, it is important to note here that too much pressure radiating from influencers to work out and eat healthy was found frustrating by most of the followers, as also confirmed by the findings of Zhang and Li (2014), according to which consumers often have negative attitudes to fitness due to a lack of satisfaction, enjoyment or frustration with the results, traced back to time pressure or the lack of energy. Taking these findings into consideration, influencers should be aware that too many posts about strict diets and tough workouts that one has to master every day might have an adverse effect on their follower numbers, whereas, motivational contents with less explicit pressure would have the opposite effect.

6.1.3 Positive, up-lifting attitude

The positive and up-lifting, life-loving attitude of fitness and health influencers was greatly welcomed by most of the respondents: this way, they felt that fitness and healthy diets were an enjoyable activity and part of a balanced and joyful life. Those posts of influencers that radiated a joyful ambiance made followers also happier, more energetic
and gave them a willing spirit. The physical presence of other people (friends or family members) was also mentioned as joyful and positive when doing sports, however, as mentioned earlier in the previous chapter of this paper, the fact of belonging to a fitness influencer’s community online or offline was not regarded as valuable or aspirational for them.

According to Glucksman’s study (2017), the personality of the influencer plays an important role in his or her success. His study shows that the huge follower base of lifestyle influencer Fink can be partly traced back to her quirky, down-to-earth and relatable impression. Based on these findings, those health and fitness influencers whose nature is positive, joyful and who are able to authentically cheer other people up might be more successful than the others. However, also here, it has to be repeated that honesty and authenticity is key, thus, there is a high chance that followers would sense after a time weather these joyful posts come from the true, inborn characteristic of the influencer or it is just a staged and artificial mask that he or she is wearing. Therefore, companies who plan to work together with influencers, have to devote an adequate amount of time to find out the real nature of the pre-elected influencer in order to provide their consumers with honest and authentic content, since otherwise, it would be just a struggle – both for the company and the influencer - to create the needed content.

6.1.4 Professionalism

Several respondents – especially the professional fitness instructors – found professional knowledge and expertise of the influencers as a critical factor when reading and listening to their contents. This is a new finding, since the secondary research did not provide information about this trait and its role in consumers’ (followers’) preferences. Respondents found it very unattractive when fitness and health influencers provided information that they knew that they were not true, and as a consequence, they ceased following these influencers at once. Therefore, it can be concluded that – especially in this industry – pure creativity and presence on the social media channels is not enough: since fitness and health tips are not only there to entertain followers, but also to educate them and any kind of recommendation within this field of science needs adequate knowledge through a decent training of the given influencer. It is important to note here, that – based also on the findings of the primary research – consumers, especially those who are not well educated in the field of health and fitness based on the fact that they do
not possess a degree in the field of fitness or health, these consumers are especially prone to believe everything they see or read on social media. This however, might lead to dangerous consequences regarding their health. That is why companies should take great care of researching and testing the knowledge and experience of their chosen influencers in order to take the greatest care of the health of their consumers. They could hire certified experts (fitness instructors, nutritional advisors for example) to follow the accounts of the pre-elected influencers for a couple of month and also to analyses their education and past activities on social media.

6.2 Main factors of resentment towards influencer marketing

In the following part of this chapter, the three main drivers of resentment towards influencers marketing in the field of fitness and health will be presented and discussed, namely, staged ads, irrational perfectionism and the involvement of influencers in unflattering activities.

6.2.1 Staged ads

The most cited negative perception when talking about fitness and health influencers was staged ads: several respondents found it extremely appalling, when influencers just posed with a certain product once in their lives and never again or when the posts were very uncreative, simple and short. One brief sentence below a photo was just not enough to convince potential consumers to try the recommended product, and even worse, it also turned them away from the given influencers, often resulting in tapping the “unfollow” button on Instagram, for example. Various respondents found it important to see that there was actual work in the given post: if they could see the effort, the creative process behind it, they were much more open to not just read the given post, but also to consider trying the advertised product or service. These findings can be related to the already mentioned honest and authentic nature of influencers as also confirmed by Glucksman, (2017) and Sheena et al. (2017). Consequently, companies should always chose influencers where they already see this type of creative thinking behind their posts. The extent to which they give free hand to the influencers depends on the culture of the company, its goal and the type of the product to be advertised, however, firms should at least share their goal and vision regarding the given campaign with the chosen influencer. They should encourage them to use the product (if not used already) in their natural surroundings, such as at home, for example (staged studio presentations should be kept minimal in number), and
also to document this to their followers. Additionally, once the content is created, they should check it before it is posted to the public. Last but not least, brands and influencers should closely monitor every kind of reaction (comments, likes, messages, shares and also WOM communication if possible) to the campaign.

6.2.2 Irrational perfectionism

The interesting finding of the primary research was that most respondents found it positive to see content from fitness and health influencers about their imperfections: cellulite, breakdowns, bad days, stretch-marks and similar problems that an “average” person would encounter also in his or her life from time to time or with which he or she has to deal with on a daily bases. Especially in the world of fitness, where an essential goal is to look good, which is also in line with findings of Stebbins (2015) and Zhang and Li (2014), it was interesting to see that respondents found it satisfying and reassuring that fitness and health influencers, who had this as a full-time job most of the time, also have insecurities and physical and mental challenges, just like everybody else. Since many respondents cited the word “rational” when speaking about the positive characteristics of influencers, it can be stated here that those influencers who tried to be more human, showing their insecurities and flaws are found more attractive by followers than those influencers who post only perfect and immaculate content about their flawless and perfect life. Thereupon, companies should encourage (but not force) influencers to show their mental and physical insecurities since it is more than welcomed by most followers. However, also here, balance is key, since some followers who are not willing to see content like this might be turned away if too much room is taken up by unflattering images and self-revelation about insecurities.

6.2.3 Involvement in unflattering activities (Showing-off)

Respondents were also put off by their once favorite influencers’ involvement in negative activities. Actions like leaving the kids often at home instead of caring for them emotionally, parking the car on the zebra or showing off their luxurious lifestyles were mentioned among others as unattractive and unappealing. Showing too many photos about luxurious holidays, homes or other belongings made some respondents – as also observed on the analyses social media channels – furious since they thought that influencers had to do much less than they have for the same or even much better result. Many of the respondents also regarded influencers as “normal” people and not as
celebrities who they should admire. The primary research has concluded that followers prefer those fitness and health influencers to whom they can relate and with whom they can easily identify themselves. Simplicity, modesty and immediacy were key when it came to following an influencer. Thereupon, companies and influencers should work together to decide about the appearance and image of the given influencer, however, honesty is also pivotal here: if the chosen influencer tries to wear a mask on Instagram, however, acts completely differently in real life, this kind of delusion will become public at a very fast pace and this would have an extremely detrimental effect both on the authenticity of the advertised brand and the influencer him- or herself as well.

6.3 The importance of choosing the right channels and content

One of the most important findings of the primary research were that Instagram and Facebook are considered as two radically different social media channels. Facebook is considered as much more “tame” and conservative than Instagram. The same wild or even provocative content on Instagram would look very strange on Facebook, for example. Respondent also found that influencers were more active, posting more content on Instagram and searching for content was easier on Instagram than on Facebook due to the hashtags. Furthermore, Instagram was regarded as a trendier channel as compared to Facebook. Consequently, companies and influencers should thoroughly think about which channel they intend to use and if both, what type of content they want to post to one or to both channels. Everyday videos about the product usage, private life or extreme photos should be posted on Instagram, as there, this kind of content is found less intrusive, especially, if it is posted in the stories. Work-out or product videos should also be posted on Instagram since they are not interrupted by ads as on Facebook and followers can swipe for more content, thus, people are more willing to watch them till the end, but are less annoyed if they are not interested in a given post. Constant monitoring of all channels should be effected, as well. Regarding the fact weather a content was sponsored or not, respondents felt neutral about it, however, if they saw almost only sponsored and staged content on the account of an influencer, they were definitely turned away of following him or her. Consequently, influencers should strive to limit the number of sponsored content on their accounts, and they should also post content reflecting on their true, non-paid behavior, where they do not tag any company, just intend to genuinely communicate and interact with their followers. In this case, sponsored content will also be welcomed with greater trust and interest from the side of the followers.
6.4 The needs of the target audience: flow, challenges and appearance

Three main needs of the respondents were found during the primary research: the need for flow, challenges and the importance of the external appearance. Firstly, the concept of Mihály Csíkszentmihályi (1990) retrieved from the work of Stebbins (2015) about the experience of “flow” was reflected strongly in the interviews: respondents found it important to experience flow when working out. They wanted to forget about their duties, problems and time, they wanted to unwind and to almost get into another dimension where they can fully concentrate on the given activity without thinking about anything else. This kind of detachment from the problems and worries of their lives gave them a high degree of satisfaction, joy and revitalization and gave them a real energy boost for dealing with their duties once they finish the given activity. Secondly, respondents regarded fitness and sports not only as a simple free time activity or hobby through which they wanted to stay healthy or become more active and fresh, but they were also constantly looking for challenges through working out. Once they reached their ambitioned goals (like running an extra mile longer or lifting heavier weights or starting to work out), they felt satisfied and proud which considerably boosted their self-confidence. They felt a sense of accomplishment that they were able to do something about which they initially thought that they were not capable of. This feeling had a positive effect on their private and professional life as well: as a result, they felt more confident and high-spirited. These findings were also confirmed by Stebbins (2015): significant personal effort, self-actualization, self-enrichment, self-expression, regeneration and the renewal of the self are regarded as essential characteristic of the Serious Leisure Perspective. Thirdly, not only the inner satisfaction was essential for the majority of the respondents, but also seeing that their appearance has changed positively due to working out and eating healthy, as well as the appreciative comments coming from their friends, family and other acquaintances. Thus, external motivation and reward was also crucial in taking part in fitness activities, as also confirmed by Zhang and Li (2014) and Stebbins (2015) in the theoretical framework: exercise is used to improve body-image and self-esteem, to improve health, fitness and strength and to achieve proficiency challenges; external rewards as motivational factors are also crucial.

In order for influencers to satisfy the above mentioned needs of their followers, firstly, they need to focus on the “flow” principle of working out: instead of highlighting how difficult or tough an exercise routine is, they should educate followers about the beauty,
Joy and fun of fitness and the healthy lifestyle, telling them to what great extent this lifestyle can have a positive effect also on followers private and professional life. They should see working out as a joyful activity rather than a frustrating pressure. Secondly, influencers should regularly create posts challenging their followers to lead a healthier lifestyle: for example, this could be a thirty day challenge about quitting sugar or a two weeks challenge of doing planks every day, motivating their followers to cross their boundaries and help them to experience satisfaction and self-confidence. Third, they should organize contests: for example, followers could posts before and after photos about their transformation and influencers should praise them and maybe also chose winners with small prices in order to target their followers’ need for challenges and rewards.

6.5 The effect of influencer marketing on the lives of followers

Taking the findings of the primary research into consideration, influencers not only satisfy business goals through sponsorship, but they also have a deeper, more altruistic social effect on the lives of their followers: they aid them in being healthier, provide them emotional support and include them in their community, even if they do not get a financial reward for it, since – based on the interviews – several followers did not buy any recommended product or service in spite of following the given influencer and reading their posts every day. Most respondents found that fitness and health influencers helped them in maintaining a healthy lifestyle or they had a great effect on beginning to pursue a healthier lifestyle. This was due to the influencers’ regular and motivating posts, photos and videos which respondents could easily follow anywhere with the help of their smartphones. Also professional fitness instructors found following other fitness instructors as helpful due to their inspirational and educational power (for example, finding new types of exercise). Fitness and health influencers were also found to emotionally support their followers through their daily motivational posts and presenting their mental and physical imperfections, as well. However, the importance of belonging to a certain community due to following influencers – as described by Stebbins (2015) and Zhang and Li (2014) – could not be confirmed by the primary research of this paper. Almost all respondents found that belonging to a fitness and health community online or offline was not important for them, neither were these their aspirations in the future.

6.6 Differences between generation Z and Y
Considerable differences were found between Generation Z and Y within the primary research. Most importantly, Generation Y can be targeted in an easier way by traditional ads due to the nostalgic feelings they evoke in Generation Y. They associate the warm and joyful moments of their childhood with Teleshop ads, for example, thus, they not only accept these kind of ads, but they also pay an elevated level of attention to them whenever they see them on the TV. Additionally, Generation Y does not necessarily regard influencers as stars or celebrities who they should admire, but rather as everyday people who have jobs just like they do and they have nothing more. Respondents from the Generation Y were also more negative and rejective about meeting influencers in real life than Generation Z, since they did not want to worship them. Furthermore, they tend to pay more attention to a healthy diet, not only on working out. They were also more active on Facebook than on Instagram, consequently, they also tend to follow less fitness and health influencers since they are more active on Instagram in general. An important finding was additionally, that Generation Y is more independent when they have to make decisions, even though, they also tend to ask for advices and reviews. Finally, they regard physical and mental imperfections as more important to talk about as compared to Generation Z. Taking the above findings into consideration, fitness and health influencers should not highlight their status as celebrities in their posts, rather, they should try to stay humble and present themselves as everyday people with an immediate personality, in case they wish to target Generation Y as well beside of Generation Z. They should also create Facebook accounts since this is the channel where they can easily reach out to this older Generation. Devoting various posts to imperfections on a regular bases would be also an effective way to catch Generation Y’s attention and convert them into their loyal followers on the long-term.

7 Conclusion
Taking everything into consideration, it can be concluded that the insights gained from the primary research of this paper confirmed the theories presented in the theoretical framework through the secondary research. Today, consumers are confronted with vast amount of information every single day and it is a challenge for them to process and remember all these pieces of information. They may even show different forms of resistance towards traditional forms of advertisements. Consequently, companies have to face the growing challenge of attracting consumers’ attention towards their products or
services. Hence, influencer marketing provides a fresh and extremely effective form of non-traditional advertisement in today’s saturated market places. The aim of this paper was to analyze the effect of influencer marketing on the perception of the contemporary consumer within the health and fitness industry in Hungary.

The primary research of this paper included a qualitative research – using in-depth interviews – in order to provide a deeper insight into the impact of influencer marketing in the fitness and health industry on consumers in Hungary. The empirical research was carried out between in February and March 2019. For the interviews, individuals from the Generation Y and Z were chosen, since these generations are particularly interested and actively taking part in the world of social media and the latest technology, and their attention is difficult to capture through traditional types of advertising. They are sophisticated related to technology and they are also very flexible in changing the different communication channels where they can be reached. (Social Marketing, n.d.) In total, twelve respondents were selected, out of which ten were non-professional respondents related to the world of fitness (working out as a hobby), while two were fitness professionals (fitness instructors). Additionally to the interviews, Instagram pages of two fitness influencers Réka Rubint and Daniella Dominika Horváth) have been analyzed in details as part of the primary research. This latter research focused on the content on their accounts and also the comments coming from the followers of these two influencers.

The secondary research of this paper concluded that the nature of customer relationships has changed considerably in the past few years, leading to that fact that companies focus more on building deeper, more direct and interactive relationships through laying a greater emphasis on target marketing instead of focusing on mass marketing. New technologies and communication channels aid them in creating deeper customer involvement and also to develop a sense of community around the brand through the deployment of social media networks. (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012)

Regarding the research question of this paper, both the primary and the secondary research conclude that influencer marketing signifies a very effective form of non-traditional marketing due to its nature perceived as the atmosphere of WOM, as a friendly and unbiased authority. (Sheena and Sudha, 2017) Regarding the chosen industry for influencer marketing in this paper, both researches confirmed that the most important
motivational factors of fitness as a Serious Leisure Activity are the experience of flow (Stebbins, 2015), the need for constant physical and mental challenge and the external reward considering the physical appearance. (Zhang and Li, 2014) Additionally, the findings of the secondary research are also in line with the findings of the primary research regarding influencer marketing in the fitness and health industry within Hungary: both researches confirmed that the most important drivers of influencer marketing were authenticity and honesty, motivation and inspiration, positive attitude and professional knowledge of the influencers. The negative drivers include staged ads, physical and mental perfectionism of the influencers and the involvement of influencers in unflattering activities. However, the importance of interaction and the belonging to a community – as stated in the secondary research - could not be confirmed in the primary research due to the fact that respondents were rather passive followers, placing infinitesimal importance on online or offline interaction with fitness and health influencers and their community. However, the online primary research depicted a greater need for the interaction with the influencer and his or her community. Here, it has to be noted again, that the primary research concentrated specifically on fitness and health influencers and thus, these findings apply specifically to this industry, adding new insights to the already existing researches regarding the effect of influencers on consumer perception. That is why the primary research added valuable new insights to the existing findings about influencer marketing, since it researched the effect of influencer marketing on consumer perception in a specific field (the fitness and health industry) and country (Hungary). Consequently, as another new insight, considerable differences were found between the perceptions about the different social media channels: the primary research concluded that Facebook is seen as much more conservative and old-fashioned as compared to Instagram which is regarded as easy-going with more liberal content. The primary research also confirmed that too much sponsored content is annoying for most followers, however, if they are kept within certain limits, followers regard them even as beneficial. Finally, considerable differences between Generation Z and Y were found: Generation Y can be targeted in an easier way by non-traditional ads (due to their nostalgic feelings towards them), they regard fitness and health influencers as normal people just like them, they are more active on Facebook than on Instagram, they are more independent when making decisions and they regard physical and mental imperfections as more important to talk about than Generation Z.
Finally, an interesting finding was that fitness and health influencers do not only have business goals as a result in terms of selling products or services, but they also contribute to a better, healthier, higher-quality life - both physically and mentally - of many people, which implies an altruistic, non-profit, social role, since they may never receive any form of compensation from some of their followers as a return for making their lives better and healthier.

Taking all the findings of this paper into consideration, it can be concluded that influencer marketing is an extremely effective tool in today’s highly saturated marketing place within the fitness and health industry in Hungary. However, as also described in the previous chapters of this paper, influencers have to possess the adequate characteristics such as authenticity and honesty for example, in order to remain successful in the long term. Companies and creative agencies have to incorporate the adequate measures – as detailed in the previous chapter – when working together with fitness and health influencers in order to reach their business goals and to remain trustworthy as well.

This research was limited to studying the effect of influencer marketing on consumers’ perceptions in the fitness and health industry, however, further investigations could be effectuated regarding the effect of influencer marketing in Hungary in different sectors and industries, like the beauty industry, for example in order to analyze whether there are further differences between the needs of followers in the different industries. Additionally, individuals below eighteen years could also be involved in in-depth interviews similar to the one created for this paper, since the author of this paper assumes that there are considerable differences in the needs, attitudes and behavior of these younger followers and consumers due to their different life-stage. Similarly, the attitude of older generations to influencer marketing could be researched in order to find ways how influencers could reach out to them in the most effective way, since studies have confirmed – as described earlier in this paper – that the need of people to seek out the trustworthy opinion of others before making decisions instead of just relying on staged ads, is not related to age. The future of influencer marketing could also be analyzed based on consumer expectations.
8 References


Delimano Nutribullet turmixgép (2015) YouTube video, added by Delimano Hungary (online) Avialbale at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDU20w1K84M&t=100s Accessed 2 April 2019

Ferenci, R., (2017). Eddig büntetés nélkül reklámoztak a celebek, de mi lesz mostantól? (“So far, celebrites could advertise without sanctions, but what now?”). (online) Available at: https://media20.blog.hu/2017/05/29/facebook_aktual Accessed 29 March 2019


Huber, F., Meyer, F. and Nachtigall, C., (2009). *Guerilla-Marketing als kreative Werbeform*. (“Guerilla-Marketing as a creative form of advertising”) Köln: Josef Eul Verlag GmbH, pp. 29-52. (online) Available at: https://books.google.hu/books?id=V0Wr54PXts4C&pg=PA38&lpg=PA38&dq=Kreative+werbung&source=bl&ots=6wxHdQOmS1&sig=ApjF24QZtmTofM7LBFDZBwilUj0&hl=hu&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjsiea8kJ7LAhUBXg8KHSDBCz4ChDoAQg-MAU#v=onepage&q&f=false Accessed 1 April 2019


Nutribullet: Réka szépségbombája (2016) YouTube video, added by Delimano Hungary (online) Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B5XNSk2ylpc Accessed 2 April 2019


93
Schönstein, K., (2018). Chancen und Risiken des Influencer Marketings für Unternehmen. (online) Available at: https://www.google.hu/search?source=hp&ei=VJ-bXluzCe2xrgSj4YfYDQ&q=https%3A%2F%2Fpubliscologne.th-koeln.de%2Ffiles%2F1122%2FBA_Schoenstein_Katharina.pdf&btnK=Google-keres%C3%A9s&oq=https%3A%2F%2Fpubliscologne.th-koeln.de%2Ffiles%2F1122%2FBA_Schoenstein_Katharina.pdf&gs_l=psy-ab.3...345.345..600...0.0..0.129.258.0j2......0....2j1..gws-wiz.....0.5aIMD15woMg Accessed 12 December 2018


Think, (n.d.). In-depth interview. (online) Available at: https://think.design/user-design-research/in-depth-interview/ Accessed 29 March 2019


Weill, K., (2019). Facebook’s ‘LOL’ Outreach to Teens Is a Joke. (online) Available at: https://www.thedailybeast.com/facebooks-lol-outreach-to-teens-is-a-joke?source=articles&via=rss Accesses 29 March 2019

References of the figures:

Horváth, D.D., (2019). Instagram page. (online) Available at:
https://www.instagram.com/p/Bty7OLAg9bl/ Accessed 19 March 2019

Horváth, D.D., (2019). Instagram page. (online) Available at:

Horváth, D.D., (2019). Instagram page. (online) Available at:
https://www.instagram.com/p/BuZSYhMA8F-/ Accessed 19 March 2019


Kiss, V. (2018) Instagram page. (online) Available at: https://www.instagram.com/viragakiss/ Accessed 2 April 2019


Rubint, R., (2019). Instagram page. (online) Available at:
https://www.instagram.com/p/BudXWXknUSW/ Accessed 29 March 2019

Rubint, R., (2019). Instagram page. (online) Available at:
https://www.instagram.com/p/BuTPlhlH6bI/ Accessed 29 March 2019

Rubint, R., (2019). Instagram page. (online) Available at:

Rubint, R., (2019). Instagram page. (online) Available at:
https://www.instagram.com/p/BuuG9NvnQrM/ Accessed 29 March 2019

Rubint, R., (2019). Instagram page. (online) Available at:
https://www.instagram.com/p/BtfUpNvHQ6W/ Accessed 29 March 2019

Rubint, R., (2019). Instagram page. (online) Available at:
https://www.instagram.com/p/BtVG-gYHHZN/ Accessed 29 March 2019
Rubint, R., (2019). Instagram page. (online) Available at: 
https://www.instagram.com/p/BuyiDwBHDg8/ Accessed 29 March 2019

http://www.academia.edu/2636302/THE_HIERARCHY_MODEL_OF_ADVERTISING_EFFECTS_A_DEBATE Accessed 2 April 2019

Sky, E., (2018). Instagram page. (online) Available at: 

At the beginning of the each interview, the interviewee is ensured that participation is voluntary and he or she can refuse to answer any question. The interviewee is also ensured that the content of the interview will only be used for the research and only the interviewer and the supervisor will have access to it. Additionally, it is stated that there are no good or wrong answers, but the goal is to find out the true attitudes, opinions and the behavior of the respondents.

Part 1:

- Please, tell me a few things about you.
- What are the most important things in your life?
- Can you please tell me a few things about yourself and your hobbies?
- Do you work-out? If yes, how many times per week?
- Why do you work-out?
- Do you regard fitness as one of your hobbies, or does it mean more to you?

Part 2:

- When you think about advertisements in general, what is the first thing that comes to your mind?
- What is your opinion about advertising in general? Why?
- What is the best advertisement channel in your opinion? (TV, Internet, radio,..)? Why?
- What is the worst advertisement channel in your opinion? (TV, Internet, radio,..)? Why?
- Do you have a favourite ad? Which one? Why?
- Is there an ad you hate? Which one? Why?
- Do you watch out for ads consciously?

Part 3.

- Is there an influential opinion leader in your life?
• When you consider buying a product or service, but you do not know if it would fit your needs, what do you do as a first step?

• Where do you look for information when searching for a product and its qualities?

• Do you involve others in your search? If yes, usually who do you involve?

• How do you feel about sponsored content on social media platforms (boosted posts for example)?

• Do you follow the account of at least one fitness or health influencer on any social media platform? If yes, how many?

• Which social media platforms do you prefer when following these accounts? Why?

• How do you feel about this ad? Why?
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDU20w1K84M&t=100s

• Do you know Rubint Réka? (If not, explain.) How do you feel about this ad? Why?
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B5XNSk2yIpc

• Which one do you find more attractive and which one would you remember for a long period of time?

• Why do you like the one better than the other one?

• Would you share any of the two ads on your social media accounts? If yes, which one and why? If not, why?

• Why do you follow fitness influencers on social media?

• How do you decide whether you want to follow him or her or not?

• Who is your favourite Hungarian fitness or health influencer? What is her/his main idea, value or topic?

• What is your opinion about this post?
Do you want the influencers to be perfect in order to feel motivated?

Do you follow male or female fitness influencers? If both, who are the majority of the two genders you follow?

Have you ever worked out (even if you felt lazy on that day), because you just saw a fitness influencer you follow working out on social media?

What are your feelings about this Instagram post?

And what about this one?
Have you ever bought something because you saw that your favourite fitness influencer uses it? If yes, how often and why?

Did you see any promotional or sponsored content from them?

What kind of products did you see from them?

Is it always clear for you if a content is sponsored or just a non-paid personal recommendation?

Have you ever felt that the product or service recommended by the influencer was never really used by him or her?

Have your favourite influencers ever been involved in negative situations/actions/something you did not like? If yes, what was it? How did it make you feel? Did it have any consequences on you?

Do you tend to comment as well below the posts of your favourite influencers or you rather just watch the contents? If yes, do you expect the influencer to respond/like your comment? Why?

Have you ever met a fitness influencer in person? If yes, what were your feelings? If no, would you like to meet her/him in person?
• Do you know some of the other followers in person/online?
• If not, would you like to get to know them in person?
• What are the most important traits that come to your mind regarding fitness influencers?
• What is your greatest motivation when following fitness and health influencers?

**Concluding questions**

• As an advertising agency, would you do something differently regarding influencer marketing? If yes, what? If no, why?
• What do you think, how do Hungarian people relate to influencer marketing?
• Did you know that in Hungary, there is a regulation that influencers have to indicate very clearly to their followers when a content is sponsored?

**Last Part**

• What is your name and how old are you?
• What do you study?/What did you study?
• Do you work? If yes, what is your occupation?
• How old are you?