Influence of surreptitious advertising in vlogs on the purchase intention of soft drinks.

Bsc Thesis
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Preface

You are the reader of the thesis 'Influence of surreptitious advertising in vlogs on the brand perception of softdrinks'. For this thesis research has been done into the input of social influencers in vlogs on the brand image and purchase intention of unhealthy soft drinks. This thesis is written as the final assignment of the bachelor Business and Consumer Studies at the University of Wageningen & Research in the period from September to December 2017.

I have learned a lot from working on this thesis, such as conducting your own research for the first time. I also learned that things change and change is not bad at all but can contribute to a better result. I really enjoyed being able to carry out my own research for the first time, fully focused on my interests and to find a solution for your problems independently.

I would like to thank my supervisor Ellen van Kleef for the good support and guidance during the writing of this thesis. When I ran into something and did not get any further, I could always contact her for a quick solution. Of course I also want to thank my friends and family for their support during these four months. In addition, I would like to thank the participants as well who contributed to carrying out this research. Finally, I thank Hans van Trijp as the second reader.

I wish you a lot of reading pleasure!

Kim Stukker

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Abstract

Nowadays, the internet and social media are becoming more important. More YouTube videos are watched every day, and social influencers are very popular. Social influencers provide vlogs including unhealthy food advertisement and this is among other things seen as a leading cause of obesity and overweight. Despite the fact that social influencers provide unhealthy food advertisement, consumers are also believed to be unaware of the fact that they are watching paid advertisement.

The aim of this research is to find out what the effect of surreptitious advertising in vlogs is on the brand image and the purchase intention of unhealthy soft drinks. This was done on the basis of the following research question: *"What is the effect of surreptitious advertising in vlogs on brand image and purchase intention of softdrink?"*

In order to provide an answer to the research question, an experiment was conducted for which an online questionnaire was distributed among Dutch respondents. The respondents (N=63) were randomly divided over two conditions, namely a group that first looked at an official Fanta advertisement and then a vlog about an unrelated topic (i.e. marriage of a vlogger). The experimental group watched an official advertisement about an unrelated topic (i.e. marriage) and then a vlog with Fanta's surreptitious advertisement. For both groups the same social influencer was used.

The results showed that there is no difference between the two conditions on the attention to the message and the credibility of the message and the purchase intention. Furthermore, it turned out that there is a positive relationship between the credibility of and attention to the message in the vlog on the brand image and the purchase intention.

It can be stated that surreptitious advertisement by Fanta has no influence on Fanta's willingness to purchase. On the other hand, a link has been found between the credibility of the message and the attention paid to the message on the brand image. So there is an indication that vlogs can have a positive influence on the brand attitude and willingness to purchase. However, further research must show whether the direct effect of surreptitious advertising on the willingness to purchase can be clearly found with a different vlog.

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Introduction

"Hey guys! Hola chicas and chicos, vandaag ben ik hier voor jullie met een heleboel pakketjes." This is Teske introducing her YouTube video channel which has 104.858 views. What she does not tell her viewers is the fact that a lot of these packages include unhealthy candy. Teske is not the only one, there are more than thousand vloggers who all do not tell their followers about their financial interests when promoting their products (Stichting Reclame Code, 2017). Recently, vloggers increasingly advertise for unhealthy snacks (Youngworks, 2016). How do they do it and why do they seem to be so powerful?

This question is related to the underlying social problem of overweight and obesity. About 13% of the world's adult population were obese in 2014, and 39% of adults suffered from overweight (World Health Organization, 2016). In the Netherlands, almost half of the Dutch above 18 years in 2016 suffered from overweight (49,2%). In total 14,2% of this group had obesity (Volksgezondheidenzorg, 2016). These percentages are problematic since obesity and overweight lead to multiple health risks such as diabetes mellitus type 2, cardiovascular disease and various forms of cancer (Health council of the Netherlands, 2003). According to the World Health Organization (2016) causes for the rise of obesity are changes in dietary and physical activity patterns. Not only the World Health Organization has an explanation for the rise of obesity, according to various authors, the rise of unhealthy messages communicated towards children through food advertising is as well a leading cause of the unhealthy eating patterns of children (Beaudoin, 2014; Brownell & Horgen, 2004).

Recently there has been a movement from traditional media (printed media, radio and television) to new media (news sites, blogs and social media) (Schagen, 2015). With the rise of mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones the internet has become more popular and is used often among children and young adults to entertain themselves (Youngworks, 2016). When looking at this population of young adults in the age of 12 to 24 in the Netherlands, research has shown that 98,7% of them uses the internet (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2016). YouTube is one of the most popular sites. In general, 7,5 million people in the Netherlands use YouTube from which 1,7 million visit YouTube on a daily basis. Especially young adults use YouTube a lot, in the age between 15 to 19 86% of them use YouTube (Newcom research, 2017). This could be problematic since vloggers on YouTube are by far the most important online channel by which children get in touch with advertisements for unhealthy foods (Youngworks, 2016).

In traditional media branded products are usually clearly marked as an advertisement. With the rise of new media, branded products are increasingly combined with core entertainment content. This combination has been shown to improve the emotional connection with the consumer and so a new concept of branded entertainment was born. The merging of advertising and entertainment is further to referred as 'surreptitious advertising' in the rest of this report (Hudson & Hudson, 2006).

Social media including Facebook and YouTube have made sharing opinions and information easier than before. Vloggers share their personal experiences and opinions on YouTube, both paid and unpaid by companies. This personal experience can be seen as spreading word of mouth. Due to word of mouth communication consumers can get useful information from an experienced source because it provides consumers the opportunity to read opinions and experiences from other consumers (Hennig-Thurau et al,. 2004). Word of mouth communication gets among other things extended by lifestyle experts. Lifestyle experts are seen as a trustworthy source by consumers. Also, children see vloggers as a

reliable role model (Youngworks, 2016). Through their role as a lifestyle expert and their own visible lifestyle as an example for consumers, celebrity lifestyle experts play an important role in the confirmation of certain personal values and way of living (Lewis, 2010). Unfortunately, these vloggers spread a lot of information about unhealthy snacks. They typically promote these products through 'food challenge' videos, 'unboxing' videos and videos which show the vlogger, unpacking a number of products that were sent to them by manufacturers (Youngworks, 2016). This is unfortunate because research showed that children exposed to food marketing increases their request for food to parents and they develop a preference for the advertised brands (Hastings et al., 2003). This leads to the fact that food marketing has on the short-term an effect on the unhealthy food consumption of children (Epstein et al, 2008; Halford et al., 2004).

Recently, the 'Commissariaat voor de Media' (CVM) performed a study on how often brands and products are visibly shown in vlogs on YouTube and whether it is clear to viewers that the attention for the products or brands is paid or unpaid. In this study, they compared a hundred videos of the top twenty Dutch YouTube channels. They found that in almost 90% of the vlogs one or multiple brands or products were shown, and in 60% of these cases these brands or products even got explicit attention which was often very positive. When a video does contain sponsored products, the video should have the tag #spon (Stichting Reclame Code, 2017). However, in more than 75% of the vlogs that pay attention to products, it is unclear whether the vlogger is paid or unpaid for paying attention to a product, because the video does not include the indication #spon (CVM, 2017). Moreover, many viewers do not understand the meaning of #spon even when it is included (Stichting Reclame Code, 2017). The 'Commissariaat van de Media' can act towards surreptitious advertising on radio and television and set rules but the 'Commissariaat van de Media' cannot do this yet on social media. They cannot yet act towards vloggers and other online content creators. Due to this lack of rules, the 'Commissariaat van de Media' wants to create more awareness and self-regulation about the advertisements created in vlogs (Commissariaat Van de Media, 2017).

A lot of research is done on internet and television advertising, for example in the research of Harris et al. (2009). This research showed that there is a causal link between advertising and greater snack consumption. Also it appeared in this research that children are most affected by the snack advertising but snack advertising also increased consumption among adults. Little research has been done on food advertising with the help of social influencers in YouTube vlogs. This is also stated by Harris et al. (2009) who recommended that more research has to be done on the effects of other forms of food advertising. This research will focus on food advertisement in social media and thereby try to contribute to the existing literature. Also, research has been done on the effect of surreptitious advertising in vlogs on children but not so much on the effect of surreptitious advertisement on young adults. Therefore this research will focus on young adults (Youngworks, 2016). This research will try to fill the gap in the literature by investigating what the influence of surreptitious advertising in vlogs is on purchase intention and brand image of the consumer.

The underlying research question of this investigation will be: *"What is the effect of surreptitious advertising in vlogs on brand image and purchase intention of softdrink?"*

Expectation is that people relatively watch surreptitious advertising with more attention and relatively more focus in vlogs compared to when they watch the same advertisement separated from entertaining content in more traditional formats (such as in advertisement blocks around TV programs). Moreover, in this research it is expected that a vlogger is expected to be seen as a

trustworthy source of information. As a result, the expectation is that these two factors have a positive influence on the brand attitude and on the willingness to purchase.

In this experiment young adults are used as target group. Half of the respondents will watch a vlog with surreptitious advertisement while the other half will watch an advertisement followed by a vlog with a non-hidden advertisement (I.e.- the independent variable). After this, the respondents fill in a survey, with questions focused on whether they followed the vlog and advertisement with full attention, and the credibility of the advertisement message. The key dependent variable in this study is the willingness to purchase the promoted unhealthy drink.

The results of this study can be used by governments and public health experts to better understand the impact of this new type of advertising. Results can inform new legislation related to marketing and social influencers. The results can also be used by marketers to change their brand promotion strategy.

Theoretical background

In the next part the existing literature about social influencers, attention processes, (food) advertisement and their influences on brand attitude and willingness to purchase will be discussed.

Processing systems

There are multiple theories about processing systems. One of them is the dual process theory of Kahneman (2012), which consists of two ways of processing information; by heuristics and by analytic processing. A predecessor of this theory is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). The ELM Model focuses on how persuasion is affected by recipient elaboration. Elaboration is the amount of message-relevant thinking an individual has to combine when the individual processes a persuasive message or issue. The theory states that sometimes people will be unmotivated or unable to think about a message, for example when this message is low in personal relevance, or when there are many distractions. Other times people will be highly motivated to think about a message or issue (Petty et al., 1976; Petty & Cacioppo, 1990). The model assumes there are two routes leading to persuasion, the central and the peripheral route. When a consumer is exposed to a form of communication, in this case an advertisement, the consumer can process via the central route where the ad will be actively processed or via the peripheral route, where the ad will be automatically processed. The peripheral route is also called shallow information processing because it will lead to weaker memory paths and less memory of the ad will stay in mind. The central route is also called the deeper information processing, because it will lead to stronger memory paths and strong attitudes and associations towards the advertisement (Craik et al,.1972; Petty et al., 1986).

The central route is supported by the levels-or depth-of –processing approach (Craik & Lockhart, 1972; Craik & Tulving 1975). This theory states that the more the meaning of information has appeared during the encoding (how the information enters the consumer's memory), the stronger the associations in memory will be. Concluding, when a consumer thinks actively about and elaborates about the importance of product or service information, the stronger the associations in mind of the consumer will be.

The ELM model is focused on persuasion and attitude change but the central and peripheral route have similarities with the dual processing theory of Kahneman (2012). System 1 operates automatically, unconscious, fast and often with little or no effort. System 1 is also called the heuristic system, because of it unconscious and heuristic processing. Therefore it has some similarities with the peripheral route of the ELM model, which stands for automatic processing (Kahneman, 2012; Neys, 2006; Petty et al., 1976; Keith & Stanovich, 2000; Evans, 2003). Whereas the central route of the ELM model leads to a more active process it is comparable to System 2; it allocates attention to the mental activities that demand attention, often complex situations and makes use of the central working memory system. System 2 is also called controlled processing or the analytic system. The most important difference between the two systems is that they lead to different type of tasks interpretations (Kahneman, 2012; Neys, 2006; Keith & Stanovich, 2000; Evans, 2003).

The central route of the ELM model and System 2 of the dual processing theory is supported by the levels-or depth-of –processing approach (Craik & Lockhart, 1972; Craik & Tulving 1975). This theory states that the more the meaning of information has appeared during the encoding (how the information enters the consumer's memory), the stronger the associations in memory will be.

Concluding, when a consumer thinks actively about and elaborates about the importance of product or service information, and thereby using the central route or System 2, the stronger the associations in mind of the consumer will be. This is what is expected to happen in the mind of the consumer when watching a vlog; the consumer will watch the vlog with full attention because he/she wants to watch the vlog. While watching with full attention, the consumer thinks actively about the product or service showed to him and will have stronger associations towards the product/brand.

Influence of advertisement on brand attitude and purchase intention

Traditional media is known as printed media, (the press, photography, advertising, cinema and broadcasting on radio and television). Consumers are turning away from the traditional sources of advertisement such as radio, television and newspapers and are turning more frequently to various types of social media to gather information and make a purchase decision (Rashtchy et al., 2007 in Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Lempert, in Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

Shift from traditional to new media
There is a shift from 'audiences' to 'users' and from 'consumers' to 'producers'. Vloggers are as well consumers who have become producers, by showing branded content (Lister et al., 2009). Part of this new media is social media, or also called consumer-generated-media (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). This form of media is described by Blackshaw & Nazarro (2004) as 'a variety of new sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated and used by consumers intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities and issues (p.2 in Mangold & Faulds, 2009). In the 21st century, there was an explosion of internet-based messages which were transferred via this new media. These messages have become an important factor in influencing many aspects of consumer behavior such as awareness, forming brand attitudes, opinions and purchase intentions (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). In traditional communication media the content, the timing and frequency of communications were dictated by the organization and its paid agents such as advertising agencies or marketing research firms. This led to minimum information flows, were word-of-mouth information spreading was only limited to face-to-face individual consumer communication and this limited the spreading of information about the brand (Mayzlin, 2006).

Social media
However, when looking at social media, marketing managers still control the content, timing, and frequency of information. The difference is that the information about products and services is now based on individual consumer experiences. Due to development within new media, and thus social media, also various independent social media platforms are set up, including YouTube and vloggers. These platforms give consumers the opportunity to spread their experiences and brand attitude via electronic word of mouth and brand information will flow much further than in traditional media (Mangold & Fauld, 2009). The internet has become a mass media for consumer sponsored communications or advertisements, such as product placement. Product placement is 'the purposeful incorporation of a brand into an entertainment vehicle' (Russel & Belch, 2005 p. 74) and can occur on television and movies as well as in songs and music videos and thus vlogs (Russel & Belch, 2005). Therefore product placement is a hybrid message because it combines the key elements from the definitions of advertising (communication that is being paid for) and publicity (communication that is not being paid for and which do not identify the sponsor). Thus a hybrid message is a paid message, the sponsor is still in control of the content and format, while the audience still perceives the message as credible (Cohen, in Balasbramanian, 1994; Balasubramanian, 1994)

Product placement

More specific, product placement is a paid product message that is aimed at influencing television, and movie watching audiences by including a branded product into the television program or movie. This product placement was executed by actors, working for moviemaker companies (Balusubramanian, 1994). Nowadays vloggers on YouTube are used to execute the product placement, this is done in various forms such as challenges with a specific product, unpacking videos of a product and product reviews. Product placement is very useful because when a product is placed in a program (or in the case of this research in a vlog), the product information will be registered because the product is shown in a content that the consumer is willing to watch (Cowley & Barron, 2008), and therefore product placement is effective. The effectiveness of the placement is higher when consumers are not aware of the influence of the placement (Law, 2000).

Mere exposure effect

There are two theories to explain the shift in brand attitude after being exposed to product placement. The first theory is the mere exposure effect, which state that the consumer will not recall the brand as a placement but will have a more positive brand attitude as result of the exposure (Zajonc, 1968). The second theory states that a placement will increase explicit memory of a brand. The study of Russell (2002) found an increase in explicit recognition memory and a positive shift in brand attitudes after being exposed to an audio placement (Zajonc, 1968; Cowley & Barron, 2008). This shift in brand attitude is explained by the plot connection. Plot connection is described as a dimension of meaning. When there is a high level of plot connection, the brand makes a relevant contribution to the story (the advertisement including product placement). Therefore, the information is seen as important and will facilitate memory. Thus, the level of plot connection will determine how meaningful a placement in a story is and because of that will lead to explicit recognition in memory and a positive shift in brand attitudes (Russel, 2002; Cowley & Barron, 2008).

According to previous research, a positive brand attitude leads to a higher willingness to purchase the product (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Bian & Forsythe, 2012; Kim & Ko, 2012). The research of Lee & Watkins (2016) investigated the effect of YouTube vloggers' influence on consumer luxury brand perception and intentions. Their study among 88 female students showed that watching vlogs with luxury brand advertisement had a positive influence on the brand attitude and the willingness to purchase.

Factors influencing effectivity of advertising messages

Credibility of the message

Vloggers show products and brands in their videos and give their opinion about the product. This spreading of information and opinion about a product can be seen as Word of Mouth (WOM). EWOM communication is formulated by Hennig-Thurau (2004) as 'any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet' (p. 39).

With the rise of new media, the introduction of the internet has extended consumers' options to collect information or opinions about (new) products from other consumers. It also offers the possibility for consumers to give their own consumption-related advice by engaging in electronic word-of-mouth (eWom) (Hennig-Thurau et al,. 2004). This statement is supported by Brown et al. (2007) who stated that WOM is a major part of online consumer interactions, and specifically in online communities.

WOM is being shared (output WOM) for three purposes: social (1), emotional (2) and functional (3). First, the social driver is mainly focused to send signals to others about one's expertise, uniqueness or social status. This driver consists of 3 different behaviors. It consists of self-enhancement including status signalling. This implies that people use their purchase to signal their social status to their own social group or to other groups as well (Han, Nunes & Drèze, 2010). Secondly, express uniqueness; where consumers don't only use consumption and possessions to express their uniqueness or their group identity (Berger and Heath, in Lovett et al., 2013). Consumers can also express their uniqueness by talking about brands (Lovett et al., 2013). This also applies to advertising in vlogs online. On YouTube, Vloggers are showing their social status and expressing their uniqueness to their followers, by showing them products or brands and give their opinion about it. The third behavior of the social driver is the desire to converse, the basic human desire to socialize and converse with others can lead to WOM (Rubin, Perse, and Barbato, in Lovett et al., 2013). The brand will be relevant to talk about when the brand is visible or observable for consumers. Another attribute that will make a brand a subject for conversation is whether the brand is relevant in the lives of many people (Lovett et al., 2013).

Second, the emotional driver is about the emotions satisfaction and excitement. The higher the satisfaction and excitement about a product or brand the more likely people are to spread WOM about it (Roberts, in Lovett et al., 2013; Aaker, 1997, Lovett et al.,2013). When a vlogger shows a product, the viewer will believe that the vlogger is satisfied and excited about this product, otherwise, it would not be shown.

The last driver is the functional driver. The goal of this driver is to exchange useful and practical information through conversation. This driver comes from a need for information by consumers which is especially high in relation to new brands. The vlogger in this research is the one who can give the information the consumer is demanding for. The type of good can be an experience or a credence good. WOM can be useful to describe an experience of a product (Lovett et al., 2013).

Input WOM includes the understanding why consumers believe WOM information. Consumers use WOM information, to reduce their decision risks or cognitive dissonance (Buttle, in Huan & Chou 2007; File, Cermak & Prince in Huan & Chou, 2007). Consumers often perceive risk when purchasing new products. Obtaining WOM information can reduce their uncertain feeling and reduce perceived risk. Consumer tends to believe information from experienced consumers, friends and family members rather than they will believe information from commercial sources (Buttle, in Huan & Chou, 2007; Murray, 1991).

Whether this WOM of vloggers is found credible by consumers can be explained by the Para-Social phenomenon. Para-Social interaction (PSI) is the 'friendship' of a media personality (in this case the vlogger) with the media user (Rubin & Perse, 1989). Fans of celebrities have the feeling they know their idol because of their frequent exposure in the media. This effect also occurs by vloggers on YouTube, due to repeated exposure of the vlogger and the feeling the media personality is similar to themselves and others in their personal network. This evokes a feeling of a 'relationship' (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Ballantine & Martin, 2005). When this relationship extends, the viewer will start to see the vlogger as a trusted source of information and uses this interpersonal relation as a source of information and advice (Rubin & Perse, Powell, 1985). According to Labrecque (2014), PSI enlarges the feeling of connection with the showed brand and will result in increased brand loyalty and thus probably as well the brand attitude. In the study of Lee & Watkins (2016) the effect of PSI was measured by 396

respondents, all females in the age between 19 and 82 living in the United States. The respondents had to watch a YouTube video from a female vlogger (a review of a woman's handbag). They measured PSI based on the research of Rubin et al., (1985) and modified it into the vlogger context. In total, they used several items to measure PSI such as 'When I'm watching the YouTube vlogger, I feel as if I am part of her group' or 'I would like to meet the YouTube vlogger in person'. The results showed that PSI had a positive influence on luxury brand perceptions.

Conceptual Model & Hypotheses

Besides the change from traditional to new media and the rise of social media, social influencers are now part of product placement in vlogs. Product placement is the incorporation of brand information into entertainment (Russel & Belsch, 2005). The research of Lee & Watkins (2016) found that watching surreptitious advertisement in a vlog will lead to more willingness to purchase. Based on this, the following hypothesis is formed:

H1: Watching surreptitious Fanta advertisement in a vlog leads to a higher purchase intention of Fanta than watching a traditional advertising commercial

Vlogs contain a lot of surreptitious advertisement, which is spread through word-of-mouth. Word-of-mouth is seen as a trustworthy source of information by consumers because they see the vlogger as a friend. Consumers thus find the information told about the brand by a vlogger credible. This feeling of having a relationship with the vlogger leads to a greater brand loyalty of the brand showed by the vlogger and increases the brand attitude (Rubin & Perse, 1989; Labrecque, 2014; Lee & Watkins, 2016). To test this the following hypotheses are formed:

H2: Watching surreptitious Fanta advertisement in a vlog leads to more credibility of the advertisement message than watching a traditional advertising commercial
H4: A higher credibility of the surreptitious advertisement message leads to a more positive overall brand attitude than a traditional advertisement commercial

Consumers watch vlogs because they want to watch a vlog, they like the vlogger and will therefore watch the surreptitious advertisement with full attention (Cowley & Barron, 2008). Because the advertisement is surreptitious the consumer will probably not recall the brand as placement but will develop a more positive brand attitude. To test this the following hypotheses are formed:

H3: Watching surreptitious Fanta advertisement in vlog leads to more attention for the advertisement message than watching a traditional advertising commercial
H5: A higher attention for the surreptitious advertisement message leads to a more positive overall brand attitude than a traditional advertisement commercial
H6: A positive overall brand attitude will lead to a higher purchase intention of Fanta
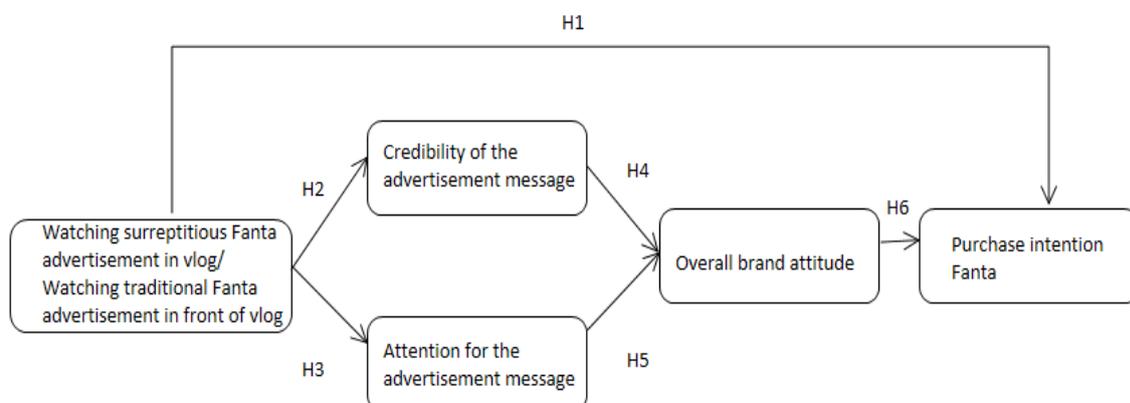

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Method

Design

In this study, the influence of surreptitious advertising of unhealthy products in vlogs on brand attitude and willingness to purchase was examined. This research was based on a quantitative experimental 2x1 between-subject design, because every respondent only participated in one condition.

The independent variable in this study was the type of advertising a respondent will watch, surreptitious advertising or traditional advertising. In the first condition, respondents watched a distracting advertisement of Renault about a wedding and afterward a surreptitious Fanta advertisement in a vlog of Masha from Beautygloss (i.e. experimental group). In this vlog, Fanta cans were constantly showed and presented as a fun object to complete your bucket list. The respondents in the second condition watched the official Fanta 2017 advertisement. After this advertisement, they watched a vlog also from Masha of Beautygloss where she talks about her wedding day (i.e. control group). This vlog was supposed to be a distraction and contains no further advertisement.

Both the control group and the experimental group watched a 'regular' advertisement video and afterwards a vlog from the same social influencer. This ensured there was no difference in the design between both groups. The expectation was that most of the respondents would be Dutch native speakers, that is why the used YouTube videos used are spoken in Dutch or have Dutch subtitles and the survey was conducted in the Netherlands.

Measures:

Dependent variable

The dependent variable in this research was the willingness to purchase Fanta. This variable was measured by the purchase intention scale including four items which are used in previous research to measure the willingness to purchase (Putrevaq & Lord, 1994; Kim & Biocca, 1997). The questions were measured with a 5 point Likert scale (Totally disagree – Totally agree) and are summarized in Table 1 below. From these four items the construct 'Willingness to purchase' was formed with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.701.

Mediators

The mediators in this research were the credibility of the message, the attention for the message and the brand attitude. These three factors were expected to have an effect on the willingness to purchase of the consumer.

Credibility of the message

The credibility of the message was measured with two items, which tested the degree the consumer thought the message was credible. The items were measured with a 5 point Likert scale (Totally disagree – Totally agree) and are summarized in Table 1 below. From these two items, the construct 'Credibility of the message' was formed with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.755.

Attention for the message

To check whether the respondents had watched the advertisement with full attention, the respondents were asked which brand was promoted in the two videos with an open answer question. The attention for the message was also measured by two items 'I watched with full attention to the movies' and 'I noticed Fanta advertisement' (see Table 1). These two items were measured with a 5

point Likert scale (Totally disagree – Totally agree). From these two items, the construct 'Attention for the message' was not formed with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.163.

Brand attitude
The brand attitude of the respondents towards Fanta was measured based on the attitude towards the product/brand (semantic differential) scale (Osgood & Suci & Tannenbaum, 1957). A few relevant items of this scale were used and summarized beneath in Table 1. The items were measured with a 5 point Likert scale (Totally disagree – Totally agree). From these two items, the construct 'Brand attitude' was formed with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.685.

Table 1: *dependent and mediator variables*

Measurement items	In Dutch	Chronbach's Alpha
Attention for the message -I watched with full attention to the movies -I mentioned Fanta advertisement	*Aandacht voor de boodschap* -Ik heb met volledige aandacht naar de filmpjes gekeken -Ik heb reclame voor Fanta gezien	0.163
Willingness to purchase -I'll probably buy Fanta -The next time I want a soft drink, I will buy Fanta -I definitely want to try Fanta -Imagine, a friend calls about advise for soda. Would you recommend him/her Fanta?	*Aankoop intentie* -Het is zeer waarschijnlijk dat ik Fanta zal kopen -De eerstvolgende keer dat ik zin heb in frisdank, koop ik Fanta -Ik wil absoluut Fanta een keer proberen te drinken -Stel je voor, een vriend(in) belt je om advies voor frisdrank. Zou je hem/haar als frisdrank merk Fanta aanraden?	0.701
Crediblity of the message -The benefits of Fanta are mentioned in a credible way. -Credible information about Fanta is given	*Geloofwaardigheid van de boodschap* -De voordelen van Fanta worden op een geloofwaardige manier naar voren gebracht - Er wordt op een geloofwaardige manier informatie gegeven over Fanta	0.755
Brand attitude -Fanta is good -Fanta is nice -Fanta has good quality -Fanta is satisfying -Fanta is distinctive -Fanta is positive -Fanta is important -Fanta is valuable -Fanta is safe -Fanta is wise	*Brand attitude* -Fanta is goed -Fanta is fijn -Fanta is van goede kwaliteit -Fanta is bevredigend -Fanta is onderscheidend -Fanta is positief -Fanta is belangrijk -Fanta is waardevol -Fanta is veilig -Fanta is wijs	0.685

Control variable

To check whether some variables might have influenced the results, the respondents were asked about their pre-knowledge of YouTube, Mascha and the product Fanta. For the constructs 'Pre-knowledge of Mascha' and 'Pre-knowledge of Fanta', the respondents were also asked whether they like Mascha and whether they like Fanta. This is done to control the results of the experiment because it might have been possible that some of the respondents were already familiar with YouTube and watching vlogs while others were not. The items are summarized in Table 2 below and were measured with a 5 points Likert scale (Totally disagree – Totally agree). The construct 'Pre-knowledge of YouTube' was formed with a Cronbach's Alpha larger than 0.6 (0.668). The constructs 'Pre-knowledge Mascha' and 'Pre-knowledge Fanta' had a Cronbach's Alpha lower than 0.6 and couldn't be used as a single construct. Both items were analysed separately.

Randomization variables

General information about the participants was gathered in the survey to be able to describe the target group and to check whether factors like age and gender had an influence on brand attitude and willingness to purchase of Fanta. Both age and gender were used to measure the randomisation between the two conditions.

Table 2*: Control variables*

Measurement items	In Dutch	Cronbach's Alpha
Pre-knowledge YouTube -I am familiar with YouTube -I am familiar with Vlogs	*Voorkennis Youtube* -Ik ben bekend met YouTube -Ik ben bekend met Vlogs	0.668
Pre-knowledge Mascha -I know vlogger Mascha -I like to watch vlogs from Mascha	*Voorkennis Mascha* -Ik ken de vlogster Mascha -Ik kijk graag naar vlogs van Mascha	0.571
Pre-knowledge Fanta -I know Fanta as a soft drink brand -I like Fanta	*Voorkennis Fanta* -Ik ken Fanta als frisdrankmerk -Ik houd van Fanta	-0.046

Procedure

Since the survey was conducted online, the respondents were approached via social media and personal contacts. The survey was posted in the Facebook group of BBC 2015-2016, and several personal contacts received a link to the survey via WhatsApp. The procedure is graphically displayed in Figure 2.

Before the survey was conducted, a pre-test was conducted in which 5 respondents filled in the questionnaire. These respondents were ultimately not included in the data set because some questions.

To start, the respondents opened the link to the survey and had to read a short introduction in order to be able to participate in this study. This introduction included reading the informed consent and general information about this study. This was done to give the respondents an indication about the survey they were about to conduct, without giving them to much information to be influenced by

forehand. By clicking 'Ja ik doe mee aan dit onderzoek' the respondents agreed to participate in this study. The first part of the survey consisted of questions to collect general information about the respondents, such as age and gender. After this, the respondents were randomised into two groups, the control, and the experimental group. This was automatically done via two different blocks in Qualtrics. The control group watched a commercial of Fanta about young kids being in charge of Fanta headquarter and afterward a vlog of Mascha about her wedding day. The experimental group watched a commercial from Renault with the topic wedding, and afterwards a vlog from Mascha with surreptitious advertising of Fanta. After watching the commercial and vlog, the respondents all had to answer the same questions. First, they were asked whether they fully watched the commercial and vlog to make sure all the respondents fully watched both videos.

The next part of the survey started with questions related to the willingness to purchase Fanta of the respondents. This was measured by four items and a 5 point-Likert scale. With two items the respondents were asked about the credibility of the message. These answers are as well measured with a 5 point-Likert scale. To find out which product the consumers remembered they had to answer which product was promoted in the videos. Afterwards, the attention for the message and the brand attitude towards Fanta was measured as well. The attention for the message is measured with two items and the brand attitude with ten items, both on a 5 point-Likert scale.

The following block of the survey was about checking randomisation and possible side effects. The respondents were asked about their pre-knowledge on YouTube, Vlogs, Mascha and Fanta. All measured on a 5 point-Likert scale.

The last part of the survey consisted of the opportunity for respondents to comment on the researcher. In addition, the respondents were kindly thanked for participating in this research, and there was an opportunity to provide an email address for further research within the MCB group.
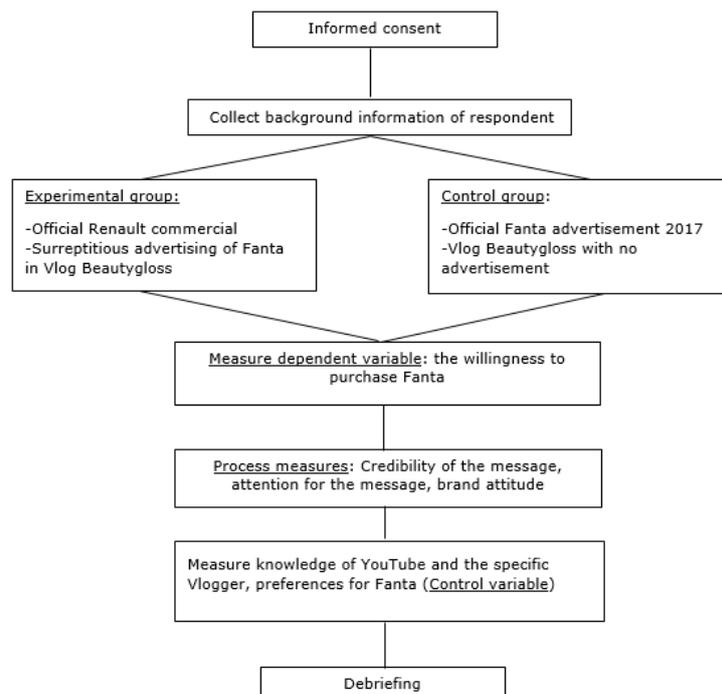

Figure 2: *Flowchart procedure*

Data-Analysis

In total, 73 respondents filled in the survey. Ten respondents were not included in this study. Three outliers where found in the open question 'which product is promoted in the videos?'. When a non-relevant answers was provided (answers that did not include a product that could've been promoted), the entire respondent was removed because this person may not have filled in several answers seriously. Seven respondents did not completely watch the vlog and were removed from the dataset as well. Two were part of the control group and the other five were part of the experimental group. In the end, 63 respondents were used for this study. The respondents were randomised into two different blocks in Qualtrics and distinguished in SPSS as the experimental group (1) and the control group (0).

Constructs

All questions were measured with a reliability analysis in order to make constructs (Table 1 & 2). The constructs: 'Willingness to purchase', 'Brand Attitude', 'Credibility of the Message' and the 'Pre-knowledge of YouTube' had a Cronbach's Alpha value >0.6 (Table 1 & 2). The constructs 'Attention for the message', 'Pre-knowledge of Mascha' and 'Pre-knowledge of Fanta' had a Cronbach's Alpha value <0.6. All three exist of two singular questions and both questions per item were used separately to test the hypotheses. All constructs were also checked for the option 'if item deleted' but no construct got higher by deleting any item. The questions which could not form a construct were recoded into MEAN-variables.

Randomization

In order to check the randomization, the variable 'Gender' was recoded into a dummy variable man (1) and woman (2). Via crosstabs, the randomisation was checked with a Chi-square test. The question what is your 'Age' was recoded into a MEAN-variable and the randomisation was checked with ANOVA.

Manipulation

The answers of the open question, 'Which products are promoted in the videos' were processed, to see whether the manipulation in the videos was successful. From the six different sort of answers a graphic is made to see the frequencies. The six different sorts of answers were computed into four answer categories; 'Fanta', 'auto' and also two combinations were used to include all answers 'Fanta&Auto' and 'Fanta&Kleding' (Figure 3). These four combinations were formed into a dummy variable: 'Don't mentioned Fanta' (0) and 'Mentioned at least Fanta' (1). A Chi-square test was conducted to see if there was a difference between the two conditions.

Control-variables

To check whether the control variables were divided equally between the two conditions and would not hurt the results, the influence of the control variables was checked with ANOVA. The construct 'Pre-knowledge of Mascha' was not equally divided between the two conditions, therefore in the first three hypotheses this construct was taking into account as covariate to make sure it would not influence the results.

Hypotheses

To test whether the surreptitious advertisement of Fanta in the experimental condition influenced the willingness to purchase, the credibility of the message and the attention for the message a Univariate analysis (ANOVA) was used. The homogeneity of variances was measured with the Levene's test. The correlation between the credibility of the message and the attention for the message on the overall brand attitude was measured with a Pearson correlation. For these constructs a Multiple Regression

analysis was also run. Whether the overall brand attitude had an influence on the willingness to purchase was also measured with a Pearson correlation.

Results

63 respondents were used for the analysis of the study, consisting of 23 males and 41 females. The experimental group consisted of 31 respondents and the control group consisted of 32 respondents. The average of the final sample was 19.4 years (SD = 1.7).

Randomization

To see if there were differences in gender between the two conditions, a Chi-square test was performed. The condition for running a Chi-square test was met, since all expected counts > 5. Out the χ^2 - test between gender and the two conditions appeared to be a relation (χ^2 (1) = 3.72, p = 0.054), therefore it is marginal significant and there might be a small difference between man and woman in the two conditions. The control group contained relatively more woman (60.0%) than man (34.8%) and the experimental group contained relatively more man (65.2%) than woman (40.0%). The data from the randomization and control variable check are shown in Table 2.

To see if there were differences in age between the two conditions, an ANOVA analysis was run. There was no significant difference in age between the two conditions (F (1, 61) = 0.16, p >0.05). The control group had an average of 19.1 years and the experimental group had an average of 19.7 years.

Control variables

To check whether some variables influenced the outcome of the results an ANOVA analysis was run. Since all values of the pre-knowledge of YouTube and the pre-knowledge of Fanta between the groups were not significant (All P > 0.05), there is no difference across conditions in the likelihood of pre-knowledge of YouTube and Fanta. The pre-knowledge of Mascha was measured with two questions both measured with ANOVA and were significant (All p < 0.05). So there is a difference between the conditions about the pre-knowledge of Mascha and whether the respondents like to watch vlogs from Mascha. More respondents in the control group know Mascha and like to watch vlogs from Mascha (Table 3).

Table 3: *Randomization and control variables*

Measurement items	Experimental Group		Control Group		P-Value
Randomization	*(N=31)*		(N=32)		
Gender	15 male , 16 female		9 male, 24 female		P=0.054
Age	19.7	2.0	19.1	1.5	P=0.16
	Mean	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**	**P-Value**
Control variables					
Pre-knowledge YouTube	4.4	0.9	4.6	0.5	P=0.25
Pre-knowledge Mascha					
1.I know Mascha	2.2	1.5	3.1	1.7	P=0.03
2.I like to Watch vlogs from Mascha	1.1	0.3	1.9	1.1	P <0.01
Pre-knowledge Fanta					
1.I know Fanta	5.0	0.2	4.9	0.3	P=0.96
2.I like Fanta	3.5	0.9	3.7	1.0	P=0.91

Manipulation

In order to see which form of advertisement had more influence, the respondents were asked which product was promoted in the videos. This is graphically shown in Figure 3.
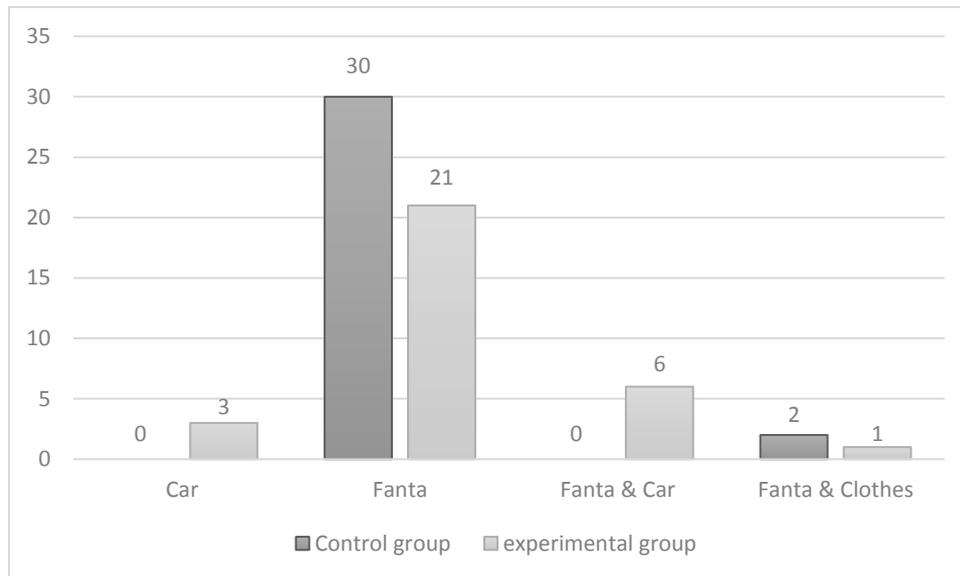

Figure 3: The promoted products remembered by the respondents

To see if there were differences in answers between the two conditions, a Chi-square test was performed. The four answer categories were transformed into 'Don't mentioned Fanta' and 'Mentioned at least Fanta'. The condition for running a Chi-square test was not met, since not all expected counts were > 5, so the test is less reliable and may fail to detect an effect. Out the χ^2 - test between the two conditions and the given answers appeared to be a relation (χ^2 (1) = 3.25, p = 0.07), the relation is not significant and therefore there is no significant difference between the answers in the two conditions.

The influence of watching surreptitious Fanta advertisement in a vlog on the purchase intention of Fanta (H1)

The willingness to purchase was measured by four questions which were combined in the construct willingness to purchase. A univariate analysis (ANOVA) is performed on the Type of video on the willingness to purchase, due to unequal sample sizes the results of this ANOVA are not robust to violations of homogeneity of variances. The Levene's test was not significant 0.205> P(0.05), so the variances of the groups were the same and homogeneity of variance is met. There was no significant effect of the Type of video on the willingness to purchase (F (1, 61) = 0.36, p >0.05). Therefore the hypothesis 'Watching surreptitious Fanta advertisement in a vlog leads to a higher purchase intention of Fanta, then watching a traditional advertising commercial' is not accepted. The test is as well run with the control variables 'I know Mascha', and 'I like to watch the vlogs from Mascha'. Results of the analysis were similar in terms of significance, therefore the results were not influenced (Table 4).

The influence of watching surreptitious Fanta advertisement in a vlog on the credibility of the advertisement message (H2)

The credibility of the message was measured by two questions which were combined into the construct credibility of the message. A univariate analysis (ANOVA) was performed on the Type of video on credibility of the message. Due to unequal sample sizes the results of this ANOVA are not

robust to violations of homogeneity of variances. The Levene's test was not significant 0.31> P(0.05), so the variances of the groups were the same and homogeneity of variance was met. There was no significant effect of the Type of video on the credibility of the message (F (1, 61) = 1.03, p >0.05). Therefore the hypothesis 'Watching surreptitious Fanta advertisement in a Vlog leads to more credibility of the advertisement message' is not accepted. The test was as well run with the control variables 'I know Mascha', and 'I like to watch the vlogs from Mascha'. Results of the analysis were similar in terms of significance, therefore the results were not influenced (Table 4).

The influence of watching surreptitious Fanta advertisement in a vlog on the attention for the message (H3)

The attention for the message was measured by two questions which could not be combined into a construct so were measured independently. Both were measured with a univariate analysis (ANOVA) and due to unequal sample sizes the results of this ANOVA are not robust to violations of homogeneity of variances.

First the influence of watching surreptitious Fanta advertisement on whether the consumers watched the video with full attention was measured. The Levene's test was not significant 0.97> P(0.05), so the variances of the groups were the same and homogeneity of variance was met. There was no significant effect of the 'Type of video' on the 'Credibility of the message', (F (1, 61) = 0.47, p >0.05.

Secondly the influence of watching surreptitious Fanta advertisement on whether the consumers mentioned advertisement for Fanta was tested. The Levene's test was significant 0.04> P(0.05), so the variances of the groups were significantly different and the homogeneity of variances was violated. Therefore the Welch's F is measured as well and was significant 0.054> P(0.05), There was no significant effect of the 'Type of video' on 'The attention the message', (F (1, 61) = 01.06, p >0.05). Since both questions were not significant, the hypothesis 'Watching surreptitious Fanta advertisement in a vlog leads to more attention for the advertisement message' is not accepted. The test was as well run with the control variables 'I know Mascha', and 'I like to watch the vlogs from Mascha'. Results of the analysis were similar in terms of significance, therefore the results were not influenced (Table 4).

Table 4. *Dependent and mediator variables*

Measurement items	Experimental Group		Control Group		P-Value
	(N=31)		(N=32)		
	Mean	*SD*	Mean	SD	P-Value
Dependent variable **H1:Willingness to purchase**	2.5	0.8	2.6	0.9	P=0.55
Mediator variables: **H2:Credibility of the message**	2.2	0.9	2.4	1.0	P=0.31
H3: Attention for the message					
3.1: watched with full attention	3.8	1.2	4.0	1.1	P=0.50
3.2: Mentioned advertisement for Fanta	4.8	0.4	4.7	0.5	P=0.31

The influence of the credibility of the message on the overall brand attitude (H4)

To test whether the credibility of the message influences the overall brand attitude a correlation was performed. The correlation between the credibility of the message and the overall brand attitude appeared to be significant and positive (r(63) = 0.50, p=0.00). This means that when the credibility of the message is higher the overall brand attitude will increase as well and therefore be more positive. Therefore, the hypothesis 'A higher credibility of the advertisement message leads to a more positive overall brand attitude' is accepted.

The influence of the attention for the message on the overall brand attitude (H5)

To test whether the attention for the message has an influence on the overall brand attitude, the correlation between these two variables has been examined. The attention for the message was measured with two questions.

First, the correlation between watching the videos with full attention and the overall brand attitude appeared to be a significant, positive correlation (r(63) = 0.26, p=0.04). This means that when the videos are watched with more attention the overall brand attitude will increase and will therefore be more positive.

Second, the correlation between mentioning advertisement for Fanta and the overall brand attitude appeared to be a not significant, positive correlation (r(63) = 0.03, p=0.81). This means that when advertisement for Fanta is mentioned by the respondent it will not lead to a more positive brand attitude. Therefore the hypothesis 'A higher attention for the advertisement message leads to a more positive overall brand attitude' is accepted when the consumers have watched the video with full attention but not when the consumers mentioned Fanta.

From a multiple regression it appeared that the 'Overall brand attitude' can be for 27 percent explained by the variables 'Credibility of the message' and 'The attention for the message' (F(3, 59) = 8.53, $p <$ .00). The 'Credibility of the message' appeared to be a significant predictor for the 'Overall brand attitude' (β =.49, p =.00). 'The attention for the message' is a significant predictor for the item 'watched with full attention' for the 'Overall brand attitude' (β =.23, p =.04) and is not a significant predictor for the item 'Mentioned Fanta' for the 'Overall brand attitude' (β =.02, p =.83) (Table 6).

The influence of the overall brand attitude on willingness to purchase (H6)

To test whether overall brand attitude influences the willingness to purchase, the correlation between these two variables has been examined. The correlation between the credibility of the message and the overall brand attitude appeared to be a significant, positive relationship (r(63) = 0.47, p=0.00). This means that when the overall brand attitude is high and thus positive the willingness to purchase will increase. Therefore, the hypothesis 'A positive overall brand attitude will lead to a higher purchase intention of Fanta' is accepted.

Table 5: *Correlations for Credibility of the message and attention for the message on the overall brand attitude*

Variable	Brand attitude	Willingness to purchase
Credibility of the message	0.50	-
Attention for the message		
- watched with full attention	0.26	-
- Mentioned advertisement for Fanta	0.03	-
Brand attitude	-	0.47

Table 6: *Multiple regression analysis for Credibility of the message and attention for the message on the overall brand attitude*

Variable	B	SE B	β
Intercept	1.87	0.57	
Credibility of the message	0.24	0.06	0.49
Attention for the message			
- watched with full attention	0.10	0.05	0.23
- Mentioned advertisement for Fanta	0.02	0.12	0.02

Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of surreptitious advertising in vlogs on the brand image and purchase intention of soft drinks. On basis of the literature there are a number of expectations about surreptitious advertisement and consumer behavior. Surreptitious advertisement will lead to willingness to purchase (Lee & Watkins, 2016), because consumers will watch the vlog with more attention and will find surreptitious advertisement more credible (Petty et al., 1976; Kahneman, 2012; Cowley & Barron, 2008; Craik & Tulving, 1975; Rubin & Perse, 1989). Both will positively increase the overall brand attitude, and a positive brand attitude will lead to a higher purchase intention (Lee & Watkins, 2016; Bian & Forsythe, 2012). However, these expectations are not all confirmed by the results of this experiment.

The first hypothesis within this study is not accepted, watching surreptitious advertisement from Fanta did not lead to a higher willingness to purchase Fanta in the experimental group in comparison to the control group. This is not in line with the study of Lee & Watkins (2016), who did find a significant result for watching a vlog with surreptitious advertisement and the willingness to purchase a purse. This difference might be explained by the fact that there was no significant difference between the two conditions whether they could recall the brand Fanta after watching the movies. It was even the case that less people in the experimental group could recall Fanta than in the control group (Figure 3). The study of Lee &Watkins (2016), performed a pre-test to find a vlogger which the respondents liked to watch videos from. The respondents in this study indicated with low averages in the survey that they didn't liked the vlogs from Mascha. Since Mascha was the one promoting Fanta in the experimental group, this may have influenced the image that the respondents in the experimental group had of

Fanta and therefore the effect of surreptitious advertisement on the willingness to purchase might have been damaged.

The results of the second hypothesis are not significant and therefore this hypothesis is not accepted. Watching a surreptitious Fanta advertisement does not lead to more credibility of the advertisement in the experimental group in comparison to the control group. This is not in line with the theory of Rubin & Perse (1989) and Lee & Watkins (2016). These theories state that consumers feel connected to a vlogger and experience a social relationship towards a vlogger and therefore find the vlogger more credible. This difference might be explained by the fact that in the experimental group less people knew Mascha, and liked Mascha less in comparison to the control group. This may have negatively influenced the effect of friendship towards the vlogger. Despite, there were also male respondents, who possibly felt less attracted towards Mascha, and therefore found it harder to feel friendly connected towards Mascha. Since it was harder to feel a friendship towards Mascha this may have affected the influence of the vlog on the credibility of the message.

The third hypothesis showed that watching surreptitious Fanta advertisement does not lead to more attention for the advertisement message in the experimental group in comparison to the control group, therefore the hypothesis is not accepted. This hypothesis is based on the theory of Cowley & Barron (2008) who say that product information will be better registered because the consumer is willing to watch a vlog. It is also based on the theories of processing systems (Kahneman, 2012; Petty et al., 1976) and the levels-or-depth-of-processing approach (Craik & Lockhart, 1972), which elaborate the fact that when consumers process via the central route they will have more association towards the brand. The respondents in this study were forced to watch a specific vlog on a specific moment. This specific moment was probably not a relaxation moment for the respondent and this may explain why watching a vlog in this research does not lead to more attention for the advertisement message.

The fourth hypothesis is accepted, a higher credibility of the advertisement message leads to a more positive overall brand attitude, since the results show a positive correlation between the credibility of the advertisement message and brand attitude. This is in line with the study of Lee & Watkins (2016) and Labrecque (2014) who also found these results. This may mean that vloggers still have an influence on the brand image. Since the credibility leads to a better brand image, it turns out that consumers feel more involved with a social influencer, as Lee & Watkins (2016) research also show.

The fifth hypothesis, 'A higher attention for the advertisement message leads to a more positive overall brand attitude', is partly accepted since it was measured by two different questions. It appeared that when respondents watched the videos with full attention the overall brand attitude became more positive, which was confirmed by a positive significant correlation. This is in line with the theory of Zajonc (1968) and Cowley & Barron (2008). They state that when a video with surreptitious advertisement is watched with full attention and the placement is not mentioned, the brand attitude will be higher. The second question used to test this hypothesis measured the ability of the respondents to mention advertisement for Fanta. This question did not positively influence the overall brand attitude, due to a not significant positive correlation.

The sixth hypothesis is accepted as well. In this study a positive overall brand attitude will lead to a higher purchase intention of Fanta. This is in line with the study of Lee & Watkins (2016) and many more authors. This means that when a vlogger can ensure that the brand image is positively seen by

the consumer this also leads to willingness to purchase. When this is the case, surreptitious advertising is actually effective.

In this study it appeared that surreptitious advertisement is as (in) effective as more traditional advertisements in impacting the brand image and purchase intention. On the other hand this research showed that the attention for the message and the credibility of the message did positively relate to the overall brand attitude. Also, the overall brand attitude is positively related to the willingness to purchase. This research shows on the basis of the accepted hypotheses that when the surreptitious advertising has been carefully considered and is credible, the brand image is more positive and a positive brand image leads to a higher purchase intention. A possible explanation for the fact that there is no effect of looking at surreptitious advertising is that the respondents may already be very accustomed to advertising in vlogs. In addition, research showed that less attention is paid to commercials and advertisements on television, because there are more possibilities to record programs and to flush the advertisement (Winer, 2009). This means marketers have to look for other forms of advertising (i.e. vlogs) and therefore consumers might be used to advertisement in vlogs (Winter, 2009).

Limitations

A limitation of the research is the select sample. The study consisted of 60 respondents and the respondents were in the age group 16 to 24 years, which may have ensured that this group was more aware of the advertising manipulation than a younger population had been. In further research it might be interesting to use more respondents. Furthermore, the survey is mainly distributed among students and high school students, because of the limitations in the age category this may have damaged the external validity. This implies that the results of the study cannot be generalized because the respondents from the sample are too highly educated compared to the entire population. The choice for the brand Fanta should also be reconsidered in follow-up research, since this brand is very familiar and the results showed that almost all respondents were already familiar with Fanta and therefore the brand was probably easier to remember for the respondents. This might have influenced the results, and might have been different with a more unknown brand. There was also an error in the survey, because the respondents first had to answer questions about the purchase intention and credibility of Fanta, after which they were asked what product was promoted in the videos. Therefore it was probably easier for the respondents to indicate which product was promoted in the videos. This might explain the reason why there was barely a difference between the two conditions by naming the promoted products (Figure 3). In the survey two vlogs from social influencer Mascha were used. As the respondents also indicated with low averages in the survey, the respondents did not like to look at the vlogs. This may have influenced the image that the respondents in the experimental group had of Fanta and therefore the effect of surreptitious advertisement was harder to measure. Another disadvantage of Mascha's vlogs was that there were also male respondents, who possibly felt less attracted, and therefore found it harder to feel friendly connected towards Mascha and this may have affected the results. In addition, the videos used contained a fairly exaggerated form of surreptitious advertising. In many vlogs the advertising will be more 'surreptitious'. In further research it is recommended to conduct a pre-test with different vloggers where the respondents can indicate whether they like to watch the vlogger, as in the research of Lee & Watkins (2016). This should ensure that the respondents watch a video from a vlogger they prefer, like they do at home. This may make the situation more realistic and will possibly harm the results less. The choice for the Vlogs of Mascha was made in order to meet the internal validity of the study, because both conditions watched two videos with exactly

the same topics and the same influencer. As it seems, the choice for this vlogs might have hurt the internal validity in the end.

Strengths of study

Overweight and unhealthy food are a growing problem, according to the literature the internet may contribute to this (Beaudoin, 2014; Brownell & Horgen, 2004). Since research into food advertisement in vlogs has not been conducted before, this research is of great importance (Harris et al., 2009) Despite the fact that the direct result in this study has not been shown, there is an indication that when vlogs can have an influence on the purchase intention, these findings contribute to the literature. In addition, the target group of this study was young adults. This has not been researched before and gives new insights within the existing literature.

It can be stated that contrary to the expectation, surreptitious advertisement by Fanta has no influence on Fanta's willingness to purchase in comparison to the control group who watched a traditional Fanta advertisement. On the other hand, a link has been found between the credibility of the message and the attention paid to the message on the brand image. So there is an indication that vlogs can have a positive influence on the brand attitude and willingness to purchase. However, further research must show whether the direct effect of surreptitious advertising on the willingness to purchase can be clearly found with a different vlogger.

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