

The influence of YouTubers on teenagers

A descriptive research about the role YouTubers play in the life of their teenage viewers

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An overview of the influence Dutch YouTubers have on their teenage viewers and to what extent this influence is good or bad

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Preface

Two years ago I met two well-known YouTubers from the Netherlands. We were working at the same company at that time and once a month I met them at meetings in Amsterdam. The YouTubers often talked about their YouTube channels and remarkable experiences such as being recognized in the streets by fans and the questioning gaze of parents when teenagers asked for a picture. Also, I remember moments in which we all made pictures of the delicious food and drinks and posted it on Instagram. However, one of the two YouTubers had to make sure the picture did not contain alcohol, as she felt responsible for her teenage viewers.

Every month I was amazed again by the stories about the quite unknown world of YouTubers and I really enjoyed listening to them. I started following YouTubers on social media and got more involved in how the teenagers behaved towards their favorite YouTubers. Amazing how many teenagers do what YouTubers say and actually copy their behavior. I really wanted to know more about this.

Meanwhile I was finishing up the course Communication Studies, specialization New Media, at the University of Twente in Enschede. I did not have to think long about a thesis subject: the influence of YouTubers on teenagers. Luckily my supervisors were as enthusiastic as I was about this topic.

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So here it is. My final thesis. I worked on it for six months. It probably would have taken much longer if Koen Nijbroek did not help me transcribing all the interviews. So many thanks for this. Also a big thanks to my mother who helped me optimize my codebook. And finally a special thanks to my two supervisors Niels Baas and Alexander van Deursen for the brainstorm sessions, input and feedback.

I really enjoyed listening to enthusiastic teenagers. They told me about their favorite YouTubers and sometimes even their plans of starting a channel themselves. And of course I really liked talking with Dutch YouTubers and hearing about their stories and experiences. A big thanks to all people who helped me find participants and of course to the participants themselves!

Wilma Westenberg

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* On the front page you can see a picture of Enzo Knol, one of the most popular YouTubers from the Netherlands. He is standing in front of a big fan crowd at one of his exclusive meetings. The teenagers are holding signs with his slogan 'Knol Power'.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	5
1. INTRODUCTION	6
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	8
2.1. TEENAGERS' BEHAVIOR ON SOCIAL MEDIA.....	8
2.2. TEENAGERS' IDENTIFICATION WITH YOUTUBERS.....	8
2.3. INFLUENCE OF YOUTUBERS ON TEENAGERS' BEHAVIOR.....	10
2.4. AWARENESS OF TEENAGERS.....	11
2.5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	11
3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	12
3.1. DESIGN.....	12
3.2. PARTICIPANTS.....	12
3.3. PROCEDURE.....	12
3.4. DATA ANALYSIS.....	13
4. RESULTS	14
4.1. BEHAVIOR.....	14
4.2. IDENTIFICATION.....	17
4.3. INFLUENCES ON BEHAVIOR.....	19
4.4. AWARENESS.....	22
5. DISCUSSION	26
5.1. MAIN FINDINGS.....	26
5.2. LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH.....	27
6. CONCLUDING REMARKS	28
7. REFERENCES	29
8. APPENDICES	31
APPENDIX A) INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEENAGERS.....	31
APPENDIX B) INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUTUBERS.....	32
APPENDIX C) QUESTIONS FROM OTHER RESEARCHES.....	33
APPENDIX D) SPONSORED CONTENT OF YOUTUBERS USED TO MEASURE AWARENESS.....	34

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, teenagers are raised in an era of smartphones and do not remember a time before social media. Most teenagers are active on social media starting at the age of 10 (BBC Newsround, 2016). According to a study by Variety Magazine (2014), six out of ten influencers for 13-18-year-olds are YouTubers. Teenagers find YouTube influencers more relatable than traditional celebrities (Defy media, 2015). They are seen as role models and are often recognized in the streets by their fans. However, despite being famous online, outside the YouTube community they are just average people that could be the person living next door. Parents often do not know about the online behavior of their children and the YouTubers they endorse.

The aim of this research is to give an overview of the current YouTube community, including what influence Dutch YouTubers have on their teenage viewers and to what extent this influence on their life is good or bad. This study uses a qualitative study approach with a semi-structured interviewing technique. The research focuses on both teenagers and YouTubers and combines the results. The sample consists of 16 in-depth interviews with 20 teenagers in total and 4 in-depth interviews with 4 YouTubers in total.

This research shows that YouTube has become part of the daily life of many teenagers. YouTubers do have influence on the behavior of teenagers, of which teenagers and their parents are unaware. This influence is not a bad thing, however, the unawareness of parents can be a problem as many teenagers want to become YouTubers themselves.

The advice of this research is that parents should know more about the behavior of their teenagers on YouTube and make rules about what is allowed and what is not. This descriptive research describes the world of YouTubers and teenagers. Further research could focus on guidelines for parents whose teenagers are active on YouTube.

1. INTRODUCTION

A few years ago the new internet hype called Web 2.0 appeared, resulting in a big shift from using internet relatively passive and consuming, to a hype of networking as a revolutionary type of large-scale cooperation and economic democracy (Meijer, Boersma and Wagenaar 2009). According to Smith (2009), this big shift towards user-driven technologies such as blogs, video-sharing platforms and social networks enabled a revolution of User-Generated Content (UGC). UGC refers to all the various media content created or produced by the general public, excluding paid professionals (Daugherty, Eastin & Bright, 2008). Constantinides, Romero and Boria, (2009, p.2) describe UGC as the process of 'extracting value by generating, reviewing, editing and disseminating content'. Smith (2009) states that this revolution of UGC is now being referred to as social media.

UGC is also stated to be the next iteration of Word-of-Mouth (WOM) (Huang & Benyoucef, 2012). Traditional (offline) WOM has proven to play a major role in customers' decision-making process (Richins & Root-Shaffer, 1988). The so-called eWOM is 'any positive or negative statement made by (potential) customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet' as stated by Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh and Gremler (2004, p. 39). Consumers can share their own experiences and opinions online, increasing the unbiased product information people gather from other consumers online.

People are now able to create their own content and participate in all kinds of applications such as weblogs, social networking and online journalism. Some users create online content on a daily basis. They share their experiences and opinions about everything; from product reviews, services and baby advice to boyfriend problems, homework, make up and game tutorials. Often starting as a hobby, creating online content on a personal blog or channel can become a fulltime job. By creating content on a daily basis, large communities are built up with thousands of loyal followers. New followers and subscribers are gained every day. YouTube is one of the most popular platforms on which creators share their content. With one single video it is possible to reach millions of people. Other popular channels are Instagram, Snapchat, Vine, Facebook and Twitter. These platforms are used for real-time contact with YouTube subscribers, as this is not possible on YouTube itself.

Successful content creators become social influencers with a lot of persuasive influence. Their influence and fame can be compared with traditional celebrities. The content they share via social media has influence on the viewers, for example on viewers who are looking for product information to support their purchasing decisions (Dellarocas, 2003). Although YouTube is used by all ages, the platform is very popular among teenagers. According to a research by Defy Media (2015), 96% of the youngsters aged between 13 and 24 regularly use YouTube. They consume online videos via social media sites for an average of 11 hours a week, making it their most popular website. This popularity is reflected again in the amount of YouTubers that focus on teenagers. The influence YouTubers have on the behavior of teenagers is increasingly unprecedented. They are seen as role models and often recognized in the streets by their fans. However, outside this online world, YouTubers are just as normal as most people. Parents often do not know about the online behavior of their children and the YouTubers that children endorse. This results in confusing moments when fans enthusiastically recognize their favorite YouTuber while other people do not know who this particular YouTuber is.

A well-known Dutch beauty YouTuber explained that when she is in public, for example when visiting a shopping mall or eating at a restaurant, fans recognize her from YouTube. Full of excitement they ask to take a picture together. However, the other people walking by are confused and do not know why these young teenagers want to take pictures together. This example shows the unknown impact of social influencers on youngsters of which most adults do not even know the existence.

Although there already is research available on the influence of traditional media on youngsters, it is interesting to know what influence YouTubers have on teenagers and whether this influence is good or bad. Until this point, only little has been studied about the influence of YouTubers on teenagers. Previous research mostly concerned participatory cultures on YouTube (Mueller, 2014), reviewing platforms of which YouTube is only a part of several more platforms (e.g. Dellarocas, 2003) or the difference between YouTube and watching traditional television (e.g. Defy Media, 2015; Variety, 2014). Moreover, few studies were conducted in Europe and often limited on the US, which is why this research focuses on Western Europe with a main basis on the Netherlands. Consequently, the present research takes both the perspective of viewers and YouTubers into account and combines them within four themes. Therefore the research question of this research is as following: *'What role do YouTubers play in the life of their teenage viewers and how do YouTubers assess their own influences and experiences?'*

The aim of this research is to give an overview of the current YouTube community, including what influence Dutch YouTubers have on their teenage viewers, what this means for teenagers and to what

extent this influence on their life is good or bad. The research focuses on both the perception of teenagers and the experience of YouTubers themselves and combines both results. The research investigates what changes in behavior occur, how teenagers identify with YouTubers and how YouTubers think about their influence on teenagers. Additionally, the interviews investigate whether the life of a YouTuber really is as beautiful as it looks in their videos and whether teenagers know how real everything in their videos is.

The following four themes guide throughout the research: (1) Behavior; how teenagers behave on YouTube and what role YouTubers play in their life, (2) identification with YouTubers; how much teenagers identify with their favorite YouTubers and want to be like them, (3) influences; what influence YouTubers have on the behavior of teenagers and (4) awareness; how aware teenagers are of the influence and the commercial market behind YouTubers. First the paper starts with a theoretical framework based on previous research and literature. Second, the research design and methodology will be further elaborated, followed-up by the results. Lastly a conclusion will summarize most important findings and answer the research question.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This theoretical framework describes the rise of social media, swift to User-Generated content and the behavior of teenagers on YouTube (2.1). Paragraph 2.2 focuses on identification and describes the social cognitive theory. After that, the influence of social influencers such as YouTubers on the buying behavior will be described (2.3). Finally 2.4 focuses on the awareness of influence and the responsibilities YouTubers have regarding their teenage viewers.

2.1. Teenagers' behavior on social media

The World Wide Web has changed over the past few years. Whereas YouTube was new to most internet users a few years ago, it has now become part of many daily lives. This paragraph describes the rise of social media, the swift to User-Generated Content and the behavior of teenagers on social media.

Two related concepts that are frequently used describing social media, are Web 2.0 and User-Generated Content (UGC). The term Web 2.0 has been used since 2004 and describes a new way in which software developers and end-users collaborate. Content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011, p.61). Examples are blogs and wikis.

The term UGC has been used since 2005 and refers to all the various media content created or produced by the general public, excluding paid professionals as explained by Daugherty, Eastin and Bright (2008). According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2007, p.9) UGC has three basic requirements: first it needs to be published on accessible websites like social networking sites. This excludes messages that are not available to the public, for example messages sent via email or WhatsApp. Second it needs to show creativity, meaning simply posting a copy of existing content like articles without modifications is not considered as UGC. Lastly UGC needs to be created without professional involvement, excluding content that has been created with a commercial market context in mind (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011, p.61).

At present, there is a new era of the web, called Web 3.0. Whereas Web 2.0 is described as a medium for human communication, web 3.0 is described as networked digital technology that supports the human cooperation. Web 3.0 integrates users' generated data to create new meaning (Fuchs et al., 2010; Harris, 2008; Tasner, 2010; Watson, 2009). The web will be able to understand content and elaborate on that. An example is the combination of information with which relevant suggestions can be offered to the user. According to Smith (2009, p. 559) the shift towards user-driven technologies enabled a revolution. He states that this revolution in terms of UGC, global community and the publications of consumer opinions is now referred to as social media.

Taking the features and similar concepts of Web 2.0, Web 3.0 and UGC into consideration, social media can be described as 'mobile and web-based technologies that create highly interactive platforms, via which users can share, discuss, modify and co-create content' (Kietzmann et al., 2011). This perfectly describes what is happening on YouTube.

Teenagers nowadays are raised in the era of smartphones and do not remember a time before social media. They are called Generation Z and defined with birth years ranging from the late 1990s through the 2010s (Tulgan, 2013). Millennials are watching fewer traditional TV shows and consume more digital content from sites like YouTube than ever. According to a new report from Defy Media on the viewing habits of 13-24-year-olds (2015), 96% of that age group spends an average of 11 hours a week on watching online video via social media sites. Younger viewers are more likely to identify with YouTubers than with traditional TV and movie stars. 59% of 13-year-olds follow YouTubers on social media versus only 32% following TV and movie stars. According to a study by Variety Magazine (2014), six out of ten influencers for 13-18-year-olds are YouTubers. Teenagers find YouTube influencers more relatable than traditional celebrities (Defy media, 2015) and identify themselves more with YouTubers than with traditional celebrities.

2.2. Teenagers' identification with YouTubers

Nowadays, the new generation of social influencers can be found online. This paragraph describes the difference between traditional influencers and YouTubers, why teenagers identify with YouTubers and the social cognitive theory that explains this phenomenon.

Although YouTubers can be compared with celebrities in traditional media, there are appealing aspects that make YouTube celebrities even more popular and admired than their Hollywood variety. According to several studies among American teenagers, relatability and attainability are two of the biggest reasons teenagers are impacted by YouTubers (Defy Media, 2015; The Intelligence Group's Cassandra report, 2013, as cited in Adweek; Variety, 2014). Teenagers feel more related to YouTubers, because they are perceived as equal. They are 'just' average kids

creating unique content on the Internet and can be the boy or girl living next door or a kid from the same school. Attention is gained for their personalities, unique talents and creativity, which teenagers strive to achieve. They started from the bottom and grew follower by follower. The intimate stories about personal lives make them seem approachable and trustworthy. According to a study by Variety (2014), not many teenagers can relate to the lifestyle of Hollywood celebrities like Jennifer Lawrence and Justin Bieber or the amount of money they earn. YouTubers that are swallowed by Hollywood are in danger of becoming less authentic versions of themselves. Teenagers will notice this right away.

YouTubers are often about the same age as their audience. For them it is easier to create content that fits the current frame of reference of teenagers. People tend to copy behavior of people they like, or share the same behavioral style (Bentley, Earls & O'Brien, 2011). According to researchers of the Stony Brook University (2015), behaviors and beliefs are more contagious among those with shared social connections. Imitating others leads to social benefits, like bonding together on social groups.

YouTubers are seen as authentic when reviewing a product or brand (Influencer Marketing, 2012). Followers believe that recommendations or discouragements are honest. Information in consumer reviews that is not originated by the company or brand is seen as more credible than marketer-sponsored information. In order to look more honest and transparent to the followers, YouTubers label their promoted messages and videos with special hashtags like #spon, meaning the content or product is sponsored. This way YouTubers save their own face of being transparent and authentic. In some countries the Advertising Standards Authority rules that YouTubers have to add labels to their paid advertisements (The Guardian, 2014). By adding #sponsored hashtags, viewers can prepare themselves that the following message contains information for which is paid.

Lastly, YouTubers who are active on social media can easily interact with their audience. In a study conducted by Sehdev (2014), YouTubers were judged to be more engaging and extraordinary. For example, one of the most famous YouTuber called PewDiePie has an endearing attitude towards his fans. He interacts on social media and lovingly refers to his subscribers as 'bros' (Marrs, 2015). Personal interaction makes the YouTuber more beloved and sympathetic. The reach and impact of eWOM networks such as YouTube has expanded enormously (Dellarocas, 2003) and with the possibilities of social media it is easier than ever to become a YouTuber.

A theory that emphasizes learning from social environment is the social cognitive theory by Miller and Dollard (1941). This theory focuses on learning by observing others that occurs within a social context (Hurst, 2016). In 1977, Bandura expanded the proposition of social learning. His famous Bobo doll experiment showed when and why children display aggressive behaviors and demonstrated the value of modeling for novel behaviors (Evans & Bandura, 1989). The theory is applied in many different areas like mass media and marketing. The use of celebrities, such as YouTubers, to endorse and introduce products to certain demographics is an example of the application of this theory, because they illustrate the influence the media possesses in shaping audience behaviors and actions (Pal, 2011).

People learn by observing others, also called models, which demonstrate behavior (Bandura, 1986). There are different types of models from which teenagers can learn behavior. The first are live models, which are individuals from whom we observe behavior in real life. Examples are parents and teachers. There are also symbolic models, which are real or fictional characters from books, movies and other media like YouTube. Teenagers are surrounded by many influential models and encode their behavior (McLeod, 2016). Copying behavior from models like YouTubers is more likely to happen when people perceive themselves similar to the model (McLeod, 2016). Consequently, behavior is more likely to be imitated from models of the same sex. Also reinforcements and punishments from the environment determine if someone will continue performing the behavior.

People identify with models and adopt their behaviors, values, beliefs and attitudes (Bandura, 1986). Identification is not the same as imitation, as imitation usually means copying a single behavior and identification involves a number of behaviors being adopted (McLeod, 2016). If a YouTuber possesses qualities that teenagers adore, it is more likely that teenagers identify with them and thus copy behavior.

According to the theory, learning most likely occurs when teenagers have a good self-efficacy, which is the belief someone has in their own ability to complete tasks and reach goals (Ormrod, 2006). Self-efficacy has influence on the motivation, affect and action (Bandura, 1989). People with high self-efficacy are more likely to believe they can solve problems. Low-efficacy often means people are less confident and believe they can't perform well and therefore avoid challenging tasks. Also, the theory states that learning depends on whether there is a close identification with the model or not.

Teenagers must understand the potential outcomes of repeating behavior. 'An outcome expectance is the person's estimate that a given behavior will lead to certain outcomes' (Bandura,

1977, p.193). They do not expect the exact same outcomes as the model, they do expect similar outcomes when imitating behavior. Expectancies are influenced by the environment that teenagers grow up in (Pal, 2011).

2.3. Influence of YouTubers on teenagers' behavior

Social influencers like YouTubers are used to spread messages rapidly among their large-scale networks of loyal followers against relatively low costs. This paragraph will explain the use YouTubers in marketing and the influence YouTubers have on teenagers' behavior.

In the decision making process, consumers tend to copy others. Influencer marketing is a variant of marketing that focuses on the decision-making process (Brown & Hayes, 2008, p. 32). Before Web 2.0, consumers based their purchasing decisions on professional advice and advertisements (Dellarocas, 2003). Nowadays, personal opinions and experiences have become one of the most valuable sources of information to assist users in their purchase decision-making process (Chua & Banerjee, 2015; Dellarocas, 2003). Purchasing decisions are often based on online reviews (Dellarocas, 2003). Before buying expensive make up or a new camera, consumers search the internet for reviews and experiences, making YouTube a perfect place to promote products, brands and services against relatively low costs.

However, there is so much content available online that it causes a limit to attention. Western societies currently live in a network society in which individuals are exposed to a high level of information exchange and changing activities (van Dijk, 2006). In this network everyone is able to connect and communicate to each other. With the overload of information and communication it is not possible to read everything on the Internet and users have to make a selection of what to read or what to ignore. Users only read the things they want to know, also called superficial scanning, or only read what they are interested in, called selective perception. Organizations have to take the limited attention into account when communicating online. Content has to be unique and must be of value for its audience in order to be read, and shared.

A way in which organizations and brands can draw attention is by making use of social influencers, also called celebrity endorsement. Traditional sales barriers are minimized by involving people with a high level of influence over potential buyers. According to McCracken (1989), celebrity endorsement occurs when individuals with high public recognition use this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement (p.310).

Nowadays customers are becoming more educated, sophisticated and selective and the competition is becoming more intense. Consumers want to improve their self-image by choosing brands which have relevant meanings to their self-concept (Ghani & Kakakhel, 2011). Celebrities like YouTubers, singers, movie actors, famous athletes and professionals are used in advertisements to influence consumers' brand choice behavior. YouTubers are mainly used to create awareness and signal benefits to others within their social network. They are influential in encouraging trial and adoption of new products and services (Subramani & Rajagopalan, 2003).

YouTubers are typically successful because of their expertise, popularity and reputation (Influencer Marketing, 2012). Companies create marketing activities around these influencers to increase sales. Now that influencer marketing and WOM also take place online (eWOM), messages can be spread on larger scales with lower costs (Dellarocas, 2003). YouTubers are asked to try out services or products and make articles and reviews of it. Reviews include product information based on personal experience. Based on this experience the YouTuber can recommend or discourage viewers from purchasing. Next to free items, financial compensation can be offered in exchange for a review. Although the YouTuber gets free items or financial compensation, the viewers see reviews made by YouTubers as true and authentic.

Next to buying behavior, YouTubers have other kinds of influence on the behavior of teenagers. Teenagers copy the behavior of YouTubers they see in videos, such as language, clothing and actions. Especially among younger viewers swearing could be a problem. YouTubers are often older than the average viewer and do not mind cursing and swearing. This frustrates parents whose young children copy the bad language. Examples in which YouTubers swear a lot are videos about the popular game Minecraft. Minecraft is a game in which players battle monsters and build houses using bricks that look like Lego. Minecraft is very popular among children in elementary schools who watch Minecraft videos on YouTube for advice and game play strategies. Online many parents seek for advice about their young children watching videos on YouTube and copying the bad language. Websites and platforms have created top ten lists with Minecraft YouTubers that are most child friendly and do not swear in their videos (e.g. thetoptens, brightpips, commonsensemedia, autcraft).

2.4. Awareness of teenagers

Children do not have the ability to distinguish advertisements from reality. As a result, young children are often deceived into believing something that is false (Moore & Lutz, 2000). As YouTubers have a young audience, they have to be careful with their influence and content. This paragraph describes the unawareness of children and responsibilities of YouTubers concerning the influence they have.

Media awareness is described as the 'understanding of the different methods for presenting information in newspapers, on television and on the internet and of the possible uses and dangers of these methods' (Cambridge University Press, 2016). Children lack a lot of knowledge to make wise decisions. According to a report published by the Dutch Ministry of Health and Consumers Association (2016), children are negatively influenced by some videos that result in eating too much unhealthy food. They do not have the ability to distinguish advertisements from reality. Young children are often deceived into believing something that is false. Older children on the other hand are more able to know that advertisements are not always true and therefore are more skeptical to the messages that are shown (Moore & Lutz, 2000).

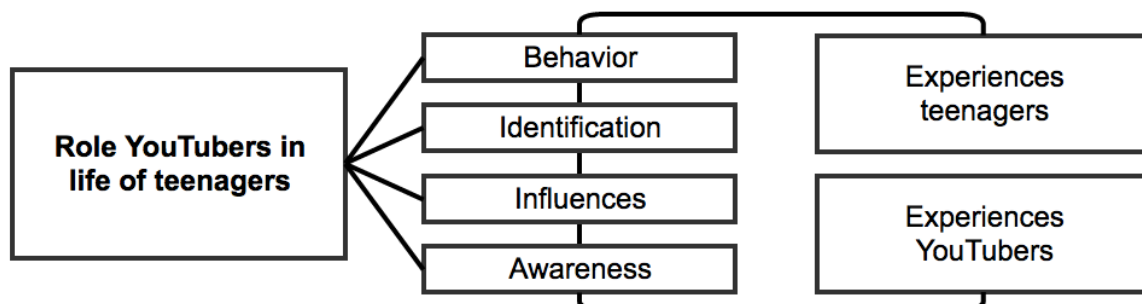
In the Netherlands, there are no laws about advertisements that focus on young children. However, an alliance called Stop Child Marketing has set up a code of conduct that companies must adhere to. Celebrities are not allowed to promote unhealthy food if 25 percent of the target audience is younger than 14 years old, as most children of these ages are more innocent and lack a lot of knowledge to make wise decisions (NOS, 2016). Till now, these restrictions only apply to traditional media. Although YouTubers are seen as celebrities, there are no rules and restrictions yet about what YouTubers might do and say in their videos, as it is hard to measure the actual age of the viewers on YouTube. The Consumers Association believes that the code is not conducted well and that the compliance is inadequate. Videos about unhealthy food are becoming a big phenomenon in the world of YouTubers (NOS, 2016). As most teenagers like exclusive food and candy, this is a popular subject to make videos about. In their videos, YouTubers eat candy in front of the camera and try out exclusive candy that can only be bought abroad. Other popular videos are the so-called do-it-yourself tutorials, in which YouTubers explain how teenagers can make special treats themselves. Younger viewers do not know that most of the time YouTubers are asked to promote the candy brands they are showing, in exchange for free goods or compensations. Since January 2016 the Dutch government has started interfering in this kind of advertisement videos and blogs by putting YouTubers as a topic on the political agenda.

2.5. Conceptual framework

To summarise, it can be concluded that teenagers grow up in an era of smartphones. On social media they can share, discuss, modify and create content, what is exactly happening on YouTube. Teenagers spend about 11 hours a week watching videos and identifying themselves more with YouTube celebrities than their Hollywood versions. They have more in common and perceive themselves as equal. Companies use YouTubers to promote products among their loyal followers. Teenagers however do not have the ability to distinguish advertisements from reality and can easily be persuaded.

Until this point, only little has been studied about the influence of YouTubers on teenagers. Previous research mostly concerned participatory cultures on YouTube (Mueller, 2014), YouTube as reviewing platform (e.g. Dellarocas, 2003) or the difference between YouTube and watching traditional television (e.g. Defy Media, 2015; Variety, 2014). It is interesting to know what role YouTubers play in the life of teenagers and whether their influence is good or bad. Consequently, the present research takes both the perspective of teenagers and YouTubers into account. Four themes can be distinguished from the theory: (1) behavior, (2) identification, (3) influences, (4) awareness. These themes will be used throughout this research.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Design

In order to investigate the stated research question, this study has a qualitative study approach. Since the research objective is primarily exploratory in nature, a semi-structured interviewing technique was chosen. A semi-structured interview consists of several key questions focusing on specific areas, but also allows the interviewer to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail (Britten, 1999). It provides participants some guidance on what to talk about, which might be helpful for young teenagers talking about a broad subject as YouTube. This approach is more flexible than structured interviews and allows discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have been thought of by the researcher. Qualitative methods such as interviews provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from quantitative methods such as questionnaires (Silverman, 2000). Interviews are therefore most appropriate where little is known about the study phenomenon or where detailed insights are required from individual participants (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008). Interviews were used to explore views, experiences, beliefs and motivations from both the teenage viewers and the YouTubers. Given the time allowed for this study and restricted access to YouTube participants, the majority of the data consisted of a sample of 16 in-depth interviews with 20 teenagers in total and 4 in-depth interviews with 4 YouTubers in total. The results of the interviews are kept anonymously.

3.2. Participants

The study was conducted in 2016 and focused on two groups: Dutch YouTubers and their teenage viewers. 16 interviews were held among 20 Dutch teenagers aged between 10 and 18 years old who follow YouTubers. This age range was chosen based on previous research focusing on youngsters and social media (e.g. Childwise, 2016; Stichting Kennisnet, 2015). Also, despite the age requirements of social networks, most teenagers are already active on social media starting at the age of 10 (BBC Newsround, 2016). The gender distribution was 12 girls (60%) and 8 boys (40%). All interviews took place face to face and 4 out of 16 interviews were in pairs. Convenience sampling was applied for the selection of participants. The network of the researcher was used to invite teenagers. Also teenagers who posted tweets or comments on YouTube were invited via personal messages on social media.

Four interviews were held among Dutch YouTubers who were invited by convenience sampling. The network of the researcher was used to invite YouTubers as it was hard to arrange interviews with popular YouTubers without having a connection. During the invitation process, a quota was taken into account: years of experience and target audiences of the YouTubers. Two YouTubers started their YouTube channel one year ago and two YouTubers had at least four years of experience. They focused on different kinds of content. One YouTuber focused on lifestyle, beauty and fashion, one focused on lifestyle and two focused on entertainment. The lifestyle, beauty and fashion YouTuber mainly had female followers and the other three YouTubers had both male and female followers. Their ages varied from 16 to 22.

3.3. Procedure

All participants were interviewed face-by-face. The interview questions focused on four themes: (1) behavior, (2) identification, (3) influences and (4) awareness. First the behavior was measured to see how active teenagers are on YouTube. Questions focused on the amount of time spent on YouTube, most favorite YouTubers, if they visit YouTube events, follow fan accounts or maybe even own one themselves and if they have merchandise. After asking how teenagers behave on YouTube, questions focused on identification with the YouTubers. They were asked what attracts them to watch YouTube videos, why they follow YouTubers, what they have learnt from their favorite YouTubers, how important YouTubers are and if they want to become a YouTuber themselves. After asking questions to see how much teenagers identify themselves with YouTubers, questions focused on the changes in behavior. Teenagers were asked if they have ever bought products based on recommendations of YouTubers, if they have listened to advice given by YouTubers, if they postpone homework or have less sleep because they watch videos, if they have spent too much money because of YouTubers and what the environment says about their behavior on YouTube. Lastly questions focused on awareness. Teenagers were shown a screenshot in which YouTubers promoted products, charities or merchandise. They were asked how they behave when they see these kinds of messages, what they think the goal of the message is and whether they would buy or do it. The messages used for this question can be found in appendix D. Also, teenagers were asked if YouTubers have influence on

their buying behavior, if they think YouTubers make use of all the stuff they promote in videos, if YouTubers give their honest opinions about products, if YouTubers earn a lot of money with their videos, if the teenagers are aware that many content is sponsored and how they think about hidden promoted content. A list of all interview questions can be found in appendix A.

The same themes and types of questions are asked to YouTubers. First the questions focused on behavior, like how YouTubers combine their work with other duties such as school, the differences between now and when they started, whether they behave the same online as in real life and what they take into account when making videos. The second theme, identification, focused on how they think about teenagers copying their behavior, if they are aware of this and what hidden aspects there are behind the videos that viewers do not see. The third theme, Influences, contained questions like if they notice any influence on teenagers, if they keep opinions to themselves taking the viewers into account and how they think about sponsored content and ethical matters such as alcohol and language. The last set of questions focused on awareness, like what they have noticed of teenagers being aware of the world behind YouTube, if they really use products they promote in their videos, how they think about sponsored content, how much work they have making videos and finally if they recommend being a YouTuber and the life they have. A list of all interview questions can be found in appendix B. Most questions were derived from previous research on the influence of TV characters. A list of research questions based on previous research can be found in appendix C.

3.4. Data analysis

Data from the interviews was thematically analyzed and coded. Thematic analysis identifies, analyzes and reports patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006) through the process of systematic observation and categorization (Mills, 2010). The thematic analysis process was divided into three phases: (1) open coding, (2) axial coding, and (3) selective coding. By following these three phases, relevant themes are identified and described in an organized progression. Limitations such as selective bias during the process of constructing thematic categories were minimized by collecting sufficient data based on themes across the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and using a second coder. A lot of discussion and consultations were needed to reach agreement of the codebook. Cohen's Kappa was calculated after coding the first interview with teenagers and ended up to be 0.889. The same codebook was used as a base for the codebook of YouTubers. However, some items were changed, deleted or added to make it more compatible. The codebook of YouTubers reached a Cohen's Kappa of 0.832.

Table 1: Method design of this study

Teenagers	Semi-structured interviews	YouTubers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time on YouTube - Follow or own fan accounts - Active in fan chats - Visit YouTube events - Own merchandise 	Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Combining YouTube with school - Difference starting phase and now - Behavior YouTube versus real life - Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attractiveness YouTube(rs) - Role YouTubers in their life - Learnt from YouTubers - Become YouTubers themselves 	Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Copy behavior of teenagers - Awareness copy behavior - Examples copy behavior - Advice teenagers becoming YouTubers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buy products based on YouTubers - Listen to advice - Influence on homework, sleep, money - Environment about influence 	Influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examples influence on teenagers - Opinions not shared - Avoided topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognize sponsored content - Honesty of YouTubers - Do teenagers know how much work - Money YouTubers earn 	Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use sponsored content - Honesty in their advertisements - Workload of YouTubers - Do they think teenagers are aware

4. RESULTS

Following the theory, four themes were used throughout this research: (1) behavior, (2) identification, (3) influences, (4) awareness. The results of interviews with YouTubers were combined with the expectations of teenagers which resulted in an interesting overview of what teenagers think about YouTubers and how YouTubers actually experience it.

4.1. Behavior

First the behavior was measured to see how active teenagers are on YouTube. Questions were focusing on the amount of time spend on YouTube, if they visit YouTube events, bought merchandise, follow fan accounts or maybe even own one themselves. These questions show how active teenagers follow YouTubers.

Most teenagers watch YouTube videos every day. YouTube has become part of their daily routines. What helps here is the fixed times YouTubers use to upload their videos. Teenagers know exactly when they can expect new videos from their favorite YouTubers. YouTuber's upload frequencies vary from weekly to even twice a day. Most teenagers watch videos immediately after school or later in the evening. On weekends they spend more time on YouTube than on weekdays.

R1: I watch videos every day. Especially videos from YouTubers who upload every day on fixed times. I try to watch immediately when it is uploaded. If I do not have time, I will watch it later. I know the upload times of my favorite YouTubers exactly. Enzo Knol uploads every day at 4 PM and 7 PM.

R8: I watch YouTube several times a day. I am slightly addicted. When my mother calls for dinner, I can stop if I really have to, although I sometimes want to finish the video first.

YouTuber 3: We try to post videos on fixed days and times. First we uploaded at 9pm, but as we have many young viewers who already have to be in bed at that time, we changed it to 7pm.

Teenagers watch more YouTube than TV. TV is used less and in some cases only for watching football and family shows on Friday night, like The Voice of Holland. Also, when asked if they are bigger fans of YouTubers or traditional celebrities, almost everyone responded to be more fond of YouTubers. Nowadays most teenagers grow up with YouTubers and know more YouTubers than other Dutch celebrities.

R16: I think YouTubers are more personal, so I find them more fun to watch. I have the feeling that we have more in common.

R20: I sure am more fan of YouTubers. Some YouTubers are already more famous than famous celebrities.

Teenagers can stay in contact with their favorite YouTubers by leaving comments and sending private messages. However, not all messages are positive. Teenagers sometimes send hate, threats or very personal information. One YouTuber said he often gets messages from teenagers saying they have cancer, a friend who is dying or they lost somebody recently and therefore ask him to record a personal message. For YouTubers it is impossible to answer all messages, as the amount of messages is too much. Some teenagers even lie to get in touch with him. They pretend being sick to get attention from the YouTuber.

YouTuber 1: I completely understand that viewers send me messages, but I also find it annoying because they send very personal things. I get a lot of negative load and sometimes it is hard to deal with this.

Where fans of traditional celebrities probably only meet their idols at concerts, and do not even get the chance to talk to them, teenagers can meet all their favorite YouTubers in one place. Several times a year big YouTube events are organized in for example Utrecht and Amsterdam where many YouTubers gather to meet and take pictures with fans. Even all-day security service is available to ensure the safety of YouTubers. At these events fans sometimes have to wait hours in line before they

can meet their favorite YouTuber. About 10 percent of the teenagers have visited events in the past and most teenagers said they want to visit an event soon. Especially younger teenagers want to visit these meetings, but say their parents do not allow them to go alone. Boys aged 14 and over were less interested in going to events.

R1: My friends and I really want to go to a fan meeting of Enzo Knol, but most of the time his events are immediately sold out. Ticket sales are announced in his videos. I am afraid that I watch one of his video too late and that all tickets are already sold out. That is why I turned on the notifications for his videos so that I can immediately check his new videos.

Especially younger teenagers talk to friends about the videos they watch and YouTubers they follow. They talk about videos they have seen the day before, events that are organized or new YouTubers they follow. Teenagers aged 14 and older say they do not talk much with friends about YouTubers. 15 percent of the teenagers are so caught up in the YouTube community, that they join fan chats on Instagram and Whatsapp. Fan chats are created to chat about a specific YouTuber with other fans from all over the country. Although they do not know each other, these fan chats often result in new friendships. At YouTube events many of these teenagers meet each other for the first time in real person.

R5: I talk to my friends about YouTubers. We give each other advice on which YouTuber to follow. Sometimes we watch videos together.

R16: I am in two fan chats. One group is with people who I met online. They have become real friends as we Skype almost every day and sometimes meet in real life. The other group is with over 80 people whom I do not know. Both groups are focused on a YouTuber called Dutchtuber.

The same fifteen percent follow and own fan accounts. On social media teenagers with a passion for the same YouTubers create and follow so-called fan accounts. On these fan accounts teenagers share pictures of their favorite YouTubers, video screenshots, fan-edits where they combine several pictures, birthday wishes and other information related to the specific YouTuber. Teenagers collaborate and combine their skills to become a popular fan account. The other teenagers stated they only follow YouTubers on social media and not any fan accounts.

R2: My friend and I own a fan account together, which is really nice. We created it in October 2015. We discuss what we want to post and collaborate with others to create edits for each other. This way we got in touch with other fans.

R20: I follow fan accounts on Instagram. I used to have one myself but I turned that one into my private account.

Half of the teenagers own merchandise of their favorite YouTubers, like a book, sweater or cap. The other half state they do not have it but would like to have something from their favorite YouTuber. YouTubers have merchandise to increase revenue, but also to meet the desires of fans that want to possess something from their favorite YouTuber. Some teenagers wear sweaters or caps with the name of their favorite YouTuber to school.

R5: YouTuber Dylan Haegens launched his own school line with agendas, t-shirts and other stuff. Maybe I will buy them for school.

YouTuber 1: People are more likely to buy stuff from YouTubers. Fans are really happy when they have something of you in their possession.

Most teenagers do now know what their parents think about their behavior on YouTube, because they never talk about it. Parents do not know much about the online activities of their child. Teenagers say their parents often complain about spending too much time online.

R9: I often watch videos in my room so my parents do not really notice it. They do not like that I sit upstairs all the time. My parents think I am spending too much money on merchandise. I always ask their permission first before buying it. My friends sometimes say I

talk too much about YouTubers. When they say this, I stop talking about it. But they also enjoy my advice about which YouTubers to follow.

R5: My parents often say: 'put that phone away'. One time I used too much data so since that day they watch my data usage more careful. My sister sometimes complains about the noise, so I have to use headphones then.

R1: My parents often watch videos together with me because they like them too. Even my grandma loves to watch videos with me. She often asks: 'when will there be a new vlog online?'. When I visit my grandma, we watch videos together.

Conclusion

The results about behavior on YouTube show that YouTube has replaced TV and is part of the daily routines of teenagers. They watch videos every day, talk to their friends about YouTubers, join friends chats with other fans, own or follow fan accounts, send personal messages to their favorite YouTubers, wear merchandise and go to fan meetings. Although it is such a big part of their lives, many parents are not aware of this community on Youtube and do not know what their children do online.

4.2. Identification

Identification was measured to get an idea how much teenagers identify with YouTubers and how close they feel. They were asked what attracts them to watch YouTube videos, why they follow YouTubers, how important YouTubers are and if they want to do the same things as their favorite YouTubers or maybe even become YouTubers themselves. YouTubers were asked how they think about teenagers wanting to become a YouTuber like them.

Teenagers like YouTube because they have access to any content they like. They can watch whatever they want at any moment. Most teenagers say they use YouTube for entertainment. They like to watch qualitative videos that are funny and creative. They also use YouTube for information and watch videos for advice about products, personal matters or opinions. Many teenagers also say they get inspiration from YouTube. Examples are videos that show how to put on special make-up, pimp school stuff, tactics for playing Minecraft or so-called do-it-yourselfers.

R16: I like YouTube because I can decide what to watch whenever I want. I choose the videos that I like. Also, YouTubers have more interaction with their viewers. That is why I almost do not watch TV anymore.

R1: I use YouTube to search information about products. OnneDi is a YouTuber that tests all kinds of toys. Thanks to her we know when we need to buy things or not.

R2: I like to follow Enzo Knol. In his vlogs he shows his daily life. Sometimes fun things and sometimes bad things. They really show their true selves.

R6: I watch YouTube videos out of boredom. And amusement. I also like to watch make-up tutorials for new tips and tricks.

Teenagers do not immediately notice they have similarities with YouTubers other than age and hobbies like playing games, singing or practicing the same sports. However, there are some unconscious similarities that result in a connection with YouTubers. This could be living in the same country or city, going to the same school or both having divorced parents. They do associate themselves more with YouTubers than traditional celebrities. They perceive YouTubers as normal as any other teenager who earned fame in a way that everybody could do.

R20: What brings me together with YouTubers is the fact that even my 'normal next-door' friends can become famous YouTubers. Literally everybody can do it. This way I identify more with them. I have been following English YouTubers for a while, but I did not like them, because I just had no connection with them. If I send messages to Dutch YouTubers, I often get a reply. I have met all my favorite YouTubers in real life at local fan meetings.

YouTubers play an important role in the lives of teenagers. Especially girls say they could not imagine a life without YouTubers and their videos. Most boys said they could live without YouTubers, but that they would miss something in their lives. They see YouTubers as a means to fill in a time gap. Almost all teenagers said they immediately check what YouTube videos they have missed when coming back from holiday. Some teenagers even admit they have an addiction for YouTube.

R7: They are important to me, because without them I would not know what to do all day.

R8: Hard to explain. I see them as entertainment, I can live without them. But if I come back from holiday, the first thing I do is open YouTube and check out the videos I have missed.

R10: They are not indispensable, but it would be a pity if I cannot watch YouTube anymore.

Many teenagers would love to do what YouTubers do. Going to exclusive parties, launches, making trips abroad, getting free clothes and items. Teenagers believe that everyone who really wants to can become a YouTuber. They do not know the amount of work that is needed to become successful. They state that all you need is access on a camera, for example on a phone. A few teenagers already created a YouTube channel on which they upload videos. However, despite most teenagers would love to do all these things, they state that they will not create a channel anytime soon. Some

teenagers say they do not like to upload videos all the time, feel pressure from fans or even get stalked by fans at their own house. Teenagers under than 14 often say their parents do not allow it. Parents are worried about the fact that the whole world can see them and that their kids will get bullied.

R2: Sometimes I would like to become a YouTuber myself. I would love to have fans that love me, being famous is fun. My parents do not allow me to create a YouTube channel. They say the whole world can see me and are afraid people will bully me.

R8: I would love to do what they do, but I do not want to be a YouTuber myself. I do not like the pressure to upload videos every day or otherwise have to deal with angry fans.

R12: I want to be a YouTuber and I have my own YouTube channel. I upload a few times a week. Sometimes I make videos with friends. For example when we go swimming or shopping. Not at school because we are not allowed to use our phones there.

YouTubers recognize that a lot of teenagers want to be like them and start their own YouTube channels. However, many of these new channels do not last long. Teenagers do not know the amount of work and do not upload regularly. Often the quality of their videos is not as good as viewers demand. It is hard to grow and gain subscribers; only a few channels really succeed and make it to the top. YouTubers discourage teenagers who create a YouTube channel because of the fame and money. They do however recommend teenagers to start a channel if they truly love making videos and see it a hobby.

YouTuber 4: Many people start a YouTube channel only because they think it is easy money. Money should not be the motivation; it should be a passion that starts as a hobby. All famous Dutch YouTubers started YouTube as a hobby that got out of hand. If you really like it, go for it. I also started making movies because I liked to do it. If you want to do it because of something else, do not do it. The most important part is that you really like to do it. I sincerely believe that this can be seen back in your videos."

YouTuber 1: Many starters are not that serious. It is a nice hobby, but uploading once a month will not bring you further. I like that YouTube is accessible for everyone, even for young children just playing around and making movies with friends. But if you want to become a bigger YouTuber, you need to show dedication. I recommend it, but make sure to be secure. Know that YouTubers are always working; it is not like a regular job that you go home and do not have to think about it anymore. Of course turning your hobby into your work is the best thing you can do, but not everything is as nice as it seems. People think it is easy, but it takes a lot of energy. If you are really passionate about it, then do it. I enjoy it every day and cannot imagine a life without YouTube."

YouTuber 3: I would recommend it. It really is fun to do. If you only do it for the money, fame and attention, I would advise not to do it. It takes so much time to grow. But if you really like it and just want to make videos because it is your hobby, it is a great opportunity. You will meet a lot of new people with the same ambition and you will do things of which you have never dreamed of."

YouTuber 2: I would stimulate teenagers to do it. But make sure you know why you would do it. Do not start a YouTube channel to make it your job. Because the chance is small that you will really become that big. If you only do it for the money, viewers will notice it right away.

Conclusion

The results about identification show that teenagers like YouTube because they can watch whatever they want at any given time. Many teenagers cannot imagine a life without YouTubers. Teenagers perceive YouTubers as normal as any other teenager who earned fame in a way that everybody could do. They do not know the amount of work that is needed to become successful. Teenagers want to do the same things as YouTubers and start YouTube channels themselves. YouTubers however warn that teenagers should only start a channel if they really like to make videos and not because they want to make money with YouTube.

4.3. Influences on behavior

Influences are measured to see what influence YouTubers have on the behavior of teenagers, like their buying behavior, sleep behavior, homework and level of English. Teenagers were asked if they have ever bought products because of YouTubers, if they have listened to advice given by YouTubers and what the environment says about their behavior on YouTube. YouTubers were asked if they notice any influence on teenagers, if they keep advice and opinions for themselves taking the viewers into account and what they take into account when making content.

When asked what teenagers have learnt from YouTubers, the most mentioned answer was 'English'. Many teenagers watch English videos regularly or even daily because they follow English-speaking YouTubers. This has a positive influence on their level of English.

R12: I taught myself English via YouTube, because I follow many English YouTubers.

Next to English, teenagers learn practical tips and tricks they can use in daily life. They get inspired and copy styles and behaviors of YouTubers, often unconscious, like clothing, fillers, humor or opinions. Some teenagers state that YouTubers have a positive influence on their mood and wellbeing. They learn to be positive and how to deal with problems like bullying, depressions or parents who divorce.

R20: YouTubers influence me with their opinions. I am interested in what older YouTubers have to say about things. It helps me to figure out what my own thoughts and opinions are.

R7: Many YouTubers say you always have to be yourself. I think that is important. I try to do that more since I hear YouTubers say that all the time. And I also use their advice on practical things like how to decorate school stuff.

R9: I often feel down and get negative feelings. From YouTuber Enzo Knol I learnt to stay positive, he is always happy in his videos and his positivity affects me.

R19: Sometimes Enzo Knol talks about divorced parents. How he feels about it and how he deals with that. I have the same issues and I can learn from him how to handle the situation.

Almost all teenagers state YouTube does not negatively influence their homework. They do not postpone homework because they watch too many videos. The ones that do say they spend too much time on YouTube, said they would otherwise spend it on something else, like watching TV or Netflix. Also, teenagers do not think YouTubers influence their (lack of) sleep. Although teenagers do watch videos in bed, they online stay up late to watch videos on weekends.

R1: No I first do my homework. If I have enough time left, I watch YouTube videos. Except if it really is an important video.

R4: Sometimes I combine doing homework with watching videos. But I do not postpone my homework because of YouTube. I am not that addicted.

R20: I often postponed homework because I spent too much time on YouTube. But I think everyone has that problem, my friends postpone homework because they watch series or are active on Facebook for example. An advantage of YouTube is that it has short videos, like maximum 15 minutes. I have problems with my concentration so short movies are better for me. I first watch a short movie and then do my homework.

YouTubers notice they have influence on the behavior of teenagers. They say teenagers imitate behavior, like special hand signs, jokes, way of talking, fillers, jokes and irony. Also some teenagers (want to) wear the same clothes. Most influence YouTubers have on teenagers' behavior is innocent. Sometimes however YouTubers perform actions in their videos that are against the rules. Teenagers think it is funny or cool and copy this bad behavior, which can get them in trouble.

YouTuber 1: I always make a V with my fingers and teenagers copy my hand sign. I never told them to do that, but when I do it, they copy me. I like this actually. I also have the feeling

that people sometimes imitate my humor. That they make jokes of which they know I would like it. They use my style of jokes.

YouTuber 4: One day I was at a fan event and one girl looked exactly like me. She wore the same top and skirt as me in one of my videos. Also on Instagram many teenagers try to take the same kind of pictures and use the same effects as me. They create almost the same feed. I find it hard to believe, but I do not think much about my influence. Actually it is very sweet, I like to inspire people and I see it as a compliment that they copy me.

YouTuber 3: One time we made a video about putting soap in a fountain. There was foam everywhere. Two weeks later we received about 20 messages from people saying they did the same after watching our video. We always warn them and say 'do not try this yourself because we do not want you to get in trouble'. However, it is their own choice and if they want to copy us, it is not our responsibility.

YouTuber 4: I find it hard to realize that I play such an important role in lives of teenagers. I do not think about it a lot, I just do my thing. But I like that people see me as their role model, it is a compliment.

Teenagers often ask YouTubers for advice. YouTubers find it hard to realize that they have so much influence and can actually control the lives of teenagers. Questions vary from personal matters, health and issues to study advice, clothing and trips. Teenagers attach much value to the answers and statements of YouTubers, with which YouTubers have to be careful. Therefore they try to avoid sensitive subjects like religion, sexuality and politics as this often leads to discussions. Also, many YouTubers take the age of their viewers into account in terms of good example behavior. They minimize the use of drugs and alcohol in their videos and do not actively promote it.

YouTuber 1: Many teenagers ask me for advice about high schools in the USA. I made a video about my college year and since that movie I receive a lot of questions and messages saying: 'hey, next year I am going to a high school in the USA thanks to you and your video!'. Those messages make me realize how much influence we have and how we actually influence the lives of teenagers. I think it is amazing. On the other hand, I think it is weird that teenagers ask very personal questions and spotlessly take over what YouTubers say. People ask me what organization they should use to book a high school year in the USA. I do not reply those questions because there are so many different organizations. In the end it all depends on the family you are placed at. An organization does not control how great your year will be. I feel responsible because teenagers make a choice based on my experiences. So I watch what I say and do not mention organizations.

YouTuber 2: I try to avoid foul language. And I do not drink alcohol in my videos.

YouTuber 4: I do not show alcohol in my videos because of the age of my viewers. Also I have friends using words I do not want my viewers to hear, so I cut them out of the video. I do not want to be a bad example for my viewers. Things I find important, like the acceptance of homosexuality, I do mention in my videos. To teach my viewers that it is a normal topic. I avoid things like politics, actualities and health because everyone has another opinion and I do not want to provoke discussion.

YouTuber 1: I notice that YouTubers really are role models so I think we have to take that into account in terms of content. I do not show alcohol or drugs on YouTube. I also avoid serious matters like politics, religion and war. I try to have a positive vibe. YouTubers have influence on viewers and I do not want them to blind copy my vision on these subjects. I prefer influencing people in terms of positivity, love, sexual education and happiness.

Teenagers follow YouTubers on different social media platforms. Most used platforms are Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter. When YouTubers post messages that are referring to a new video, most teenagers say they would click the url and check out the video. Almost all teenagers bought products or visited shops based on YouTuber's recommendations. The purchases vary from merchandise to

products that YouTubers often use and promote. Also YouTubers notice they get a lot of questions about stuff they use or wear. Teenagers want to buy the same things.

R5: I really wanted to go to the Lush shop because I saw it in a video of Beautynezz. When I visited Amsterdam with my dad, we visited the shop. I bought some body lotion.

R7: I bought several things that I saw in videos of YouTuber Dionne. She has a serie called Leuk of Meuk ('like or dislike') where she tests all kinds of useful things. I always want the stuff she shows. I bought a Snackeez cup and some special pens.

R12: I recently bought a diary after watching a video of Beautynezz. She showed several diaries from Hema. In the video I saw one I liked so I went to the shop and bought it.

YouTuber 1: I often get questions like 'where did you buy that shirt? What jeans are those? Where can I get those shoes?'. Even if it is a basic t-shirt that every shop sells. Teenagers want to buy the same stuff we have.

YouTuber 3: A great example is the Oxboard. It became a craze because many YouTubers showed it in their videos. Every teenager wanted to have that thing.

Conclusion

The results about awareness show that YouTubers do have influence on the behavior and buying behavior of teenagers. Often this influence is not necessarily a bad thing; teenagers improve their level of English, learn practical tips and tricks, get inspired on clothing and some teenagers state YouTubers have a positive influence on their mood and wellbeing. However, sometimes teenagers copy bad behavior like foul language or actions against the rules. Teenagers attach much value to statements of YouTubers and ask personal advice. Therefore YouTubers have to be careful with their answers. They often avoid sensitive subjects like religion, sexuality and politics and minimize the use of drugs and alcohol in their videos.

4.4. Awareness

Lastly questions focused on awareness. Teenagers were shown a screenshot on which YouTubers promoted products, charities or merchandise. They were asked what they think the goal of the message was and whether they would buy it. This way it was measured whether teenagers were aware of sponsored content. An overview of the messages that were used can be found in Appendix D. Also, teenagers were asked if they think YouTubers have influence on their buying behavior, if YouTubers give their honest opinions about products and really make use of all the products, if YouTubers earn money with their videos and how they think about hidden promoted content. YouTubers were asked if they really use products they promote in their videos, how they think about sponsored content, what they have noticed of teenagers being aware of the world behind YouTube and finally if they recommend being a YouTuber and the life they have.

Teenagers are not aware of their buying behavior influenced by YouTubers. When asked if they have bought products based on YouTubers recommendations, most teenagers say they have not. Later in the interview they gave examples of products they have bought because they have seen YouTubers using it or because YouTubers were really promoting it. They think YouTubers have influence on other teenagers, excluding themselves.

R5: No they do not really have influence on me but I visited the Lush shop in Amsterdam because I saw it in a video of YouTuber Beautynezz.

*R7: On some teenagers YouTubers will have influence but not on me. Because when I watch a video, I ask myself: 'why would I buy this' and then I close the video.
R7: I bought products based on videos of Onnedi.*

*R9: No, I believe I have not bought products based on YouTubers.
Message on Twitter: Because YouTuber Rutgervink always says that he likes the orange Tony Choclonely, I tried it today and OMG it is delicious!*

R12: They do not have influence on me. But if a YouTuber says 'you really should try this' then I would try it, for example if it is a special kind of candy.

Teenagers say they recognize promoted messages right away. However, when being confronted with messages of YouTubers and being asked what the goal of the message was, younger teenagers did not mention the goal was promotion. A message on which YouTuber Beautynezz showed all kinds of diaries from the Hema, younger teenagers did not mention the fact that it was a collaboration with Hema and that the goal was advertisement¹. Older teenagers aged 16 and over seemed to know Joy was promoting diaries. Another example was a message of YouTuber MeisjeDjamilla. The message urged teenagers to raise money for Africa for the Dutch charity Rode Kruis. Most teenagers responded how good it was that Djamilla raised money. They were not aware that she and several other YouTubers were asked to promote the campaign. Older teenagers were in doubt whether it was promoted or not.

R2: I think it is great that Djamilla skips her visit to the cinema and instead uses her money for Africa.

R4: With this message Djamilla wants us to think about people in Africa who are poor. I think Joy is really promoting Hema because how would she otherwise get all these diaries?

R6: I think Djamilla is asked to share this message but I do not think she gets paid because it is a charity. Sharing this message is also good for her reputation.

Teenagers think that paid advertisements might influence how YouTubers talk about the product or service. When YouTubers get paid, they talk more positively about the product. Also, they think that YouTubers are honest about the products they show in their videos and messages. Teenagers think not all products shown in the videos are really used. Some products are only used for the promotion

¹ <http://www.adformatie.nl/nieuws/hema-laait-leerlingen-schoolspullen-pimpen-met-campagne-eigen-school-eigen-ding>

video. YouTubers were asked the same question. They state that they are honest about the products they promote and really use the products.

R7: Many YouTubers are honest but sometimes when messages are sponsored YouTubers can behave more positive because they get paid for it.

R6: When I know messages are sponsored, I will keep this in mind and know that it might not be true what the YouTuber says. They might exaggerate and leave bad things out.

R4: Sometimes products are only used in videos because it is sponsored, although YouTubers pretend to use the product a lot.

YouTuber 4: I am aware that teenagers buy things based on our recommendations. I do not promote products I do not sympathize. Most of the time I really use the products I promote. It depends of course. But when I show products in my video and state that I like it, I really do use it. One time I was asked to promote Fish Sticks. I told them I could not do it because I am vega.

YouTubers were asked if they behave the same on YouTube as how they are in real life without a camera. YouTubers say they behave the same, although there might be a little difference because the camera is focused on them. They state that everyone will react a bit differently in that situation. They leave out bad things or cut out less beautiful scenes. But other than that, YouTubers think they behave the same on camera as in real life and show their true selves.

YouTuber 1: I behave the same on YouTube. Of course it will not be 100% the same, everyone will behave differently in front of a camera. But I have the feeling I am truly myself, my jokes are not fake, I do not write a script or anything.

YouTuber 4: I think I am the same person, but someone once told me 'wow, in your videos you seem differently than you really are'. I do not know how this difference happened.. Maybe because I talk more enthusiastic in my videos.

Most teenagers say they do not find it necessary that YouTubers add hashtag #spon to promoted content, because they think they recognize promoted content right away. However, they do think that younger children do not know when a message is sponsored and for them it might be better to add hashtag #spon. They think hashtag #spon should only be added to messages where it might be hard to know it is paid, for example at paid advertisements for charities, or at messages focused on younger children.

R9: I do not think YouTubers should add that it is paid because then teenagers will hate and leave mean comments. But I do think they should add where the products are from in case someone else wants to buy it.

R12: I do not really care about #spon. Viewers will notice when it is paid because YouTubers behave differently. They are acting more seriously when it is a paid advertisement.

R14: You can see that it is sponsored by the tone of the message. I think younger children do not know this, so for them it would be better to include #spon.

YouTuber 3: It depends on what the company wants. If they want me to add #spon, I do it. Otherwise I try to promote the product in a way that it does not look like it is promoted.

YouTuber 4: Officially we have to add that it is sponsored. However, not everyone does this.

Teenagers are not aware of the world behind YouTube. They do not understand the amount of workload YouTubers have and the time YouTubers have to spend on coming up with ideas, recording the video, editing the video and spreading the videos. They think making a video can be done in 30 minutes and consider it as a hobby rather than a fulltime job. They assume everyone who really

wants, can become a YouTuber. They also do not understand the obligations YouTubers have towards their fans. Teenagers send a lot of messages to YouTubers and expect answers. Some messages include heavy content like personal problems. YouTubers do not have the ability to answer all messages and have to deal with a lot of negativity. Also, a part of their privacy is gone.

R1: If you make qualitative videos you can become a famous YouTuber.

R14: I think it takes about 30 minutes to make a video, maybe even an hour, because they have to make the sound match with the movie.

R13: I believe Enzo Knol spends about 2 days a week working on his videos. I think he does not consider it as a real job, because he just records things with his camera. I do not consider that as a job. He just makes videos because he likes it. If you really want to earn money, you should get a job at the supermarket.

R14: Enzo Knol has a friend that helps him editing videos. But he does that because they are friends, he does not get paid or anything. Maybe sometimes a small gift, but not more than 50 euros a year. Just like our grandparents sometimes babysit us and we take them out for dinner to thank them.

YouTuber 2: Many people do not know how much time it takes to make a video. A video of 5 minutes can take about 4 hours to edit.

YouTuber 1: There are so many aspects teenagers do not know about being a YouTuber. Making a video takes much time and investments. You need a camera, microphone, special camera light, creative ideas. Of course editing which often takes about 6 hours. Then you need to upload the video, think about the SEO like good titles and tags. Also teenagers do not see what companies expect from YouTubers. Making a promoted video takes a lot of time because companies need to see the video first. They often have things they want to change and that need to be re-done. At the other hand, teenagers are not aware how much money some YouTubers earn with their videos. For some YouTubers it is their fulltime job.

I think at first teenagers do not know how much time it takes to make a video and that we sometimes spend nights on it. However, if they really think about it, they can know how much time it takes. It is the same as making a movie. When you watch a movie, you do not think about how much time and money it took to make it. They do not know how busy we are. That is also a good thing, because now they can enjoy our videos without knowing all the stuff going on behind the scenes.

They also do not know the amount of messages we get. Some messages contain heavy things like teenagers that are very sick or are going to die. We have to deal with all the problems they send us. It feels horrible not being able to answer everyone. We also have to deal with bullies and people who are jealous. We get a lot of negative comments. But luckily we also get a lot of positive messages and people want to take pictures of us.

YouTuber 4: Teenagers are also not aware of the fact that a part of our privacy is gone.

Being a YouTuber is more than just uploading videos. When YouTubers become bigger and more famous, their duties and obligations also grow. More and more people are expecting videos from them, companies want to collaborate and they will be invited for many events and meetings. Especially when they have other obligations like school, friends and family, this can be hard to combine. Most YouTubers say they have problems combining school and YouTube. They have to re-do a school year school completely.

YouTuber 3: I did not pass last year because of YouTube, so I will continue on a lower level. School and YouTube is not a good combination.

YouTuber 1: I always felt something stopped me. I could not do everything I wanted as a YouTuber. This year I decided to fully focus on YouTube and put university second. I want to grow with YouTube and I believe now is the moment. I can always finish university later.

YouTuber 4: I really believe that if you want to accomplish something, you can make time for it. For me school is not a problem in combination with YouTube. Sometimes I cannot visit friends because I have a lot to do. I try to work hard at the start of the school year so that I have more time for other things at the end of the year. Also school knows about my situation and like athletes I have an entrepreneurs arrangement to skip lessons if needed.

Teenagers have no clue about the market behind YouTube. Famous YouTubers are entrepreneurs who are officially registered at the Chamber of Commerce. They have duties like tax incomes and VAT. Almost all YouTubers have agreements with agencies. Teenagers are not aware of how much YouTubers are used for advertisements and campaigns that are paid. In general teenagers think YouTubers earn money, but they have no idea how much.

R9: Yes YouTubers earn about 5 euros for each 1000 views. Enzo Knol has millions of views, so do the math how much he earns.

R12: YouTubers earn money from subscriptions and likes. If people like the video, YouTubers get money. They can earn a lot, even 1000 euros a year.

YouTuber 4: YouTubers can be seen as any other promotion channel. Our reach is even bigger than traditional printed media because it is way more targeted and viewers are more dedicated. It takes us a lot of time to make a video. Sponsored campaigns are needed for YouTubers to exist. Our prices can be compared with other media. For example a magazine with the same target audience and reach.

Conclusion

Teenagers are not aware their buying behavior is influenced by YouTubers. Teenagers think they recognize promoted messages right away, and therefore do not find it necessary that YouTubers add hashtag #spon to promoted content. However, teenagers were not able to indicate that the sample messages from YouTubers were paid advertisements. They think YouTubers are honest about the products they promote but may talk more positively when they get paid. They are not aware of the world behind YouTube and the amount of work YouTubers have. They also do not understand YouTube can be a fulltime job rather than a hobby and believe everyone can become a YouTuber.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Main findings

This study started with the following research question: *'What role do YouTubers play in the life of their teenage viewers and how do YouTubers assess their own influences and experiences?'* Interviews were used to collect data about experiences and personal opinions from both Dutch teenagers and YouTubers.

The results show that YouTube has become part of the daily lives of teenagers. Teenagers watch YouTube videos daily and are more fans of YouTubers than traditional stars. This was also found in previous research. Defy Media (2015) and Variety Magazine (2014) showed that teenagers nowadays consume more digital content from sites like YouTube with an average of 11 hours a week and are more likely to identify with YouTubers than with traditional movie stars. However, although YouTube plays such a big role in the lives of teenagers, the results also showed that many parents do not know what their children are doing online. They do not know who their favorite YouTubers are, what kind of content teenagers are exposed to, what fan chats they are active in and how this affects the behavior of their children. For example, it was found that YouTubers get a lot of messages from fans. Most of the time these messages are positive, but sometimes they are full with hate and threats. Teenagers think they are anonymous online and can therefore say whatever they want. Parents often do not know about this behavior.

The results also show that teenagers feel more attracted to YouTubers than traditional TV celebrities. They imitate things YouTubers do, such as wearing the same clothes and make-up, using the same humor and fillers and in some cases they also copy bad behavior and make mischief. These findings are consistent with previous literature. Although the social cognitive theory is older and used in traditional marketing, it can also be applied in today's world of social influencers. According to the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), people learn by observing others. People copy behavior from models like YouTubers when they perceive themselves similar to the YouTuber (McLeod, 2016) and when a YouTuber possesses qualities that they adore. Nowadays many teenagers want to become YouTubers themselves. However, parents often disallow their children to start a YouTube channel because they are afraid their child will get bullied and because the whole world can see them. On the other hand, teenagers can learn a lot from making videos. It encourages creativity, trains new media skills, is good for the self-confidence of teenagers who are insecure, they meet a lot of new people and it can become more than just a hobby.

Results show that YouTubers influence the buying behavior of teenagers. Teenagers think YouTubers are honest about the products they promote and often want to buy things that YouTubers have. This finding corresponds to previous research. Consumers copy others in the decision making process (Brown & Hayes, 2008, p. 32) and social influencers are used to spread messages rapidly among their loyal followers. They are influential in encouraging trial and adoption of new products and services (Subramani & Rajagopalan, 2003) and seen as authentic when reviewing a product or brand (Influencer Marketing, 2012). Results also show that YouTubers have influence on other behavior than the buying behavior. Most of the time this influence is positive: teenagers learn new tips and tricks from do-it-yourself tutorials, they know the latest trends, many teenagers feel happy after watching videos and they get advice about topics that might be hard to talk about like for example bullying and sexual education. However, some YouTubers create content that might have a less positive influence, like bad language or making mischief.

Lastly results showed that teenagers are not aware of the influence YouTubers have on them. Although many of the teenagers state that YouTubers do not have influence on them, they have bought products based on YouTubers' recommendations and copied their behavior. They also think they recognize sponsored content right away, but when they were asked about the goal of a sponsored message, they did not mention promotion. This is consistent with previous research that found that children do not have the ability to distinguish advertisements from reality. As a result, young children are often deceived into believing something that is false (Moore & Lutz, 2000). Next to teenagers themselves, also many parents are unaware of the influence YouTubers have on the behavior of teenagers. Further research could focus on guidelines for parents whose teenagers are active on YouTube.

The general advice of this research is that parents should know more about their teenagers' behavior on YouTube. They should know what their children do on YouTube, what kind of videos they watch and make rules about what is allowed and what is not allowed.

Many parents do not know about the hateful messages teenagers send to YouTubers. It is important that parents talk to teenagers about their online behavior and actions. Parents can keep an

eye on the online behavior and comments by checking the recent activities on YouTube, which is a functionality that can be activated.

Some children copy bad behavior from YouTubers. Although Enzo Knol makes kid-friendly vlogs, he sometimes uses words that parents do not want to hear. Parents can make rules, for example that the child can watch his vlogs but that he cannot use those bad words. If the child does not obey and still uses bad words, parents can temporarily restrain the use of YouTube.

Many teenagers want to buy things because they saw a YouTuber wearing or using it. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as YouTubers also promote cheap and useful products. Younger teenagers often do not have money and have to ask permission before they can buy things. Parents can use this moment to talk about why the child wants to have it, because many teenagers are not aware of the influence YouTubers have on them. Does the teenager want to buy it because the YouTuber has it, or because the product is really useful and needed. Perhaps the child can save for it.

Many teenagers want to be like their favorite YouTubers and start their own YouTube channel. Often the first reaction of parents is that they do not allow this. Parents can watch videos together with their children and talk about what kind of content their children want to make. Together they can select what is allowed and what not. Also, a rule can be that teenagers first show their parents the video before putting it online. If the parents approve of publishing, it can be shared on YouTube. Parents can keep an eye on the messages children receive and delete hateful comments.

YouTubers on the other hand should be aware of the age of their viewers. It is irresponsible to use bad language or drink alcohol when most viewers are underage. Companies should also take the age of YouTubers and their viewers into account when asking YouTubers to promote their products. Together they have to keep YouTube an enjoyable and educational place for teenagers.

5.2. Limitations & future research

Although limitations are minimized as much as possible, several limitations of this study can be taken into account in future research. First of all, this research is conducted with limited time and capabilities. Only a limited number of interviews have been conducted. This research focused on 4 Dutch YouTubers and 20 teenagers. Further research would likely benefit from a larger sample of interview participants and another population to make the results more reliable.

Second, convenience sampling was used in this study as sampling method. This might result in an unequal amount of teenagers reached in terms of geographic areas. Most teenagers live in the eastern part of the Netherlands and some ethnicities might be underrepresented. Also, all teenagers that participated in this research were selected on the fact that they are active on YouTube. Only teenagers that watch or follow YouTubers were invited to participate and non-users were left out. This was necessary to get useful input about their watching behavior, which this explorative research needed to create an overview of the YouTube community. Further research could use another sampling method taking also the geographic areas and ethnic differences into account.

Third, many interview questions focused on behavior and feelings. Answers on these questions may be biased, because of social desirability and because teenagers forget pertinent details. This means that teenagers might have answered questions in a certain manner to appear more favorably by others. Also, teenagers are often not aware of the influence YouTubers have on them or they feel embarrassed to reveal to truth. For example, it happened that teenagers answered 'no' when asked if they have bought products based on YouTubers. However, a quick research on their social media channels revealed many examples of purchases based on YouTubers' recommendations. Therefore it could be really interesting to conduct further research with another approach. By involving parents and friends it is possible to get more accurate answers including information the teenager did not think of.

Lastly, YouTube and other social media platforms are constantly changing. September 2016 YouTube announced its own social network called YouTube Community on which YouTubers can strengthen the bond with their viewers. YouTube Community gives a new way to engage with viewers beyond video and make YouTubers even more powerful than ever before. The influence of YouTubers on teenagers can be further investigated in the future including the new possibilities of YouTube Community. Additionally, role modeling and identification are timeless phenomenon that will always occur. Further research could investigate the influence of role models on other popular (video) platforms, such as Vine, Musical.ly and new social media platforms that will be coming up in the future.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This research shows that YouTubers play an important role in the life of teenagers who are active on YouTube. YouTube has become part of their daily life as they watch videos every day, go to fan meetings, are active in chats with other fans, talk to their friends about YouTube, own or follow fan accounts, buy merchandise and send messages to their favorite YouTubers. Some teenagers want to become a YouTuber themselves and have started a YouTube channel. Teenagers are unaware of the influence YouTubers have on them. Teenagers ask YouTubers for advice, want to buy things YouTubers promote and copy their actions, language and clothing. Parents often say that their children spend too much time on their phone and YouTube. However, most parents do not know what their children exactly do and watch on YouTube, even though YouTube is a big part of their daily lives.



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8. APPENDICES

Appendix A) Interview questions for teenagers

(1) Gedrag op YouTube/kennis

1. Hoe vaak kijk je videos op YouTube?
2. Wie zijn jouw favoriete Nederlandse YouTubers?
3. Ben je meer fan van bekende Nederlanders of van YouTubers? Is daar een reden voor denk je?
4. Bezoek je wel eens evenementen/bijeenkomsten van YouTubers?
5. Volg je fanaccounts van YouTubers of beheer je er zelf een?
6. Zit je in WhatsApp-groepen met andere fans?
7. Kijken jouw vriendinnen ook naar YouTubers? Praat je er met hen over?
8. Heb je merchandise van jouw favoriete YouTuber zoals een pet of t-shirt?

(2) Identification

1. Wat trekt jou aan om videos op YouTube te kijken?
2. Wat vind je zo leuk aan YouTubers waardoor je ze gaat volgen?
3. Op welke aspecten vind je dat je op de YouTuber lijkt / YouTuber op jou lijkt?
4. Welke overeenkomsten heb jij met de YouTuber?
5. Wat denk je dat je hebt geleerd door het volgen van YouTubers?
6. Wat betekenen YouTubers voor jou? / Hoe belangrijk zijn YouTubers voor jou?
7. Zou je willen doen wat YouTubers allemaal doen?
8. Zou je zelf een YouTuber willen zijn?

(3) Gedragsverandering

1. Vind je dat een YouTuber invloed heeft op jouw leven?
2. Heb je wel eens advies van YouTubers opgevolgd? Zo ja welk?
3. Heb je wel eens producten gekocht op aanraden van YouTubers? Wat dan?
4. Wat was de reden dat je het product kocht?
5. Wat vindt jouw omgeving ervan dat je zoveel naar YouTubers kijkt? (bv ouders, vriendinnen, vriend) . Zijn er ook mensen die er minder blij mee zijn?
6. Merkt jouw omgeving positieve gevolgen aan jouw YouTube-gedrag? Wat dan?
7. Merkt jouw omgeving negatieve aspecten aan jouw YouTube-gedrag? Wat dan?

(4) awareness

Voorbeeldberichten van YouTubers worden getoond(promoted content)

1. Wat denk je wanneer je dit bericht ziet?
2. Wat doe je over het algemeen wanneer je zo'n berichtje ziet?
3. Wat is denk je de boodschap van het bericht?
4. Zou je dit kopen of doen?

5. Denk je dat YouTubers invloed hebben op jouw koopgedrag?
6. Maken YouTubers echt gebruik van de producten die ze promoten denk je?
7. Als YouTubers iets zeggen over een product of dienst, geven ze dan hun eerlijke mening denk je?
8. Denk je dat YouTubers geld verdienen aan YouTube-videos?
9. Wat vind je ervan als YouTubers producten promoten (tegen betaling) zonder dit duidelijk te vermelden?

Appendix B) Interview questions for YouTubers

(1) Gedrag op YouTube/kennis

1. Hoe combineer(de) je YouTube met school en andere verplichtingen?
2. Hoe was de beginperiode toen je nog niet zoveel subscribers had?
3. Hoe kijk je aan tegen beginnende YouTubers? / Wat vind je ervan dat tegenwoordig veel jongeren ook YouTuber willen worden?
4. Hoe is de sfeer als YouTubers onder elkaar?
5. Waar houd je rekening mee bij het plaatsen van content?
6. Zijn er onderwerpen waar je niet over praat in je videos?
7. Gedraag je je op YouTube hetzelfde als daarbuiten? Of heb je een soort online identiteit gecreëerd?

(2) Identification

1. Merk je dat kijkers jou na (willen) doen? Waarin zie je dat het meest? (bv kleding, reizen, make-up)
2. Wat vind je ervan dat jongeren jou willen zijn? Hoe ga je hier mee om?
3. Krijg je wel eens mails/berichten van ouders? Wat voor 'n mails en wat doe je hiermee?
4. Welke dingen komen er bij het zijn van een YouTuber kijken die de kijkers niet zien/weten?

(3) Gedragsverandering

1. Merk je dat je invloed hebt op jongeren?
2. Wat zijn de meest opvallende momenten die je zijn bijgebleven waarop je merkte dat je veel invloed hebt op jongeren?
3. Merk je verschil in hoeveel invloed je hebt op jongeren t.o.v. toen je minder bekend was?
4. Heb je wel eens een mening voor je gehouden rekening houdende met je kijkers?
5. Spreek je je mede YouTubers wel eens aan als ze iets plaatsen wat echt niet kan?

Stel een fan vraagt om persoonlijk advies, zoals de keuze van een opleiding.

1. Wat denk je van dit soort vragen/reacties?
2. Hoe ga je hier mee om?
3. Zijn er aspecten/onderwerpen waarbij je je als YouTuber/influencer verantwoordelijk voelt?

(4) Awareness

1. Denk je dat kijkers beseffen wat er allemaal bij komt kijken als YouTuber en de hele markt erachter? Dat YouTubers niet 'gewoon maar filmpjes op de slaapkamer maken' maar echte ondernemers zijn?
2. De producten die in jouw videos voorbij komen, gebruik je die ook echt in het dagelijks leven?
3. Hoe denk je over sponsored content?
4. Geef je het altijd aan wanneer je producten gratis krijgt of zelfs betaald wordt voor het promoten?
5. Wijs je ook wel eens sponsored content af i.v.m. de volgers die je hebt?
6. Denk je dat YouTubers tegenwoordig te veel ingezet worden voor advertenties?
7. Ben je je bewust van het feit dat jongeren soms dingen kopen op aanraden van YouTubers die ze anders niet of niet zo snel zouden hebben gekocht? Hoe ga je hier mee om?
8. Wat vind je ervan dat de politiek zich gaat bemoeien met het promoten van ongezond voedsel?

Laatste vraag: nu je zoveel jaren ervaring hebt als YouTuber en alles wat erbij komt kijken, zou je het jongeren – die nu vaak YouTuber willen worden - aanbevelen?

Appendix C) Questions from other researches

The following researches focused on similar subjects, for example celebrity endorsement or identification with TV celebrities. These questions are used as a base for some interview questions in this research.

Gan, W. (2006). Effectiveness of Celebrity Endorsement Advertising in Chinese Marketplace.

1. Do you think that nowadays advertisement over-frequently use celebrity as endorser?
2. Have you ever bored with and even resistant with celebrity endorsers?
3. Are you generally more influenced or attracted by celebrity endorsers, if products are relative cheap and relative familiar to you, or if products are quite expensive and you have no relevant knowledge to choose them?
4. What factors you feel the most important can decide you to purchase, when you intend to purchase an expensive and unfamiliar product?
5. Do you believe that celebrities truly like their endorsed products?
6. Do you have a more favorable attitudes towards the endorsed product, if you increasingly believe that the endorser truly like the advertised product?
7. What other impact can you cause due to this belief?

Peckham, R. (2006). Audience Interpersonal Identification with the Television Series Friends as it is Reflected in Avid Viewers within the Twixter Life Stage.

1. What do you think of YouTuber X
2. How often do you watch their videos
3. What drew you to watching their videos?
4. What is it about the YouTuber that drew you into watching it?
 - how does that relate to you and your life?
5. What about the YouTuber did you find yourself relating to? (values, environment, lifestyle, situation)
6. Are there particular characteristics you thought 'that's like me'?
 - what similarities do you share with the YouTuber?
7. What do you think you have learned about society from watching YouTubers?
8. What connections could you draw with the vieos and your life?
9. Comment on the YouTubers idea of ... x

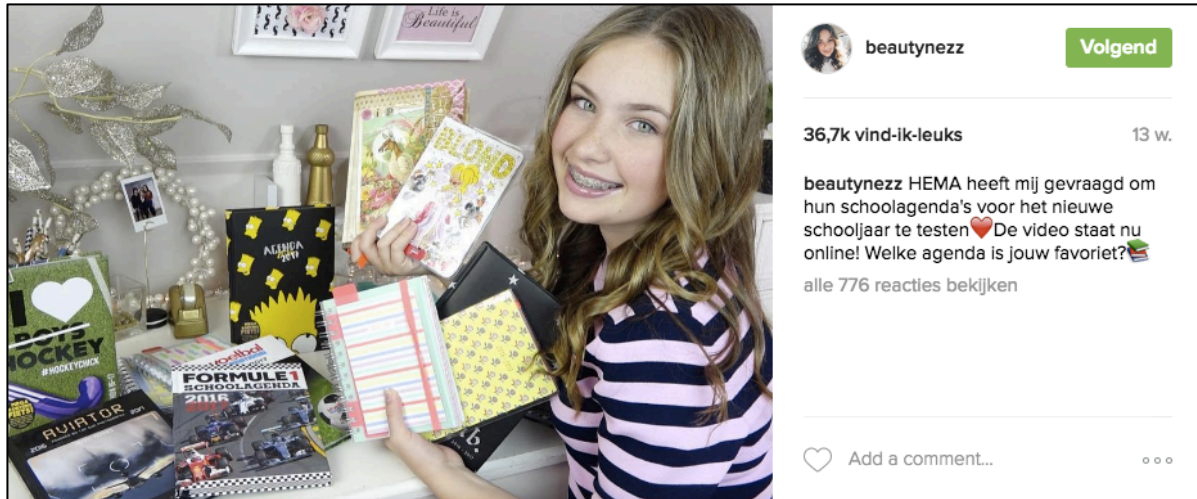
Mangan, J. (2013). A Quantitative Study of the Effect of Celebrity Endorsers on Consumer Purchase Intent.

1. Have you ever purchased a product or service that was endorsed/advertised or backed by a celebrity?
2. What category of celebrity, do you think, is most likely to have an impact in your purchasing of a product or service.
3. What was the main reason you chose to buy this product/service endorsed by this particular celebrity?
4. Please rate the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers in raising your awareness of advertising campaigns
5. Can you recall any celebrities that have recently been promoting advertising campaigns? Who?
6. Would a celebrity being associated with negative publicity affect your inclination to purchase the product/service being endorsed by them?
7. What is the most important attribute you feel a celebrity should possess when endorsing a product/service?
8. In your opinion, who has been the most influential celebrity over the last ten years?

Appendix D) Sponsored content of YouTubers used to measure awareness

1. Message from Beautynezz

'Hema asked me to review their new school diaries. The video is up on my channel. What is your favorite diary?'



2. Message from Meisjedjamila

'I wanted to go to the cinema, but #ikdoeniksvoorafrika. That means I skip an activity I would pay for and instead donate the money to a charity that prevents food shortages in Africa. I dare you to do the same. What do you do for Africa? Let me know by leaving a comment. Do not forget to donate money on giro 7244!'



3. Message from StukTv

'Which one would you choose? Both shirts are available in our webshop'

