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“Do Brand Communities require Purpose?”
A comparative study of best practice communities
- The Case of Pamela Reif

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Abstract

This master's thesis investigates the interrelationship between the vitality and engagement of brand communities and brand purpose, a largely unexplored area in current marketing research. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach including netnography, qualitative interviews, and quantitative surveys, the study analyzes the brand community from the brand persona Pamela Reif. The research focuses on six key aspects: engagement, sense of belonging, shared values, support and collaboration, brand loyalty, and advocacy, to identify the unique characteristics of each brand and draw comparative insights.

Results indicate that a brand's purpose, aligned with its community values, enhances engagement, and fosters a stronger sense of belonging. Conversely, discrepancies between a brand's purpose and its community's values result in lower engagement and weaker community bonds. These findings emerge as the most relevant and provide strategic insights for businesses aiming to cultivate vital and engaged brand communities, underscoring the importance of aligning brand purpose with community values and the need for brands to maintain authenticity in a rapidly evolving marketing landscape. Research limitations and directions for further research are discussed.

Keywords:

Brand communities, Brand purpose, Socio-cultural analysis, Mixed-methods approach, Community dynamics, Brand Management

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1. Introduction

In an era marked by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, society loses its internal cohesion and disintegrates into a multitude of interest groups (Taskan, Junca-Silva and Caetano 2023). In times of increasing social fragmentation, communities emerge as essential unifiers and serve as a countermeasure to prevent societal disintegration. Brand communities are defined as specialized, non-geographically bound networks formed around a shared admiration for a brand (Muniz Jr and O'Guinn 2001). Especially in a world of social disintegration, leveraging the potential of brand communities becomes essential for creating meaningful connections around shared interests (Poynter 2008). Moreover, the alignment of the values of brand community members with a brand's purpose, typically results in higher levels of engagement, and a deep sense of belonging within their communities (Martinek 2021). Brand purpose is specified as the brand's central goal that significantly shapes a brand's identity, strategy, and meaning, further transcending merely profit-oriented objectives to encompass societal and environmental engagement (Williams, Escalas and Morningstar 2022).

Despite the growing interest in brand community and brand purpose in marketing research, the interrelationship between these two concepts remains relatively unexplored in academic literature (Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel 2009). This thesis seeks to fill this gap by exploring the central research question:

Does a well-functioning, engaged, vital brand community require brand purpose?

Besides the main research question, this paper aims to answer the following sub-questions:

- *How does brand purpose affect the level of engagement within these brand communities?*

- *How does a brand's purpose contribute to the development of shared interests and identities amongst community members?*
- *How does the existence of a vital brand community affect perceived authenticity and purchasing behavior?*

This thesis starts by defining the concepts of branding, brand purpose and brand community, further addressing the research gap of the interrelationship of the latter concepts. Utilizing a comprehensive mixed-methods research strategy that encompasses netnography, qualitative interviews, and quantitative surveys, this study undertakes a thorough exploration of brand communities across diverse industries. The analysis focuses on three distinct brands: (I) Pamela Reif, (II) GoPro, and (III) Supreme, which constitute the individual parts of this thesis. Each brand is analyzed separately and in detail to gain a deep understanding of their respective brand community dynamics, focusing on six key metrics: engagement, sense of belonging, shared values, support and collaboration, influence and advocacy, and brand loyalty. Following the individual brand analyses, the study transitions into a comparative phase. Therefore, insights are elaborated to reveal differences and similarities across the three brands. This is further encompassed through the development of a practical guideline for companies, that aims to provide managerial implications for businesses aiming to cultivate vital and engaged brand communities. This paper acknowledges potential limitations that arise from these findings and gives directions for future research.

Findings of this study emphasize the substantial impact of brand purpose on community engagement and vitality. The alignment of a brand's purpose with its community's values emerges as a driving force for elevated levels of engagement, a higher sense of belonging, mutual support, the willingness to defend the brand and higher loyalty towards the brand.

2. Contextual Background

This section lays the theoretical groundwork for understanding brand communities and brand purpose. This foundation is essential for conducting a deeper and more comprehensive analysis of the research question.

2.1 Branding

Initially, branding was primarily focused on using brand names and symbols to distinguish products from commodities (American Marketing Association 1960). Over time, it shifted to influencing how consumers perceive the functional benefits of a product or service and how these benefits connect to social and emotional aspects (B. J. Calder 2022). Additionally, with the rise of social media, the concept of brand personas, or "personal brands" has gained significant prominence (Keller 2011). Individuals, embodying brands, redefine the connection by attracting consumers not just for products but for the values and experiences they represent (Hennessy 2018). This shift highlights the trend towards more personalized and humanized brand interactions in the modern digital landscape. Modern branding goes further by aiming to engage consumers with the brand, making interactions more meaningful and participative (Martinek 2021).

2.2 Brand Purpose

“The brands that will matter in the future are the ones that have a purpose which is beyond profit.” - Richard Branson, CEO Virgin group

Defined as a brand's “long-term, central aim that is a predominant component of its identity, meaning structure, and strategy”, brand purpose transcends profit-oriented objectives and

extends towards productive engagement with broader societal and environmental issues (Williams, Escalas and Morningstar 2022, 704). The concept has gained traction as brands increasingly recognize the need to go beyond mere product offerings and connect with consumers on a deeper level. Brand purpose involves a commitment to authenticity, aligning with social and environmental responsibilities (Sinek 2011). It serves as a compass for decision-making, guiding brands in turbulent times (Kramer 2017). Moreover, it underscores a long-term commitment to values and principles that extend beyond immediate profits, emphasizing transparency and accountability (Sinek 2011). As brand purpose continues to evolve, it plays a vital role in shaping modern branding strategies, differentiating brands in competitive markets, and serving as a catalyst for positive change (Hemerling, et al. 2018). In essence, brand purpose is not just a concept but should be seen as a strategic tool. It demands careful navigation, with brands needing to align their messages, actions, and purpose authentically. When executed effectively, brand purpose contributes not only to differentiation in competitive markets but also to the creation of genuine emotional connections, enhanced brand loyalty, and a positive contribution to society (Williams, Escalas and Morningstar 2022). However, the concept of brand purpose has been criticized for its potential to be used as a marketing tool without genuine alignment with social or environmental causes, leading to accusations of “greenwashing” (Vredenburg, et al. 2020, 449). Further, there is the risk of using brand purpose manipulatively to influence consumers’ trust and willingness to pay a premium (Williams, Escalas and Morningstar 2022).

The concept of brand purpose remains ambiguous, marked by unclarity and several definitions. Despite the lack of comprehensive understanding, there is a growing interest among practitioners, coupled with an increase in research efforts aimed at unraveling the concept of brand purpose.

2.3 Brand Communities

It is important to note that in existing literature, terms like “brand tribes” and “consumer subcultures” often overlap and are used interchangeably with “brand communities” (Goulding, Shankar and Canniford 2013, 817). Muniz and O’Guinn (2001, 412) introduced brand communities as “a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand”. Further, they identified three key pillars that characterize these communities, namely consciousness of a kind, shared rituals and traditions, and moral responsibility (Muniz Jr and O’Guinn 2001). Within a brand community, consciousness of a kind is characterized by the strong connection members feel towards each other, marked by a sense of familiarity. The culture and identity of the community are further nurtured through shared rituals and traditions, reflecting established norms and values, which also reinforce a sense of unity. Finally, moral responsibility reflects a feeling of commitment to both the community as a whole and its individual members (Muniz Jr and O’Guinn 2001). Therefore, the ideal way to achieve a successful, loyal, and vital brand community is through extensive community-building measures, providing its members with emotionally added value over and above the products and services offered (B. J. Calder 2022). Furthermore, brand communities differentiate themselves through their preferred communication, whether it’s online, offline, or a hybrid interaction of both (Wirtz, et al. 2013). Additionally, a distinction can be drawn between company-managed brand communities, originating from corporate initiatives, and consumer-run entities, motivated through brand enthusiasm (Bonnemaizon, Cova and Louyot 2007).

The research topic of brand community has gained momentum in recent times. Existing literature primarily focuses on the association between brand communities and elements such as brand loyalty, brand equity or trust, as evidenced in studies by Marzocchi, Morandin, and

Bergami (2013), Hur, Ahn, and Kim (2011), and Casaló, Flavián, and Guinalíu (2007). Additionally, some studies delve into the relationship between brand communities and engagement or participation, as explored by Wirtz et al. (2013), Zhang et al. (2017), and Kamboj and Rahman (2017).

2.4 Interrelationship between Brand Purpose & Brand Communities

Up to this point, there has been limited research on the relationship between brand purpose and brand communities (Calder, Malthouse and Schaedel 2009). The search query using "(TI=(Brand Communit*)) AND TI=(Brand Purpose)" in Web of Science yielded just one article by Calder (2022) that directly relates to this study's research topic, displaying a research gap. In his paper, Calder (2022) suggests that brand communities can play a pivotal role in reinforcing and amplifying a brand's purpose. Members of these communities often share common interests, values, and objectives, which can in turn foster deeper engagement and loyalty to the brand. Moreover, within the article, these communities are described to serve as powerful channels for extending the reach and influence of a brand's message, as community members often transform into passionate brand advocates (B. J. Calder 2022).

3. Methodology

This section delves into the methodology that guides the research, outlining a systematic approach to investigate the interrelationship between a well-defined brand purpose and vital and engaged brand communities. This methodology is distinguished into two parts: the methodological filter and the methodological analysis. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the central research question, this study deploys a mixed-method framework, combining an observing netnography, qualitative interviews, and a quantitative market survey.

3.1 Methodological Filter

Within this work, a methodological filter is utilized as a systematic approach for selecting appropriate brands for further in-depth analysis. In this context, the methodological filter refers to a set of criteria or process used to screen and select subjects of interest based on specific research objectives (Jenkins 2004). This approach ensures that the chosen brands align closely with the focus of the study, providing relevant and meaningful insights.

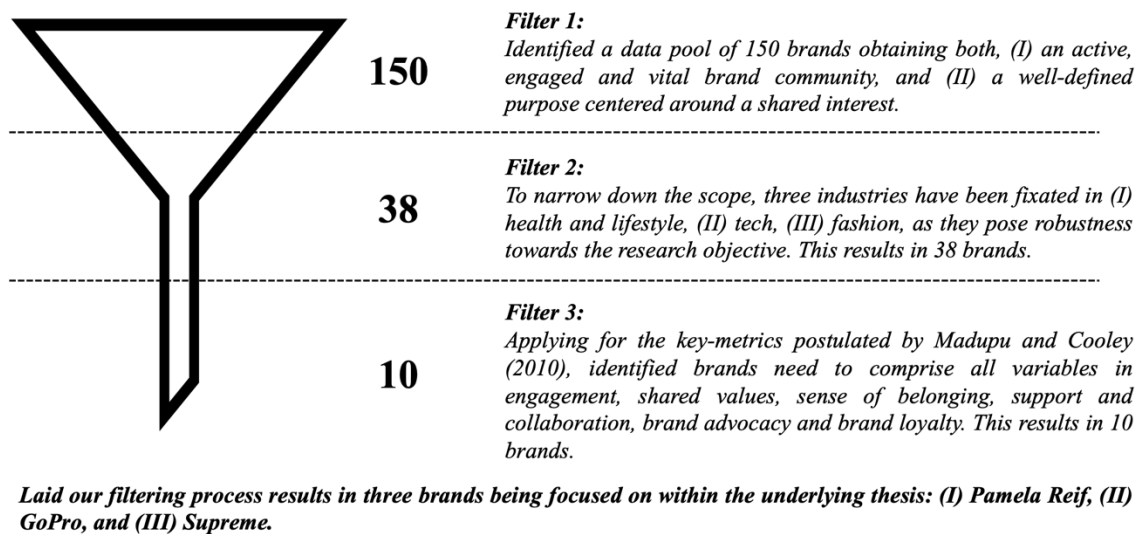


Figure 1: Methodological filter to retrieve case examples relevant to the research topic

The underlying methodological filter can be screened in Figure 1 and follows three distinct steps. The initial phase of the filtering process comprised a pool of 150 brands, each with both strong communities and a clear brand purpose. This first filter is essential to narrow down the initial database to brands that are potentially relevant for the research of this study. In the second phase of the filtering process, the selection was then further refined by focusing on brands from robust and dynamic industries. This additional criterion reduced the initial pool of 150 brands to 38, ensuring the brands are operating in industries known for resilience and market presence. In the third phase, the following key metrics derived from previous research from Muniz and O’Guinn (2001), Madupu and Cooley (2010), and Jones and Vogl (2020), showcased in Table 1, are applied. Those ensure relevance of the brands in focus to the research topic and are

expected to reveal valuable insights into the brand purpose impacting the activity and vitality of brand communities.

Engagement	<i>Community members actively engage with the brand and with each other. They participate in discussions, share experiences, provide feedback, and contribute to the overall community conversation. This engagement can take place through various channels, including social media, online forums, events, or even offline interactions.</i>
Sense of Belonging	<i>Strong brand communities foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity among its members. Community members feel connected to each other and to the brand, creating a feeling of being part of something bigger.</i>
Shared Values and Identity	<i>Brand communities often revolve around shared values and beliefs. Members identify with the brand's mission, vision, and identity, and these shared values form a common bond that strengthens the community.</i>
Support and Collaboration	<i>Brand communities provide a platform for members to support and collaborate with each other. They share knowledge, tips, and advice related to the brand and its products/services. This collaborative environment encourages learning, creativity, and innovation.</i>
Influence and Advocacy	<i>Brand communities can become powerful advocates for the brand. Members often act as brand ambassadors, promoting the brand within their networks and influencing the perceptions and behaviors of others.</i>
Brand Loyalty	<i>Consumer's positive feelings towards a brand and their dedication to purchasing the brand's products or services over time, regardless of changes in competitors' pricing or the external environment.</i>

Table 1: Variables of interest comprised in analysis based on Muniz and O'Guinn (2001), Madupu and Cooley (2010), and Jones and Vogl (2020)

The underlying approach narrows down the initial brand pool to 10 best-practice examples with the potential for in-depth analysis. Through extensive examination of those brands, three distinct brands from various industries are identified for central interest, further encompassing this thesis' individual parts: (I) Pamela Reif, a personal brand and influencer in the lifestyle and health industry (II) GoPro, a contemporary brand from the technology sector, and (III) Supreme, exemplifying the unique dynamics of brand communities in the fashion industry. As a result of this filtering process, the three selected brands demonstrate diverse and robust examples of thriving brand communities in fast-paced market environments. The study will thereof delve deeper into each brand's community activity, further exploring the interplay between their brand purpose and community vitality and engagement.

3.2 Methodological Analysis

The methodological analysis dives deeper into the applied mixed-methods approach, integrating netnography, qualitative interviews, and quantitative surveys to investigate the influence of brand purpose on brand community engagement. This multifaceted approach allows for a thorough exploration of brand community dynamics across the three distinct brands: (I) Pamela Reif, (II) GoPro, and (III) Supreme. Each method provides unique insights, combining broad online data analysis, personal perspectives, and quantifiable community engagement trends to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Each of these brands represents a separate case study, allowing for an in-depth analysis of its respective brand community dynamics.

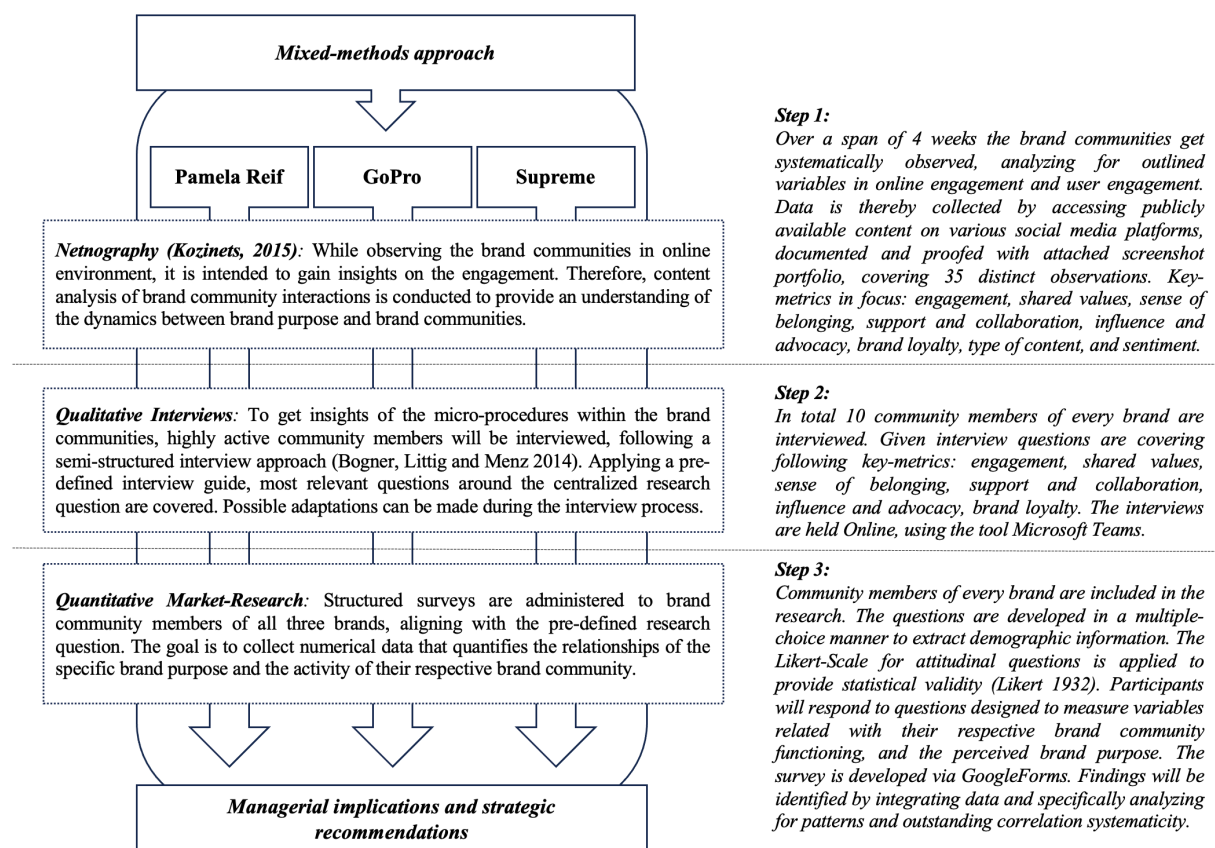


Figure 2: Methodological approach for data gathering

Step 1: Netnography

Netnography, as defined by Kozinets (2002), is a marketing research technique using publicly available information to provide insights from online communities. This method is applied to investigate the engagement dynamics within the specified brand communities of Pamela Reif, GoPro, and Supreme (Kozinets 2015). It stands out as a quicker and more cost-effective alternative to traditional ethnography, while offering a non-intrusive approach, compared to focus groups or interviews (Kozinets 2002). Netnography involves a sequence of crucial steps: “(1) making cultural entrée, (2) gathering and analyzing data, (3) ensuring trustworthy interpretation, [sic] (5) conducting ethical research, and (6) providing opportunities for [...] member feedback” (Kozinets 2002, 63).

To comprehensively understand the impact of brand purpose on each brand's community, a content analysis of online brand community interactions is conducted on various social media platforms for the respective brands. The selection of the platforms was based on the criteria recommended by Kozinets (2002) for identifying suitable online communities. These criteria include focusing on segments, topics, or groups that are relevant to the research question, prioritizing platforms with higher posting activity, targeting platforms with a significant number of discrete message posters, selecting platforms that offer more detailed and descriptive data, and preferring platforms with a higher level of member-to-member interaction, which aligns with the research question's requirements (Kozinets 2002). Following these guidelines, the selected platforms for the analysis are Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and TikTok. Each of these platforms offers comprehensive insights into the dynamics of brand communities, crucial for understanding how the engagement and vitality of brand communities is influenced by a brand's purpose. On these platforms, the participation of members was observed, evaluating aspects such as sentiment, type of content, engagement levels, brand loyalty, sense of

belonging, shared values, support, and advocacy. Detailed findings from these observations, are presented in the accompanying Excel document.

Step 2: Qualitative Interviews

Furthermore, qualitative interviews with highly active community members are conducted, using a semi-structured interview approach. This guided interview technique is based on the six criteria, defined in section 3.1, and covers the most relevant questions around the central research question, with possible adaptations during the interview process such as open-ended questions (Yin 2018). Therefore, the interviews are designed to gather general facts about the identified brands, as well as following a more subjective structure, containing individual perceptions and opinions. Semi-structured expert interviews are often used to gather technical as well as organizational process information from defined experts, and professionals from a specific industry field (Bogner, Littig and Menz 2014). Further, guideline-based interviews are stated to provide facts and information that cannot be gathered through other external sources (Kaiser 2021). The guideline allows for standardized data collection throughout the interview process and thus enables comparing similarities, as well as underlying differences across multiple variables. Nevertheless, the interviews should be adapted to respective partners to meet individual-characteristic requirements (Bogner, Littig and Menz 2014).

The systematic content analysis, starting with transcription and then extracting relevant aspects, demonstrates a rigorous approach to understanding the participants' viewpoints (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton 2013). The progression of filtering for first-order concepts is a methodological way to distil and synthesize the rich information obtained from the data gathered throughout the collection process. These theoretical themes not only capture but also contribute to understanding the broader narrative inherent (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton 2013).

Step 3: Quantitative Surveys

In the quantitative phase, structured surveys are administered to brand community members of Pamela Reif, GoPro, and Supreme, aligning with the pre-defined research question (Groves, et al. 2009). The goal is to collect numerical data that quantifies the relationship between the brand purpose of each of these brands and the engagement of their respective community and support the identified research findings. Therefore, the research data is significantly enhanced and complemented with a considerable stake in quantitative data. Numerical data gathering is structured around the six underlying key metrics identified in section 3.1, screened in Table 1. Thus, participants will respond to questions designed to measure variables related to brand community functioning, the perceived brand purpose of each brand, and their level of engagement within the respective communities. Therefore, multiple choice questions for demographic information and the Likert Scale for attitudinal questions are applied to provide statistical validity (Likert 1932). The survey also offers space to actively incorporate subjective opinions towards the brand community development. Surveys were developed, using Google Forms, and distributed electronically to participants who were identified as members of the underlying brand communities. Overall findings were identified by integrating the responses into a data-matrix, which can be screened in attached Excel file “Interview_Data-Matrix” and further analyzing for given data patterns and outstanding correlation.

4. Data Analysis

The following section represents the individual parts of the thesis, where a comprehensive in-depth analysis of the three distinct brands is conducted: (I) Pamela Reif, (II) GoPro, and (III) Supreme. The analyses are developed in parallel to obtain comparable insights. Each brand represents a different industry with diverse community dynamics, offering a rich spectrum for the analysis. Pamela Reif, as a personal brand and influencer, provides insights into the

dynamics of influencer-led brand communities. GoPro, a contemporary U.S. brand, exemplifies how product-based communities evolve in the tech sector. Supreme, as a fashion label, showcases the unique aspects of brand communities in the fashion industry. Each brand is analyzed, following the six key metrics: engagement, sense of belonging, shared values, support and collaboration, advocacy and brand loyalty, further elaborated on in section 3.1. While the foundation of the analyses lies in the transcripts of the conducted interviews, insights are further enriched by incorporating information from the quantitative studies and the observations derived from the netnography of each brand. In the following section, the analyzed data is laid out separately and elaborated on further, presenting the results in a structured manner.

4.1 Individual Part: The Case of Pamela Reif

This section introduces the personal brand and prominent influencer Pamela Reif and provides a detailed overview of her brand community. This is followed by an in-depth analysis, incorporating insights from multiple research streams, including netnography, qualitative interviews, and a quantitative study. These insights are organized into six key dimensions as presented in Table 1 in section 3.1, offering a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics and the interplay between Pamela Reif's brand community and her brand purpose.

4.1.1 The Social Media Influencer and Personal Brand Pamela Reif

The rise of personal brands and influencers in recent years, driven by social media, marks a significant shift in contemporary marketing, fundamentally reshaping, and transforming how individuals engage with products, services, and information in the digital age (Keller 2011; Hennessy 2018; Veirman, Cauberghe and Hudders 2017). Pamela Reif serves as a best practice example of a thriving social media influencer, characterized by her commitment to almost daily

interactions with her community and her efforts to cultivate and maintain a strong connection with them.

The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the prominence of influencers and personal brands, as social media usage and online screen time, and interest in topics such as health, nutrition, exercise, and mental and physical well-being grew exponentially (Callaghan, et al. 2022; Sui, Rush and Rhodes 2022; Kaur, et al. 2020). This period marked a pivotal turning point for the health and fitness influencer Pamela Reif. As gyms were closed, her home workout videos garnered millions of views on YouTube, with up to 300,000 people working out every hour (Lenz 2020). As a result, Pamela Reif gained international popularity and a rapidly growing social media community (Gardt 2022).

Born in Germany in 1996, Pamela Leonie Reif has become a prominent fitness influencer on various social media platforms. Since starting her social media journey on Instagram in 2012, she has attracted over 9.3 million followers to date and has become the most popular German fitness YouTuber in 2023, with 9.72 million followers and over 1.8 billion views on this platform (Reif, Instagram 2023; Reif, Facebook 2023; Lohmeier 2023). She is also recognized globally for her leading role as a female fitness influencer (Feedspot 2023). In addition, Pamela Reif has a significant following on TikTok, with 917,200 followers and 7.2 million likes and amassed a total of 276,804 followers on Facebook (Reif, TikTok 2023; Reif, Facebook 2023). Her content is primarily focused on fitness, food, and beauty, with a strong emphasis on promoting and spreading her purpose of a healthy and fit lifestyle. With a steadily growing base of millions of followers, she has laid the foundation for a thriving health and fitness business. Beyond social media, she has published two bestselling cookbooks, developed the “Pam” App with weekly new recipes and workout plans, and founded two brands, namely “Naturally Pam”

and “Ela Beauty”. Her recognition in Forbes' “30 Under 30” at the age of 23 underscores her success in the health and fitness industry (Dawkins 2019).

4.1.2 Brand Community of Pamela Reif

Pamela Reif has built a strong connection with her followers by regularly sharing her daily life, including her fitness routines, based on following her workout plans, her diet, and current projects. By interacting with her followers on an almost daily basis, she has fostered a strong, loyal, and engaged community, and created a sense of intimacy among them (Ziegler 2017). In 2019, she was honored with the “Place to B Award”, given to the most influential young content creators on social media (Senft 2019). She stays even closer connected to her community by exchanging real-time text messages on her Instagram broadcast channel called “Pam’s Besties”, further strengthening this bond. Members also refer to each other as “Pammies”, which underscores their strong connection and identity within the community. Her community is highly engaged on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Facebook and TikTok. Members frequently share co-created content such as photos of themselves doing her workouts or reels of making her recipes, often using hashtags, or tagging Pamela in these posts. Pamela regularly reposts this user-generated content on her channel, which serves as a fitness inspiration and motivation for millions of members within her community. The main hashtags, used by her community are #pamelareif, and #pamelareifworkout, and revolve around her brand and her brand purpose (Reif, Instagram 2023). Her vital and engaged community and her brand purpose, centered around living a healthy and fit life, make her a compelling subject for investigating the research question.

4.1.3 Insights of Pamela Reifs Community

This section provides an in-depth analysis of Pamela Reif's online community based on netnography, expert interviews, and a quantitative study. The expert interviews were conducted virtually with 13 active members from her Instagram and Facebook communities during October and November 2023, lasted between 25 and 45 minutes, and followed a semi-structured interview methodology outlined in Appendix A.1. To augment these qualitative insights, a market survey was carried out, involving 112 active members of Pamela Reif's community. In addition, the analysis incorporates data obtained from netnography, to provide a deeper understanding of the engagement, interactions, and behaviors within her community on social media platforms. The main observations can be found in Appendix A.4.1. In the following, the analysis is structured around the six key topics: engagement, sense of belonging, shared values, support and collaboration, influence and advocacy, and brand loyalty.

Insights: Engagement in the Pamela Reif Brand Community

All survey respondents and interviewees actively follow Pamela Reif on one or more social media channels and are below categorized as 'members' of her community. The most popular platforms among members include Instagram (93.8%), YouTube (85.7%) and the "Pam" App (34.8%). The majority of them started following Pamela mainly during COVID-19, 2-3 years ago, which led to significant growth of her online community.

While Pamela Reif's community demonstrates active and engaged members on social media channels, the level of participation varies significantly among the members, leading to the identification of three distinct groups: 'consuming' members, who engage more passively by watching, playing a role in maintaining an audience and reach; 'active' members, who actively participate by liking, commenting, using hashtags, contributing to the vibrancy of her

community; and ‘connected’ members, who not only actively engage with Pamela’s content, but also interact with others, both online (through fan groups) and offline (through in-person meetings), deepening the bond between community members. These observations were made through netnography. Notably, 89% of interactions take place online, while only 11% meet in person, according to the results from the market study; typically, between members who knew each other previously, further revealed from the interviews (Interviewee #3, #4). However, when members interact, either online or offline, they exchange information about Pamela’s new products and her latest content (Interviewee #3, #10). Overall, the diversity in engagement levels underscores the different roles members play in contributing to the communities’ vitality.

Pamela Reif’s official social media channels serve as the primary source of motivation and inspiration for the fitness goals of the community, with 93.6% of the participants visiting her profile at least twice a week, trending toward daily or every two-day visits. In addition, staying up to date with Pamela’s content was important (65.2%) to very important (28.6%), further demonstrating a deep interest in her personal life and her fitness and health content, indicating a strong alignment with her brand purpose (Interviewee #5). This is also evidenced by the fact that 46.8% actively like and 33.3% comment on her social media accounts every two days. Some members also feel a deep personal connection to her, as articulated by interviewee 2: “Pamela is part of my life”. Moreover, nearly half (47.7%) have joined her Instagram broadcast channel “Pam’s Besties” to stay even closer connected with her. To foster engagement, Pamela actively interacts with her followers by responding to messages and comments, taking photos, and organizing meet-and-greets, as observed in netnography.

While engagement between Pamela and the members on her official social media channels is significantly high, direct member-to-member communication is less frequent, with a substantial

75.9% indicating annual engagement. Results from the market survey support the initial observations, that members primarily engage directly with Pamela and her content on these platforms, rather than with each other. Most members like or comment on Pamela's posts, while fewer engage with each other, particularly on Instagram. Member-to-member interaction primarily occurs within smaller Pamela Reif sub-communities, as depicted in Figure 3, and includes liking, commenting, and chatting.

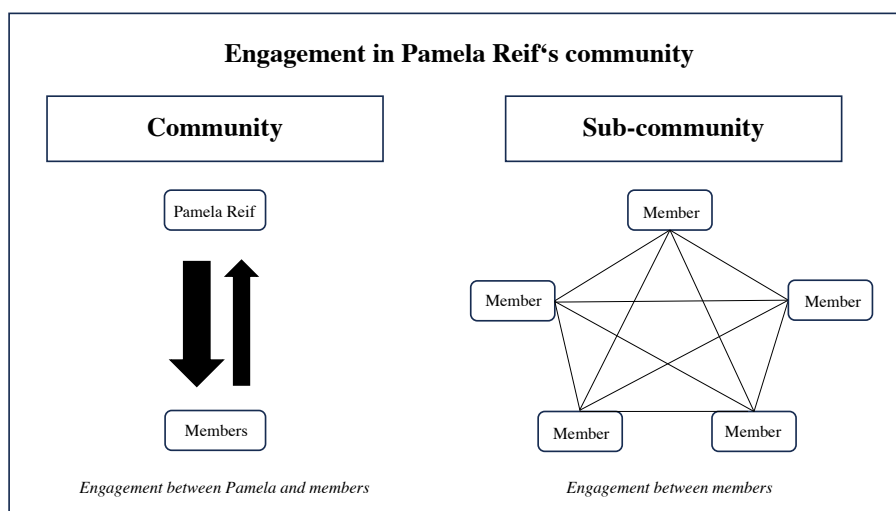


Figure 3: Engagement dynamics in the Pamela Reif community

Smaller sub-communities, such as the “Pamela Reif Workout Group” on Facebook, with 15,952 members to date, serve as spaces for members to connect, offer mutual support and establish deeper personal relationships that extend beyond fitness, as observed from netnography. Members share their workouts, motivate each other by liking or commenting and provide mutual support on each other's fitness journeys (Appendix A.4.1.1). They also maintain daily contact through their Facebook chat group “Our Feelings”, which is used to connect beyond fitness-related discussions (Interviewee #7, #9). These interactions within the sub-community illustrate how Pamela's purpose extends to fostering deeper, more meaningful connections among members, further strengthening the community bond. However, it's important to note that these sub-communities represent a small portion of the overall community and play a less relevant part, with only 20.5% participating in such groups.

Nevertheless, regardless of the specific platforms and types of interactions, engagement consistently revolves around her purpose of living a healthy and fit lifestyle, as observed in netnography, and further illustrated in Appendix A.4.1.1, uniting members on official social media platforms and in sub-communities on Facebook and serves as the key driver for engagement within the community.

Insights: Shared Values in the Pamela Reif Brand Community

As observed through netnography, Pamela Reif's community is characterized by a strong presence of shared values. The sentiment within this community is overwhelmingly positive expressing enthusiasm, passion, and gratitude for Pamela Reif's free content and her inspiration that goes beyond fitness. Interviews support these findings, as all participants committed to a healthy and fit lifestyle by working out several times a week and focused more on a healthy diet since following her (Interviewee #1, #4). Pamela Reif's community on social media is perceived as a group of like-minded individuals with common interests and values, who get inspired by Pamela (Interviewee #3, #4). The smaller Facebook sub-community is further described by Interviewee 7 as people, who share the "same mindset, and strive to be healthy, fit and happy". Quantitative market research supports these insights, as a significant portion of the participants (70.5% agree; 27.7% strongly agree) believe that members share the same values. Furthermore, all interviewees committed to a healthy and fit lifestyle working out several times a week. This was quantitatively validated as nearly all participants (61.6% agree; 34.8% strongly agree) believe that Pamela's purpose aligns with their own values and the majority (54.1% agree; 41.4% strongly agree) believe that it also aligns with their personal interests. These findings highlight the strong alignment of values and interests among the members as they could resonate and identify themselves with her brand purpose, fostering a strong connection within the community. According to recent research by Calder (2022, 750),

high levels of engagement within brand communities are frequently associated with common interests and shared values among its members, which could be validated by the findings of this research.

To conclude, sharing the same values and a common interest in fitness and health, as well as their affinity towards Pamela Reif serve as a unifying force, forming the basis of their connection. This collective commitment is a key element in her community, essential in binding members together, and fostering a strong sense of unity.

Insights: Sense of Belonging in the Pamela Reif Brand Community

Within Pamela Reif's community, the sense of belonging is notably high, with 75% of respondents agreeing and 21.4% strongly agreeing, that they feel like a part of her community. Despite limited direct interaction between members on her official social media channels, more than half of the participants (57.1%) feel connected to each other. Interviewee 1 pointed out, that the sense of belonging is unique, compared to other social media brand communities. Recognizing the names of highly active members, who frequently comment, increases the feeling of familiarity and connection, even though members don't know each other personally (Interviewee #1). This sense of belonging and mutual recognition is even stronger in smaller sub-communities such as Facebook groups. These groups typically involve daily interactions among a circle of five to ten highly active members, including group administrators who, according to netnography and interviews, play a pivotal role in maintaining engagement (Interviewee #12, #13). Members in these groups share not only their workout routines, but also their emotions, daily activities, inspirational quotes, and personal photos.

Furthermore, the interviews also revealed a strong connection between the level of engagement and a sense of belonging within the community as described by interviewee 5:” I have the feeling, that when I interacted and posted more, I would feel more of a member there“. Members who actively participate by writing comments, liking posts, or creating posts reported a stronger sense of belonging and connection to others (Interviewee #9, #11). This is exemplified by interviewee 13, who expressed feeling “[...] extremely connected to everyone in the group”, while interviewee 11 described the group as a place where she “found many friends”. Respondent 9 even referred to the group as a “second family”, underscoring the depth of connections within the sub-community. The group nurtures this bond through shared rituals and traditions, such as posting daily activity polls and sharing workout routines, which strengthens the sense of connection. This is in line with the research of Muniz and O’Guinn (2001, 413), who analyzed this as a typical behavior within engaged communities.

In addition, a significant 78.4% of the survey participants agree that the purpose of living a healthier and fitter life contributes to a stronger sense of belonging. This brand purpose is familiar to an impressive 98.2% of respondents, underscoring its vital role in Pamela Reif’s community. The alignment of personal values with her brand purpose connects the members. Members reinforce this sense of togetherness by sharing their experiences, commenting, and using hashtags related to Pamela Reif. Pamela further nurtures this community spirit by reposting co-created content from her members, whether it’s doing her workouts, wearing her collection, cooking her recipes, or sharing feedback on her latest products, as observed through netnography. The visibility of these shared experiences and the feeling of being part of a collective journey, as mentioned by Interviewee 4, “It’s nice to see who else is doing her videos [...]”, increases the sense of connection and belonging. Quantitative market research supports these observations, with 79.5% of respondents agreeing and 17.9% strongly agreeing that they

feel like members of the community. Comments about the impact of Pamela's workouts and shared physical results not only motivate but also make the fitness journey more relatable.

Overall, Pamela's brand purpose, embodied by the community as a collective commitment to living a healthy and fit life and their shared experiences enhances feelings of connection and belonging among the members.

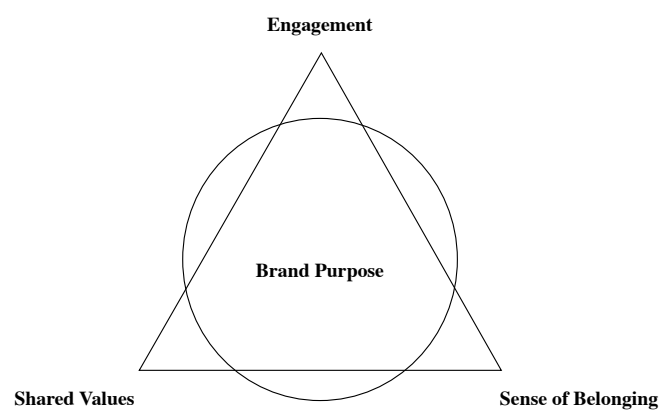


Figure 4: Interplay of shared values, sense of belonging, engagement, and brand purpose

This Figure illustrates the interconnected relationship between shared values, a sense of belonging, and engagement within Pamela Reif's brand community, with the brand purpose acting as the central unifying element. It visually demonstrates how these elements mutually reinforce each other, contributing to the cohesiveness and vitality of the community.

Insights: Support and Collaboration in the Pamela Reif Brand Community

Especially in fitness, where personal goals can be daunting, additional support can be beneficial. This was the key reason for members seeking smaller sub-communities, as insights from the interviews revealed. Most of them were looking for a group to stay active by working out with Pamela Reif's videos, achieve fitness goals and hold each other accountable, as articulated by interviewee 6: "I'm in the group, so I am doing my workouts". By posting screenshots of their workouts and liking and commenting on each other's posts, they provide

each other with mutual support. These communities serve not only as a source of motivation but also as a platform for guidance, help and accountability. They also support Pamela's brand by consuming her workout videos, sharing their own experiences through co-created content, and embodying her brand's purpose. Pamela amplifies this by reposting this co-created content, frequently sharing workout videos and challenges, creating recipes, and providing informative content to help members achieve their fitness goals, all while fostering community spirit, resulting in a mutual support system within the community, illustrated in the Appendix A.4.1.2.

A key observation from the analysis is the direct association between the duration of the membership and the level of support. The longer members have been part of the community and the more active they have been, the stronger their feelings of connection and support towards Pamela have become. These dedicated, long-term members play a pivotal role in the community, consistently showing high levels of support, even in times of disappointment, exemplified by interviewee 9: "Even though those people don't know her, they would support her, help her and do anything for her", reflecting their strong support for Pamela. These core members form the heart of the community and are fundamental to its vitality. Recognizing and valuing these members is important to nurture and strengthen the community bond, as they contribute significantly to the community spirit and are instrumental in spreading and reinforcing the brand's values and purpose. In the sub-community, interviewee 7 described the atmosphere as "[...] friendly, warm and supportive", with a focus on encouraging each other without fostering a sense of competition. While most enjoy this "lovely bond" (Interviewee #6) and the feeling of being part of it, Interviewee 7 noted that the extreme enthusiasm "doesn't seem real to me." However, Pamela's official community exhibits a more complex dynamic. While the majority (68.8% agreeing; 25% strongly agreeing) perceive it as positive and supportive, nearly half (48.2%) observe it as negative, toxic, or competitive. Seeing the physical

results of other's fitness journeys can be a source of motivation, but it can also lead to an unhealthy sense of comparison (Interviewees #3, #4).

In essence, levels of support and collaboration in Pamela Reif's community are remarkably high, with members actively encouraging each other to achieve their fitness goals and supporting Pamela by engaging with her content and creating co-created content. Pamela further supports this by frequently providing new workouts or recipes, resulting in a mutual support system within the community.

Insights: Influence and Advocacy in the Pamela Reif Brand Community

Pamela Reif's brand purpose, focused on a healthy and fit lifestyle, has significantly influenced her community. As observed through netnography and interviews, members experienced notable improvements in their physical and mental health by following her approaches from her purpose-driven content, which is offered for free and highly valued by the community (Interviewee #11, shown in Appendix A.4.1.2). Members reported weight loss, increased strength, and achieved common fitness goals, often with just 30-minute workouts (Interviewee #2). They also experienced increased confidence and happiness, leading to improved self-esteem and a more positive self-image, particularly notable among members who began following Pamela's workout plans during the COVID-19 pandemic (Interviewee #1, #4). Pamela influences her community to stay active and encourages them to make healthier lifestyle choices (Interviewee #5, #12). Beyond that, community members also become influencers by embodying her brand purpose and sharing their positive experiences with others, effectively spreading it through word-of-mouth. Remarkably, 111 out of 112 members are very likely or likely to recommend her products or workout videos. Members actively provide feedback on Pamela's products through reviews, stories, and comments and actively share their fitness

success stories on social media, using hashtags such as #pamelareifworkout, and posting before-and-after pictures, often reposted by Pamela herself (Interviewees #7, #11). These authentic experiences and opinions shared by community members serve as persuasive advertising (Interviewees #7, #10). Member reviews, similar to recommendations from trusted friends, turn brand enthusiasts into brand advocates through electronic word-of-mouth.

In addition, members are enthusiastic advocates of Pamela's products and workouts, primarily because of the physical and emotional improvements they have experienced (Interviewee #7). They often feel a strong emotional connection to Pamela because of her pivotal role in their fitness journey, leading them to actively support and engage with her content, which often translates into product purchases. Pamela's food products complement her fitness and health-focused brand purpose, as they contain less sugar and protein-rich ingredients and receive strong advocacy from the community. Additionally, Pamela's transparency in product development, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, has built trust among members and influenced their decision to purchase Pamela's products (Interviewee #10).

Overall, advocacy within the Pamela Reif brand community is notably high. By sharing their experiences, members actively promote and embody her brand purpose, influence others along the way, and spread it to a wider audience, turning from followers into passionate brand advocates.

Insights: Brand Loyalty in the Pamela Reif Brand Community

Loyalty within the Pamela Reif community manifests in three key areas: social media engagement, her own products, and product collaborations. This loyal behavior is further strengthened by Pamela's constant engagement with her followers and her perceived authentic

personality. On social media, especially on Instagram and YouTube, members are highly engaged and interact with Pamela's postings, reflecting their interest and alignment with her purpose-driven content. Her YouTube channel has become a stable part of many followers' daily lives, as evidenced by Interviewee 1, who hasn't "stopped doing her workouts since January 2020", even during her illness, highlighting the enduring loyalty of her community.

Further than that, more than half of the community (52.7%) often purchases products from Pamela's brands such as Naturally Pam, Ela Beauty or the Pam Box. These products closely align with her brand's purpose of health and fitness, driving strong loyalty and advocacy, evidenced by members' enthusiastic purchasing behavior. Even members outside of Europe express a strong desire to try out her products, with some importing them from friends and colleagues (Interviewee #6). The fact that her products sell out quickly, often accompanied by technical problems due to the overwhelming demand, is a clear indicator of the strong sense of loyalty within her community. Limited editions, like the advent calendar, create a sense of exclusivity, further enhancing demand, as shown in Appendix 4.1.1.3. Being part of Pamela's community and regularly seeing her products featured in her stories has further influenced 66.1% of members to make purchases. Interviewee 3 emphasized how this exposure increases the feeling "[...] that you need to have her products". Additionally, 75% agree, that her brand purpose of promoting a healthy and fit lifestyle significantly influences their decision to buy her products. While product collaborations with other brands, such as GHD or Puma, are also popular within her community, they are bought less frequently than her own products, with 40.2% of followers often making such purchases. These findings suggest that products, more closely aligned with her fitness and health-oriented brand purpose, such as Naturally Pam, resonate more deeply with her community, and result in increased purchasing behavior and brand loyalty, compared to beauty collaborations like GHD, as illustrated in Figure 5.

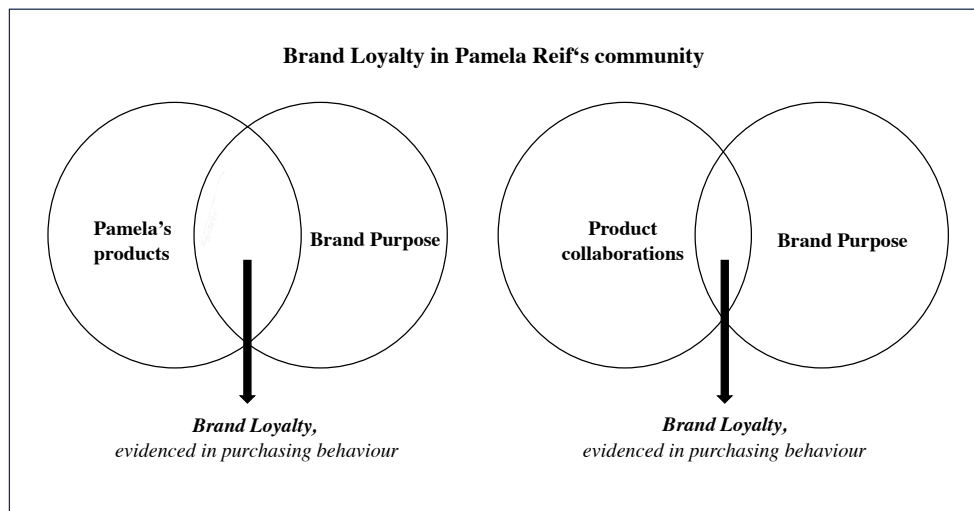


Figure 5: Impact of product-brand purpose alignment on brand loyalty

Overall, two overarching factors could be identified as major loyalty drivers within her community: Pamela's authenticity and humble personality are key loyalty drivers. Community members trust her recommendations and perceive her as authentic, which sets her apart from other influencers (Interviewee #5). Her authenticity, combined with her down-to-earth and hardworking personality, resonates deeply with her followers, elevating her status from a typical influencer to a “virtual best friend” (Interviewee #1). The personal connection, some members in her community feel is expressed by interviewee 1, who stated that she “[...] would love to hang out with her”. Her authenticity, rooted in her early career and the 'girl next door' image she cultivated during the COVID-19 pandemic, remains, and makes her relatable. Although some community members may feel somewhat disconnected due to her changing lifestyle, her commitment to promoting a healthy lifestyle remains the same, fostering strong loyalty within her community (Interviewee #3).

In summary, members of Pamela Reif brand community feel strongly connected to her and towards each other. Members share the same values and identify with her purpose, which leads to an increase in engagement and frequent purchases of her products and product collaborations.

Furthermore, her authenticity and personality are key drivers of the community's strong support and loyalty towards her and her products.

5. Discussion

This section compares the insights derived from the three individual analyses of Pamela Reif, GoPro and Supreme. It aims to highlight similarities and differences between these communities, following the framework laid out in section 3.2.

Central to this analysis is Table 4, which illustrates the impact of a brand's purpose on the six key metrics: engagement, shared values, sense of belonging, support and collaboration, brand advocacy and brand loyalty. The used rating system in the table — “+” for a positive relationship, “++” for a strongly positive one, and “-“ and “--” for negative and strongly negative relationships, respectively — helps to quantify the influence of brand purpose on these community attributes.

	<i>Pamela Reif</i>	<i>GoPro</i>	<i>Supreme</i>
<i>Engagement:</i>	+	++	--
<i>Shared values:</i>	++	+	--
<i>Sense of belonging:</i>	+	+	-
<i>Support and collaboration:</i>	+	++	-
<i>Brand Advocacy:</i>	++	++	-
<i>Brand Loyalty:</i>	++	+	-

Table 2: Impact of brand purpose on key metrics derived from individual insights

The analysis of the key metrics reveals how the purpose of a brand resonates within its community, influencing various aspects of member interaction and perception. It underscores the pivotal role of a brand's purpose in the formation of vital and engaged communities and highlights the unique ways it manifests in different brand communities.

Engagement

The key takeaway is that high levels of engagement can be attributed to the alignment of community members' values with the brand's purpose. The presence of a defined and aligned brand purpose appears to be a critical factor in cultivating and maintaining an engaged community. This is evident in the contrasting levels and types of engagement observed in the Pamela Reif, GoPro, and Supreme brand communities.

For Pamela Reif, GoPro and Supreme, a clear correlation exists between a well-defined brand purpose and high levels of community engagement. While Pamela Reif and GoPro managed to successfully align their community's values with their brand purpose over time, leading to stable and increased engagement, Supreme experienced a shift from its original purpose, leading to a decrease in engagement. GoPro's and Pamela Reif's community is driven by a shared passion, which is central to each brand's purpose, and serves as the key driver of member engagement. Community members actively participate by sharing their journeys, using specific hashtags, commenting on posts, and engaging with the products and content. Such engagement is not merely passive but involves active content co-creation and sharing, demonstrating a deep connection with the brand's purpose. Incentives to get featured by the brands' official accounts further stimulate active participation. In contrast, Supreme presents a different scenario, where a shift away from the original brand purpose led to changes in community engagement. Originally characterized by collaboration and high levels of brand enthusiasm, the community has transitioned to a marketplace. This shift indicates a move away from engagement driven by shared values and passion towards more transactional motives.

Shared Values

For a community to be truly engaged, it appears crucial for the brand to have a defined purpose that resonates with and reflects the shared values of its members. This involves consistently communicating the brand's purpose, fostering shared experiences, and aligning common interests with the brand's overarching purpose.

Both Pamela Reif and GoPro demonstrate how cultivating shared values that align with the brand's purpose can lead to robust and vibrant brand communities. In GoPro's and Pamela Reif's community, the alignment of the brand's purpose with the values of the members is evident. The community is actively engaged due to a shared interest in a certain lifestyle. This alignment not only fosters a deep sense of belonging but also encourages active participation and engagement. These strong similarities among members create a sense of resonance and identification with brand and the community, fostering a robust connection. However, as the usage of GoPro cameras diversifies, there's a risk of alienating core members. This shift underscores the importance of balancing inclusivity with maintaining the brand's essence to keep the community engaged and aligned. Supreme's experience illustrates the consequences of a brand moving away from its original purpose and values. The brand's shift towards luxury and a change in community composition have diluted its original subcultural representation. This transformation has led to a decline in engagement from core members who resonated with the brand's foundational values. The weakening of the sense of identification and alignment with the brand's original purpose has resulted in decreased engagement.

Sense of belonging

In general, the sense of belonging within brand communities seems to be closely tied to the alignment of members' values and interests with a brand's purpose. A shared passion

contributes to a strong sense of belonging. Nevertheless, challenges arise, when there is a divergence from the brand's original purpose or a switching user base, resulting in less identification and sense of community.

The brand communities of Pamela Reif and GoPro share a strong sense of belonging, rooted in a collective passion for a healthy lifestyle and adventurous pursuits, respectively. For both brands, several sub-groups have emerged, providing spaces for collaboration and mutual support. Members in these communities report strong interpersonal connections, due to shared interests and values. By sharing their experiences, commenting, and using hashtags, members reinforce the sense of togetherness, enhancing the feeling of being part of a collective journey, all united by a common goal. Furthermore, a strong correlation between member engagement and sense of belonging was identified in the communities of Pamela Reif and GoPro, as highly active members reported stronger feelings of connection. The direct engagement of the official social media accounts with the community further contributes to the overall sense of belonging. However, as stated above, members' diverging values from the brand's original purpose poses a main challenge in aligning evolving user behavior with the brand's core identity. This is exemplified in the GoPro core community about the increasing use of cameras beyond sport-related activities, as well as the commercialization of Supreme items in the aftermarket. Supreme's core members, once deeply connected, experienced polarization and disenchantment, as initial brand enthusiasts cannot identify with monetary motivated resellers entering the brand community, resulting in a weaker sense of belonging.

Support and Collaboration

The observed brand communities illustrate that a clear and positive brand purpose contributes to the creation of supportive and collaborative environments. Communities aligned with a

brand's purpose tend to thrive on mutual support, shared goals, and a positive exchange of information. Nevertheless, it became evident, that brands around personal characteristics, like body image or status symbols, are more likely to experience negative sentiment in the communities.

Pamela Reif's community is marked by strong encouragement, particularly within fitness-oriented sub-communities. Members actively support each other to achieve common fitness goals by holding each other accountable, providing motivation, and celebrating each other's successes. Especially long-term members play a pivotal role in the community, consistently showing high levels of support. Pamela herself supports her community by reposting member-created content, sharing workout videos and challenges, and offering informative content to help them achieve their goals and foster community spirit, resulting in a mutual support system within the community. While the majority perceive the community as positive and supportive, some toxicity is observed, mainly stemming from comparisons related to physical appearance and fitness levels. In the GoPro community, a positive and supportive atmosphere prevails, fostering an exchange of information, tips, and tricks. This collaborative spirit extends to helping fellow members gain visibility and getting featured, creating a vibrant ecosystem where mutual support is a cornerstone. The only negative sentiment arises from members being frustrated about their efforts to get featured by GoPro without achieving the desired visibility. In contrast, Supreme's community once again reflects a more complex scenario. Initially rooted in a supportive manner, helping others acquire sought-after pieces, the dynamics have shifted toward a more toxic environment marked by jealousy. The community's evolution into a marketplace has led to competitive, market-driven dynamics, where profit and personal advantage take precedence over the once collaborative ethos.

Influence and Advocacy

For brand advocacy, it is crucial that the brand and its purpose align with the personal values of community members, covering their perceptions of the brand and its products. This alignment fosters a willingness among members to stand up for and defend the brand or product. When evaluating the advocacy outcomes of the three brands, a broad panorama emerges.

The Pamela Reif's community is characterized by its strong advocacy and influence, rooted in the positive experiences she enables her community to have. As a role model for a healthy and fit lifestyle, Reif serves as a guiding influence for many individuals. The significant impact she has had on the lives of many, manifested both physical and mental health improvements, fosters a deep personal and emotional connection to her. These aspects turn brand enthusiasts into brand advocates. Similarly, GoPro's advocacy is characterized by members' strong willingness to recommend and defend the brand, especially in moments of other user's dissatisfaction. This loyalty is rooted in the everyday user, aligning with the brand's communicated values woven into the product DNA. Through the involvement of community members in beta testing, GoPro encourages a user-centric approach and reflects a dedication to continuous improvement, showcasing a collaborative relationship with its community and the possibility of members to shape the brand's future. When comparing to the Supreme brand community, a strong delineation stands out, as the advocacy of users has experienced strong dilution over time. Initially, the Supreme brand community strongly aligned with its brand purpose of activating American subcultures in hip-hop and skateboarding. Within this period, the community members actively engaging around Supreme were strongly supporting the brand, not only identifying with its products, but also with the purpose, as well as the lifestyle communicated. However, over time, the purpose experienced a significant shift and thereof moved into background for most users. Creating hype-driven collections, aimed at attracting mainstream

audiences, resulted in a significant decrease in credibility among its original customer bases. Consequently, the perceived purpose among the Supreme community has diverged significantly over time. The displayed shift underscores the complex interplay between brand purpose, community engagement, and the impact of strategic decisions on the overall perception and advocacy within a brand community.

Brand Loyalty

Comparing both advocacy and loyalty towards a brand reveals similar patterns and dynamics. In essence, aligning the perceived and stated brand purpose is key for activating a loyal customer base. By prioritizing authenticity and credibility, a brand can work towards vitalizing the brand community and significantly increase overall engagement.

In the Pamela Reif brand community, loyalty is strongly driven by Pamela's authenticity and personality, which foster a deep sense of connection and serve as key drivers for loyalty. Pamela's credibility and authenticity have been consistently demonstrated from the beginning of the brand's development. This authenticity coupled with a clear and credible brand purpose, fosters loyalty around her content on social media, her own products and product collaborations. Over half of the community frequently buys Pamela's branded products, demonstrating strong loyalty driven by the alignment with her health and fitness-focused brand purpose. Brand loyalty within GoPro's community is deeply rooted in the brand's legacy. GoPro's early market entry established it as the go-to camera for durable and high-performance devices. This legacy not only solidified GoPro's market position but also shaped the perception of other action camera brands, often being referred to as a "GoPro" product, due to its enduring impact. The prevalent credo of "once GoPro – forever GoPro" emphasizes a loyalty that extends beyond product quality, reflecting a commitment to the authentic lifestyle promoted by the brand. This

loyalty underscores the importance of a brand's purpose in forming an enduring and genuine brand perception. The insights applied to Supreme reveal that the ongoing decrease in authenticity and credibility contributes to diminishing brand loyalty. When the brand's public perception and community values lack authenticity, passionate brand enthusiasts not only lose their loyalty but also exit the community structure. This distinction is visually represented in Figure 9, depicted in sub-section 4.3.3, illustrating the evolving gap between the intended purpose communicated by the brand, and how it is interpreted or perceived by the community. Understanding and managing this difference is essential for brands, especially in the context of brand communities, where authenticity and shared values are key factors in building and maintaining a loyal and engaged audience.

6. Managerial Recommendations

Based on the key findings presented in section 5, derived from the comprehensive analysis of the brand (I) Pamela Reif, (II) GoPro, and (III) Supreme, the following managerial recommendations are proposed. These guidelines serve as a roadmap for brands aiming to cultivate and sustain engaged communities. Implementing these strategies not only supports the brand's purpose but also helps brands to thrive in the dynamic landscape of community-driven marketing. By following these guidelines, brands can maintain authenticity, build deeper connections with community members, and foster engagement.

1) *Encourage active engagement and collaboration:*

To enhance community engagement, companies should diversify their engagement strategies. Firms should implement a variety of approaches, such as challenges, user-generated content initiatives, and lifestyle inspiration and motivation, as exemplified by GoPro and Pamela Reif.

These diverse strategies encourage active member participation and involvement in shaping the community, resulting in elevated levels of engagement and interaction.

Further, brands should promote a culture of knowledge exchange. Therefore, the formation of sub-groups within the community should be encouraged, providing dedicated spaces for collaboration and mutual support. Learning from the success of consumer-run groups shows that these spaces offer an intimate environment for like-minded individuals to interact and foster deeper connections. In Pamela Reif's sub-community, members actively support each other and share their experiences, fostering a strong community bond. If groups are not established by community members, firms should consider creating those themselves. As in the case of GoPro, companies can encourage very active members to contribute to these groups by sharing their expertise and enriching the overall knowledge pool, further fostering a collaborative environment. This can also be seen in Supreme brand communities, where trusted members obtain functions in moderating a community and therefore serve as a catalyst for discourse.

Moreover, companies can incentivize collaboration and user-generated content by recognizing and rewarding members who actively contribute to the community's (supportive) environment. Highlighting these efforts of members, for example through features and reposts, reinforces the values of mutual support, and encourages positive interactions.

2) *Communicate shared values among community members:*

Effective communication of shared values is pivotal in cultivating a strong brand community. The process involves conveying the brand's core beliefs, goals, and cultural identity to foster a sense of shared purpose among community members. Storytelling is therefore a powerful mechanism to convey brand values in a compelling and relatable way. Brands should craft

narratives that resonate with the community, showcasing real-life examples or anecdotes that embody the shared values. This approach humanizes the brand and helps community members emotionally connect with its mission.

To ensure widespread understanding and acceptance of shared values, brands should leverage various communication channels. Social media platforms, community events, newsletters, and other mediums provide opportunities to consistently communicate brand values. This multi-channel approach helps reinforce the shared identity across diverse community segments. Therefore, it is essential to maintain a consistent message across all platforms to reinforce the brand's identity and ensure that community members receive a unified message, contributing to a shared understanding of the brand's purpose.

3) *Cultivate a sense of belonging and support:*

Encouraging sub-communities and fostering a sense of belonging through shared experiences and values can enhance community strength. Pamela Reif's and GoPro's communities benefit from these aspects. Members are willing to share part of their life and personal information in sub-communities. Nevertheless, brands should be aware of community dynamics, ensuring that they remain inclusive and supportive, rather than competitive or toxic. It is evident that brands around personal characteristics, such as status and body appearance are more likely to experience negative sentiment within communities. Supreme item resell has become a truly lucrative business model, exemplifying the immense upside potential in value generation. This leads to broad critique on both sides, scholars, and brand enthusiasts, as the individual pressure on young people increases, due to premium prices, but also limited access to the community itself. This phenomenon should be anticipated and countermeasures for toxicity and unfair behaviour, for example through community guidelines, should be integrated.

4) *Anticipate customer feedback:*

Companies should stay attuned to evolving user behaviors and preferences within the community by regularly gathering feedback to understand how community members engage with the brand and adapt strategies accordingly. As in GoPro's case, companies can involve users in beta testing, thereby valuing user feedback and ensuring that user interests are represented. This user-centric approach not only demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement but also empowers community members, making them feel integral to the brand's success. Moreover, as in the case of Pamela Reif, open, honest, and transparent communication of feedback helps members to better understand the brand's perspective. It fosters a sense of trust and authenticity within the community and ensures that members are well-informed about the brand's actions and decisions. This transparent approach can lead to stronger relationships and more engaged community members.

5) *Align the perceived and stated brand purpose:*

The discrepancy laid out in Figure 9, to be found in sub-section 4.3.3, highlights the challenges brands may face in maintaining a consistent alignment between their communicated purpose and the evolving perceptions within their user base. The growing gap between the articulated brand purpose and how it is interpreted by the community members can lead to a sense of disconnect and dissatisfaction. In response to this misalignment, individuals may seek communities that better align with their evolving perceptions and values. This migration can be observed within the Supreme brand community, underscoring the dynamic nature of brand communities and the importance of maintaining a coherent narrative that resonates with the evolving expectations of community members. Addressing this shift and revitalizing the connection to the brand's authentic purpose becomes imperative, not only for Supreme but

brands to restore and strengthen its advocacy foundations. This is crucial for brands to reinstate essential credibility and re-engage the community. This can be achieved through a redefinition of values, as well as a concerted effort to bridge the gap between the communicated purpose and the community's evolving expectations. Pamela Reif's case exemplifies how personal authenticity can drive community loyalty and advocacy. Brands should avoid drastic shifts that might be perceived as inauthentic or as a departure from core values. By returning to its foundational roots, a brand can reconnect with its authentic identity and the cultural elements that initially defined its appeal.

Implementing these recommendations should be of key interest, as brands can effectively navigate the complex dynamics of brand communities, fostering engagement and loyalty while staying true to their designated brand purpose.

7. Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the dynamics of online brand communities, it is essential to acknowledge several limitations. First, the limited time frame of approximately two months for conducting interviews, surveys, and netnography, may have impacted the depth and scope of the data collected. This potentially influences the comprehensiveness of the collected insights. Additionally, for the Supreme brand in particular, the inherent hostility observed within its communities presented challenges in securing a sufficient number of respondents, potentially influencing the depth and breadth of the findings related to this brand. Furthermore, the focus of the research on one specific brand within the lifestyle and health, technology, and fashion industry, may limit the generalization of findings. The unique characteristics and dynamics of these individual brand communities may not be entirely applicable to other brands within the same industry, as community dynamics might differ.

Moreover, the insights of this study are based on the perspectives and experiences of voluntary participants, which may introduce a potential bias, as individuals who choose to participate in such studies are often more engaged with the brand or have stronger opinions, which may not accurately represent the views of the broader brand community.

8. Future Research Directions

While this research delves into the exploration of the interconnection of brand purpose and brand communities within different industries such as lifestyle and health, technology, and fashion, avenues for future research can broaden the scope for a more comprehensive understanding. Future research may not be limited to a particular brand or industry. Through the inclusion of several brands from either different or similar sectors, researchers can identify trends and differences in the dynamics of brand communities. Furthermore, the application of long-term studies can reveal how brand communities evolve over time, particularly in response to changes in brand purpose or market trends. This approach would provide insights into the sustainability and long-term impact of brand purpose on community dynamics. Additionally, it could be investigated how individual consumer behavior within brand communities is influenced by the brand's purpose, particularly focusing on purchasing decisions, loyalty, and word-of-mouth advocacy.

By exploring these areas, future research can significantly contribute to the understanding of brand communities and brand purpose, offering valuable implications for both academic theory and practical brand management.

9. Conclusion

Based on the insights of this study, the proposed questions, laid out in chapter 1 around the impact of brand purpose on engagement, shared interests and identities, perceived authenticity and purchase behaviors within brand communities, can be answered.

- *How does brand purpose affect the level of engagement within these brand communities?*

When a brand's purpose aligns with the shared values and interests of its community, engagement tends to be high. This positive alignment reinforces the brand's identity and fosters a sense of belonging among community members. However, shifts in the perceived or stated brand purpose, or changes in community composition that deviate from original values, can lead to reduced engagement. Therefore, maintaining a balance between inclusivity and preserving the core identity becomes crucial for maintaining a vibrant community.

- *How does a brand's purpose contribute to the development of shared interests and identities amongst community members?*

A brand's purpose plays a pivotal role in nurturing shared interests and identities among community members. When community members resonate with the brand's purpose, it acts as a unifying force, that strengthens the sense of belonging and enhances shared experiences. This alignment between brand purpose and community values fosters a deep connection, making community members feel like they are part of a collective journey. Yet, changes in a brand's purpose, particularly when not well-received by the community, might weaken the alignment of shared interests and identities. Such shifts and evolving user behavior, that diverge from the brand's essence may present challenges.

- ***How does the existence of a vital brand community affect perceived authenticity and purchasing behavior?***

A vital brand community significantly influences the perceived authenticity of the brand. Positive interactions, collaborations, and support enhance this authenticity. However, challenges may arise, such as toxicity or dissatisfaction, impacting the overall positive atmosphere. Transformations within a community, especially toward commercial motivations, may lead to shifts in authenticity. Changes in dynamics, such as a community turning into a marketplace, can impact purchasing behavior and the overall satisfaction of core members.

Based on the insights and the sub-questions, our central research question can be answered:

- ***Does a well-functioning, engaged, vital brand community require brand purpose?***

It can be confidently affirmed that a well-functioning, engaged, and vital brand community indeed requires a clear brand purpose. The critical factor lies in the alignment of the brand's purpose with the values of its members. This alignment contributes to higher levels of engagement, a heightened sense of belonging as well as a supportive environment in the community. Conversely, when there is a misalignment or shift in perceived purpose, it negatively impacts the feeling of belonging among community members and drift to a more toxic environment. Further, members, whose values align with the brand's purpose, are more likely to defend the brand against criticism and perceive it as authentic, nurturing brand loyalty.

Figure 10 depicts the impact of aligning the brand's purpose with the brand community values, on the six key metrics of engagement, shared values, sense of belonging, support and

collaboration, brand advocacy and brand loyalty. Accordingly, “+” illustrates a positive, “++” a strongly positive, whereas “-“ and “--” represent a negative and strongly negative correlation.

	<i>Intersection</i>		<i>Discrepancy</i>	
Brand Purpose	=	Brand Community Values	≠	Brand Purpose
<i>Engagement:</i>	++		--	
<i>Sense of belonging:</i>	+		-	
<i>Shared values:</i>	++		--	
<i>Support and collaboration:</i>	+		-	
<i>Brand Loyalty:</i>	+		-	
<i>Brand Advocacy:</i>	+		-	

Figure 6: Break-down of brand purpose impact on key metrics variables, based on Madupu and Cooley (2010)

In summary, the research question can favorably be answered, showing that the brand purpose plays a pivotal role in shaping engagement, sense of belonging, shared values, support, advocacy, and loyalty within a brand community.

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A.1 Interview Guide – Semi-structured

Part 1:

Hello, my name is [name]. I'm a student at NOVA SBE and as part of my work project I am conducting research about brand communities. This interview will last approximately 45 minutes. I recognized that you are an active member of the [brand] community and I am really interested about getting more insights about you and your participation in the community.

With your permission, I would like to record this interview with the purpose of analyzing it later. All your answers will remain anonymous and will be treated confidentially (no personal information will be shared).

Part 2:

I) Opening Question: *Could you please briefly introduce yourself and your experience with (I) GoPro, (II) Pamela Reif, (III) Supreme?*

II) Topics to be developed

1. Level of engagement:

- a. *Type of social media platforms*
- b. *Level of engagement in the community (like, comment, share, repost...)*
- c. *Frequency of interaction with other community members (chat, meet-ups,...)*
- d. *Utilisation of hashtags related to the brand*

2. Influence and Advocacy: *support of the brand/ defending the brand/ standing behind the brand*

3. Support and Collaboration: *Attending brand/ community events/ Meet & Greet*

4. Impact on brand loyalty: *Consumption of latest products as soon as they are released*

5. Sense of belonging:

- a. *Same values as the other members, connection to the brand community*
- b. *Participation in other brand communities – level of engagement there compared to this brand community*

III) Brand Purpose - If not developed naturally:

1. *Do you know the brand's purpose and what it stands for?*
2. *Do you embrace/ embody the brand's purpose?*

IV) Topics to be developed:

1. *Brand perception – how does the person see the brand*
2. *Brand knowledge – what does the person know about the brand and its values, purpose*

V) Personal Information

1. **What is your Gender?** *Female/Male/Other*
2. **What is your age?** _____

A.2 Interview Transcripts Pamela Reif

Interviewee #1: 34 years, female, New York

- *She has followed her on Instagram since January 2020 and saw her food posts and her great body. She follows her on YouTube, the Pam App, and Instagram, she likes all her posts and visits her profile every day to stay updated, comments sometimes, and uses hashtags or tags her when she bakes a recipe from Pamela. It is **her favourite account on Instagram.***
- *She was really skinny before she started following her and she healed her relationship with food through her, by including more stuff in her diet such as oatmeals, and nut butters, and she got stronger.*
- *Her workouts are her passion, her “me time”, with having two kids and being married.*
- *She has done her workouts 5 times a week since 2020. She never stops, even when she has a flu. She does it because she truly enjoys it. She has various workouts and has kept it fun and fresh, that’s why she kept going with her for 4 years already. **“I haven’t stopped doing her workouts since January 2020.” I do it. Even when I am sick with a flue, or sore throat, I will do it. I am doing this because I truly enjoy it. I love her workouts; they are so fun!**” She has various workouts and has kept it fun and fresh, that’s why she kept going with her for 4 years already.*
- ***“She is like my virtual best friend, I would love to hang out with her technically!”***
- *For her, Pam comes across like a humble person, and she loves how positive she is. Even when she had a crampy morning, she is smiling, because Pam smiles in her videos.*
- *She saw results on her body, gained muscles and strength*
- *She cannot get her products in the US but she would love to.*
- *When negative comments arise, she would also defend her, cause she genuinely supports her and stands behind her, recommends her products or workout videos to family and friends, and feels like being a part of her community, even though she doesn’t interact with other community members. She recognizes other people in the community but doesn't know them in person.*
- *She would to meet her because she significantly changed her lifestyle and the way she thinks about herself.*
- ***She thinks that she is super authentic, and only promotes the products that she genuinely loves and stands behind, not just to sell something as many other influencers do. She also follows other influencers on Instagram but doesn’t comment there or feel the same connection that she has within the Pam community.***
- *She lives her brand purpose of living a fit and healthy lifestyle and feels that her other community members also share the same values and goals.*
- *Pamela Reif influenced her decision to purchase healthier snacks, look for ingredients, and cut out refined sugar completely.*

Interviewee #2: 25 years, female, Teheran

- *She is a big fan of Pamela Reif, and really loves her and her workout videos, knows her through her German boyfriend. Since 2020, she started following her and does her workout plans every single day.*
- ***“Pamela is part of my life.”** She follows her on Instagram and YouTube, she is also a member of the app and has a subscription. She made all her family and friends follow her.*
- *She likes all her posts, sometimes comments and always watches her story. Goes on her profile every single day. She has linked her only once but wants to do that more often.*

- *For her, she is a huge inspiration for mindset, body, and fashion. “Not only for workouts, but also about fashion, and mindset. She is a huge inspiration to me.” That’s why I am keeping up with her that much. She is a big inspiration to any girl.*
- *Yes, she would support her when shitstorms arise.*
- *A negative point about her is that she didn’t speak up in the Iranian protest, she thinks she should raise her voice because she has such a massive audience and can make an impact because women are still suppressed in Iran.*
- *She would love to try her products but has no access to them. She recommends her workout videos to her friends.*
- *There is a connection between the people, who follow her, but everyone follows her for several reasons. Most people who keep up with her have a similar mindset. She feels connected and like a member of her community. Her passion and the ways she involves people in her stories is unique.*
- *Her participation in other brand communities is less.*
- *She embodies the brand’s purpose, living a healthy fit life as she works out several times a week. She is part of her daily life, her routine. She would like to be in touch more with members of the community but has never thought of getting more engaged with others.*
- *She really believes that she only sells things she likes and that her brand is authentic, but sometimes it’s too much advertising.*

Interviewee #3: 27 years, female, Germany

- *She has followed her since the end of 2019. Since Corona, she started to become a Fan Girl. During that time, she went up at 6 am to work out for 1 hour following her workout plan and went to work after. During that time, she has experienced a lot of changes in her body.*
- *She follows her only on Instagram and has the Pam app. She visits her profile every day and likes all her posts and comments often. Tags her on some posts when she did a super hard workout or cooks one of her recipes. Pamela has also liked some of her comments on Instagram, which she is really proud of. She uses hashtags sometimes.*
- *She really likes the Naturally Pam Products and bought also Ela Beauty, she has the Pam box, a monthly membership, where you get Pam’s favourite products. She has had this since the 2nd or 3rd edition. She bought the advent calendar and has the cookbooks. She shares recipes on the app with friends and likes them because they are easy and turn out to be successful and taste yummy. She likes that she has the recipes always on hand because they are in the app.*
- *“She has a reputation for putting a lot of thought into what products she offers.”*
- *In her friend’s group, there are already some fangirls who also have the Pam Box and the advent calendar, and we “like to talk about it, especially about what was in the Pam Box or the advent calendar.”. During Corona, she video chatted with her best friends to do the workouts together.*
- *“Other than that, I haven’t joined any community there.”*
- *She would love to meet her in a meet and greet, she would like to participate in one of the experiences you can win with her .”She just always comes up with something cool for her followers. (cooking class at Vapiano..).*
- *She would defend her in shitstorms, but it depends also on the situation.*
- *She believes that the community is built from like-minded people, but it’s hard to say with nearly 10 million followers. There are also just people who like to watch her content because she is attractive. She believes that her main target group are mostly young women, who want to work out more and see her as an inspiration, also to eat healthier and live a healthier lifestyle.*

“I can imagine that many younger girls see her as a role model, inspiring them to engage in more sports, strive for a healthy diet, and adopt an overall healthier lifestyle.”

- *She thinks that she is funny, likes her positivity, and that working out seems to look easy.*
- *She follows her for so long, **because seems like she puts a lot of effort in everything she does.** Regularly new recipes, new workout plans every 2 weeks, new products, app, workouts, etc...*
- *She thinks that her products are cheap, compared to other advent calendars, apps,*

Interviewee #4: 25 years, female, Germany

- *Found her during the lockdown in 2020, her sister did the workouts as well, got inspired and started them too, was the first time she heard about her. Started to do her workout videos every day during that time and got really fit and saw her muscles, **she enjoyed the workouts as they got easier from time to time and she saw quick results even by “only” doing 30 Minutes every day.** „Even with the 30-minute plan, it's impressive what results you can achieve, by sticking with it, every day or, well, 4-5 times a week.”*
- *Since that time she stuck to doing these workouts because they are super **convenient**, you can do them from – **anywhere, anytime**. She has her favourites, which she does regularly, saves time because you don't have to drive somewhere, and **lots of diversity of workouts from beginner-friendly to specific target areas of the body, short videos 10-15 minutes,***
- *Follows her on YouTube, Instagram (because of her workout plans), Pam App for free, Cookbook.*
- *Likes her posts, watches her stories daily and is up to date, doesn't comment or share a lot.*
- ***Actually, I bought the bars, nut butters, and everything at dm and tried them all out. Definitely a strong brand.***
- *She is **not a member of an online community but interacts with other friends, who are also part of the Pam community, and like her and doing her workouts.** Exchanges with friends, how she likes the workout videos etc,.. **Does know a lot of community members in her own circle at home.***
- *She would go to a meet and greet, but it's not super important to her*
- *She would do nothing in case of shitstorms, but she uses Instagram more like a passive user (barely comments on anything), would still continue doing her workouts, just likes posts and watches her stories*
- *She likes some of her products (Naturally pam), some taste too healthy for her, and the Pam X Puma collection. She would purchase some of her products, when she drops something cool, but sometimes she **makes you feel that you need to have her products,***
- *She believes that the people, who follow her and do her workout videos share the same goals, a similar target group. **“I believe they are young girls from all over the world, from all nationalities, who aim to be fitter and healthier.”***
- *She really liked the time when Pamela Reif reposted pictures/videos of her community while **doing the workouts.** It was interesting to get to know other community members and see who else was behind the phone, doing her workouts, that did really motivate her and probably also other community members. I also found it cool when she shared posts from people in her community who tagged her. **“It's nice to see who else is doing her videos”** and practicing the sport. **I don't know, I find it really motivating** when you see others doing it too. It's pretty cool.”*
- *She feels like a member and part of this community (positive: motivates and sees that other people are also on their journey, some people are also “only” doing 30 minutes, 'So, it's super motivating.', negative: comparison on social media, fitter, skinnier,) „I believe that constant **comparison in this community can be quite dangerous,** especially for younger girls, who don't*

feel really confident in their body.” „**I believe that comparison also plays a role in this community on Instagram** “.)

- She had a huge influence on her life, she got fitter, more toned, more muscles, decided not to eat any sweets and felt better in her own body, **she wants to come back to that time as this was a formative time for her**. She felt fitter, stronger, healthier, was eating healthier, **she felt her best**. It was her daily routine to work out with Pamela in the evening, it was not even a question and **she loved it**. “**It became a habit**; for me, it wasn't a question of whether I would do sports in the evening or not. I enjoyed it, I wanted to do it, and it was actually fixed in my plan”
- She was more authentic in the beginning, but still, **she comes across as honest**, and she **believes in what she is saying**. But since she has so many followers, and lives in a big villa in Ibiza, and has much time to workout, it is **less relatable** for people who work full time, too much muscles for her taste, it was more authentic when she was cooking in her small kitchen in Germany, showing her followers what she eats, how she cooks, etc,... more relatable than showing her followers her big house with pool, and this builds a distance which she can feel. More like a huge star over the years... She is not someone anymore, that you can identify yourself with, lost connection to reality, no comparability anymore. (during lockdown she was also in her small kitchen in Karlsruhe, cooking, taking her followers along., more relatable, more authentic, real, down to earth...)

Interviewee #5: 40 years, female, UK

- She has followed Pam since the corona pandemic, does her workouts, found her through YouTube, and then started following her on Instagram as well.
- She likes to watch her stories and likes her posts, sometimes she comments. “**I like to see what workouts she is working on and I quite like to see what she is doing in her personal life.**” Doing the releases for the pam workout gear etc..
- She discovered the Facebook group 8 months ago. She really likes the community because they're **holding each other accountable for what they're doing**. She is single and lives on her own, so its up to her to move her body and do the workouts. She doesn't have someone to go to and do the workouts together, so **I quite like the community to see what other workouts other people are doing, how they rate them, before I try them, to see what other people like**. This influences her decision on which workout she does. It's nice that everyone is so genuine to each other and says well done. She gives the others a thumbs up, leaves a comment and supports them. “**It's nice that everyone is so genuine to each other and says well done.**” “**Its nice to be part of that.**”
- There were a couple of other Facebook groups that were a bit strange and just people posting random things. „**Other groups didn't feel like a community**. “**I quite like that people post pictures, and updates of not just the workouts, but a little bit more about their lives and how it fit in with their lives. The other groups seemed to be more competitive.** „She likes to see that the members are sensitive enough to say, that they go for a walk instead of doing the workouts etc.. they seem to have a good balance. It never felt like a competitive group, this community has always been **really friendly and positive to each other**.
- She is not using hashtags
- She would support her in case of shitstorms and would have commented on it, defending her. “I would have commented if I had seen something like that.”

- *She would love to meet her in a meet and greet. **“She changed my life, more my lifestyle and my point of view on fitness”**. She holds her accountable, and she feels a huge difference when she doesn't start the day properly with one of her workouts*
- *She thinks she is funny and laughs about herself, which she likes. **“I like her character and her personality.”***
- *Her products are not available in the UK, but she loves the chocolate nut butter, and her colleagues bring them over from Germany because they know how much he likes her products. **“I'm actually going to keep some of them in my locker at work so I don't just eat them all.”** Her friends buy the products for her because they know how much she likes her products.*
- *“I had a look at the Puma stuff and it looked really comfy, but I didn't manage to get some of it.”*
- ***“I guess technically she is an influencer, but I think she holds a lot of responsibility in each section so with the fitness, she's also doing the food and spends her time creating all the recipes on the app.”***
- *She feels like a member of the community but has the feeling that: **“I have the feeling, that when I interacted and posted more, I would feel more of a member there”***
- *I really don't like calling her an influencer, because I don't think she comes into that title. **“I don't feel like she is not an influencer for some reason”** She feels a bit more natural, a bit more health-oriented than someone you would influence you online.”*
- *She thinks that she has changed lifestyles, rather than lives. All the healthy products, the ideas, the recipes, the workout and all the efforts that she puts into the workout plans. **“All the work she puts into this is incredible, especially for how young she is.”***
- ***“It comes across that she cares.”***
- *She makes a lot more healthier food choices, and she always wanted to be more toned, fitter and stronger. The workouts have helped her to be fitter and healthier. **“Because of doing more workouts, it felt a bit hypocritical to eat rubbish.”** Leading to following a healthy and fit lifestyle and living her brand purpose. **“She makes me wanna eat healthier and be healthier”**.*
- *She believes that is authentic the way she promotes things. It feels really naïve to say it, because you want to think, that she's just doing this for the money and it's a huge business. But it's a lifestyle for her.*
- ***“She comes across really genuine, which is another huge reason that I've carried on following her and I'm interested in what else she is bringing out all the time.”***

Interviewee #6: 41 years, female, UK

- *She always liked to stay active and found her workout videos 18 months ago*
- *She follows her on Instagram and watches her stories, but is more of a Facebook user, and has her free version of the Pam app.*
- *Discovered the Facebook group about a year ago, she tried to stay active with the group and in September she decided that she would exercise with her every single day and post every single day about the exercise that she did. **“It's such a lovely bond”** in the Facebook group.*
- *She likes a lot of the posts of the other members. **“It's always nice to know that somebody's there and seeing what you're doing and giving you that encouragement to keep going. That's definitely what is done for me.”** When I post something and somebody likes it or comments something, you kind of want to keep doing it because you know it's being recognized”.*
- *I'm in the group, so I am doing my workouts*

- *The girls from the Facebook group are from all over the world, she just knows someone from this group, who lives quite closely but is an online community to motivate and support each other.*
- *In cases of shitstorms, she wouldn't do anything. People are offended really easily these days.*
- *She would like to purchase her products, but it's not available in the UK*
- *She thinks that they share the same values in the group and that there's like a certain connection between them, "as they share a love for working out and staying fit, other than that she doesn't know. But everybody just seems so lovely and it doesn't matter what you wear, everybody seems to be welcoming and nice about everything you say and do which gives you that feeling like: „Even though you don't know these people they almost feel like they're your friends because they're being so nice and supportive with you."*
- *The main purpose of the FB group is to hold each other accountable, to inspire and to work out. **The group motivates you to keep going and to continue your fitness journey.**" "Sometimes when you've had a hard day at work if you want to come home have a bag of chocolate, sit on your bum, these people these complete strangers, are staring you on and make you feel like you're getting off your bum."*
- *Is a part in other online communities, and helps women to be the best version of themselves they could ever be. They are suffering with anxiety and depression and need a person to talk to*
- ***"I think I'm definitely fitter, I feel better it's great for not only physical health, but your mental health. It's amazing!"***
- *She seems like the nicest person, I have never met her, but you can almost tell by how she speaks in the live video shows and the passion she has for what she does. It all comes out. **"It's nice to see, that she is not doing this for herself, but also everybody else and that seems like genuine niceness. You know she seems genuinely lovely."***
- *She is inspired by another member, who is only 19 years old, she's had two strokes and she carries on and tries to keep going and exercising. She is really inspiring to her, because she has so many setbacks, and she actually keeps going... This hasn't stopped her and she just keeps going and keeps exercising and keeps trying to look after herself as best she can, so I think she's fantastic.*

Interviewee #7: 27 years, female, Netherlands

- *Started following her in May 2021, has some physical conditions and it's beneficial for her to work out, she challenged herself to do the workouts for 30 days, to see how she would feel, and how her energy levels were and **she was hooked after only a few days**. Besides that, she saw incredible results in her body. Since that time, besides a short break where she only did 1-2 workouts a week, she continues to do the workout plans that Pamela suggests and feels really good doing them.*
- *She follows her on Instagram, Facebook, Pam App*
- *She visits her profile daily, and she likes all her posts but doesn't comment on there*
- *Facebook group: She was looking for a **group mainly to clarify her questions**, "do you also struggle with this" How can I improve here? How do you feel when doing them?" Is it easy or hard for you?" to get some feedback, when she **is in doubt** if she is doing something correctly, then **she will post this in the chatting group "our feelings"**, to feel connected and exchange about the intensity of the workouts, to not feel lonely, because, in her videos, all the workouts seemed to be pretty easy, which in fact they aren't, and she likes to see what other people do for workouts. That's when she actively searched and found this group online.*

- *There was another group, which was more about advertising, but “**this group was exactly what I was looking for**”, She really likes the atmosphere here, because **everyone is super friendly, loving and kind to each other and it motivates her to do the workouts**”, but also to take care of her own body and listen to it, because this is also what the others share. That they took it slow, etc.. **not a place for comparison but rather to inspire and support everyone on their journey**. Feels a bit guilty when the daily pool comes up, if they were active today or not and she didn’t do a workout. It does inspire and motivate her.*
- *She really likes the reviews and how others perceive the intensity of new workouts that she releases. Helps her on days when the motivation is not there to come back to her discipline and do it, to feel better afterwards. **When she needs some motivation, she goes to the Facebook group and does the workout then.***
- *Facebook Feed: Reposts from other girls, what workouts they did, how they rated it, how they liked them, influences her decision to do them or not, when people are super enthusiastic she gives it also ago.*
- *Not super active in the group, but she likes and scrolls through it every day*
- ***Chat group: “Our Feelings” updates daily**, To ask her questions, see other people’s opinion, get some help, example: when the Barbie video got cut short, everyone in the Facebook group was talking about that and making some speculations about why this would be and if the others had also read this mean German article that stated that the moves in the workout video were inappropriate. She googled why it got cut short and couldn’t find a reason apart from that the Ken moves weren’t like her, that’s why she reacted super fast and deleted that part of this video. She doesn’t understand why she took out that part, not telling out why.*
- *Doesn’t use hashtags on Instagram, because its her professional site for modeling*
- ***Shitstorms: She wanted to defend her, but she was afraid that she would get the same strong hate messages and reactions that Pamela received.** She wanted to protect herself from that and decided to not comment anything; even though she would have liked to do so and defend her. She felt really sorry for her and messaged her privately if she was okay. It was on her mind*
- *Products: She has her fitness mat, and ela beauty, but doesn’t like it, has some naked puma, and doesn’t buy naturally pam products (they don’t fit in her keto diet). She is more likely to buy her products and trys them out, because she really likes her and what she is doing. She is more eager to try out her products. **She orders a lot from Pamela’s brand and when she gets a parcel, her boyfriend comments: “Oh no, not another Pam one”...** She is really likely to recommend her product to others because a part of the Ela beauty products, and she really likes them.*
- ***She thinks that the girls from the Facebook community share the same values and have the same goal**, and passion of getting fitter and healthier, but she also suspects that not everyone has a balanced life with working out, but in general, she believes that they all have the **same mindset and strive to be healthy, fit and happy.***
- ***She feels really connected to the other members and recognizes some names and thinks that you know them a little bit because some of them post every day.***
- *Influence/ Impact of Pamela on you: She is much stronger, she got more toned, and her **physical health improved, which influences her mental health as well, as she feels more confident in her body.** She is also proud of herself for her consistency.*
- *She likes her content and the way she looks and workout and believes it is authentic, but striving for that perfection that she has is nothing that everyone can and will achieve. Pamela comments that it’s ugly and she hates flat hair in the back, this comment really triggered her, because Zinzi has flat hair in the back.*

- *Sometimes the girls are soo extremely enthusiastic too positive, too much positivity and spreading love, “I love you all sooo much” “That doesn’t seem real to me.” be unauthentic, because you don’t know them personally, and even though you share a lot on their, those people are not real friends. Not honest comments.*
- *She enjoys the group, she likes the fact that everyone is super friendly, warm and nice and supportive of each other, but she doesn’t feel like becoming more engaged because it’s not her type of people. “There are a lot of messages that I really like, I enjoy the group, I like the fact that everyone is friendly, warm and supportive.”*

Interviewee #8: 33 years, female, Chez Republic

- *She discovered her two years ago, her fitness trainer recommended YouTube workouts (growingannas), but didn’t enjoy doing them, and then she discovered Pam’s channel on YouTube and started doing them. The workouts are fun, dancing, uses her workout plans.*
- *Instagram, YouTube, Tik Tok, Facebook, Pam app*
- *She was looking for a group to talk about her workouts, and she found the Pam **community online on Facebook which “is perfect for chatting, and support.”** In this group for 1,5 years*
- *Watches her story every day, likes her posts, and comments, follows some girls from the Facebook group on Instagram and is in contact with them*
- ***Daily on the Facebook group to post her workout session, comment on the other member’s workout sessions, support and get in touch with the others.***
- *“She was looking in the Facebook group for some support and talk with other people, who like her, love her and do her workouts because in her family or my friends nobody doesn't work out. “To get in contact with other people who also work out and chat and it motivates her to stay on track and work out four/five times a week. She likes to read the other posts, “**I comment or like so that the other girls can see that I'm supporting them.**”*
- ***Chat group: Our feelings: What workout plans they did, how they are today when someone is new to guide them on how to begin, what workouts to choose if a workout is intense, share pictures when Pam products arrive at home. “Some girls also write about their feelings, If they had a bad day or good day, what they achieved etc..”***
- ***She feels a connection between her and the other members, especially with three or four of them, one girl is from Slovakia it's not far away from us and the other two are Maria and TJ, these are the two admins. They are super active and comment on every post,***
- ***This online community is there to chat, push each other, motivate, support and inspire. “It’s just online because every one of us somewhere else yeah so it's impossible to meet. But if it's possible it would be nice.”***
- *She feels that there is a community, a strong bond between all of the members. The **Members in this group are “always friendly, supportive and push each other to be better and better!”** Sometimes when I don’t feel like working out, but then I see the Facebook page and every girl, that has already worked out, and then she pushes herself to workout out and **“do at least something”**.*
- *She likes the recipes a lot, she loves her naturally pam products, but shipping is expensive, and she was lucky to get an advent calendar. She loves all her products, but they are not available for her and are too expensive.*
- ***Uses hashtags when she is posting on Instagram, and use maybe hashtags cooking with Pam or Pamela Reif***

- *When someone would write hate comments, she would stand behind her and write a comment because it's really easy to hate someone online but I think that when they meet her they would never say this.*
- *Less active in other communities*
- *More active and fitter now, more consistent through chatting in the group, she has one hour just for herself. "I go upstairs, look myself in the bedroom and work out. I have at least one hour for me, just for me. Not with kids. Not with everybody. Just me and the workout."*
- *She is honest, and authentic and believes in what she says and the products she uses.*

Interviewee #9: 31 years, female, Slovakia

- *She followed her since the beginning of 2014. She started to work out with Pamela 3 years ago to be in good shape after giving birth to two children.*
- *In the FB Community for 2 years: Facebook suggested following this group. From the first time, all the girls were really nice to me. **"That group is like a family to me."***
- ***They share their journey, what workouts they are doing, and how we are feeling. "It is really strong and powerful for me."** All the people from this community and the energy to work out make it special to her. **"I really like this FB Community...because I found many friends"**.*
- *It was difficult for her to go to the gym always, more convenient to work out from home with her daily schedule and her kids.*
- *She did every single workout from the workout plans, even when she was sick.*
- *She follows her on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube, and she has the Pam App.*
- *She likes to cook recipes and the diversity of the workouts*
- *Facebook group: She likes the posts of the workouts that the others are doing and writes comments to cheer them up and motivate them, **feel connected to especially 5 girls.***
- *She is also active on the chat group, she responds to the questions, and its not only about working out. **"It is much more personal questions, topics and information, like issues in the family and we can cheer us up and I think it's really nice that we can tell anything to those girls"**. She posts some pictures of her family trips in this chat group to interact more with the girls.*
- *The community means a lot to her. **"I think these girls are my friends. I am not afraid to tell them anything, because they are very supportive and when they have some problems, they also share them with us. "Some of best friends, some are just friends. She shares her daily life there.***
- *The interaction only happens online, but when she travels she will contact and meet them*
- *Sometimes I tell my husband about them and he wonders who are those people.*
- *The products are not available in Slovakia, but she tried some of them and loves them*
- *She watches her story daily, she likes her posts, she comments, and when she sees negative comments, she tells her opinion about this, **"I would defend her always"**, because she wants people to feel more self-confident, she makes people happier, it's choice to follow her, you don't have to*
- *The FB group is not toxic at all, it is really supportive*
- *What connects them as a group is to keep our bodies in good shape, to be healthy, not only physically, but also mentally, to be kind, to think positively, and more importantly to be more beautiful on the inside. But the connection goes beyond staying fit*
- *Other FB Communities are more toxic (The mother community she is part of)*

- *This FB Community is so special. “Even though those people don’t know her, **they really like her, would support her, help her and do anything for her**” (Pamela), and they are like best friends to me but also to anyone else.*
- *She is more conscious about the ingredients and tries to eat healthily since following her and cooking her recipes*
- *They are a bit disappointed with Pamela because “Sometimes we think that she forgets about this community, that has taken her to this level.” When we didn’t have a video for 3 weeks and didn’t post workouts workout plans. **That she forgets about the community, which was with her since the beginning** since she has a bigger audience now and she focuses more on this audience. “*
- *We also talked about this in our chat group, and the people, who brought her on to that level, but also understand that she wants to grow and doesn’t want to be in the same place all the time. “**She will do anything for us when she is back from China, It is only temporary.**”*

Interviewee #10: 23 years, female, Austria

- *She started following her in 2020, during Covid-19 and started doing her YouTube videos in lockdown, she likes how short the videos but intense they are, and does them daily, she likes her Videos on YouTube*
- *Started following her on Instagram, and it feels like I am following her journey, which is super interesting, “I think she is cool”. She really enjoys watching her stories, likes her posts and reels, and comments sometimes*
- *She still does her workouts regularly, but not daily as she doesn’t have that much time anymore during her studies*
- ***She really likes the bars from naturally Pam, as they give her the necessary energy when she is studying***
- *She posts sometimes, when she does a workout video from her on social media, got reposted by Pamela twice, which she is proud of*
- *She really likes it, when Pamela posts community created content and you see who else is doing the workouts, etc..*
- ***She doesn’t know anyone from the online community***
- ***But in her friends group, she did the workouts together with her roommates and her friends in the gym, it motivates her more, it’s a small competition, that creates a bond between her and her friends when they work out together.***
- *She would never write a negative comment, because “she is also just a human, like you and me, defend her as she is also just human and makes mistakes”*
- ***“She doesn’t deserve this much hate!”***
- *She would love to meet her at a meet and greet*
- ***She likes the naturally pam products (Muesli, and bars), but they are quite expensive for her... when Pamela offers discount codes, she shops them.** She thinks its genuine that she offers those codes, to make it more available to the broader mass, with less money like students.*
- ***She wants to try the Ela Beauty products, because she likes the philosophy of natural ingredients and thinks it’s cool, that she offers now more than just food-related products with this philosophy (also beauty).***
- *“She is a big inspiration to me”*
- *She buys the products because of the natural philosophy.*
- ***“I trust her completely.” She posted a lot about the process of how the bars were created etc,.. so she thinks she knows the ingredients and trusts her more as she could be part of the***

development and was part of the journey. That's also a reason why she buys them and why she trusts her that much.

- *Sharing the same passion and interest for a healthy and fit lifestyle is a central bonding point in her friend's group, creates a bond, and it's nice to see that we have her as the same role model and inspiration. When you are passionate about healthy eating, fitness and a more natural lifestyle, you will come across Pamela sooner or later, as this is her main content/ focus.*
- *She thinks that the people who follow her share the same values and the same passion for that, and that this unites them, feeling a sense of belonging through shared values and common interests.*
- *She identifies herself with this healthy lifestyle, during corona she started to be more active, did more workouts and looked after her body, was thinking more about what she was eating, as you cooked a lot more during this time since you had the time to do it. She played a turning point in my life, as I was watching her content daily, and she inspired me a lot to cook healthier and exercise more. Especially during corona, she did a lot of Live workouts/baking, which she enjoyed.*
- *Seeing Pamela cook in her small kitchen inspired her to cook healthy as well.*
- *She enjoyed cooking her recipes, especially during corona.*
- *She comes across as honest with her community, this feeling was strengthened during corona and was most intense, but she is super authentic when she speaks in her story, etc.. It feels more like talking to a friend instead of an influencer which she really appreciates and likes. It is also super important to me. This is not the case with all Influencers. She is humble, honest, and authentic.*
- *Pamela is my biggest inspiration.*
- *She gave me so much during..., So I want to give back as well and I think with liking and commenting you give back the most to influencers.*
- *She would recommend her products*
- *She has followed her so long already because she has the feeling that Pamela stayed authentic and she can identify with her content /brand purpose, suits my lifestyle// is a big part of my lifestyle and she talks about topics which are also important to me.*
- *She is pretty and I like her aesthetics, and that she is such a perfectionist, and "I can see myself in her."*
- *She puts a lot of effort into the things she does (flying to the Maldives for fitness videos).*
- *She stayed authentic, did Q&A's, and talked to her community, she comes across still as down to earth, "I don't feel like she is conceited."*

Interviewee #11: 32 years, female, Norway

- *She discovered Pam's profile on Instagram. She has been following her for about two years. I have been doing her videos for over 1,5 years. I was in a dark place, having a lot of anxiety and not feeling well about my body. I started to do 20 min of Pam every day and I changed my diet, **I have lost 20 kg since I started.** I know I have done the job myself, but I give a lot of credit to Pam for helping me along the way. I feel very **grateful for her sharing her videos for free.***
- *YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and she pays for the Pam app*
- *I like all of her posts, visit her profile daily, watches her stories daily, sometimes comment or shares*
- *Facebook Group: I post my workouts every day; it is like having a workout diary. I love our Facebook group because we are very friendly with each other and are always cheering each other on. We can share when we have negative thoughts to get another perspective. I comment*

and like almost everything. I like to stay active. I hope it may inspire others to stay active as well.

- **I think people today get easily offended.** I still stand by Pamela. There is only one thing I am annoyed about and that is the time she cut the Ken dance from the Barbie workout without an explanation.
- She has many clothes from the Puma collection, and loves them! If I had access to the different brands I know I would buy them. **They do not ship to all of Denmark which was a real disappointment. “Dreaming about going to Germany, just so I could buy Ela beauty and Naturally Pam”.** She would love to try her products since she only has access to Pam x Puma collections.
- Thinks that they share the same values, goals, there is a deep connection between them. We are a lot of members but only two handfuls are active. **“I see them as my friends”.** But I am probably to shy to want to meet in real life. She feels **connected and like a member of her community and looks at many of them as her friends. She feels like she belongs to this community.**
- She is only active in this group, not in other communities
- **She knows the brand’s purpose: A healthy lifestyle, working out, and eating clean foods and embraces that.** Buys healthier products, looks for ingredients, buys whole food and not ultra-processed foods.
- **She believes that her brand is authentic and that she believes in what she says.** She knows that she is also seeking to build her brand so she can one day live off other things than her videos. **“I believe in everything she says.”**

Interviewee #12: 19 years, female, Egypt, Admin

- Huge fan of Pam and her workouts, **“she got me out of a very hard time in my life”.** She found her when she was searching for YouTube workouts to **lose weight in 2020** at the beginning of the pandemic.
- Since then, she has been **“following her everywhere on Social Media and engaged a lot with her Instagram posts when she used to reply more to people.”** She started to do her workout plans and they were the best she has tried, and didn’t stop. **“made me reach my weight goal and gain strength.”**
- A month later after she found her, she was searching for a Facebook group created by people who also work out with her. **“I found one but later it was sold. So I couldn’t reconnect with my workout buddies because of it.”** She was already friends with TJ, who was also a member of that group, and she suggested **“to make our own group and invite our workout buddies and create a safe space for everyone to enjoy, motivate and share their workouts.”** On August 2nd 2021, the group was created, named Pamela Reif Workout Group. **“All our buddies joined us and the community kept growing and growing till we reached 15k a while ago”.** **“Everyone is so supportive and motivating, it’s a community full of respect and love. We all post our workouts daily, update each other, and motivate each other to keep doing this.”**
- In her opinion, they **don’t have the same mindset, but we do all share the same interest in Pam’s workouts and we respect each other’s mindsets.** Actually anyone who showed disrespect got banned. She posts a daily poll to update each other and share our workouts and also post Pam’s Instagram story version of the plan with a brief description of the structure.
- She feels **connected to the Members in the community, “some of them are really really close to me.”**
- uses hashtags sometimes
- doesn’t have access to her brand in Egypt, but would love to try the products

- *Participation in the FB group, “I would say there's no group on FB that has this much interaction and shared interests than ours. Everyone is super friendly helping and positive. We are all here for each other in our ups and downs. This group helped me personally to pass a lot of hard times in my life. “*

Interviewee #13: 19 years, female, UK, Admin

- *She has been following Pamela since April 2020, during the coronavirus pandemic lockdown, and relates to her through her fitness channel and her workouts.*
- *She follows her YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok channels and has a paid premium subscription to the Pam app, she also follows her brands Ela and Puma.*
- *She has a high engagement in her community, likes her posts, reposts, shares and comments and has spoken to Pamela once*
- *She created the FB community group in August 2021 with her “best friends” Shahd and Maria*
- *The reason to build this community was the desire “to shine a positive light on others and motivate them on their fitness journeys, and support them, guide them and come together as a community and be a support network and become friends from all over the world.”*
- *She is daily in contact with others, and likes posts, “I put up daily blog posts, I motivate people every day, share my personal stories to inspire others”.*
- *As a head admin, she is very active within the community*
- *“I feel extremely connected to everyone in the group and I have made lifelong friends.”*
- *She supports Pam and her brands and likes “to help promote them share them and talk about them”, on the group we discuss when issues arise and share our opinions “we are always in defense of Pam and I believe that she is a lovely woman”*
- *She would love to meet her in a meet and greet*
- *She has purchased Pam x Puma products before and absolutely loves them, “extremely highly likely recommend her workout videos and channel, 10/10 to everyone.”*
- *She feels really connected and a member of her community. Pam always shares so much love, and comments and interacts with her fans.*
- *She embraces and embody the brand’s purpose completely*
- *Most definitely I feel a sense of belonging and I am very proud wearing the Pam X Puma brand*
- *She thinks that Pamela’s brands are authentic and she believes in what she says, she shares very knowledgeable information about wellness and nutrition, and she gives incredible and correct advice.*

A.3 Brand Survey Pamela Reif

Welcome to the Pamela Reif Community Study!

Dear Community Member,

We are eager to hear your insights!

We’re conducting a quick 5-minute study to explore the connection between Pamela Reif’s brand community and her purpose of promoting a healthy and fit lifestyle. Our research project aims to understand the special relationship between her brand and the vibrant community that has formed around it. Your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous, protecting your privacy.

Thank you for being a part of this study!

NOVA SBE Research Team

Section 1: Social Media and Content Engagement

1. *Do you actively follow Pamela Reif on any social media platform?*
 - *Yes*
 - *No*
2. *If yes, please specify which social media platforms you follow her:*
 - *YouTube*
 - *Instagram*
 - *TikTok*
 - *Facebook*
 - *Newsletter*
 - *Pam App*
 - *Other (please specify)*
3. *How long have you been following her on social media platforms?*
 - *Less than 6 months*
 - *6 months to 1 year*
 - *1-2 years*
 - *2-3 years*
 - *More than 3 years*
4. *How important is it for you to stay up to date with her content?*
 - *Very unimportant*
 - *Unimportant*
 - *Neutral*
 - *Important*
 - *Very important*
5. *How often do you visit her profile(s) to stay up to date?*
 - *Every day*
 - *Every 2 days*
 - *Twice a week*
 - *Weekly*
 - *Monthly*
6. *Are you a member of her broadcast Channel Pam's Besties on Instagram?*
 - *Yes*
 - *No*
7. *Do you purchase her own products (Naturally Pam, Ela Beauty)?*
 - *Never*
 - *Rarely*
 - *Sometimes*
 - *Often*
 - *Always*
8. *Do you purchase her product collaborations (Puma, GHD, Intimissimi etc)?*
 - *Never*
 - *Rarely*
 - *Sometimes*
 - *Often*
 - *Always*
9. *How likely are you to recommend her products or workout videos to others?*
 - *Very likely*
 - *Likely*
 - *Neutral*

- *Unlikely*
 - *Very unlikely*
-

Section 2: Brand Community Engagement

1. *Have you ever participated in or engaged with a Pamela Reif fan page/group (e.g. Facebook groups)?*
 - *Yes*
 - *No*
 2. *If yes, how long have you been part of a Pamela Reif fan page/group on any social media platform?*
 - *Less than 6 months*
 - *6 months to 1 year*
 - *1-2 years*
 - *2-3 years*
 - *More than 3 years*
 3. *How often do you comment within the community?*
 - *Every day*
 - *Every 2 days*
 - *Weekly*
 - *Monthly*
 - *Yearly*
 4. *How often do you like posts within the community?*
 - *Every day*
 - *Every 2 days*
 - *Weekly*
 - *Monthly*
 - *Yearly*
 5. *How often do you chat with other community members?*
 - *Every day*
 - *Every 2 days*
 - *Weekly*
 - *Monthly*
 - *Yearly*
 6. *Do you interact with other Pamela Reif's brand community members in offline environments (e.g., conventions, in-store, meet-ups)?*
 - *Yes*
 - *No*
 7. *Has being part of the Pamela Reif community influenced your loyalty or your purchasing behaviour towards her products?*
 - *Strongly agree*
 - *Agree*
 - *Neutral*
 - *Disagree*
 - *Strongly disagree*
 8. *Do you feel that the Pamela Reif brand community has helped you achieve personal goals, whether related to fitness and health?*
 - *Strongly agree*
 - *Agree*
 - *Neutral*
 - *Disagree*
 - *Strongly disagree*
-

Section 3: Perceptions of Brand Community

1. *Do you feel a sense of belonging to the Pamela Reif brand community?*
 - *Strongly agree*
 - *Agree*
 - *Neutral*
 - *Disagree*
 - *Strongly disagree*
 2. *Do you feel a sense of shared values within Pamela Reif's brand community?*
 - *Strongly agree*
 - *Agree*
 - *Neutral*
 - *Disagree*
 - *Strongly disagree*
 3. *Do you feel connected to the other members of this community?*
 - *Strongly agree*
 - *Agree*
 - *Neutral*
 - *Disagree*
 - *Strongly disagree*
 4. *Do you feel like a member of her community?*
 - *Strongly agree*
 - *Agree*
 - *Neutral*
 - *Disagree*
 - *Strongly disagree*
 5. *Do you perceive the overall atmosphere within the Pamela Reif brand community as positive, and supportive?*
 - *Strongly agree*
 - *Agree*
 - *Neutral*
 - *Disagree*
 - *Strongly disagree*
 6. *Do you perceive the overall atmosphere within the Pamela Reif brand community as negative, competitive, and toxic?*
 - *Strongly agree*
 - *Agree*
 - *Neutral*
 - *Disagree*
 - *Strongly disagree*
 7. *In your opinion, do you think the community has changed in the past years?*
 - *Strongly agree*
 - *Agree*
 - *Neutral*
 - *Disagree*
 - *Strongly disagree*
- If so, please elaborate: _____*

Section 4: Brand Familiarity and Values

1. *Are you familiar with Pamela Reif's brand purpose (e.g., living a healthy and fit lifestyle)?*
 - *Yes*
 - *No*
2. *How well do you think Pamela Reif's brand purpose is communicated?*
 - *Very poor*

- *poor*
 - *acceptable*
 - *good*
 - *very good*
3. *To what extent do you believe Pamela Reif's brand purpose aligns with your own values?*
 - *Strongly Disagree*
 - *Disagree*
 - *Neither Agree nor Disagree*
 - *Agree*
 - *Strongly Agree*
 4. *To what extent do you believe Pamela Reif's brand purpose aligns with your personal interests?*
 - *Strongly Disagree*
 - *Disagree*
 - *Neither Agree nor Disagree*
 - *Agree*
 - *Strongly Agree*
 5. *In your opinion, do you think Pamela's brand purpose ever influenced your decision to purchase her products?*
 - *Strongly agree*
 - *Agree*
 - *Neutral*
 - *Disagree*
 - *Strongly disagree*
 6. *In your opinion, do you think Pamela's brand purpose contributes to the sense of community within the brand community?*
 - *Strongly agree*
 - *Agree*
 - *Neutral*
 - *Disagree*
 - *Strongly disagree*

Section 7: Open-Ended Questions (Optional)

8. *Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with Pamelas brand purpose and its brand community? (Open text field)*
-

Section 8: Conclusion

9. *Thank you for your participation. All of your responses are solely for the purpose of our master thesis and treated with confidentiality and anonymity. If you have further questions, please reach out to us via email: [Insert your email address].*
-

Section 9: Participant Information

10. *Age:*
 - *Under 18*
 - *18-24*
 - *25-34*
 - *35-44*
 - *45-54*
 - *55-64*

- 65 or over
11. Gender:
- Male
 - Female
 - Non-binary
 - Prefer not to say
 - Other (please specify)
12. Location: Country/Region
13. Education:
- High School
 - Some College
 - Bachelor's Degree
 - Master's Degree
 - Doctorate or higher

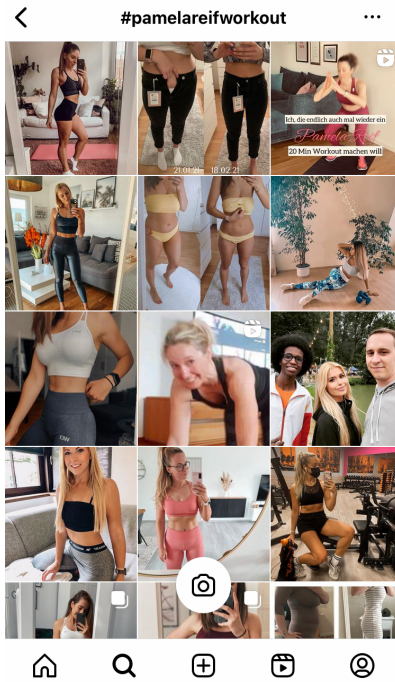
A.4 Netnography Pamela Reif

1) Engagement

The image shows a Facebook post by TJ Morton, an admin, dated November 25, 2019. The post text reads: "my final goodbye, my final workout in my house and 3 years of sweat done... my beautiful pammies, through the mist of madness I managed to complete my workout today, i am so proud of myself and i love saturday workouts, today i did my own combination and it's perfection... can i just say, our new video is my new favourite wow i feel refreshed, awake and energised perfect before work or school or to start the day on a positive note... 3 years. 3 years of Pam is complete in this home... Mehr anzeigen". The post includes a video thumbnail for a "10 MIN CHRISTMAS DANCE WORKOUT" and a photo of a woman exercising in a living room. Below the post are 11 comments from various users, including @pamela_rf, @sywiakaya, @brigittebarroso, @feelikemike, @khyati_kaushal, @tereza1176, @jacqueline1174, @sanaex, @HappyPhantom668, @jennysarra, and @Jouhatsu-oiSg. The comments express gratitude, praise for the workouts, and personal reflections on the impact of Pamela Reif's content.

2) Support and Collaboration

08:29 91% 🔋



- T** @tramvo2158 vor 1 Monat
Since Covid, you've been my only workout trainer. My friends often say "wow" for my physical transformation. Really appreciate your help.
544 Antworten
1 Antwort
- OLD FELLA** @olefella3606 vor 1 Monat
Let's just appreciate the fact that Pam's programs are totally free, accessible and helped so many people around the world. 🥰🥰🥰
395 Antworten
6 Antworten
- C** @Catherinahq vor 1 Monat
This is the intensity of cardio dances that I love! Please more of this intensity, Pam!
325 Antworten
2 Antworten
- A** @AngelLueK vor 1 Monat
This workout was incredible! MORE TECHNO MUSIC. It was so much fun, I did that 3x in the row! 🥰🥰
194 Antworten
1 Antwort
- E** @elicia88 vor 1 Monat
been waiting for this one!! anyone else scream "YAYYY" when pam posts a new workout video?! 🥰 forever grateful for all you do 🥰
236 Antworten
1 Antwort



eatingwithcriss Choco-Cherry Oatmeal

Hey Pam, I wanted to tell you how much I love your recipes ❤️ Thank you for providing us with such healthy and tasty options!! I enjoyed making and eating them until the last bite 🥰 I also can't stress enough how good this porridge was 🥰 Thank you thank you!!

3) Brand Loyalty



PAM ADK Update 9 Wo. 🎧 🔊 ⋮

[pamelara_rf] Kristina Vor 33 Min
Hat auf deine Story geantwortet: Ich weine gleich, ich hab heute bis 4 Uhr gearbeitet und deinen Launch verschlafen 😭 ich hab mich so drauf gefreut einen Kalender zu...

[pamelara_rf] elena.ilie Vor 1 Std.
Hat auf deine Story geantwortet: Noooo 🥰🥰🥰 I even put an alarm to buy it, but I overslept and then I started doing some chores and when I entered the website n...

[pamelara_rf] Funny Vany Vor 14 Min.
Hat auf deine Story geantwortet: Oh nein 🥰🥰🥰 wird es noch Nachschub geben oder war es das jetzt ganz. Ich fang gleich an zu heulen 🥰

[pamelara_rf] franzi_fidh Vor 33 Min
Hat auf deine Story geantwortet: Gerade erst aufgewacht! Und es gibt keine mehr??? 🥰🥰🥰

[pamelara_rf] polerina_teresa Vor 28 Min.
Wie traurig 🥰 ich hab leider keinen bekommen. Ich hoffe es werden nochmal

PAM ADK Update 9 Wo. 🎧 🔊 🔕

pamelara_rf 📢

Adventskalender Update: Ich weiß ihr wollt die Antwort, aber zuerst muss ich reden 🥰 Wir haben innerhalb 1 Stunde mehr Kalender verkauft, als letztes Jahr in 34 Stunden - was ich nie nie erreichen hätte! Ich hatte eigentlich das Gefühl, dass die Nachfrage aufgrund von Inflation, Geldproblemen, dem Algorithmus und allem eher abnimmt. Deshalb wollte ich dieses Jahr ja auch weniger produzieren, um mir den Druck zu nehmen.

[pamelara_rf] Wiebke Vor 14 Min.
Gibts News zu m Kalender? Kommt er nochmal wieder 🥰 hab keinen bekommen

A.5 Comparison of key insights from the individual analysis

	Pamela Reif	GoPro	Supreme
Engagement	<i>Level of activeness varies within “consuming”, “active” and “connected” members. Focus on engagement with Pamela Reif, instead of other members.</i>	<i>Mainly 3 types of members: Observing (like), Active (comment, post, take part in challenges, meet), GoPro “Family” (highly active, collaborations, sponsored); many are part of sub-groups (user-generated)</i>	<i>Overall engagement metrics reflect the ever-ongoing decrease in activity within Supreme brand community</i>
Shared values / identity	<i>Strong sense of shared values, embodiment of her purpose of living a healthy and fit lifestyle, and inspiration to work for one’s dreams.</i>	<i>Strong sense of shared values and understanding of the brand’s purpose; focus on adventures, fun, creativity; “newer” community: vlogging, webcam</i>	<i>Values strongly diverge into polarized parties of “collectors” and “resellers”</i>
Sense of belonging	<i>Strong sense of belonging within the community, despite the lack of direct interaction with other members (only in smaller sub-communities). Her brand purpose, reposted content and the feeling of a “shared journey” foster this.</i>	<i>Strong sense of belonging, further amplified through the brand’s purpose; global network of users that form connections beyond the camera</i>	<i>Weakened sense of belonging with dilution of the brand’s perceived purpose, individuals increasingly disconnect from the brand, as well as the comprising community</i>
Support and collaboration	<i>Strong mutual support for reaching common fitness goals within the sub-community. Pamela Reif plays a central role in her community, strong desire to meet her in person.</i>	<i>Positive, supportive atmosphere; Active collaboration and support through facilitation of exchange of information, tips, and inspiration, especially in dedicated groups or through Family members</i>	<i>Collaboration and supportive activities within community increasingly replaced through market-driven dynamics and toxic tonality</i>
Influence and advocacy	<i>Enthusiastic advocates of Pamela Reif products: Physical changes from workouts and healthier lifestyle improved mental health and overall well-being. E-Wom/Wom</i>	<i>High willingness to defend and recommend the brand; The everyday user has the most influence on the brand; GoPro Family members serve as ambassadors</i>	<i>Decreasing purpose-identification of community members leads to diminishing advocacy, leading individuals to “jump on the hate train”</i>
Brand loyalty	<i>Pamela’s authenticity and personality are identified as major loyalty drivers, fostering</i>	<i>Brand loyalty especially present due to GoPro’s legacy; GoPro users see the brand as superior</i>	<i>Initial loyalty replaced through increased migration of members into other brands more</i>

	<i>a very strong, loyal, and active brand community</i>	<i>compared to other action cameras; large majority sees it as a personal goal to get featured on GoPro pages</i>	<i>embodying brand's purpose</i>
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Table 3: Comparison of key insights from the individual cases categorized by six key metrics based on Madupu and Cooley (2010)