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MASTER'S THESIS

**THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA REVIEWS ON THE
INTERNATIONAL COSMETICS MARKET**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EU - European Union

EWOM - Electronic Word-Of-Mouth

SEO - Search Engine Optimization

US - United States

WOM - Word-Of-Mouth

INTRODUCTION

Women are constantly bombarded by information in mass media which transmits and reinforces values, norms, and ideals of fashion and sweetness via images of models, movie stars, and feminine celebrities during a form of media formats (Lin, Featherman, Brooks & Hajli, 2019). Mass media often portray attractive people as more desirable, credible, and inspirational (Yan & Kim, 2014). The media industry's over-emphasis on beauty and attractiveness isn't just a phenomenon found in western countries; rather, it should be a controversy or issue that's more global in nature (Gannon & Prothero, 2018). The women's magazine *Cosmopolitan*, as an example, is published in 36 languages, has 63 international editions, and is distributed in additional than 100 countries. As Western media content permeates societies and cultures around the world, the globalization of an ideal of beauty and appearance is gaining dominance in both non-Western and Western societies.

Today, all of this is reinforced and supported by the huge role of social networks. Social differs significantly from traditional marketing in that it engages customers for interactive purposes such as conversation, sharing and engagement, while traditional marketing is vendor-delivered and involves awareness, knowledge and remembering (Kontu & Vecchi, 2014). "Today's marketing environment is characterized by an increase in multi-channel shopping and a greater variety of advertising channels. This example requires companies to understand how online advertising affects offline sales." (Dinner, Heerde & Neslin, 2014).

A series of questions are raised today about the place and role of social networks in decision-making for choosing and building consumer opinions. If in the past social networks were good for advertising, reporting a new product, or a new product line, today it is evident that people pay great attention to the ratings, recommendations and comments from other people who share their experience of using a product, especially in the cosmetics industry. How have social networks become a key player in building the image and brand of cosmetic products? Why great attention is paid to word-of-mouth communication and whether the traditional way of advertising is beginning to be replaced by simply engaging celebrities and influencers who significantly help boost brand loyalty (Craig, Greene & Versaci, 2015). All those raised questions remain unexplored.

The efforts of the manufacturers of cosmetic products to create and build a recognizable brand on the market are clear and evident, which in the eyes of the public will be far well recognized and will guarantee long-term commitment. The mission to achieve this goal engages them in a variety of marketing activities that take place on social networks, far differentiated and unique, with the involvement of different parties. But what also needs considerable attention is the comments from the general public, the views and opinions that are spreading at the speed of light and their impact on future potential consumers.

Social media has affected consumers' interplay with the emblem – now no longer simply at the purchasing side, however with the remarks at the emblem route normally. The conversations that are being had between peers can provide a value-effective way for companies to extend brand awareness and increase brand loyalty. Social media helps to make up brand awareness through networking and conversation. Social media can significantly boost brand awareness as there's such an oversized reach on social networks. Social media has influenced consumer behaviour from information acquisition to post-purchase behaviour like dissatisfaction statements a couple of products and allows individuals to possess their own voice, moreover as have access to product information that facilitates their purchasing decisions (Suresh, Chitra & Maran, 2016).

This suggests that customers have more knowledge than ever before about the products and social media gives them the tools to form a more informed purchasing decision (Lee, 2010). Consumers define the brand; this can be evident from the way in which consumers are able to influence one another over the brands themselves. So, where are the consumers in all of this whole story?

Social media has had the most important impact on the evaluation of alternatives within the consumer buying process. This can be because people trust recommendations from people instead of the brand itself meaning that some marketing efforts are also insufficient when people are ready to access networks where they will obtain feedback from other consumers. There is no doubt that nowadays consumers address social media to seek advice and share it with others who have similar interests. Laying the foundations of consumer behaviour research, through a series of practical and theoretical approaches, as well as conducting direct research to determine the system that builds consumer behaviour, in this paper, I will analyze trends in the cosmetics industry, more precisely how consumer reviews on social media affect this market (Floyd, Freling, Alhoqail, Cho & Freling, 2014).

1 INTERNATIONAL COSMETICS MARKET

1.1 Analysis of the current global market

The beauty enterprise can be a thriving global enterprise. Historically, guys and women have used cosmetics to reinforce their beauty, advantage self-confidence, melt their skin, get rid of odours and protect their health. For instance, Ancient Greeks followed the concept of bathing from the Hindus who had been conversant withinside the useful results of bathing 3,000 years ago. The Romans and later the Ottomans introduced extra innovation to bathing, and they used oil-primarily based totally perfumes of their baths. Throughout history, this enterprise has been stereotyped as being associated with girls and concerning make-up and perfumes. In contrast, cosmetics aren't a gender-primarily based totally enterprise as it covers various kinds of merchandise beginning from powders, soaps, deodorants, shampoos, body care, make-up, shaving, and toothpaste (Ramli, 2015).

In the past, this industry has been notably responsive-quite sensitive, in fact-to consumer wants and wishes, and at the current time still there are challenges visible in many alternative areas: coping physically and financially with the tremendous expansion in markets and customers foreseen within the decade ahead; developing new products and formulations to require advantage of the flux of recent ideas now emanating from our laboratories; and retaining the fresh and original approach to packaging and advertising which made the industry, in years gone along, a pacesetter in selling techniques within the art of developing products which sell themselves.

Gains have shown up in most of the age and income groupings, but the sharp jump in the number of lower-income women visiting a beauty parlour within the past quarter is a sign that awareness of excellent grooming, and also the glamorous concept itself, are being extended all the way down to very cheap income brackets. With some exceptions, the sweetness industry has remained strangely far from economic depression and has been ready to grow in several dimensions-in numbers of persons encompassed, and in terms of the portion, it takes off the buyer spendable dollar.

Many cosmetics brands today have their own target market, but most cater to female consumers who endorse the products (da Silva Lopes & Casson, 2007). However, this industry is changing over time due to many factors such as changes in market, politics, globalization, demands, society and consciousness. Thanks to these changes, innovation is crucial for cosmetics brands to meet the needs of both male and female consumers (Ramli, 2015).

But today's customer is merely vaguely aware, and to a rapidly diminishing degree, of those personality gradations, and therefore the popular eye now discerns a generalized corporate cluster peddling "beauty cum- exclusivity." This in itself can vary only within certain limits: from bizarre, with the addition of an excessive amount of fashion, to washed-out looking, as within the recently popular "sarcophagus look," in which, much to the chagrin of the industry, virtually no make-up is employed, nonetheless an awfully pale lipstick. Within the limited-distribution end of the trade, with little difference possible in approach or product, competition often takes the shape of sterile advertising wars, during which rivals snipe at each other from imagined bastions, but no decision is ever reached, in as much as no clear-cut objectives exist.

Over the past 20 years, innovation in the cosmetics industry has enabled it to offer a wide range of products to protect and hydrate the skin, helping consumers achieve beauty with a natural look and more to achieve increase in the amount of personal hygiene. (Kumar, Massie & Dumonceaux, 2006). Innovation remains at the heart of the beauty industry, with innovative new products being launched in response to emerging trends in fashion, media, television, advertising, competition and changing lifestyles. In addition, industry is also finding environmentally friendly ways to source, manufacture, distribute and market products. Innovation continues to drive the cosmetics industry with its mission to produce and contribute to a safer society through philanthropy and sustainability (Thompson & Doherty, 2006) with attractive products that people around the world use every day.

The cosmetics industry is a crucial and valuable global industry. Although the cosmetics industry is competitive, it offers the brand an opportunity to attract new entrants and welcome competitors. Therefore, it contributes to the economic process of nations and generates global income. The trends within the cosmetics industry are gradually increasing compared to other industries such as the styling industry, advertising and the media. Nowadays, in order to satisfy consumers, cosmetic companies are forced to renew a brand or a new product, replace a product, or update their products to withstand the stress of consumers at all levels. Innovation is the key to success in the cosmetics industry, particularly among industry leaders, which is not limited to product innovation but is also based on brand awareness and marketing.

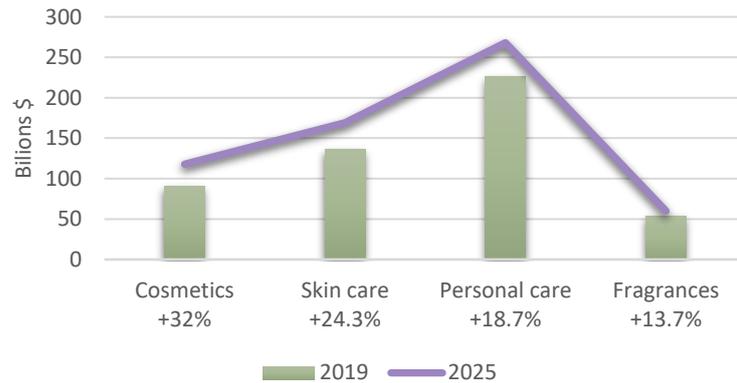
1.2 Prospective global trends

Globally, the industry is resilient and growing faster. Expand your cosmetics marketing through digital channels to attract more customers who are willing to pay higher prices for better quality. As emerging markets grow in purchasing power and become more globalized, international companies producing products of higher quality than those available in neighboring regions offer new points of entry. It is projected to grow from \$483 billion in 2020 to \$511 billion in 2021, reaching \$716 billion by 2025 and \$784.6 billion by 2027, at a CAGR of 4.75% worldwide. (Common Thread Reports, 2021). Geographically, Asia-Pacific and North America dominate, accounting for more than 60% of the total market combined. As purchasing preferences differ from country to country, cosmetics brands that want to dominate on a global scale must follow a customer-centric model that intersects with digital and physical channels.

In the US, offline shopping remains dominant, accounting for 81% of the brick-and-mortar market. At the same time, online market share is increasing while offline market share is decreasing. This change comes as a surprise to anyone following the growth trend of e-commerce. In 2018, the US was even considered the world's most valuable beauty and personal care market. It sets trends and then standards that other countries emulate. Distribution methods are evolving, but traditional retail chains continue to play the biggest role.

Following statistical reports from the cosmetics industry (Statista, 2022), it is evident how rapidly it grows, especially in those products which are part of the personal care group. There is a significant rate of growth and revenue which is expected to reach their peak in 2025. Figure 1 below shows a graphical presentation of a segment revenue and growth rate within the beauty industry.

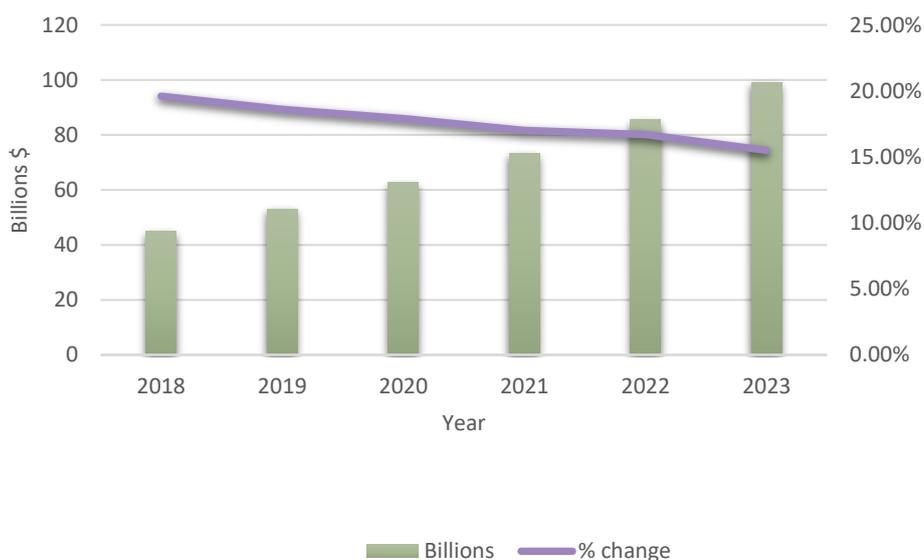
Figure 1: Segment Revenue and Growth Rate within the Beauty Industry



Source: Statista (2022).

Alongside multi-brand conglomerates such as Walmart and Target, the leading sector-specific players are Ulta and Sephora, large POS-driven health and confectionery retailers. The same applies on a global level. For a century, the production of cosmetics and confectionery has been controlled by a few multinational corporations. Long-standing legacies (L'Oréal, Unilever, Procter & Gamble and EsteeLauder Companies) accounted for a whopping 81.7% of beauty sales worldwide in 2019 (eMarker, 2019). With little left in this industry, all hopes lie in e-commerce. Although e-commerce penetration has increased only modestly in recent years, the online share of confectionery and personal care in the US is expected to increase to 48% by 2023 (Common Thread Reports, 2021), as shown in figure 2.

Figure 2: Health, Personal Care and Beauty Retail Ecommerce Sales



Source: eMarketer (2019).

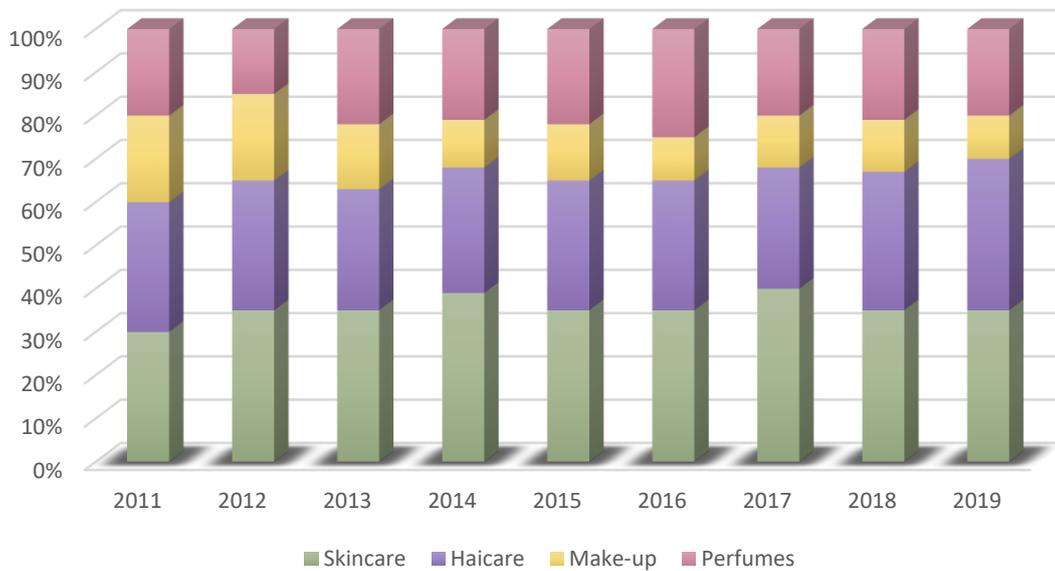
While promising, multi-brand and mass marketing platforms currently have a stranglehold on the market. But e-commerce offers something traditional retailers don't: exclusivity. The path to the club of winners combines the desire for convenience with quality products. E-Marketer reports that candy shoppers who value quality the most are most likely to buy directly from a cosmetics brand's website (64%), while large department stores attract shoppers based on price (28%) (eMarketer, 2019). This difference in quality is the brand differentiator that can make or break an ecommerce beauty brand.

Cosmetics occupy a new segment as they are available in a wide range of retail outlets, from luxury spas and department stores to home TV stores and airport vending machines. According to a 2018 Pymnts survey, special sales, unique products, and rewards programs were the biggest factor influencing consumer behavior in the US beauty market, aside from price or location. (Common Thread Reports, 2021).

Ecommerce brands can capitalize on these trends with the exclusivity of the Web shopping experience to challenge the in-store advantage of retailers. Beyond the channels, there is another divisive trend within the industry: natural cosmetics. With rising incomes, consumers are paying more attention to product efficacy and ingredients than price. As a result, retailers are more focused on promoting the standard of products as better than the competition, rather than undercutting prices. Victory in the battle for product superiority comes from using three little words in marketing: natural, organic, or clean. In fact, the cosmetics industry has the largest share of consumers who prefer organic purchases. But “clean beauty” and “organic makeup” are just buzzwords.

Across all product categories, skincare products accounted for 40% of the global cosmetics market in 2019 (Statista 2022) which can be seen in figure 3. This trend is expected to continue as consumers become more educated about sun damage, indicating potential for growth in the suncare and anti-aging skincare subcategories. Cosmetic brands that meet new consumer demands and quality expectations will grow along the same line. While the confectionery and personal care industries will remain strong globally, the cosmetics and skin care industries in particular will see the highest sales growth in.

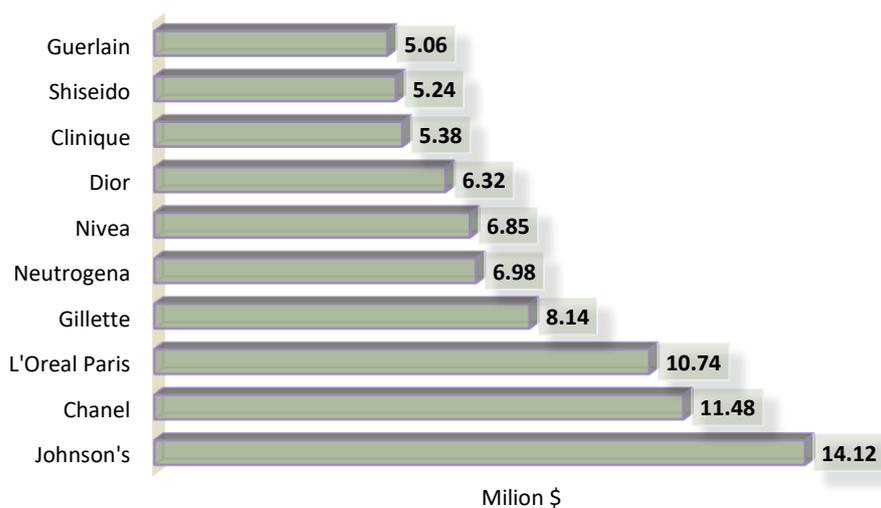
Figure 3: Global Cosmetic Market by Product Category



Source: Statista (2022).

Leading the marketplace for quite a century, legacy cosmetics brands dominate on a worldwide scale (Brand Finance, 2019). Data is graphically presented in figure 4 as well. With 81% of all US consumers shopping in brick-and-mortar stores, long-standing product placement at brick-and-mortar cosmetics retailers and drugstore chains is particularly advantageous. Meet, the old guard:

Figure 4: Leading 10 Cosmetics Brands Worldwide



Source: Brand Finance (2019).

Despite their longstanding success, brand loyalists have grown old, and to reach the longer-term at an identical scale means attracting Gen Z and millennials. Call it karma - the legacy retailers who preached that youth is beauty, are now being pushed out by younger brand counterparts. The sect of makeup brands like L'Oréal, Estée Lauder, and Chanel though revered for his or her revenue and legacy, isn't revered by all. As a brand, new generation of consumers grows up, they're more empowered to get "quick-to-market" products found via social media from brands that are growing right alongside them (Common Thread Reports, 2021).

1.3 Consumer online buying behaviour

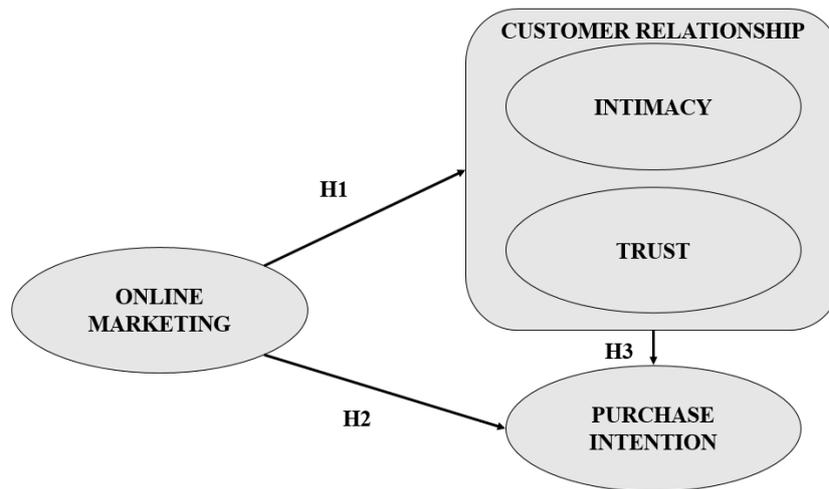
"Consumer behavior is often described as the study of people, groups, or organizations, and thus the processes they use to select, protect, and lose products, services, experiences, or ideas to meet their needs, and the impact these processes may have on patrons and society. (Izberk-Bilgin, 2012). Individual consumption behavior depends on purchase decisions. These decisions influence the purchase decision-making process. are influenced by purchasing habits that suffer from psychological and social factors that influence them (Brassington & Pettit, 2000). Online shopping behaviour (also referred to as online buying behaviour) is that the process of buying products or services through websites on the net.

In a traditional agrarian society, buying cosmetics can be a luxurious behavior. Today, the use of cosmetics is an important living art experience and leading fashion for contemporary women. In a highly competitive market, winning the favor of consumers and differentiating from businesses becomes a very important issue for every consumer market. In the early periods, consumer demand prices of cosmetics are taken into account. To meet this demand, entrepreneurs have often neglected other factors that influence consumers to buy their products. Today, when consumers think about buying a product, they not only see the value of the product, but also its added value. For example, consumers tend to pay attention to things like whether or not the vendors' service attitude and brand image is excellent; whether or not all of a brand's knowledge increases its value; whether or not cosmetics bought by women consumers harm their skin; whether purchasing products reduces consumer perceived risk; and whether there are good customer relationships between sellers and consumers, so that consumers maintain a good relationship with them, so that they affect reliability, satisfaction, promise and loyalty to businesses (Bennett, & Rundle-Thiele, 2004).

Loyalty toward a particular brand weakens as a range of alternatives are provided to customers. Brands now must build strong relationships with their existing customers so as to stay them around as long as possible in addition they believe in online buying products. Intimacy and trust have received extensive exposure within the academic literature on customer relationships within the marketing field. It's possible that customers can forge an emotional relationship like intimacy with a particular brand, and perceptions of intimacy are required before the buyer will make an emotional investment within the brand and develop perceptions of trust (Elliot & Yannopoulou, 2007). A degree of tendency to believe a

particular brand’s ability to perform a promised function can define trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Trust is taken into account as one of the keys to an enhanced relationship between a consumer and a particular brand, and it's been recognized recently as a core variable of long-term relationships with customers (Kim & Ko, 2010). The purchase intention model is presented in figure 5.

Figure 5: Purchase intention model



Source: Kim & Ko (2010).

Online marketing will have a major positive influence on customer relationships (i.e., intimacy and trust) (H1). Online media marketing will have a big positive influence on purchase intention (H2) and customer relationships (i.e., intimacy and trust) will have a major positive influence on purchase intention (H3). However, so far, in relevancy, the problem for integrating marketing plans to induce consumer purchases, surprisingly, most marketing management researchers have ignored the exploration of consumers’ potential factors for brand perception and get the decision within the interaction between situation and knowledge (Kim & Ko, 2010).

After intimacy and trust, the next factor that determines online buying behaviour is Convenience. When used in constructs within the Convenience domain, Convenience can classify products in terms of low risk and low purchase involvement. Seiders (2000) proposed his four ways of providing convenience to customers in retail:

- Access: customer's ability to contact the dealer
- Search: the ability to locate and select the product you need
- Possession: Ability to acquire desired goods
- Transactions: the ability to change or influence transactions

Convenience is one of the key positive factors driving consumers to shop online, but most studies to date have found that convenience does not influence outcome variables such as customer service for customer satisfaction. (Colwell, Aung, Kanetkar & Holden, 2008) and

combined with online service quality aspects. Accuracy (Kim, Park, Kim, Aiello & Donvito, 2012), etc. Customers who prefer online shopping are convenience-oriented, not experience-oriented. These customers see the convenience factor as the most important factor in their purchasing decisions. Most of these people have various time constraints and don't mind buying a product without touching it.

One of the foremost issues people are addressing is perceived time pressures. For people tormented by situational time pressure, online shopping being promoted as a lifesaver could be a highly effective strategy, against those stricken by personal time pressure. Those with situational time pressure would welcome any way of having the ability to scale back their activity level while fulfilling their demands on time. However, trying to market online shopping to those who are tormented by personal time pressure might not be as effective because their inclinations and personality are completely different. They will seek more activity and truly want to extend their level of activity. Thus, trying to market something that will actually decrease their levels of activity won't be met with a positive response.

2 ONLINE ADVERTISING

2.1 Importance of building brand loyalty

When consumers go grocery shopping, their baskets fill up with specific branded products. Why? These products are named with the promise of meeting the aspects you desire. A brand could be a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a mixture of those items intended to spot the products and services of one seller or groups of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors (Keller & Swaminathan, 2019). In other words, a brand is also viewed as an assortment of both tangible and intangible attributes, represented during a trademark, which can generate influence and value (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Within the absence of brands, consumers would be unable to differentiate one product from another (Ponsonby-McCabe & Boyle, 2006). There are several definitions of the term "brand image," but the most common is that brand image can also be defined as "the body of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that someone has about a subject." (Kotler 2001, p. 273). Similarly, Aaker (1991) and Biel (1992) considered the brand image to be, "a cluster of attributes and associations, usually organized in some meaningful way". Keller (1993) instead deliberated brand image as, "a set of perceptions has a brand as reflected by brand associations in an exceedingly consumer's memory." in step with its most applied definition, brand loyalty, is that the biased, behavioural response expressed over time by some decision-making units as compared with one or more alternative brands among a collection of them.

The area of selling involves the link between consumers and business and thus brand images have formed a vital aspect in current times. A spread of reasons for this increased emphasis on brand image in marketing is suggested: olores:

- Marketing’s increasing cognizance of the behavioural aspects of consumer decision-making.
- Affluent society’s predilection with symbolic instead of purely functional aspects of products.
- An increasing sort of relatively homogeneous products often involve high product complexity and confusing messages which increase consumer reliance on the image aspects of products.
- The proven fact that technological innovation, increasingly at risk of rapid imitation, may now not offer previous levels of sustainable competitive advantage.

In the beauty product industry, appearance is everything and hence, the similarity between a brand’s image and a consumer’s self-image (self-concept) can have significant effects on consumers’ brand evaluations and buy intentions (Zhang, Wan, Zwiers, Hegerl & Min, 2013, p. 44). Promotional messages that encourage consumers to consider their own self-image while evaluating a brand magnify the results of brand name images this can be further supported by Festinger’s social comparison theory which states that individuals evaluate themselves whenever they experience some sort of comparison (Zhang, Wan, Zwiers, Hegerl & Min, 2013, p. 38).

It has been suggested those companies that are specializing in identifying customer loyalty, would generate profitability, long-term/high customer retention, reduce marketing costs and increase competitive advantage (Reichheld & Markey Jr., 2000). Therefore, it's vital for companies to know the event process of brand name loyalty in today’s competitive environment. Figure 6 represents the life cycle of a brand loyalty.

Figure 6: The brand loyalty life cycle



Source: Bennett & Rundle-Thiele (2004).

The Model for Antecedents Impact on Brand Loyalty in Cosmetics Industry had confirmed the subsequent hypotheses H1: Corporate image includes a significant, positive effect on customer satisfaction, H2: Corporate image features a significant, positive effect on service quality, H3: Service quality encompasses a significant, positive effect on customer satisfaction, H4: Service quality features a significant, positive effect on perceived value,

H5: Perceived value features a significant, positive effect on brand loyalty, H6: Perceived value includes a significant, positive effect on customer satisfaction, H7: Customer satisfaction features a significant, positive effect on brand loyalty (Bennett & Rundle-Thiele, 2004).

Studying consumer brand loyalty can provide valuable insight into how beauty companies customize their products to meet specific customer needs. Marketing of beauty products eschews traditional methods and explodes in new channels. On his social channels such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, everyone can see that he is an artist and an influencer with his make-up as a skilled cutie (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). Celebrities and influencers alike make up lines and wonder products, encouraging his followers to fill their vanities with something other than fillers (Berger & Keller, 2016). It's true guerrilla marketing and advertising at its best. And with all of this digital marketing at the disposal of brands and the sheer array of products consumers have to choose from, beauty brands are trying to retain new customers.

Multi-brand and single-brand retailers are adopting a personalized approach when it comes to customer retention and increased loyalty. Brands are using key data analytics and metrics to analyze consumer interests, personal information and spending habits to successfully engage with shoppers in a targeted way. When personalization is done right, consumers will come back for more while keeping your brand memorable. Through personalization, loyalty members have access to curated birthday gifts and free samples backed by purchase history (Islam & Rahman, 2016). We pride ourselves on focusing our loyalty programs on the exclusivity and emotional elements that drive customer loyalty.

While indiscriminate incentives have only short-term effects, emotional incentives like personalization shape the future and help consumers maintain loyalty. Building face-to-face relationships with consumers is already difficult, especially in the digital age. So when it comes to connecting with consumers via modern devices, it can be even more difficult to convince them. Staying engaged with consumers is critical for brands to stay active.

By making a brand easily accessible, consumers often leave a lasting impression. There is no better way to engage them than by creating a simple and accessible shopping experience. Some beauty brands are looking at other loyalty solutions, offering her VIP experiences and deals to consumers who spend significant amounts of money. These cosmetics and confectionery brands are using data analytics to accelerate their ability to personalize approaches, deliver experiences, and build engagement. Layering education and service excellence gives you the different key components these beauty brands have used to make their loyalty programs successful.

Brand loyalty is one of the most important aspects essential for management to gain competitive advantage in the marketplace. A company must enjoy a significant advantage over other market participants. Loyalty allows brands to enjoy a loyal customer base that is willing to repeatedly choose different products and services. These benefits include (Marketing91, 2021):

- Free promotion of your brand with satisfied and consistent customers. They advertise the company's products by word of mouth.
- Brand loyalty provides a competitive advantage in the market.
- With strong brand loyalty, businesses will buy products from customers repeatedly
- Repeat purchases mean more sales for your business and more sales means more profits.
- Loyal customers are less likely to be impressed by competitors' marketing strategies.

If the consumer is fascinated to buy the product of their choice repeatedly, regardless of circumstances or other changes, this falls under the name loyalty. For this to take hold, companies must maintain product standards. These days, buyers don't compromise on standards, whether they pay a little more or not. Organizations should also maintain that focus by offering regular incentives to buyers to keep them loyal. If an organization can build a strong customer base that is loyal to its products, that's a big win. Building such a foundation cannot be done overnight. It requires a company's commitment to its customers and continuous delivery of quality products and services. Price is always a factor, but given that it's a 'trusted' or 'liked' brand with a loyal fan base, I find it to stand out above all others including price.

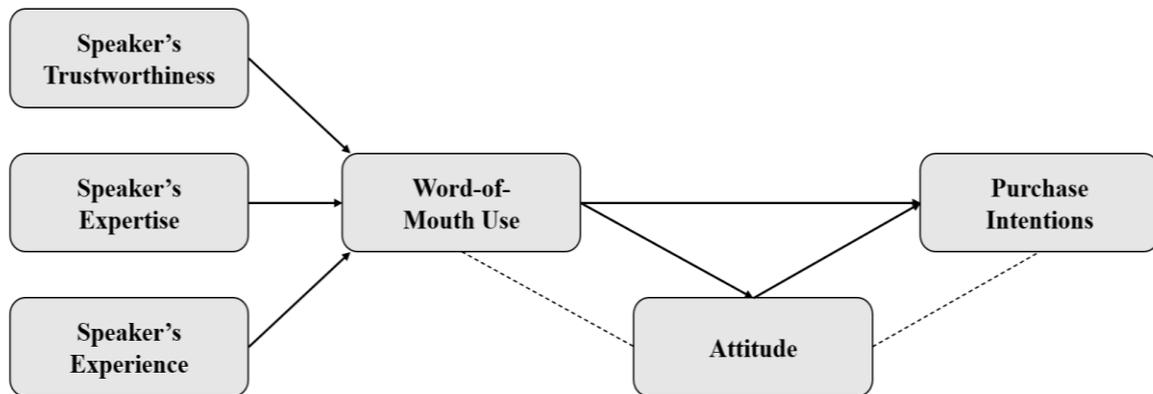
2.2 Key characteristics of online word-of-mouth

A well-established phenomenon over the last decade, online word-of-mouth (WOM) communication is revolutionizing people's lives, especially consumers. Researchers and practitioners have long recognized the importance of face-to-face and word-of-mouth communication. Its powerful impact on consumer decision-making has prompted many researchers to study this phenomenon in detail (Lam & Mizerski, 2005; Carl & Noland, 2008). Verbal communication takes many forms these days. What was once only done face-to-face is now projected through many alternative online channels. One of the fastest growing online channels in social networks consists of websites with virtual communities of people interacting with each other (Steffes & Burgee, 2009).

Consumer psychology is important for marketers to understand how, why, where and when consumers buy products and services. Advertisers seek to identify factors that influence the strength of their marketing message and increase its persuasiveness (Buda & Zhang, 2000). One factor that has been shown to influence consumer purchasing decisions is word of mouth. Word of mouth is now a spontaneous way to tell about a product or service. Electronic word-of-mouth features a unique feature compared to traditional face-to-face. It is often more readily measured, i.e. electronic word-of-mouth may be quantified and observed because it is text on websites. Another crucial aspect that can't be neglected is its controllability. Sellers can control the way people can pass away comments, indirectly influencing the word-of-mouth in their favour (Park & Kim, 2009). Researchers who conducted extensive research on the antecedents of electronic word-of-mouth use by travellers suggested that attitude works as a mediator between the antecedents of online word-of-mouth and therefore the intention to use word-of-mouth (Liang, Ekinici,

Occhiocupo & Whyatt, 2013). They noted three variables had an instantaneous positive effect on the attitudes of consumers toward electronic word-of-mouth and this attitude eventually mediates the willingness to spread word-of-mouth on the net. The word-of-mouth use model is presented in figure 7.

Figure 7: Word-of-Mouth Use



Source: Baber et al. (2016).

WOM has always been a powerful force influencing acceptance of the latest products and services. It is generally considered more trustworthy than marketer-dominated media. What changed, the authors observed, was the speed. Historically, WOM spread slowly because it relied on physical proximity, required face-to-face interaction, and spread through his social he network of close friends and acquaintances. Web changed this traditional WOM model in at least four major ways.

- Physical proximity doesn't matter, as you can easily get opinions from people in another state as well as from people who are close to you.
- WOM may not be a slow, sequential process from person to person, with time delays every time important information is sent. One person's opinion is transmitted to multiple people at the same time.
- Resized based on WOM speed. From a one-to-one process to a one-to-many "viral" phenomenon, its impact is amplified.
- With a wide range of websites and blogs to choose from, WOM is a permanent record rather than a temporary commentary. This must be constantly repeated in order to exist and continue to exist.

Differences between WOM and eWom can be seen in table 1 below.

Table 1: Differences between WOM and eWOM

| | WOM | eWOM |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Credibility | The receiver of the information knows the communicator (positive influence on credibility) | Anonymity between the communicator and the receiver of the information (negative influence on credibility) |
| Privacy | Real-time | The shared information is not private and, because it is written down, can sometimes be viewed by anyone and at any time |
| Diffusion speed | Messages spread slowly. Users must be present when the information is being shared. | Messages are conveyed more quickly between users and, via the Internet, can be conveyed at any time |
| Accessibility | Less accessible | Easily accessible |

Source: Huete-Alcocer (2017).

To understand the main characteristics of eWOM, King, Racherla and Bush (2014) identify six key aspects:

- Increased volume: eWOM reaches more people than his traditional WOM. Additionally, a study by Vermeulen and Seegers (2009) found that eWOM can increase awareness and generate more sales at the same time.
- Platform spread: i.e. whether comments on some products are pulled from differentiated online platforms.
- Persistence and Observability: Comments remain on the web and are searchable. Additionally, it's important to understand how people are affected by comments. People's comments influence others by relying on the standards of discussion. Therefore, the relevance of its source, as well as other factors such as the language and writing style used, credibility, affect comments. Since eWOM is persistent and observable, it will eventually influence eWOM content in the future.
- Anonymity and Deception: Sometimes on the internet it is possible to write anonymously so that a company can use it to sell products through his eWOM. Therefore, eWOM quality should be prioritized over quantity, for example through reputation systems and expertise. Consumers find reliable and knowledgeable answers from businesses over the ability to answer on multiple platforms.
- Importance of Value: This means that customers value the product and the numbers are easily interpreted. However, there are conflicting studies on the relationship between ratings and sales. Some studies point to a positive relationship. Some indicate confirmation bias. This means that the customer has already decided to purchase the product, but wants confirmation. This means that negative reviews influence neutral customers and positive reviews are very positive.

- Community participation: Online communities such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube His platform allows customers to share information about products with each other. Companies don't just involve their customers, they themselves influence others. Community engagement can be generated through online interactions between customers. When this is achieved, it helps the business gain a competitive advantage. Therefore, businesses need to find people to interact with and create quality content.

Some other important learnings from eWOM are:

- Manage your reputation and customer relationships using organic social networks. Build trust in your brand by reaching out directly to troubled consumers.
- Disagreements: Clients also tend to comment only when they are harassing professional reviewers such as film critics.
- Under-reporting is also widespread. Only very satisfied or dissatisfied customers participate in his eWOM (King, Racherla & Bush, 2014).

Drivers of eWOM: Despite the customer, reputation is the main driver of his eWOM (King, Racherla & Bush, 2014), and companies can also encourage customers by offering economic incentives (King, Racherla & Bush, 2014). Additionally, some of the reasons consumers turn to eWOM are related to reducing risk and saving time and energy in searching and evaluating.

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) communication is on the increase, not just around the world. The proliferation of Internet access, the increase and growth of social networking sites (SNS) and also the accessibility of the newest technologies allow consumers greater access to every other organization and business on a worldwide scale. Now not content to be passive recipients of data, many consumers provide content using technology that's readily available for review, comment and forwarding. Consumer opinion will be expressed on larger scales than ever before, accessible and available at the press of a mouse. WOM communication has long been proven to be a good tool for disseminating information and eWOM extends that capability dramatically. Companies and organizations should concentrate on eWOM today so as to watch consumer opinions and adjust business practices to remain relevant. Some have turned to unethical tactics like paying reviewers to post favourable content about their particular products and services. This, of course, causes the organizations to run the danger of being "found out" by competitors or other consumers. Some monitor and delete feedback in a shot to regulate negative brand associations. This, too, could initiate a reaction upon disclosure. Likewise, the practice of providing items to consumers ostensibly for review purposes.

Consumer expectations are considerable. Companies today are expected to be accessible on a range of platforms and to control efficiently. Consumers expect to be heard and might share positive or negative information rapidly, both among those in their circle and to individuals around the globe they will never connect with otherwise. Companies should transcend monitoring to really participate within the eWOM process, taking advantage of

opportunities to speak directly with consumers and make adjustments accordingly. They encouraged the employment of various promotional strategies to manage eWOM activity and suggested adopting tools to secure demographic, lifestyle and psychographic information. Having this data could allow companies to raised understand their current and potential consumers and answer their needs appropriately. Doing so would likely increase the likelihood of feedback and brand enhancement.

One thing is certain. New technologies will still be developed, adopted and integrated into consumer lives around the world. There's no returning to earlier days of tight gatekeeping and inherent communication constraints. Consumers today are ready to access and share information from many sources, using eWOM and other methods to influence and interact with consumers and firms on a worldwide scale. The impact of WOM communication has been well established over the years, and eWOM may be a direct descendent, already making a sway and creating a stir for people, companies and establishments on a world scale.

2.3 Online and offline product reviews

Shopping channels have evolved with the advent of the Internet (Lim, 2015). Online retail is growing rapidly, with online retail sales of over \$ 1.2 trillion and online shoppers of over 1 billion (Statista, 2022). With the rise of the Internet, many companies sell their products through multiple channels (Perea y Monsuwé, Dellaert & de Ruyter, 2004). Therefore, consumers can buy the same product through online or offline channels. The key is that online and offline channels provide consumers with a very different experience. Online shopping, for example, enables cross-regional transactions to enable consumers to buy the products they need without leaving home. In addition, when shopping online, consumers make purchase decisions based on product images and textual descriptions. In contrast, offline shopping provides consumers with close-up access to their products. Consumers can carefully observe, touch, and try out features such as product material and design.

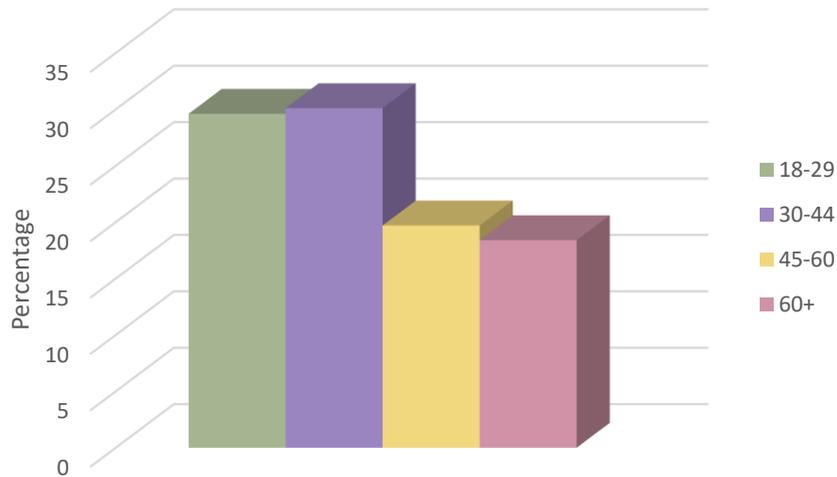
Despite these efforts in previous studies, there is still no study on how different shopping channels affect consumer psychological processes and therefore their shopping behaviour is surprisingly sparse. To fill this gap in the literature, I assume that shopping channels influence consumers and predict product consumption from different perspectives. And-feel) Pre-purchase information (Dzyabura & Jagabathula, 2018). According to the interpretation level theory (Liberman & Trope, 1998; Liberman, Sagristano & Trope, 2002; Trope, Liberman & Wakslak, 2007), as the physical distance increases, so does the psychological distance of the consumer, and its composition is more abstract. Will be. Therefore, by using a high level of structure, consumers tend to have an abstract, essential, result-related representation of the target product. Conversely, when a consumer is physically and therefore psychologically close to a goal, the consumer represents a low-level structure that focuses on concrete, supportive, and process-related aspects (Liberman & Trope, 1998). Therefore, when shopping through offline channels, consumers rate their products at a low level.

There are many aspects to online consumer buying behaviour that need to be investigated, and consumers behave differently in different situations. An extensive review of the literature has concluded the following facts: According to many authors, website user-friendly architecture, ease of information, perceived risk, transaction security, and pricing are the most important factors that influence shoppers' decisions when buying online (Berryman & Kavka, 2017). The element. All work focuses on a variety of factors that influence the buying behaviour of offline and online shoppers. Researchers have identified key factors such as convenience that influence shoppers' decisions when purchasing products. However, the factors that influence the purchase of services have not yet been studied in detail. Even comparative studies of offline and online shopper behaviour associated with a particular product or service have not been thoroughly investigated. These factors underscore the need for marketers to adopt new strategies to attract online buyers in the new era of digitalization. Consumer behaviour is a dynamic process, so it's very difficult to get loyal customers, but effective online strategies and research on consumer behaviour can give you the desired results.

Product reviews and ratings are common tools that help consumers make purchasing decisions in the online world. These tools are also valuable to online merchants who use rating systems to build trust and reputation in the online marketplace. Many online stores offer quantitative reviews, text reviews, or both. A product review can be a text review by a customer describing product features (such as strengths and weaknesses). Product ratings, on the other hand, represent the customer's opinion on a particular scale. The preferred rating scheme for online shops is a star rating, with more stars indicating a higher rating (Lackermair, Kailer & Kanmaz, 2013).

It's not surprising that technology has opened the door to enable consumers to more easily discover, research, and ultimately purchase products. Ratings and reviews became a main source of knowledge for shoppers on their path to get. An increasing number of shoppers are wishing on reviews as they decide when, where and the way to shop (Spiegel Research Centre, 2021). A graphical presentation is shown in figure 8, 9 and 10. In fact, the majority of shoppers—95%—reported consulting customer reviews. Of these shoppers, nearly 1 in 4 (24%) consults reviews for each purchase they create. Among younger shoppers, those 18-44, that number jumps to 30%. These numbers illustrate that reviews became ubiquitous and are an expected part of the purchasing process. Consumers rummage around for reviews and can intercommunicate with third-party sources if brands and retailers don't make that information available (Tripadvisor, 2019).

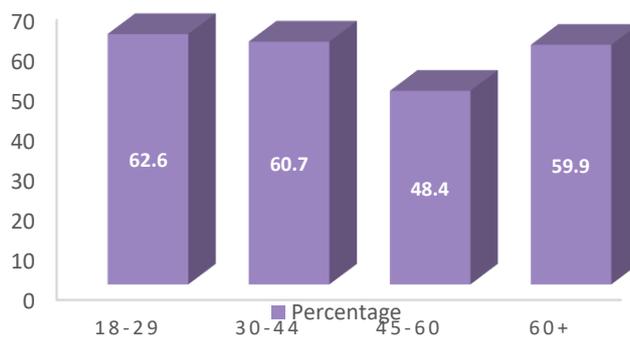
Figure 8: % of Shoppers Consulting Reviews for Every Purchase



Source: Tripadvisor (2019).

The very presence of reviews on a site can help establish authenticity and trust among consumers. The presence of ratings and reviews ranked because the most significant factor affecting purchase decisions behind only the value of the merchandise itself. Consumers ranked ratings and reviews as more integral to their online purchase decision than the brand of the merchandise and whether or not free shipping is obtainable. Even attractive incentives like free shipping can't eclipse the worth and importance of creating buyers' trust through transparent information like reviews.

Figure 8: % of Shoppers Specifically Seeking Websites with Reviews



Source: Tripadvisor (2019).

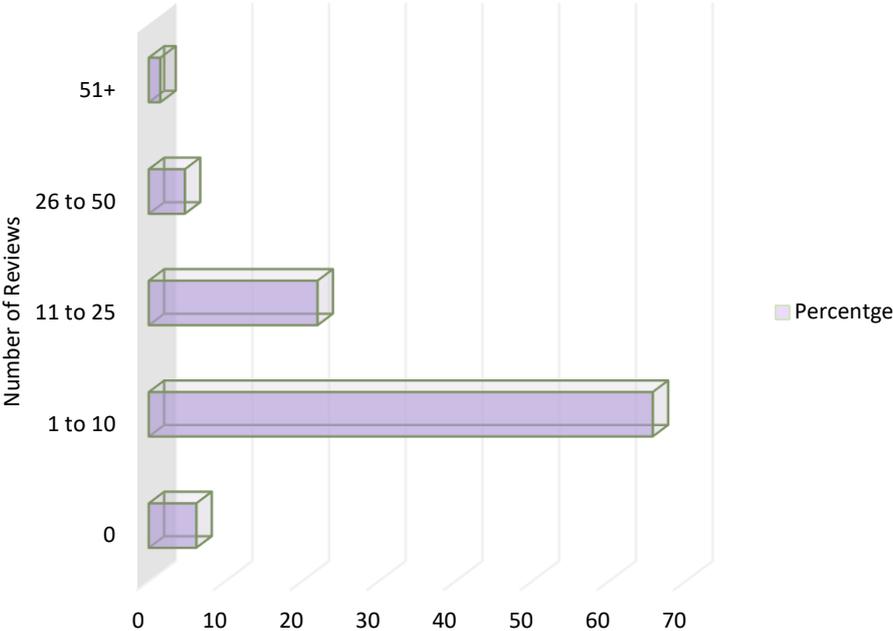
The availability of reviews is additionally impacting where consumers are making purchases. Over half of web shoppers (57%) reported specifically seeking out websites with product reviews, while 70% of mobile shoppers reported being more likely to buy a product if the mobile site, or application they're purchasing from has reviews. This trend is even

more pronounced among younger shoppers. Among the under-45 demographic, 62% specifically hunt down websites featuring reviews. For Millennials it's even higher: 77% of those aged 18 to 29 are more likely to get via mobile if the location or app has reviews. Millennials represent a big and growing purchasing force whose spending is predicted to achieve \$1.4 trillion annually by 2020. As Millennial purchasing power grows, so will the importance of mobile-based reviews (Tripadvisor, 2019).

It is no surprise that the Ratings and Reviews are among the Top 5 factors impacting purchase decisions: price, ratings and reviews, recommendation from friends/family, brand, free shipping and retailer (Tie).

Before technology permeated our lives, shoppers relied on the opinions of family and friends to guide their purchasing decisions. While the opinions of our personal networks still hold great weight, consumers are recognizing that the foremost authentic opinion of a product is from someone who has actually used it. And now ratings and review technology, enables shoppers to tap into the many millions of those authentic opinions.

Figure 9: Number of Reviews Read Before Making a Purchase



Source: Tripadvisor (2019).

Consumers look to multiple sources to search out product reviews, however, some sources are perceived as more authentic than others. The bulk of shoppers (53%) consider retailer sites to be the foremost trustworthy source of reviews, while 39% look to media outlets as the most credible. Because shoppers use product reviews to induce a fast download of data from a couple of products, review information has to be easily accessible and digestible for consumers. The bulk of consumers (66%) read between 1 and 10 reviews before making a procurement.

Because most shoppers read only a fraction of accessible reviews, it's imperative not only those reviews are displayed prominently, but also that the foremost relevant information is presented to shoppers in an easy-to-understand format. Reviews must be scannable so consumers can get the foremost important information quickly. Tag-based reviews use category-specific keywords to display information on key product characteristics that become independent from the text narrative, making them easy to consume. Convenience is vital for brands and retailers to stay shoppers from seeking reviews— and making their purchases—elsewhere (Fox, Montgomery & Lodish, 2004).

Many factors play a job within the ideal number of reviews for a product. As previously described, price point, product experience and level of importance affect what proportion of review information shoppers want to determine. So, while the perfect number of reviews a product should have, is category and context-specific, it's clear that the presence of product reviews is an important part of the buyer purchase process, irrespective of price point or category.

Ratings and reviews became table stakes and types and retailers can improve consumer experience with reviews by providing review snapshots, mobile-optimized reviews, and tag-based reviews. By making it easy for consumers to read and write reviews reception, in-store or on the go, brands and retailers increase traffic and conversions.

2.4 Product reviews before and after the purchase

A new generation of online tools, applications, blogs, social networking sites, online communities, customer review sites and other approaches, commonly referred to as Web 2.0 (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008), have transformed the Internet from “broadcast”. Change. “Medium to Interactive” (Chua & Banerjee, 2015) enables social participation through a wide range of technologies. The Internet has become a platform that facilitates customer ‘social’ electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and has become an important source of customer information and empowerment (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). A fundamental element of social eWOM is customer-generated content or CGC (Huang & Benyoucef, 2012). Through CGC, individuals share their opinions and experiences about a company, brand, product, or service, building a large word-of-mouth network. This allows consumers to easily share their personal opinions with their global community and individual peers. They use the information as an additional factor to support purchasing decisions (Dellarocas, 2003). Free and easy access to this information undermines the power of marketing communications. Information provided by online peers influences customer perceptions, preferences, and decisions far more than information provided by businesses (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008).

Personal motives include physical activity and information retrieval, while social motives include communication. These motivations are based on the consumer's intent to purchase a product while searching for reviews, rather than simply searching for information in an online environment. Consumers believe online communities are both empowering and

useful to them (Burton & Khammash, 2010). There are various motives in the consumer reputation literature. It identifies four categories: information behavior, risk reduction, quality commitment, and social belonging (Bickart & Schindler, 2001; Burton & Khammash, 2010; Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2003; Klein & Ford, 2003; Schmidt & Spreng, 1996; Zhu & Zhang, 2010).

First, consumers are increasingly relying on online consumer reviews as a cost-effective way to make more informed purchasing decisions (Klein & Ford, 2003). Burton and Khammash (2010) further discuss messages to achieve specific goals such as: B. Information about products can motivate consumers to seek their opinions in the form of reviews. Therefore, one of the motives can be identified as information retrieval. It can be defined as a stage in the decision-making process where consumers actively gather and integrate information from multiple sources (Schmidt & Spreng, 1996). In addition, Hennig-Thurau and Walsh (2003) argue that reduced search time and purchasing effort are motivators for information seeking behavior. Searching for information in reviews includes motivations for product participation such as: B. Know how you consume products and what products are on the market (Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2003).

In addition, consumers are uncertain about their purchasing decisions and the possible consequences of those decisions. Customers not only rely on their brand image and shopping experience, they can also receive information from previous consumers to reduce the risk of unintended consequences of their actions (Burton & Khammash, 2010). Consumers find opinion sources to be more reliable and less risky than information from advertisers. Review authors are viewed as similar by readers (Bickart & Schindler, 2001). Searching for reviews also helps ensure that consumers have made the right, risk-free choice. Reviews are sought more intensively to minimize uncertainty, especially when consumers plan to purchase high-ticket items (Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2003). Risk reduction can therefore rank as his second motivation for reading online opinion. In addition, Zhu & Zhang (2010) argue that consumers want product quality and therefore take ratings into account when making purchasing decisions. Consumer review platforms can be used to reasonably maximize the ratio of perceived product value to quality cost (Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006).

Moreover, affiliation and connection to virtual communities are of interest and importance to certain consumers (Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2003; Bickart & Schindler, 2001). Within the Consumer Reviews Platform, consumers can discover this community and use their reviews to find and interact with users with similar interests. For example, personal blogs tend to focus on specific product categories that attract users interested in similar products. Opportunities for communication in his online review platform, such as the ability to personally contact the author, comment on reviews, and follow blogs, are examples of her engagement with the community. Social belonging thus attracts peer groups (Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2003). As a result, four main his motivations for seeking opinions from consumers have been described in the literature and can be categorized as information behavior, risk reduction, quality seeking and social belonging. Below, I analyze review platforms for consumers to search for reviews based on four main motivations for searching for reviews

based on available literature. I will focus specifically on the differences between platform and rating function characteristics in order to later focus on the platform choices and consumer characteristics, and the impact of rating functions on consumer purchasing decisions.

In order to increase consumer trust in reviews, various platforms build consumer trust, promote the quality of websites and services, facilitate member searches, and provide consumers with well-informed information. I am aiming. To provide a user-friendly design (Dellarocas, 2010; Huang & Benyoucef, 2012). Moreover, despite the field's relatively short history, there has been a significant increase in research on the usefulness of reviews. The literature has analyzed specific design features and reached different conclusions. For example, Dellarocas (2003) considers the total number of positive and negative reviews to be the most influential, followed by the number of recently posted negative comments. Other authors such as Lee (2010) analyzed a review utility voting system that allows consumers to rate the usefulness of reviews and to display the overall usefulness of reviews to other users. However, Lee (2010) says that useful reviews affect consumers, but because of the platform's chronology and sorting options, they can only be considered effective among early-posted reviews.

In addition to confirmed purchase metrics, the review contains recommendations from the person who wrote the review (Park & Kim 2008). Reviewers can tell their friends whether to recommend the product. Unfortunately, little research has been done on the role of this validation feature. This is surprising because, as Reichheld (2003) argues, the customer's tendency to recommend a product (that is, the recommended value) is the most important measure of business success. In addition to a star rating that gives an overall rating of product quality, reviewer recommendations provide a measure of reviewer motivation to recommend a product and provide a further Indicator of reviewer satisfaction with the product. Therefore, it may directly affect other consumers' purchasing intentions. The reviewer's willingness to recommend a product to a friend influences the likelihood of purchase. It can be seen that recommendations have a significant positive impact on purchase probabilities compared to the absence of such recommendations. As well as the strengths and weaknesses, the negative reaction from reviewers is more influential. When consumers see a rating that includes "no" in the question "Do you recommend this to your friends?", They are 26.7% less likely to buy than if they didn't. Conversely, if reviewers are willing to recommend a product, they are 7% more likely to buy than without a recommendation (Kim, Maslowska & Malthouse, 2017).

3 SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

3.1 Role of social media in the cosmetics industry

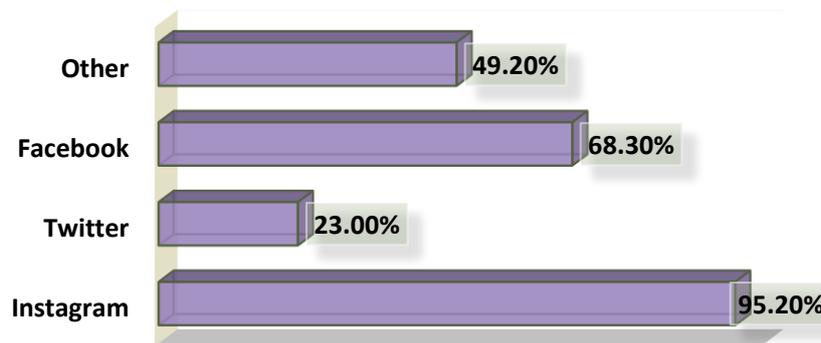
Consumers are increasingly turning to social media sites to search for information, avoiding traditional media such as television, radio and magazines (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). The

advent of social media has transformed traditional one-way communication into multidimensional, two-way peer-to-peer communication (Berthon, Pitt & Campbell, 2008). Social media platforms offer customers the opportunity to interact with other consumers. Companies are therefore no longer the sole source of brand communication. The social web is changing traditional marketing communications. Web 2.0 technologies and social media dominance have exposed Internet users to a limitless amount of online presence. One of the most important is social networking. Social networks through online media are often a set of digital knowledge sources created, initiated, distributed, and used by Internet users to educate each other about products, brands, services, personalities, and topics. Understood. Social networks play a very important role in building a strong brand. Various statistics demonstrate the ubiquity and effectiveness of social media use by people and organizations around the world. A previous conceptual article on the social media phenomenon (Zhu & Chen, 2015) classified social media platforms along multiple dimensions. For example, Zhu and Chen (2015) developed a typology that supports her two characteristics of social media. The type of connection (profile-based vs. Content-based) and the level of message customization (how much you customize the service to your personal needs). Together, these two distinct characteristics create four categories of social media:

- Relationship – represents a social media platform that is profile-based and primarily composed of customized messages. This category includes platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn.
- Self Media – a platform that is profile-based but allows people to manage their social media communication channels. Twitter is a great example.
- The creative outlet platform is content-based and allows users to share their interests and creativity. YouTube and Instagram.
- Finally, the collaboration platform is also content-based, but allows people to ask questions, get advice, and discover the most interesting news and content of the day.

Most beauty brands discovered the marketing and advertising potential of social networks, making great use of the visual medium and user engagement to extend brand loyalty. Instagram is popular within the beauty industry, as nearly all major beauty brands had an Instagram profile in 2016. As of February 2017, MAC Cosmetics was the leading beauty brand on Instagram with just near 14 million followers (Murray, 2013). The cosmetics brand is additionally the foremost popular health and wonder brand on Twitter. Anastasia city is that the second most well-liked brand on Instagram, followed by Sephora. Another popular social network where beauty brands interact with customers and fans is Facebook. Industry rankings indicate that Dove, L'Oréal Paris and NIVEA are the foremost popular beauty brands on Facebook supported by the number of followers. Instant messaging app Snapchat is growing in popularity among beauty brands in addition – nearly 60% of beauty brands already had a profile on the platform (Man & Rahman, 2019). Figure 11 shows the social media usage by cosmetic industry.

Figure 10: Social Media Usage by Cosmetic Industry



Source: Man & Rahman (2019).

For an industry that values brand image as much as customer image, social media provides the right platform to strengthen the connection between brands and consumers, and to generate and maintain brand loyalty (Mazur, 1986). Most shoppers follow their favorite brands on social media, giving brands a better chance of succeeding directly with the most receptive audiences. When indirect connections matter, social media influencers play a role (Vu & Vu, 2021).

The biggest advantage of social media and influencer marketing to the miracle industry is that the pure nature of your voice and appearance can represent you (WSI, 2020). Consumers increasingly expect to exercise beauty in all shapes, sizes and skin tones. They have to settle for someone like her, not just another cookie-cutter model during magazine distribution. I can do it. This is perhaps their greatest strength.

Ultimately, social media will allow smaller brands, especially those focused on sustainability and environmental considerations, to compete against larger competitors who are unable to adopt that ethos due to restrictions on mass production. Provide opportunities. Consumers are more conscious and confident than ever before, and smaller brands that cater to their beliefs and tastes will keep them loyal by reaching them on a tight budget and making their products shine. You can turn them into customers (McKinsey, 2022).

For an industry that's as concerned about brand image as they're about their customers' image, social media provides the right platform for an enhanced brand-consumer connection and generating and maintaining brand loyalty. With most buyers following their favourite brands on social media, brands have an excellent opportunity to achieve their most receptive audience directly. And when an indirect connection is important, social media influencers fit the role.

3.2 Paid promotion through social media

Online media has facilitated unmatched development in human association in current times. This new media has grabbed the eye of associations, networks, and people through their capacity to work with the cooperation of virtual networks and to give a useful climate to

common sharing and collaboration. The reception of online media for publicizing by organizations overall is on the ascent. Numerous companies today have official Facebook pages, Twitter accounts as well as corporate websites. Every one of these are signs that web-based media has turned into an essential piece of consumers' day to day routines as well as the everyday tasks of corporate associations.

3.2.1 Advertisement through social media

Social media marketing is a social media activity that you can participate in for free. When you post about your blog, share information with your followers, or comment on social media groups, you are doing marketing. Social media advertising is paid action on social media. From boosted posts to full-blown ads to love campaigns, social media advertising pays.

Social media advertising is the use of paid advertising on social networking sites (SNS) such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs and other content. Social networking sites are web-based applications and interactive platforms that facilitate the creation, discussion, modification, and sharing of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Therefore, social media is not limited to social networks such as Facebook, but in addition to video sharing, includes blogs, business networks, community projects, business social networks, forums, microblogging, photo sharing, product/service reviews, social bookmarking, social Also includes games. And virtual worlds. These platforms have shifted the importance of Internet services from consumption-based to more interactive and collaborative services, creating new opportunities for interaction between organizations and the public (Henderson & Bowley, 2010).

Social media advertising (also known as paid social) involves placing paid advertisements on various social media channels such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and Twitter. This includes banner ads, which are still native ads, and activities like promoting posts and similar campaigns. Social media advertising is often billed on a pay-per-click (PPC) or cost per impression basis (Marcee, 2022).

Paid Social is used to monetize content that is a type of white paper or guide created by a company or marketing agency. You can create ads about this content offering or promote posts that share content offerings. This increases the reach of your content and can lead to more website traffic and conversions from travelers.

Limited time postings alone through online media are not likely to have a wide reach and generate organic engagement. Paid social networks allow you to target large numbers of people. By the way, this focus is no joke. Rely on stages to target crowds based on rules such as area, age, orientation, search history, interests and habits, gadget use, and even manager and title. Since you pay based on the number of snapshots or impressions (referrals) of your ads, you may want to make sure you're making the most of your online media advertising

budget. To do this, focus on what guarantees the most relevant people (i.e. the best customers) will see your offer. This makes Paid Social his high ROI publishing system.

Additionally, the analytics provided by social media advertising platforms can help you better understand your audience and optimize your ads to improve reach, engagement, and ROI (Marcee, 2022). Social media advertising offers a whole new dimension of advertising, especially on the leading social media, Facebook, as it provides user interactivity (Logan, Bright & Gangadharbatla, 2012). Facebook ads offer users and consumers the opportunity to actively interact with the ads on your page. This allows you to “like” or “share” an ad and see who or whose friends can like or share the same ad. Social media networking is said to show that birds of the same plumage don’t just flock together, they like and share common views. As the benefits of social media advertising grow, mapping the relationships between users or customers online and charting those social relationships will help determine consumer responses to numerous online marketing strategies and help deliver messages. There is a growing belief that it is of great importance for prediction.

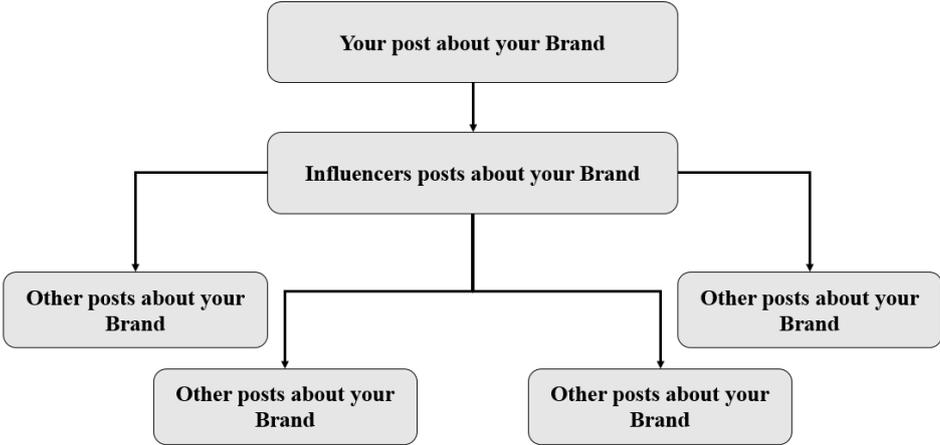
In other words, the way customers express their credibility structure is becoming a growing concern for consumers in relation to the credibility and overall message of advertising. This may be because consumers find certain types of advertising more trustworthy than others. In line with several research points, social media can be viewed as a test of the authenticity of brand appeal initiators, consistent with the findings of Lee (2010). Consumers see consumer-generated messages on social media as motivated by altruism rather than marketer-generated messages. Continually and specifically researching the factors that drive product recommendation actions on social media to ensure that customers readily accept products and brands recommended by consumers as opposed to products and brands recommended by manufacturers and marketing agencies, Muntinga, Moorman and Smit (2011) found that the atmosphere that encourages user engagement in product brand endorsements differs from the social media they actually browse. The researchers created a taxonomy to check the level of customer engagement, and using this taxonomy, found that customers who used social media liked the product or were more likely to be associated with exchanging products online. It turns out that it plays an important role in enhancing the brand image of the product to get ideas. This indicates that activity is being built on social media related to the selected organization's products.

3.2.2 Key people of influence in social media

During the most recent five years, the spread of web-based media has additionally changed trading procedures. With stages like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, buyers are prepared to ask about their encounters with items and enterprises and to impart them to their companions. This has prompted the developing requirement for organizations to think of positive client encounters to weaken negative informal messages, which could without much of a stretch be spread inside the online media stages to other, expected clients (Chopra, Gupta & Manek, 2020).

One more kind of online media that is exceptionally discussed with style-mindful ladies is publishing content on a blog. Design online journals have become one of the principal viable approaches to sharing encounters and ideas over the web and that they are a proficient approach to elevating items directly to the objective client for a minimal price. It's not just a region where ladies visit track down explicit items to look for yet in addition a region to wander around and incidentally find something attractive. It can expand the quantity of web store purchasing since it can interface the client to the spot of procurement (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). Figure 12 shows a graphical presentation of brand posts opinion.

Figure 11: Brand Post Opinion



Source: Butner (2019).

Social Media Influencers (SMI) as explained by Freberg et al., (2011) "Represents a proxy for independent third-party providers shaping audience attitudes through blogging, tweeting, and other social media usage". As mentioned earlier, influencer marketing is gaining momentum and awareness in the developing world, and he is quickly becoming another traditional marketing communication style. Beauty industry popular for influencer marketing. Beauty giant Estée Lauder spends 75% of her marketing budget on her digital marketing, especially social media influencers. Cute YouTubers are everywhere, so there's even a Wiki entry. All of this means that social media influencers are the most influential when it comes to purchasing beauty products. Consumers see them, love them, and most importantly, trust them.

Consumers hear influencers advertising their businesses. Many people see influencers as friends who offer trusted support, not celebrities out of reach. While Kim Kardashian's product endorsements can reach millions, some smaller influencers (so-called micro-influencers) have thousands instead of millions of followers. You can build more trusting and intimate relationships with your followers (Grafström, Jakobsson & Wiede, 2018). And most importantly, the recommendations and reviews from other consumers, friends and family are genuine. That's why user-generated content is so important for brands trying to attract more loyal customers. Let real people talk about you.

Influence today his marketing is in the experimental phase, which scientists call the pre-paradigm or exploratory phase. At this stage, most people will try different approaches to support their experience. There are incomplete theories as to why some approaches work and why they fail, but there is no underlying principle that explains everything. My approach in this series is to use a simplistic model of social media influence to examine whether influence methods can be gained from an information analysis perspective to gain a deeper understanding.

Influences consist of two entities: influencers and targets. An influencer's influence depends on her two factors: The first one is credibility or the influencer's expertise in a particular data area. There are no universal influencers because no one person can be influential in all areas. The most effective ones you can expect are influencers in very specific information spaces. The second factor is bandwidth, meaning the influencer's ability to transmit his expert knowledge through a social media channel. Active influencers in one channel might not even be present on another channel. So, influencers don't seem to be only specific to a website of information, they're specific to social media channels.

The target's likelihood to be influenced by a particular influencer depends on four factors:

- Relevance (the right information): How closely does the target's information needs coincide with the influencer's expertise? If the knowledge provided by the influencer isn't relevant, then it's just spam to the target and can be ignored.
- Timing: The power of influencers to make their expertise available to their targets when they need it. There are only a few timeframes along the electoral path in which targets are affected. Outside of this golden window, even relevant content is treated as spam because it has no time relevance.
- Placement (at the right place): The amount of channel overlap between the target and the influencer. Notifying influencers takes too long or doesn't reach them if the target is on their own social media channel.
- Trust (the right person): What percentage of targets in her group do the influencer trust as relevant to their information needs? Whether the influencer is trustworthy or not, the target sees them you have to trust. Without trust, all influencer information is demoted from targeting.

Big brands definitely recognize the value of using social media influencers to expand their marketing reach. An Estée Lauder rep admits that about 30-50% of their social/digital budget goes to funding social media influencers. Overall, social media influencer platforms have grown from 190 to 740 since 2015, with a market capitalization of he \$6.5 billion (McKinsey, 2022). However, one of the main differences between today's influencer and his marketing is the authenticity and friendliness conveyed to customers. In a criticism of the clean-shaven NBA star poster (courtesy of Gillette), potential customers can follow the star on Instagram to see how he actually uses the product in his life. became. However, even prominent social he media influencers (who usually have very large followings) are not always the most effective influencers (Grafström, Jakobsson & Wiede, 2018).

All things considered, the non-VIP force to be reckoned with will be really convincing on account of their evident realness and commonality. Individuals need to pay attention to individuals who are interesting, individuals they will trust since they're somewhat similar to them. This suggests a high school young lady could be bound to require cosmetics counsel from an individual adolescent young lady who exhibits information, legitimacy, and appeal more than a pop star. These forces to be reckoned with are alluded to as "miniature powerhouses" (or "nano-powerhouses"), and regularly just have nearly a hundred or thousand supporters as threatening a huge number. It could in fact be all the more monetarily gainful for an association to utilize a couple of dozen miniature powerhouses over big names with monstrous followings. Not exclusively would this be able to be immensely less expensive, yet marks understand that occasionally these styles of forces to be reckoned with are easier in really persuading adherents regarding the beneficial thing regarding a given item or administration.

3.3 Non-paid promotion through social media

Marketers are creating more and more content to support all stages of the buying journey. They distribute and promote their content across all channels on the web to maximize their chances of being "discovered" online. A simple question: who was looking for who on the internet and who was "found"? Social media in general, and Facebook in particular, has become an ideal platform for promoting brands and connecting with target markets. rice field. A big question that business owners and marketing leaders ask when it comes to Facebook marketing is whether free marketing (organic advertising) is available or is it worth spending on Facebook advertising (paid advertising) (Ohajionu & Mathews, 2015).

Organic Reach – Refers to the number of people who saw your post through free delivery. Organic social is social media activity without paid advertising. Create and interact with your web following using free social media tools. Paid social is anything on social media that is influenced by advertising dollars. In other words, brands pay social networks to display ads or sponsored posts to an audience beyond their followers. Cost-per-click (CPC) is one of the most common billing methods for this type of advertising. Combining paid and organic social strategies can simultaneously engage and nurture your followers while extending your brand's reach to a wider audience (Chawla & Chodak, 2021). The benefits of organic social networks are:

- Organic Social is free.
- Manage your reputation and customer relationships using organic social networks. Build trust in your brand by reaching out directly to troubled consumers.
- Listen to your audience and take the opportunity to acknowledge and improve their opinions.
- Deploy free campaigns with custom hashtags.
- Build a community of like-minded people who share the company's values.
- Build trust and demonstrate transparency.

- Using social channels as an opportunity to tell the brand his story (Chawla & Chodak, 2021).

Brands often look for ways to promote their beauty products on social media. This is the most rewarding in terms of brand awareness and profits. Social media marketing for beauty brands has been one of the most lucrative forms of marketing their products since the advent of the internet, and Facebook and its subsidiary Instagram are the most widely used platforms for such marketing. Social media marketing isn't the only way beauty brands can keep up with their audience. There are some alternatives that can take traffic away from paid ads like this.

First option is in-house content marketing. The brand may be against unregulated Facebook/Instagram commercials however, it not should be against the web-based media stages themselves. Whenever done accurately, excellent content showcasing can be similarly as productive, as far as reach, as the designated advertisements. The ideal crowd for your image is dependably there; you really want to take advantage of them, which should be possible by ceaselessly making quality substance regarding your image and items. Posting such substance via web-based media as inbound promoting can assist with driving traffic and leads. While web-based media promotions could help your image mindfulness, its shortfall doesn't mean the lift is beyond the realm of possibilities. Content, for example, recordings and online contests have been demonstrated to have magnificent crowd commitment. Making such an intuitive substance can assist with advancing your image without you spending a mass on notices.

Next option is exploring search engine optimization (SEO). Assuming your magnificent image can put resources into distributing quality substance reliably, the web search tool will remunerate this work by positioning your substance to the top during any important quests. Contrasted with different ventures, SEO for the magnificence and makeup industry is the most encouraging as these end up being two of the significant areas that are probably going to not run out of content. From 50 distinct ways of placing on eyeliner to similarly as numerous skincare strategies, the speciality of putting out reliable, quality substance for the ideal utilization of SEO for the magnificence and makeup industry is certainly not a challenging errand. This probably won't be as capable in getting business as paid web-based media ads, however, it absolutely makes a steady presence among your potential clients.

The third option is influencer partnership. Numerous magnificence brands accomplice excellence powerhouses to expand their image mindfulness. Presently, like never before is an ideal opportunity to take advantage of the boundless capability of joining forces up with your powerhouse image esteems and can acquaint your image with a wide scope of crowd. While powerhouse advertising is tied in with making the most extreme openness, it doesn't continuously mean collaborating up with a big name or a persuasive individual with numerous supporters. Brands might decide to give their items to their chosen influencer(s) for a notice on their page or give a level of their created deals.

4 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4.1 Purpose and objectives of the research

The **purpose** of this research is to focus the attention on the international cosmetics market from a consumer perspective and explore in depth how certain social media tactics and tools influence their online purchasing decisions, forming a better understanding of their behaviour. The main research question is stated as: examine what is the influence of social media on consumers' online buying behaviour for beauty products. Additionally, the following research objectives are defined:

- What is the influence of brand perception on online consumer buying behaviour?
- To what extent does the electronic word-of-mouth and negative reviews influence consumer online buying behaviour?
- What is the influence of social media influencer marketing on consumer online buying behaviour?

Based on the findings from the literature reviewed, brand perceived quality, brand awareness and brand association influence consumers to a great extent, as they prefer to buy brands, they are familiar with and they have heard of (Keller, 1993). Consumers are likely to take a brand name as a key consideration when buying a product since they associate the brand name to the quality of a certain product (Bristow, Schneider & Schuler, 2022). The relationship between brand awareness and purchasing decisions has been found to be statistically significant by researchers (Hoyer & Brown, 1990). From this, I formulate Hypothesis 1 as:

H1: Consumers agree that brand perception has a significant impact on their online buying behaviour.

A great information tool with a high influence on consumer buying behaviour is the electronic word of mouth (Baber et al., 2016; Lin, Featherman, Brooks & Hajli, 2019). The great potential of eWOM has shown influence on sales and levels of consumer loyalty (Craig, Greene & Versaci, 2015). This positive relationship has been proven in many previous studies related to the purchases of cars, smartphones and computers, tourist destinations and hotels (Ismagilova, Slade, Rana & Dwivedi, 2019). In this research I would try to explore the importance of e WOM communication and its impact in customer decision-making. Based on this I state Hypothesis 2 as:

H2: Consumers agree that electronic word-of-mouth in a form of product reviews has significant impact on their online buying behaviour.

Although extensive studies have demonstrated the effect of positive online reviews on sales, negative reviews are found to have a greater impact in consumer-decision making

(Bambauer-Sache & Mangold, 2011; Sen & Lerman, 2007). Given that reviews emerge from other buyers, consumers put their trust in them more than in sellers` positive comments (Floyd, Freling, Alhoqail, Cho & Freling, 2014). Greater attention is paid to negative information than to positive ones, because the latter are not as diagnostic and informative, thus negative information has a great impact on the decision-making process (Fiske, 1980; Maheswaran & Meyers-Levy, 1990). Following this proposition, Hypothesis 3 aims to show that customers are more prone to dropping their purchasing decisions if they hear overwhelmingly bad reviews. H3 is formulated as:

H3: Consumers agree that negative product reviews have a significant impact on their online buying behaviour.

Influencer marketing as a process of using individuals with a significant amount of followers has been used for different purposes. Some of them are to establish online product presence awareness, to create engagement from consumers and most importantly to drive both online and offline product sales. By sharing their product opinion, influencers highly impact customers purchasing decisions (Sudha & Sheena, 2017). Berger and Keller (2016) in their research found that influencers are being perceived as more credible, believable, and knowledgeable and that 82% of the people are highly likely to follow an influencer`s advice. Hypothesis 4 aims to show that customers and their purchasing behaviour of beauty products are influenced by influencer marketing and it is formulated as:

H4: Consumers agree that social media influencer marketing has a significant impact on their online buying behaviour.

4.2 Description of the research methodology

In order to answer the research questions, the method used for collecting data would be using an online questionnaire. The online questionnaire would aim to collect new, fresh data regarding this topic. It is going to be shared online, through social media and mail. The target population for this research are consumers of all ages and both genders. A non-probabilistic snowball sampling technique is going to be used in this research, where respondents would participate voluntarily and also are going to be asked to further share the questionnaire with other people and so on, thus creating snowball sampling (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). The advantage of using this method of data collection is that it can cover a large base of consumers. At the same time, the main disadvantage of this technique is that participants who are asked to refer to the questionnaire, are very likely to do that with other potential respondents similar to them. This can form a homogeneous group, making the problem of bias huge (Lee, 1993). In order to avoid this problem, each participant would be suggested to share it with members of their family instead of friends only. Regarding the sample size, at least 150 responses are expected to be collected.

4.3 Research design

I conducted the research through a survey questionnaire that was created on the Google Docs platform, which I used as a method for the easiest distribution of the questionnaire to a wider mass, for easier collection of the answers to the questions and for a more sublimated analysis after receiving the answers.

The questionnaire circulated online less than 10 days, from September 17 to September 26. The sample was among a diverse, non-targeted population that included people of different ages, people in different positions, with different levels of education, and people coming from different social backgrounds. Within a week, it was possible to achieve the minimum number of answers to the questionnaire and I moved on to the analysis of the obtained results.

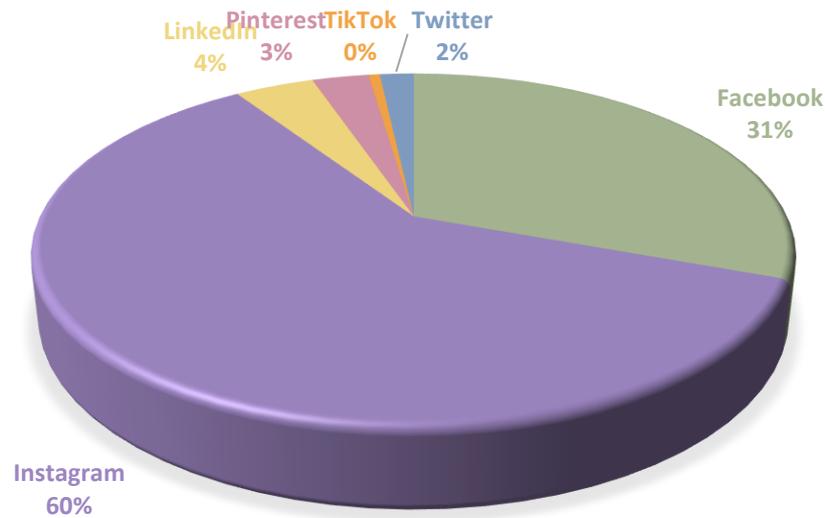
4.4 Data analysis

I received a total of 173 responses to the electronically conducted survey questionnaire, which satisfied the post target of a minimum number of 150 responses to form an appropriate opinion regarding the impact of reviews on social networks on the international market of cosmetic products. It is evident, and indeed it should be noted in the segmentation of the number of answers against the number of respondents who answered the questionnaire, which is really close to equalization, i.e. 85 women and 88 men answered the questionnaire, which is really interesting data from the point of view to the fact that attitudes in society indicate increased use of cosmetic products and care for one's own appearance by the male population as well. So yes, it is already possible to reject the universally accepted attitude that women's self-care is more emphasized than in the male population. In particular, if I connect it with their age, that is, with the age limit of the respondents, it is clearly seen that these are generations born in the period from 1990 to 2000, which means that most of them are generations in their 20s and 30s.

Regarding the data on their current engagements and employment, 133 respondents are full-time, 20 are students, 10 are part-time or part-time employees, 6 are retired and 4 are housewives. And, in the demographic data section, I still have to mention that most of the respondents, 91%, come from urban communities, while only 9% are from rural communities.

In order to start researching the market of cosmetic products, specifically the part that refers to the impact of comments and all those reviews that are related to the satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the corresponding cosmetic products, the first thing I was needed to do is to locate the audience or consumers of cosmetics products. When I say to locate it, I mean more precisely to determine the social media on the Internet that is used to the greatest extent. For this purpose, I dedicated the first part of the questionnaire to the questions related to the most frequently used social media and the time spent on a daily basis searching and reviewing posts on social networks. Collected data is shown in figure 13.

Figure 12: Most used social network

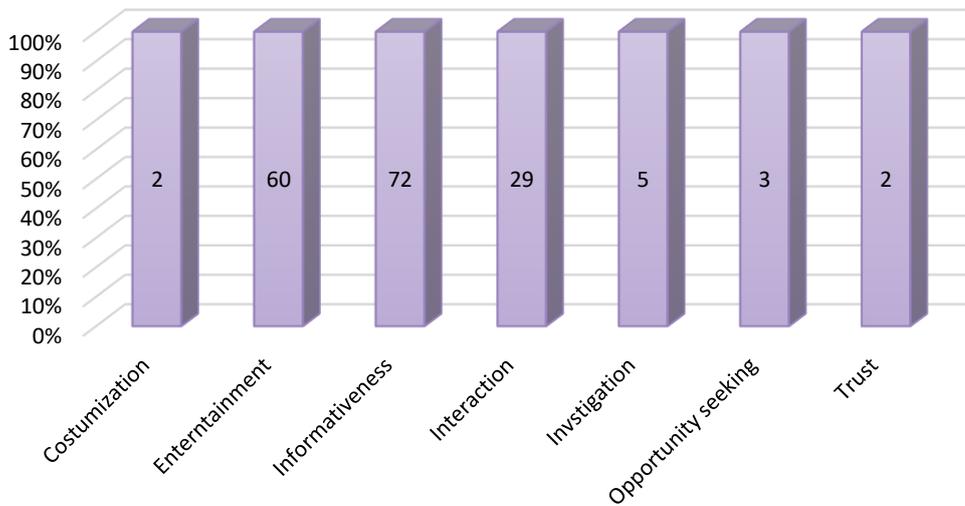


Source: Own work.

As shown in figure 13, most of the respondents use Instagram – 60%. And that is not surprising. By cross-checking the data, I found that the population aged 20-45 uses Instagram to the greatest extent, and that is the largest population that answered our survey questionnaire, the older generation uses Facebook, and TikTok is mostly represented among teenagers. Furthermore, 20% spend less than an hour a day on social networks, more than 50% of people who answered the questionnaire spend from 1 to 3 hours a day on social networks, 23% are attached to social networks for an average of 3-5 hours, and just over 5% spend more than 5 hours on social networks.

The second group consisting of two questions aimed to examine the behaviour of the respondents on social networks. 42% of the respondents answered that they use social networks with the aim of being informed about certain issues of their interest, 35% use them for entertainment, 17% use social networks in order to establish some kind of relationship, 3% use them for searching, 2% looks for suitable opportunities through social networks and 1% correct them for adaptation and trust, as shown in figure 14.

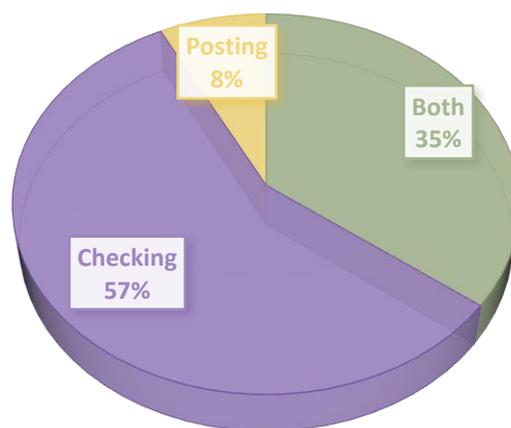
Figure 13: The usage of social networks



Source: Own work.

More precisely, 99 of the respondents answered that their presence on social networks is for the purpose of making some kind of checks, searching and reviewing, 13 respondents use them for the purpose of publishing, and sharing, while 61 of the respondents use social networks to perform both things. Or, if I present this in percentage 57% is getting information, 8% intended to connect links or develop discussion, while the rest 35% most commonly are doing the both things (figure 15).

Figure 14: Attitude towards social media

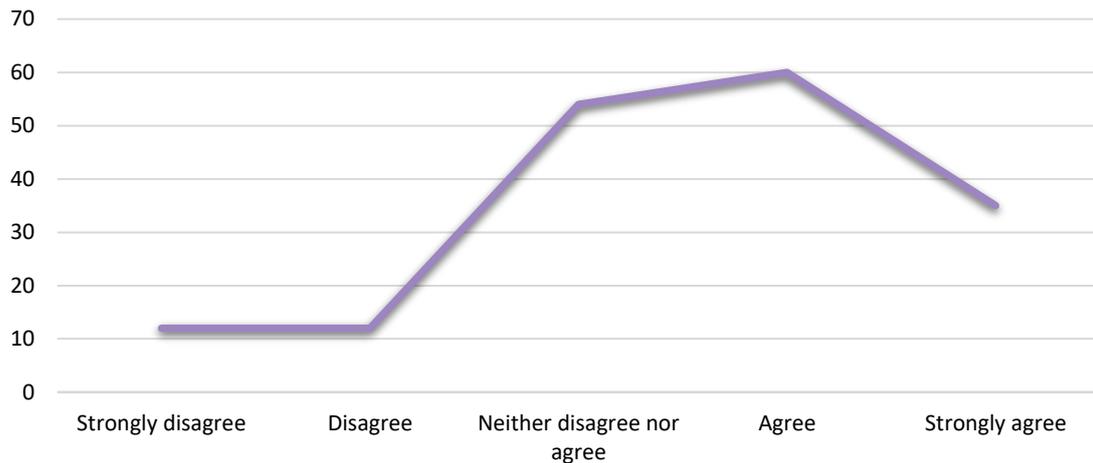


Source: Own work.

Starting with the next question, I aim to put the focus on the market of cosmetic products and begin to examine the relationship between this market and social networks, through ratings, reviews, comments and everything that is published, which is related to cosmetic products.

When asked if they use cosmetic products, 80% of our respondents answered yes. Regarding their need for cosmetic products in everyday life, 80-100% need cosmetic products for 35% of respondents, 18% have 60-80% need for cosmetic products, 40-60% need was expressed by 20% of respondents, 20-40% cosmetic products are used by 10% of the respondents and the remaining 17% of the respondents stated that they need cosmetic products around 0-20%. Data is also presented in figure 16.

Figure 15: The role of the brand in making decision for buying cosmetic products

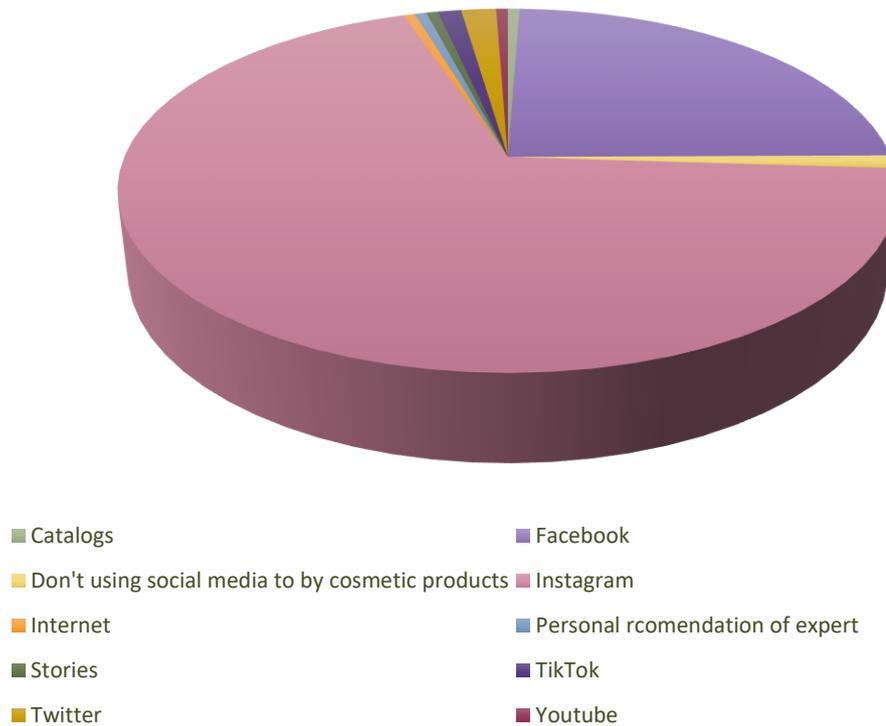


Source: Own work.

When talking about the extension, what must be also mention is the influence of the brand, which it has when making the decision to buy the product. The thesis that people are often attached to appropriate brands and base their opinion solely on the brand is globally valid, but there are also some who often experience the products independently and base their decision on the brand. As shown in figure 16, in the section on cosmetic products, 60 respondents answered that they agree with the thesis that the brand has a strong influence when choosing cosmetic products, and 35 of the respondents are firmly convinced of the influence of the brand in making a choice decision. and purchasing a suitable cosmetic product. This means that 55% of respondents make their decision based on a brand. But here must be noted that the number of those who both agree and disagree with this thesis is not small, and their number is 54. The standard deviation between the data is 22.6.

And again, if I go back to the influence of social networks on making a purchase decision, Instagram is ahead of all others, both as the most used social network and as the most influential network for purchasing cosmetic products (figure 17). And this is not surprising considering the fact that this social network is created for marketing, promotion and sales of products. Right behind Instagram is Facebook.

Figure 16: Most influential social network for buying cosmetics

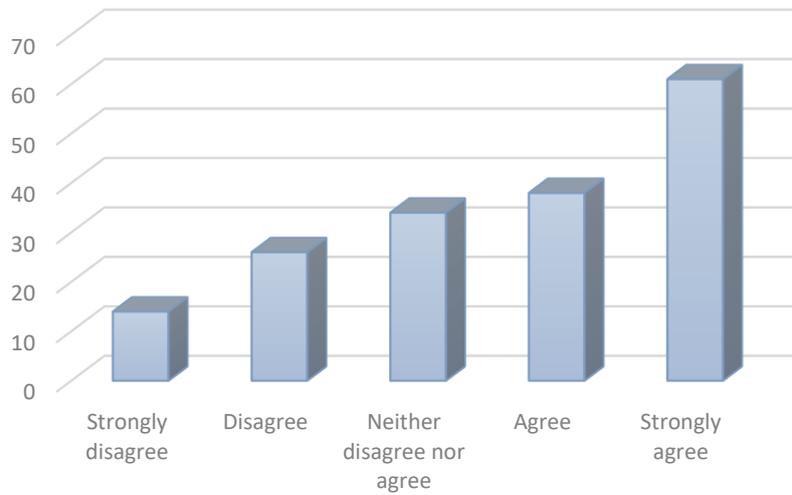


Source: Own work.

The next block of questions is more related to reviewing posts and people's attitudes towards cosmetic products. Practically, through these questions, I determine the core of our research, which is how they affect people's mindsets.

With the following question, our intentions were to see how much people look at ratings and reviews for certain cosmetic products in case they intend to buy or replace a certain product (figure 18). Out of a total of 173 respondents, 61 responded on a Likert scale of 1-5 that they strongly agree with the position of prior review of ratings, rankings and reviews before making the decision to purchase cosmetic products, while 38 are the number of those who agree. A total of 99 respondents believe that before forming their own opinion, they should check what others think about a given product. But the number of those who are in the middle is not small, that is, for them the opinion of others is equally important or unimportant. A standard deviation of 17 confirms that the data is highly spread.

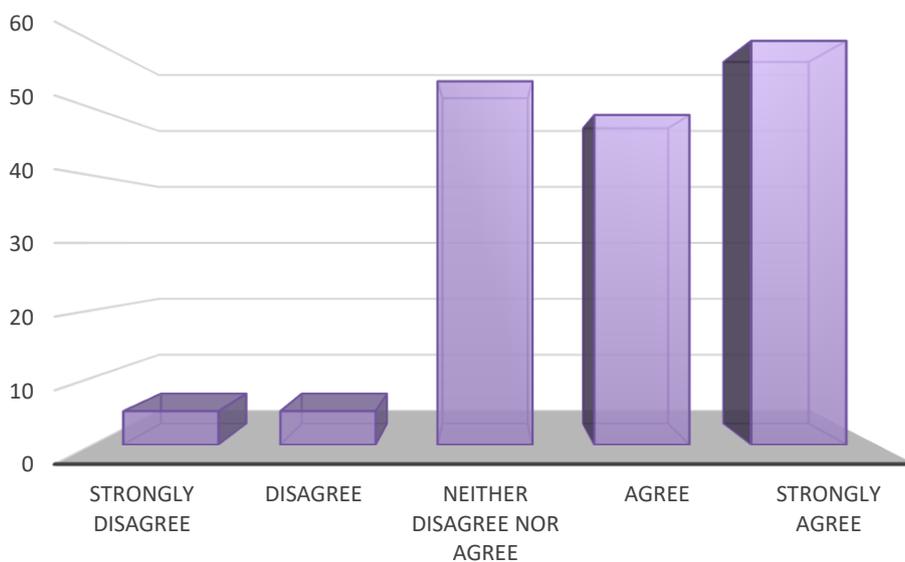
Figure 17: Reviewing ratings and reviews before deciding to buy a product



Source: Own work.

Do product ratings improve consumer awareness? - Absolutely yes! Figure 19 also speaks for this, which clearly showed that there is an agreement about how routines affect the awareness of consumers about the quality of cosmetic products. Expressed in numbers, 63% of the respondents agree and are firm in the given position, while on the other hand, only 10 respondents or 5% express strong disagreement and disagreement.

Figure 18: Product ratings improve consumer awareness



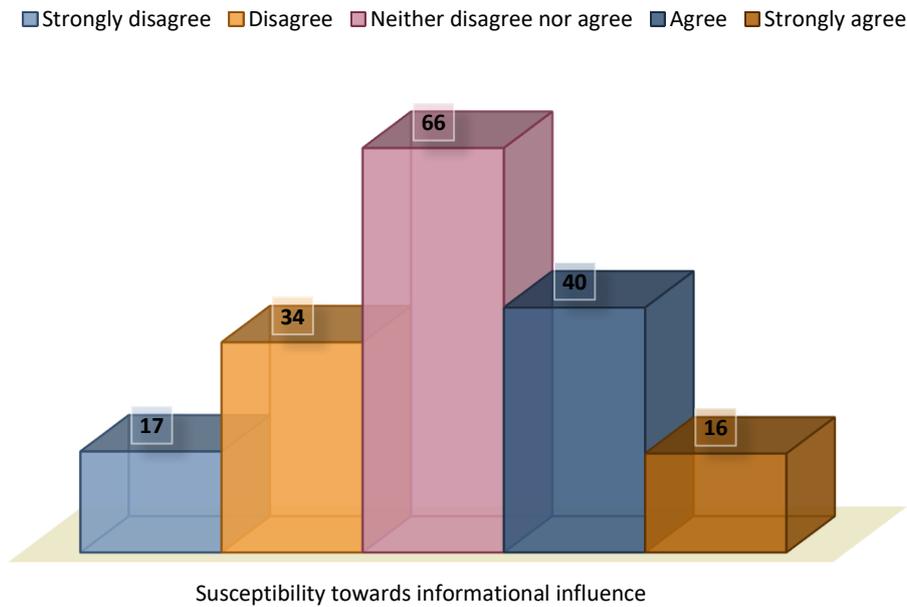
Source: Own work.

When I asked the respondents about which of the factors most influence their decision to visit sites and pages where product ratings are carried out, and before making the decision to buy, I received the following data:

- Ratings and reviews are viewed in order to obtain an additional source of information about the product - 31%
- Ratings are reviewed in order to review the experience of other consumers regarding the product – 21%
- The review is done on someone's recommendation - 15%
- Reviews and opinions about the product are reviewed as a basic source of information - 13%
- Check/recheck – 9%
- Accidentally came across these reviews while searching for the product – 8%
- Talking with friends before buying something – 1%

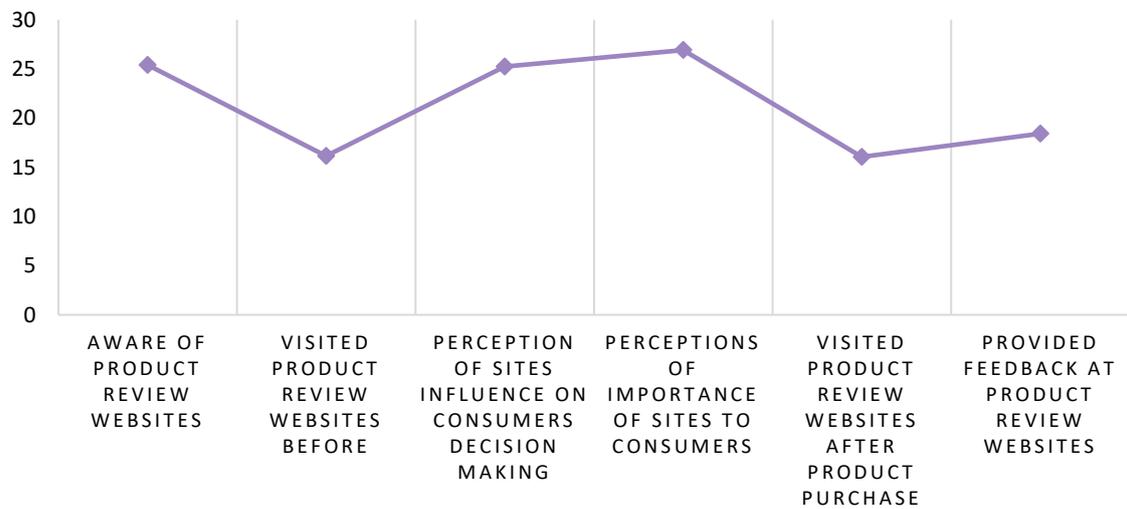
In addition to the survey, I examined people's behaviours in terms of how susceptible they are to influences. Hence, the results obtained are presented in figures 20 and 21 and are as follows: Globally, people do not agree very much about the awareness of web pages for product ranking, and to the greatest extent they show some middle ground, more precisely, they both agree and disagree, and this attitude of theirs is somewhat equally and the most represented and for all 6 set theses, i.e. also in the section of visiting websites for ranking before referral, and that the perception of the parties affects the consumer behaviour, the perceptions of others are important for consumers, visiting the parties after purchasing the product, as well as leaving feedback at the end. But what is interesting and interesting is in the part of the highest and lowest steps, more precisely the agreement and disagreement about the presented views, so I have the following case: If in the part of the parties' awareness of the rating, visiting them before buying, and the perception of how they influence their decisions, most of the respondents agree, in terms of their importance, as well as visiting after purchase and leaving feedback, the respondents do not agree. Hence, I can conclude that the information that is viewed before buying a certain product is more important, and much less often they decide to visit the site and leave a note and their opinion after the purchase.

Figure 19: Susceptibility towards informational influence



Source: Own work.

Figure 20: Standard deviation for Susceptibility towards informational influence



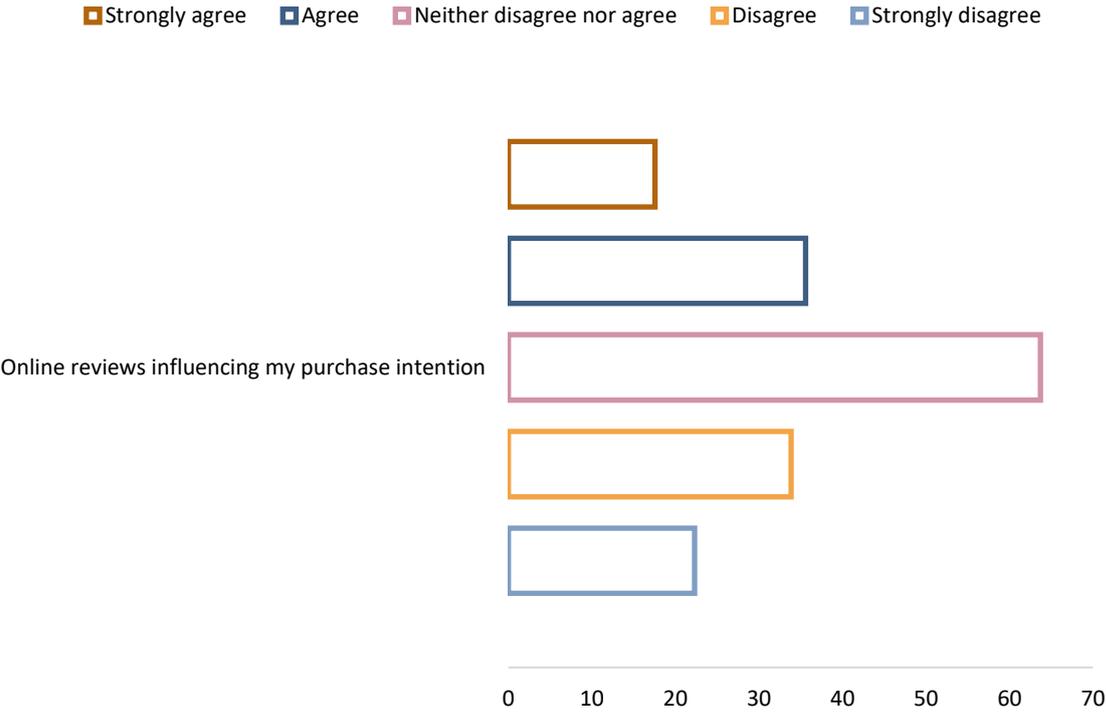
Source: Own work.

The high values of standard deviation that appear for the given variables in this section are noticeable, more precisely, I have the highest spread of data for the section that refers to the Perceptions of the importance of the parties that offer ratings and consumer reviews, while I have a lower spread for the Posting of these parties before and after the purchase of cosmetic products.

Now let's see how online reviews influence the decision to buy. Data is shown in figures 22 and 23, and again, most of the respondents are of the opinion that they both influence and

do not influence. There is a large number of respondents who trust online reviews and agree with their veracity, as well as make a decision based on those reviews, but the largest number of respondents who base their purchase decision on the basis of what friends say. Respondents do not strongly agree that social networks can influence their decision to buy a new cosmetic product and that comments on social networks can change their attitude about a certain cosmetic product. There is equal agreement that they will not decide to buy a cosmetic product for which there are negative ratings and comments. Or, if I express all these attitudes in percentages, I get the following picture: 32% of respondents believe that online reviews equally influence and do not influence their decision to buy a cosmetic product, and the percentage of those who agree and disagree is equal about the informational influence on creating an opinion and attitude towards the purchase of a product 17% and on the margins I have 11% who are firmly convinced that reviews and comments about a given product will not influence their decision, and 8% firmly agree that these online reviews significantly influence their decision.

Figure 21: Online reviews influence my purchasing intention



Source: Own work.

Figure 22: Standard deviation about influencing purchasing intention

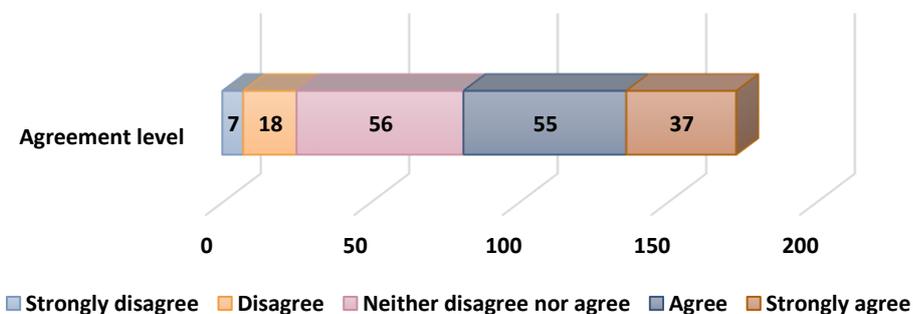


Source: Own work.

Taking into account the entire media scenario, and as presented in figure 24, there is a consensus around the following affirmations:

- If more people comment about the products, it affects the prospects for the information that is provided.
- If the content on social networks gets more likes, it again influences consumer perspectives.
- It is more reliable when the content shared on social networks is followed by more people or has more subscriptions and likes.
- The more content is shared, the more the credibility of the brand is affected.
- The higher the number of followers, subscribers or likes, the more popular the cosmetic products.

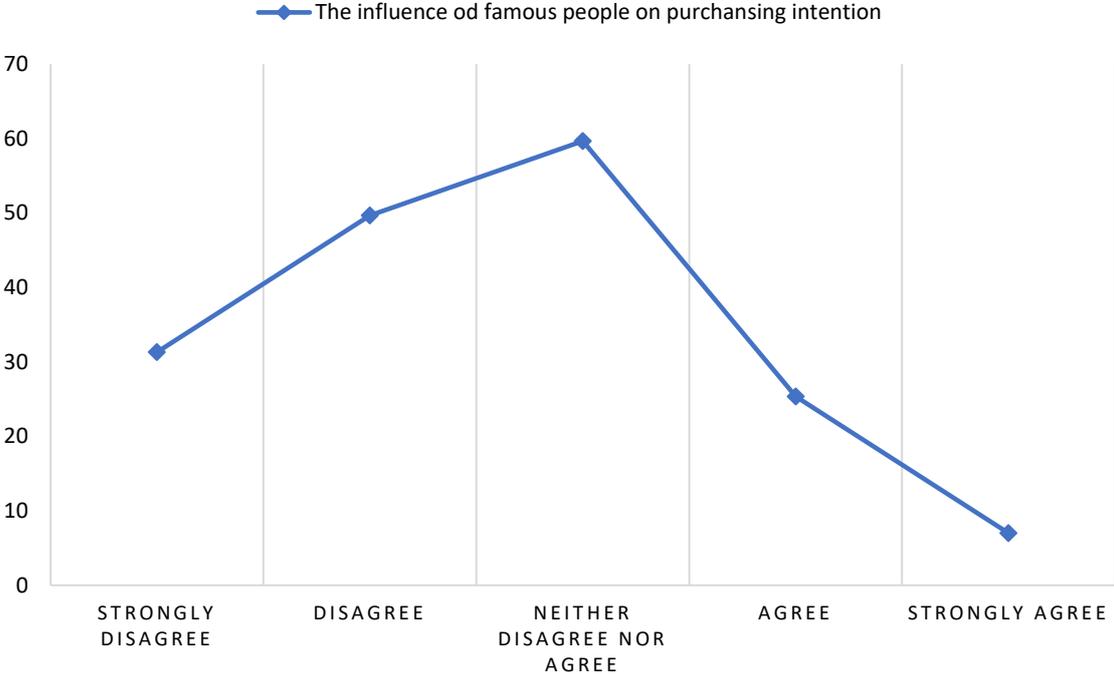
Figure 23: Agreement level



Source: Own work.

A wide range of data after calculation of standard deviation was seen for the statement that High number of followers or subscribers or likes leads to more popularity of cosmetic products and The more content related to the product is shared on social networks, the easier it is for consumers to rate and evaluate brand credibility. In recent years, influence has become widespread and many people follow these personalities who, through their behaviour and lifestyle, manage to influence the masses. However, regarding our survey on whether they would choose to buy a cosmetic product that was first posted by or sponsored by a famous person or influencer, 108 respondents answered no, while the remaining 65 answered yes.

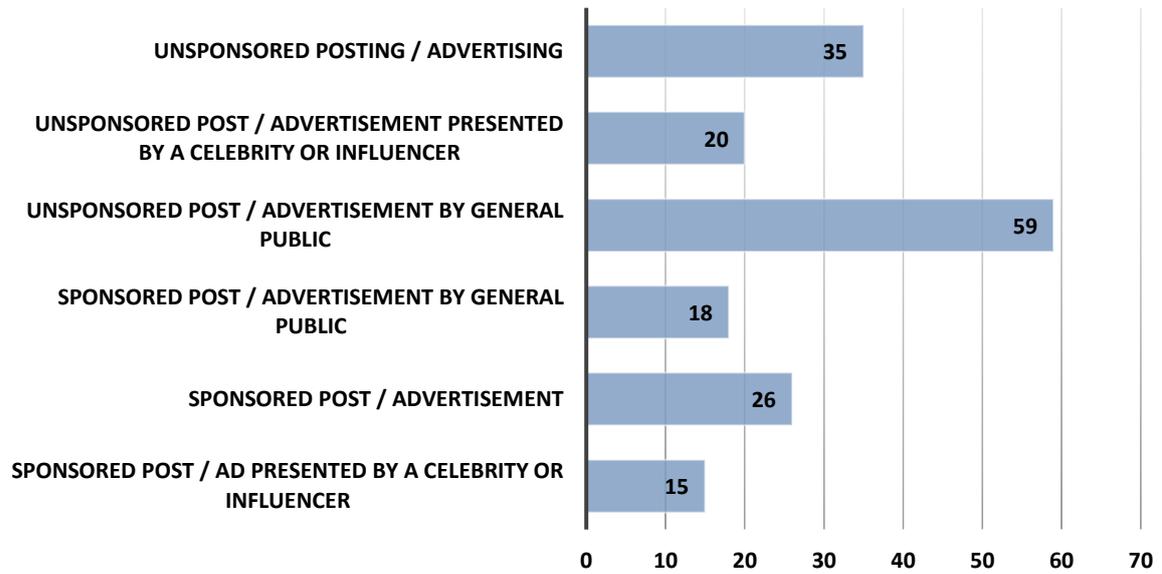
Figure 24: The Influence of famous people on purchasing intention



Source: Own work.

The figure 25 also shows the above global view. Namely, the number of respondents who do not agree with the views that information about cosmetic products has more credibility if it comes from influencers is much higher. There is also not a lot of trust in the recommendations given by influencers for the use of cosmetic products and they do not believe that there should be certain influencer characteristics that should influence the behaviour of consumers in making their purchase decision. And, all these findings are confirmed by the following answers where a large number of respondents believe in unsponsored posts or advertisements and shares from the general public (figure 26).

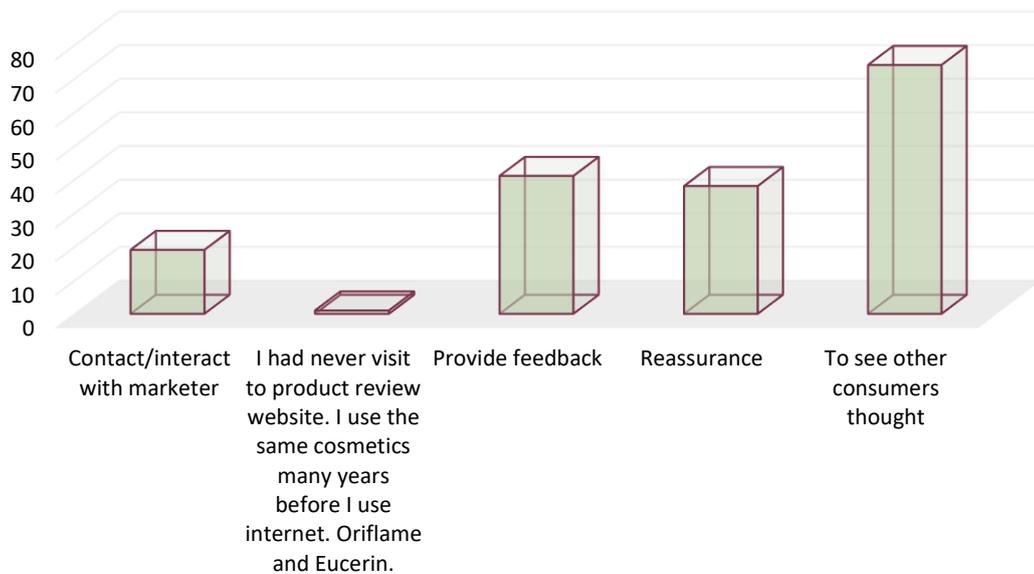
Figure 25: Motivation for buying cosmetic products according type of posts



Source: Own work.

In the questionnaire, I inserted again near the end the same question, only posed in a different way, regarding the factors that cause visits to web pages where product reviews are made. I see that the largest number of 74 answered that they visit to see what others think about the product, 41 to leave feedback and 38 to do a double check or confirm their views and opinions. This can be seen from figure 27.

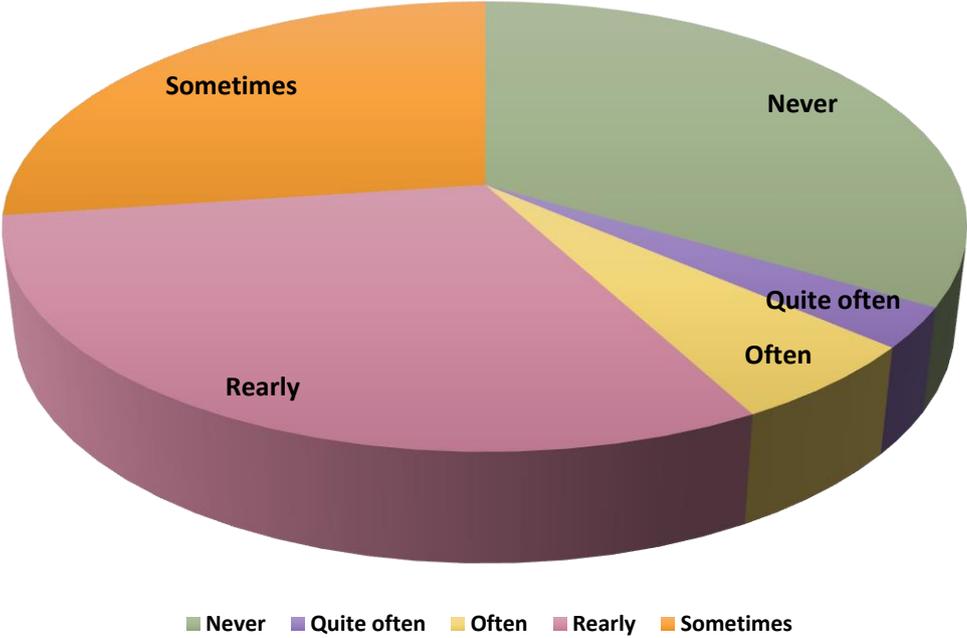
Figure 26: Factor influencing visit to product review websites



Source: Own work.

When using social networks, our respondents often and sometimes know how to rate a given product, and you can see how often they leave a comment expressing their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with cosmetic products in the following graph. And, most of the respondents who decide to give their own comments, choose to do so because of a positive experience and satisfaction with a cosmetic product. Data is presented in figure 28.

Figure 27: Leaving a comment to express satisfaction or dissatisfaction

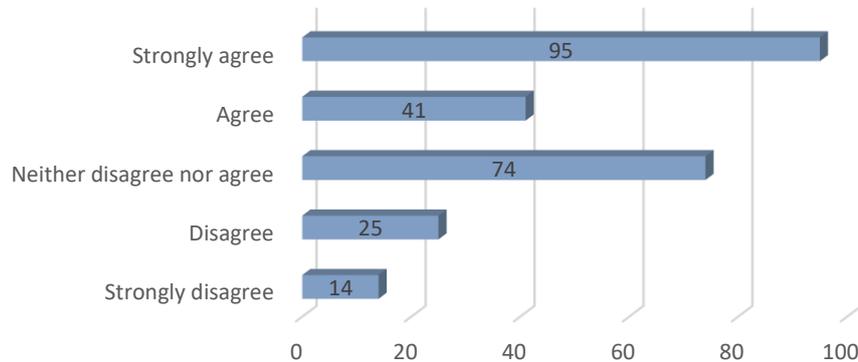


Source: Own work.

But aside from other people's views, promotions, ads, left reviews, ratings and ratings, how do companies react to all these connections and interactions that consumers establish in the market through social networks and the Internet?

More than half of those surveyed, 95, strongly agree that companies follow consumer comments in order to create a better product and a product that will better satisfy and respond to their needs, while 41 only agree. Furthermore, 74 think they follow or do not follow product end user statements equally. 25 respondents do not agree that the companies take action after the views of consumers, and 14 are firmly sure that the companies all these comments, ratings, evaluations, etc. are not very important to them. Figure 29 shows data for this question.

Figure 28: Companies follow customer's reviews and reactions in order to improve the products they offer



Source: Own work.

4.5 Hypotheses testing

H1: Consumers agree that brand perception has a significant impact on their online buying behaviour

In my research, I aimed to determine whether consumers believe that brand perception influences their buying decisions. To explore this hypothesis, I utilized the statement "The brand has a role in making a decision to buy a cosmetic product" from question 7. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with this statement.

To assess this hypothesis, I conducted a one-sample t-test to examine whether the average value significantly differed from 3.0, which served as the critical value for this investigation. The results, presented in Table 2, indicated that the sample mean was calculated as 3.54, exceeding the critical value of 3. Based on the sample data and a p-value of 0.00, I was able to reject the null hypothesis, leading to the conclusion that consumers indeed agree that brand perception significantly impacts their online buying behavior.

As the researcher, I conducted this study, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation, which led to the stated findings regarding the influence of brand perception on consumers' online purchasing decisions.

Table 2: H1. One sample statistics

| One sided One sample test | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| N | 173 |
| Mean | 3.543352601 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.102124944 |
| Std Error Mean | 0.083793008 |
| Degrees of freedom (df) | 172 |
| Hypothesised Mean | 3 |
| t-statistic | 6.484462309 |
| p-value | 0.00000000091 |

Source: Own work.

H2: Consumers agree that electronic word-of-mouth in a form of product reviews has significant impact on their online buying behaviour

In my research, I aimed to explore whether consumers believe that electronic word-of-mouth, particularly in the form of product reviews, significantly influences their buying decisions. To investigate this hypothesis, I used the statement "I buy cosmetic products based on the reviews" from question 13, which captured respondents' levels of agreement. To test this hypothesis, I conducted a one-sample t-test to determine whether the average value significantly differed from 3.0, serving as the critical value in this investigation. The results revealed that the sample mean was calculated as 2.84, which is lower than the critical value of 3. However, upon analyzing the data, I found that the p-value was higher than 0.05, indicating that the result is not statistically significant. As a result, there was insufficient evidence to accept the null hypothesis.

Table 3 provides the data pertaining to this hypothesis, showcasing the responses collected during the research process.

As the researcher, I conducted this study, which encompassed data collection, analysis, and interpretation, leading to the stated findings on the impact of electronic word-of-mouth through product reviews on consumers' buying decisions.

Table 3: H2. One sample statistics

| One sided One sample test | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| N | 173 |
| Mean | 2.843930636 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.127835257 |
| Std Error Mean | 0.085747727 |
| Degrees of freedom (df) | 172 |
| Hypothesised Mean | 3 |
| t-statistic | -1.82009915 |
| p-value | 0.07048227 |

Source: Own work.

H3: Consumers agree that negative product reviews have a significant impact on their online buying behaviour

In this research, the third hypothesis aimed to explore whether consumers perceive negative product reviews as having a significant impact on their online buying decisions. To assess this hypothesis, we utilized the statement "I would buy a cosmetic product despite negative reviews" from question 13. To account for the reverse nature of the statement, it was first reversely coded before inclusion in the analysis. We employed a One-sample t-test to examine whether the average value significantly differed from 3.0, which serves as a critical value for this investigation.

Upon analyzing the data and calculating the sample mean, which was found to be 3.54, we observed that it exceeds the critical value of 3. This outcome led us to reject the null hypothesis at a p-value of 0.00, indicating that consumers indeed agree that negative product reviews significantly influence their online buying behavior.

As the researcher, I conducted this study, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation, which culminated in the stated findings regarding the impact of negative product reviews on consumers' online purchasing decisions.

Table 4: H3. One sample statistics

| One sided One sample test | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| N | 173 |
| Mean | 3.549132948 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.042225844 |
| Std Error Mean | 0.079238964 |
| Degrees of freedom (df) | 172 |
| Hypothesised Mean | 3 |
| t-statistic | 6.930087463 |
| p-value | 0.0000000001 |

Source: Own work.

H4: Consumers agree that social media influencer marketing has a significant impact on their online buying behaviour

The fourth hypothesis aimed to investigate whether consumers believe that social media influencer marketing significantly influences their online buying behavior. To test this hypothesis, we used the statement "Influencer characteristics are needed to be shown and influence your behavior for buying cosmetic products" from question 15 in the questionnaire. The respondents rated their level of agreement with this statement. The analysis involved conducting a One-sample t-test (table 5), revealing that the sample mean was calculated as 2.71, which is below the critical value of 3. Based on the sample data and with a p-value of 0.00, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. Consequently, we cannot assert

that consumers agree that social media influencer marketing has a significant impact on their online buying behavior.

As the researcher, these findings were obtained through the conducted research, indicating that the data analysis and interpretation led to the stated conclusion regarding consumers' perception of the impact of influencer marketing on their online cosmetic product purchases.

Table 5: H4. One sample statistics

| One sided One sample test | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| N | 173 |
| Mean | 2.716763006 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.070539386 |
| Std Error Mean | 0.081391602 |
| Degrees of freedom (df) | 172 |
| Hypothesised Mean | 3 |
| t-statistic | -3.479928962 |
| p-value | 0.0006356 |

Source: Own work

4.6 Discussion of the results

Examining the processed data from the survey questionnaire and the obtained results, I can notice that the influence of certain social tactics and tools on the Internet is noticeable in the international market of cosmetic products, which can influence the decision-making of purchases and a better understanding of consumer behaviour.

Social networks and how they play a big role in the modern world in the field of marketing as a tool for promotion and sharing of additional information about cosmetic products. The obtained results also go in this direction, where I clearly saw that Instagram as a modern tool for promotion is a widely used social media by people who primarily use it for information and obtaining additional data regarding a desired cosmetic product.

Branding is also a crucial factor, a factor of great importance when it comes to choosing a particular cosmetic product or not. The connection with the brand, the built trust for the brand among consumers, facilitates their decision to choose a newly launched product or replace an existing item with a new one.

In the area of social media advertising, the majority of people, despite the high representation of influencers, would not choose to choose a product that goes as a sponsored post or is advertised by a famous person, and rather decide to value products that have likes or positive comments, and are not shared as sponsored posts.

4.7 Limitations of the research and recommendations for further research

The formulation of research subjects and objectives stands as a paramount aspect of meticulous research planning. It necessitates utmost care to avoid excessive breadth and maintain a focused approach. Hence, it becomes imperative to precisely specify research objectives, ensuring that they are tailored to the study's core focus, free from any exaggerations or unnecessary expansions that might lead to overlooking the essence of the entire study.

During the process of data collection, researchers may encounter obstacles that could impede the acquisition of information, potentially leading to inadequacies in the collected data and subsequently influencing the outcome and conclusions of the research. Particular attention must be given to the targeted group, questionnaire design, and the time allocated for responses. These seemingly simple yet crucial factors demand special dedication and scrutiny to overcome potential limitations in data collection. Additionally, researchers must be vigilant regarding sample size and the statistical significance of the data collected, as insufficiencies in these areas may hinder the achievement of desired research outcomes.

Furthermore, it is crucial to address the potential lack of previous research on the selected topic. Conducting a comprehensive literature review is a fundamental aspect of any research endeavor as it establishes the groundwork and scope of existing works in the research area. The findings from the literature review serve as the building blocks upon which the researcher constructs her study to achieve the research objectives effectively.

However, when investigating contemporary and emerging research problems or narrowing the focus too much, there might be limited prior research available on the topic. For instance, if the research focuses on exploring Bitcoins as the future currency, it is plausible to find a scarcity of scholarly papers, given the recent emergence of Bitcoins. While there might be studies touching upon related aspects, they might not specifically address the influence of social networks on cosmetic product markets or similar specific areas.

Moreover, access to relevant data can pose challenges. Often, students and young researchers face financial constraints when subscribing to electronic platforms providing statistical data for specific domains. The choice of the most appropriate resource becomes critical to ensure relevant and accurate data access, as making the wrong subscription decision might lead to additional financial burdens. To expand upon the analysis or offer recommendations for future research, it would be beneficial to investigate the role of influencers, especially sponsored and unsponsored posts, and their impact on consumer behavior. Additionally, exploring the extent of trust gained and brand loyalty established through these influencers' interactions could further enrich the study.

It is interesting the fact that it is especially emphasized that quality products usually do not need advertising and that the comments from people who have experienced or tried them are sufficient proof of their quality, usability and their degree of satisfaction with their needs. On the other hand, not perfect enough products usually require the involvement and engagement of a famous person who will be like a wind at the back and will cause more attention from the audience by presenting the product and all this will be further supported by sponsoring announcements in order to increase visibility and there was more interaction with potential consumers.

It is for this reason that I can propose a deepening of this research in order to get a clearer picture of whether influencership is really useful in terms of promoting truly quality products and in terms of contributing and setting up a real marketing tool for the business community. Also, this part can be supplemented with brand loyalty, because famous faces are often seen as the face of certain cosmetic products, only to break off cooperation with a certain manufacturer after a while and start cooperation with another, so the question is raised again for the reality in the words they present. So yes, as a certain trust is built, so it can be destroyed. Simply, as our analysis showed, people trust the general audience much more, but to crystallize the picture it would be good to deepen the analysis in these two directions from the aspect of how social network reviews influence the international market of cosmetic products.

CONCLUSION

Social media is now an integral part of people's lives and has a significant impact on them. These networks' features, such as their interaction, inventiveness, virality, content sharing, and community-building capacities, have created several new options for firms to market their goods and services through social media. Additionally, platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter make it simpler for businesses to connect with their target markets and attract new clients. Additionally, because so many users participate in writing online evaluations that affect customer perceptions, social media creates additional opportunities for consumers to learn more about specific products they are interested in buying. The cosmetics market has grown significantly, and it is well-represented on social networking sites.

With over 1 billion monthly active users, Instagram is a platform based on visual appeal and photo and video sharing, and is one of the most popular social networking services to promote luxury and beauty products. It makes sense as a platform to Users can share their hobbies and lifestyle with their loved ones, friends, acquaintances and strangers through images and videos. Unlike Facebook, Instagram allows users to choose whether to create a public profile that anyone can view and interact with, or a private profile that requires the account owner's permission to follow and view the feed. Social media platforms provide

users with various tools to improve their interaction and engagement. It also helps users express themselves and connect with others.

Since Instagram is a social media site, user comments and replies can also improve interactions. Last but not least, Instagram offers users a “shopping” feature, allowing them to shop directly from different brands without leaving the app. Social channels now include “product tags” that display product prices and brands to help customers learn more about their purchases. The platform has also integrated shopping destinations into its app, allowing users to discover new brands and products available on this network. There is a "Product Details Page". Brands can effectively and inexpensively showcase and promote their products and services on social media platforms and expand their marketing campaigns. Businesses can upload as much information or product images and videos as they want after creating a typically free account.

The emergence and growing popularity of social media is influencing consumer purchasing behavior. Rather than relying on information disclosed by companies, they seek additional reliable knowledge from consumers who have already experienced the products and services being sold. As a result, consumers are increasingly turning to social media to read the experiences, recommendations and opinions of others and automatically solicit electronic word of mouth (eWOM). The company is looking to create his eWOM to complement their company and their products. Therefore, we are increasingly turning to social media influencer marketing to actively enhance our brand image, increase awareness, increase website traffic and sales. Brands seek to build strong relationships with their consumers in order to build a stable and trustworthy foundation that is essential for increasing customer loyalty. Brand loyal shoppers are less likely to believe negative eWOMs and more willing to share positive eWOMs. eWOM is a powerful tool for getting other consumers to buy your product and later recommend it to others. First-time users do not benefit from this promotion and therefore have no incentive to fake positive reviews, instilling a high level of trust, reducing perceived purchase risk and increasing consumer purchase intent. EWOM Messages spread quickly and reach a wide range of consumers, making them an influential tool for both established and new brands (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011).

The research conducted aimed to identify the impact of social networks, and more specifically reviews, on the international market for cosmetics through consumer behavior when purchasing this type of product. The section literature review provided an introduction and explained the implications of terms and topics relevant to this study. This has allowed further research to define the significance of topics and issues, better understand the variables and make connections between them. In addition, we were able to reach out to a large number of respondents by conducting a survey that received 173 responses. A survey can be divided into several sections, such as: B.: Survey of respondents on demographics, social network usage, online reviews, influencers, purchasing habits and behavior, and individual behavior and purchasing behavior related to these segments. With the help of this survey, we gained greater insight into the impact of social networks and ratings and reviews

available to consumers in making purchasing decisions for products in the cosmetics industry.

Survey results indicate that the majority of respondents purchase cosmetics based on reviews, giving them the opportunity to influence their attitudes toward a particular cosmetic product. reported using online reviews as online reviews, suggesting that there is a certain level of trust in online reviews. Moreover, negative online reviews have a greater impact on consumers and their buying behavior than positive or neutral ones.

According to survey respondents' responses, influencers do not appear to be as reliable as previous surveys have shown, which may also be due to the sampling methods used by the researchers. However, some respondents do not really rate the product highly and therefore recommend it because of the quality and effectiveness of the product the influencer sells, or simply because they are getting paid by the big brands. They justified these opinions by stating that they were not sure. das. In summary, despite the potential for various improvements in future research, this paper shows that there is an important relationship between influencer marketing and purchase intent.

Finally, I found Instagram to be the most influential platform for buying beauty products, followed by Facebook.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Povzetek (Summary in the Slovene language)

Družbeni mediji so zdaj sestavni del življenj ljudi in nanje pomembno vplivajo. Lastnosti teh omrežij, kot so njihova interakcija, iznajdljivost, viralnost, deljenje vsebine in zmogljivosti za izgradnjo skupnosti, so ustvarile več novih možnosti za podjetja, da tržijo svoje blago in storitve prek družbenih medijev. Platforme, kot so Instagram, Facebook in Twitter, podjetjem olajšajo povezovanje s ciljnim trgi in tako pritegnejo nove stranke. Ker veliko uporabnikov ocenjuje in objavlja ocene na spletu, le-te pa vplivajo na dojemanje strank, družbeni mediji ustvarjajo dodatne priložnosti za potrošnike, da izvejo več o določenih izdelkih, ki jih zanimajo za potencialen nakup. Trg kozmetike je doživel močan razcvet in je postal zelo zastopan na spletnih mestih in družbenih omrežjih.

Platforma Instagram ima več kot milijardo aktivnih uporabnikov in je platforma, ki v glavnem temelji na vizualnosti, saj je poglobljena aktivnost uporabnikov deljenje lastnih fotografij in videoposnetkov iz življenj le teh. Zato so podjetja iz lepote industrije videli Instagram kot potencialni kanal za oglaševanje luksuznih lepote dobrin in storitev. Uporabniki lahko s slikami in videoposnetki delijo svoje hobije in način življenja s svojimi najdražjimi, prijatelji, znanci in popolnimi neznanci. V nasprotju s Facebookom, Instagram uporabnikom omogoča izbiro med ustvarjanjem javnega profila, ki ga lahko kdorkoli vidi, ter zasebnim profilom, ki zahteva dovoljenje lastnika profila, da jim kdorkoli sledi in si ogleda njihov profil. Družbena omrežja svojim uporabnikom ponujajo različna orodja za izboljšanje medsebojne interakcije in sodelovanja, kar uporabnikom tudi pomaga pri izražanju in povezovanju z drugimi.

Instagram je družbeno omrežje, ki omogoča tudi komentarje in odzive uporabnikov, kar vodi v izboljšanje medsebojne interakcije. Nenazadnje Instagram svojim uporabnikom ponuja funkcijo »Nakupovanje«, ki jim omogoča neposredne nakupe pri različnih blagovnih znamkah, ne da bi zapustili aplikacijo. Socialni kanal je zdaj dodal kategorijo "oznake izdelkov", ki prikazujejo ceno in blagovno znamko artiklov, z namenom, da bi strankam pomagale izvedeti več o produktu. Platforma je v aplikacijo vključila tudi nakupovalno destinacijo, ki uporabnikom omogoča iskanje novih blagovnih znamk in izdelkov, ki so na voljo v tem omrežju. Poleg tega vsebuje Instagram kategorijo "stran s podrobnostmi o izdelku", kjer so predstavljene vse podrobnosti o določenih stvareh. Blagovne znamke lahko učinkovito in cenovno ugodno predstavljajo in oglašujejo svoje blago in storitve na družbenih platformah ter jih uporabljajo za razširitev svojih tržnih kampanj. Podjetja lahko na svojem ustvarjenem računu naložijo poljubno količino informacij, slik in videoposnetkov svojih produktov, kar je običajno brezplačno.

Pojav družbenih omrežij in njihova vse večja priljubljenost je vplivala na nakupno vedenje potrošnikov, saj ti niso več odvisni od informacij, ki jih razkrije podjetje, temveč iščejo dodatna in verodostojne informacije pri potrošnikih, ki že imajo izkušnje s trženim izdelkom ali storitvijo. Zaradi tega se potrošniki vse pogosteje obračajo na družbena omrežja, da bi prebrali izkušnje, priporočila in mnenja drugih uporabnikov, tako avtomatično iščejo

elektronsko besedo od ust do ust (eWOM). Podjetja poskušajo izdelati eWOM, ki dopolnjuje njih same in njihove izdelke, zato se vse pogosteje obračajo na »influencer-je« ali vplivneže (v nad. vplivneži) na družbenih omrežjih in tako pozitivno krepijo podobo svoje blagovne znamke ter ustvarjajo prepoznavnost in povečujejo promet na spletnem mestu. Blagovne znamke si prizadevajo vzpostaviti tesne odnose s svojimi potrošniki, da bi zgradile trden in na zaupanju sloneč temelj, ki je bistvenega pomena za povečanje zvestobe strank. Kupci, ki so zvesti blagovni znamki, so manj nagnjeni k temu, da bi verjeli negativnim eWOM in so bolj pripravljeni širiti pozitivna mnenja in komentarje. eWOM je močno orodje za prepričevanje drugih potrošnikov, da kupijo izdelek, ki ga ti kasneje priporočijo tretjim. Prvi uporabniki nimajo nobene namere ponarejanja pozitivnih mnenj, saj s tem dejanjem ne bi imeli koristi, zato se tako ustvari visoka stopnja zaupanja, ki zmanjša zaznano tveganje nakupa in poveča nakupno namero potrošnika. Sporočila E-WOM se lahko hitro širijo in dosežejo širok krog potrošnikov, zaradi česar so vplivno orodje za uveljavljene in nove blagovne znamke.

Izvedena raziskava je imela za cilj ugotoviti vpliv družbenih omrežij, natančneje ocen, na mednarodni trg kozmetičnih izdelkov skozi obnašanje potrošnikov pri nakupu tovrstnih izdelkov. Prvič, pregled literature v prvem razdelku je predstavljal uvod in pojasnil pomen izrazov in tem povezanih s to študijo. To je omogočilo nadaljnje raziskave za opredelitev pomembnosti predmeta in problema za boljše spoznavanje in ustvarjanje povezav med spremenljivkami. Poleg tega je bila izvedena anketa, ki je dosegla 173 odgovorov in uspela doseči veliko število anketirancev. Vprašalnik lahko razdelimo na več sklopov, kot so: demografija, uporaba socialnih omrežij, spletne ocene, vplivneži ter nakupne navade in vedenje ter spraševanje anketirancev o njihovem osebni vedenju in nakupnih navadah, povezanih s temi segmenti. S pomočjo tega vprašalnika sem dobila globlji pregled nad vplivom družbenih omrežij ter ocen in recenzij, ki so potrošnikom na voljo pri odločanju o nakupu izdelka iz kozmetične industrije.

Rezultati vprašalnika kažejo, da večina anketirancev kupuje kozmetične izdelke na podlagi ocen in da imajo tudi moč vplivati na njihov odnos do določenih kozmetičnih izdelkov. Več udeležencev je poročalo, da spletne ocene uporabljajo kot varnostno merilo pred dejanskim nakupom, kar pomeni, da obstaja določena stopnja zaupanja v spletne ocene. Nadalje lahko sklepamo, da imajo negativne spletne ocene večji vpliv na potrošnike in njihovo nakupovalno vedenje kot pozitivne ali nevtralne.

Glede na odgovore udeležencev ankete se zdi, da vplivneži niso tako zanesljivi in vredni zaupanja, kot so pokazale dosedanje raziskave, kar je lahko posledica načina vzorčenja, ki ga je raziskovalec uporabil. Nekateri anketiranci pa so za ta mnenja navedli razlog, in sicer, da nikoli niso prepričani, ali vplivnež resnično ceni in posledično priporoča izdelke, ki jih prodajajo, zaradi njihove kakovosti in učinkovitosti ali zgolj zato, ker so za to plačani od velikih blagovnih znamk. Na koncu lahko rečemo, da čeprav obstajajo različne možne izboljšave za nadaljnje raziskave, ta analiza kaže, da obstaja pomembna povezava med vplivnim trženjem in nakupno namero.

Nazadnje je bilo ugotovljeno, da je Instagram platforma, ki ima največji vpliv na uporabnike z vidika nakupa lepotnih produktov. Močan vpliv na uporabnike ima tudi družbena platforma Facebook, ki pa je zasedla drugo mesto.

Appendix 2: Research questionnaire on English language

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PRODUCT REVIEWS ON THE INTERNATIONAL COSMETICS MARKET

This research is conducted in order to better understand the behavior of consumers of cosmetic products as well as the influencing factors that determine the decision-making process regarding the selection and purchase of cosmetic products. In the research process, the degree of dependence and activity on social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.), their presence (active or passive), as well as the part related to leaving comments, feedback, sharing practices, and reviews, will be seen. As well as experiences, all of this in the area of promotion and sale of cosmetic products.

The results of this research will be used in the preparation of a master's thesis on the topic

"Influence of social media product reviews on the international cosmetics market".

Q1. Which of this social network you use:

- Instagram
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Pinterest
- LinkedIn
- Other: _____

Q2. The average time spent on online on social media per day:

- Less than an hour
- 1-3 hours
- 3-5 hours
- More than 5 hours

Q3. What do you most often use social networks for?

- Informativeness
- Customization
- Investigation
- Opportunity seeking
- Trust
- Interaction
- Entertainment

Q4. What do you most often use social networks for?

- Posting

- Checking
- Both

Q5. Do you use cosmetic products?

- Yes
- No

Q6. The neediness of cosmetic products in percentage (from 1 to 100%)?

Q7. Please indicate the level to which you agree with this statement:

| | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Neutral (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| The brand has a role in making a decision to buy a cosmetic product | | | | | |

Q8. Which is the most influential social network for buying cosmetics?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Other: _____

Q9. Please indicate the level to which you agree with this statement:

| | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Neutral (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Did you review the ratings and reviews before deciding to buy a product? | | | | | |

Q10. Please indicate the level to which you agree with this statement:

| | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Neutral (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Do you agree that websites that offer product ratings improve consumer awareness? | | | | | |

Q11. Which of the following factors influencing visits to product reviews websites prior to product purchase?

- Use as additional source of information
- Assurance/reassurance
- Get other consumer's views prior to purchase
- Use as primary source of information
- Came upon in during search for product information
- Someone referred me to it
- Other: _____

Q12. How much, as a person, you are susceptible to Informational Influence?

| | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Neutral (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Aware of product review websites | | | | | |
| Visited product review websites before | | | | | |
| Perception of sites influence on consumers decision making | | | | | |
| Row 4Perceptions of importance of sites to consumers | | | | | |
| Visited product review websites after product purchase | | | | | |
| Provided feedback at product review websites | | | | | |

Q13. How much online reviews influence your purchasing intention for cosmetic product?

| | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Neutral (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| I trust online reviews | | | | | |
| I buy cosmetic product based on the reviews | | | | | |
| I am more likely to buy a cosmetic product that is recommended by my friends | | | | | |
| Social media influences me to try new cosmetic products via reviews | | | | | |
| Comments from social media can change my attitude about a cosmetic product | | | | | |
| I would buy a cosmetic product despite of negative reviews | | | | | |
| I have decided against purchasing a cosmetic product, because of the negative online reviews regarding the product | | | | | |

Q14. Considering an overall social media scenario, please indicate below your agreement level with the following affirmations:

| | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Neutral (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| The higher the number of followers, subscribers or likes, the more popular the cosmetics products are | | | | | |
| The more the content shared on social media, the easier is to evaluate the brands credibility | | | | | |
| It makes me feel more confident about the content shared by a social media when many people follow, subscribes or likes | | | | | |
| If the social media content is liked by many people, it affects my perspective on the information given | | | | | |
| If many people comment the social media content, it affects my perspective on the information given | | | | | |

Q15. What is your opinion about the influence of Famous people and Influencers on Purchasing Intention for Cosmetic products?

| | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Neutral (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Information about cosmetic products have a higher credibility if they come from an Influencer | | | | | |
| I trust the recommendation I obtain from influencers regarding cosmetic products | | | | | |
| Influencer characteristics are needed to be showed and influence your behavior for buying cosmetic products | | | | | |

Q16. Would you decide for a cosmetic product that is the first time posted and sponsored by a famous public figure or influencer?

- Yes
- No

Q17. Which posts will motivate you more to make a decision for buying a cosmetic product?

- Unsponsored posting / advertising

- Unsponsored post / advertisement presented by a celebrity or influencer
- Unsponsored post / advertisement by general public
- Sponsored post / advertisement
- Sponsored post / ad presented by a celebrity or influencer
- Sponsored post / advertisement by general public

Q18. Which are the factors that are influencing visit to product review website after product purchase?

- To see other consumers thought
- Reassurance
- Provide feedback
- Contact/interact with marketer
- Other: _____

Q19. When using social networks are you that kind of a person who wants to give an assessment for using a product or service and how often?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Quite Often
- Often

Q20. Do you and how often do you leave a comment to express your satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a cosmetic product?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Quite Often
- Often

Q21. Mostly I am writing review for:

- Positive experiences
- Negative experiences

Q22. Please indicate the level to which you agree with this statement:

| | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Neutral (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Do you think that cosmetic companies follow your comments and react in order to improve the products they offer? | | | | | |

Q23. Gender:

- Male
- Female

Q24. Year of birth:

Q25. Education

- Primary school
- Secondary school
- High education
- Master of science
- PhD

Q26. Employment:

- Full time
- Part time
- Retired
- Homemaker
- Student
- Temporary unemployed
- Unemployed never held job

Q27. Region

- Urban
- Rural

Appendix 3: SPSS analysis output tables

Table 6: H1. One sample statistics

| One sided One sample test | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| N | 173 |
| Mean | 3.543352601 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.102124944 |
| Std Error Mean | 0.083793008 |
| Degrees of freedom (df) | 172 |
| Hypothesised Mean | 3 |
| t-statistic | 6.484462309 |
| p-value | 0.00000000091 |

Source: Own work.

Table 7: H2. One sample statistics

| One sided One sample test | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| N | 173 |
| Mean | 2.843930636 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.127835257 |
| Std Error Mean | 0.085747727 |
| Degrees of freedom (df) | 172 |
| Hypothesised Mean | 3 |
| t-statistic | -1.82009915 |
| p-value | 0.07048227 |

Source: Own work.

Table 8: H3. One sample statistics

| One sided One sample test | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| N | 173 |
| Mean | 3.549132948 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.042225844 |
| Std Error Mean | 0.079238964 |
| Degrees of freedom (df) | 172 |
| Hypothesised Mean | 3 |
| t-statistic | 6.930087463 |
| p-value | 0.0000000001 |

Source: Own work.

Table 9: H4. One sample statistics

| One sided One sample test | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| N | 173 |
| Mean | 2.716763006 |
| Standard Deviation | 1.070539386 |
| Std Error Mean | 0.081391602 |
| Degrees of freedom (df) | 172 |
| Hypothesised Mean | 3 |
| t-statistic | -3.479928962 |
| p-value | 0.0006356 |

Source: Own work.