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# **The Impact of Instagram Influencers on Customer Purchasing Decision for Beauty Products**

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## ABSTRACT

Janis, Monika: The Impact of Instagram Influencers on Customer Purchasing Decision for Beauty Products

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The use of mobile devices and social media has rapidly increased over the years and people tend to research almost everything from online. This is the perfect opportunity to businesses to cooperate with influencers in social media.

The purpose of this thesis is to find out how the users of Instagram feel about the influencers, and does they influence on their buying behaviour and what are the reasons users follow beauty influencers in general. The study was concentrating only for Instagram users and Instagram influencers and was made using the survey. The survey was made on 30<sup>th</sup> of May and the goal of 200 responses were met in a day.

The result of this study revealed that even if the Instagram user is not following any influencers, they still might purchase products that they recommend. Various of the respondents do follow influencers and the influencers affect to their buying behaviour. The main finding was how many new makeup brands were found via influencers, and it was total of 53. People tend to buy beauty products when they are already seeking the same kind of product which the influencer recommends. The further research it would be very interesting to research economical aspects of the beauty industry and social media marketing via influencers.

Keywords: social media, Instagram, buying behaviour, beauty industry, influencer marketing

## FOREWORD

I want to thank my family and friends who has been supportive throughout my studies. It has been a rough road, but we did it.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Social media has grown rapidly in a past ten years. This research incorporates the impact of influencers into the conventional notion that commitment leads to increased purchasing intention. With the advent of new technologies, consumers have access to information from novel sources such as social media and blogs, making it crucial to examine their effects on purchasing intention. The nature of these relationships and the role of emerging players in the digital landscape on relationship behaviour warrant further investigation (Barnes & Cumby, 2002; Brodie et al., 2013; Huang & Shyu, 2009).

Because people use the internet more and more for the information search, companies being present in the social media is an important part of their marketing strategy. However, people are getting more demanding so the companies and the influencers must take to consideration what the audience wants to see. However, because there are thousands of influencers on Instagram and for brands it is hard to find suitable influencer for their purposes, there are created many websites and influencer searching tools. (Website of Promoty, 2023)

The purpose of this thesis is to find out how the users of Instagram feel about the influencers, and does they influence on their buying behaviour and what are the reasons users follow beauty influencers in general. Related to the purpose of the subject this thesis includes survey of Instagram users buying behaviour concerning beauty products.

## 1.1 Research Approach and Conceptual Framework

This research's conceptual framework starts with social media and Instagram users and see how big impact the influencers have in a consumer behaviour. The researcher's aim is to explain how does the Instagram influencers recommendations effect on consumer behaviour in beauty industry and purchasing beauty products. There are also explaining how different factors effect on consumer behaviour.

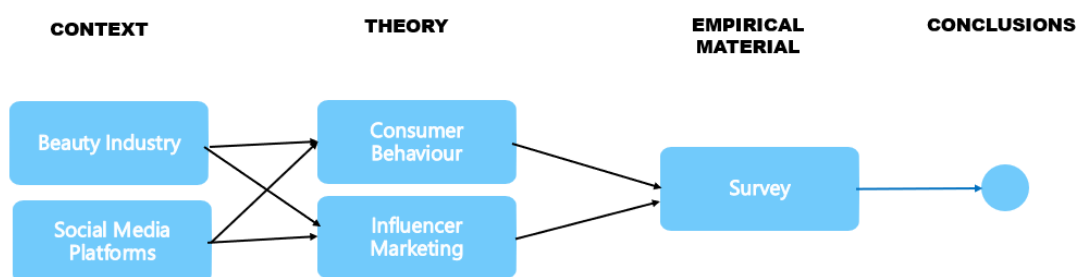


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

In the framework of the thesis (figure1), the theory combines consumer behaviour and influencer marketing in the context of beauty industry and social media platforms. The conclusions are made based on these and the empirical material which was the survey.

## 1.2 Purpose and Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to find out the potential of Instagram marketing in the beauty industry and to investigate how does influencers effect on Finnish consumers' buying behaviours, especially, in the beauty industry.

Based on the research approach and conceptual framework chapter the following questions was set and will be answered on this thesis.

1. What kind of influence influencer have on the buying process of Consumers?
2. Which brands of beauty products stood out the most due to influencers?

3. Which factors were the most important purchase motivation factors so that customers bought products suggested by influencers?

First this Thesis explains consumer behaviour and influencer marketing and then it views different social media platforms in which influencers influence. Following that, it takes a look to beauty industry and beauty brands in general. After that there are the chapters on research methodology and research findings. And the last chapter is the summary and the conclusion.

## 2 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND INFLUENCER MARKETING

In this chapter will be introduced consumer behaviour and the five steps concerning this process. Before even making a buying decision, we need to look at the reasons why we buy. Behind that is a huge area which we might not be aware of, what are the reasons and aspects of our behaviour. People might not recognize that there are multiple reasons behind of our choices, everything what we are, and where we come from will affect our behaviour of buying. Even, who our friends are and from which society we come from, how old we are and what are our believes and values. All of these and a lot of other aspects will affect our behaviour of buying (Khan, 2006, p.4).

### 2.1 Buyer decision process

In the following chapters will be introduced more detailed the five steps of buyer decision process which are: recognition of need, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post-purchase evaluation as stated in the figure 2.

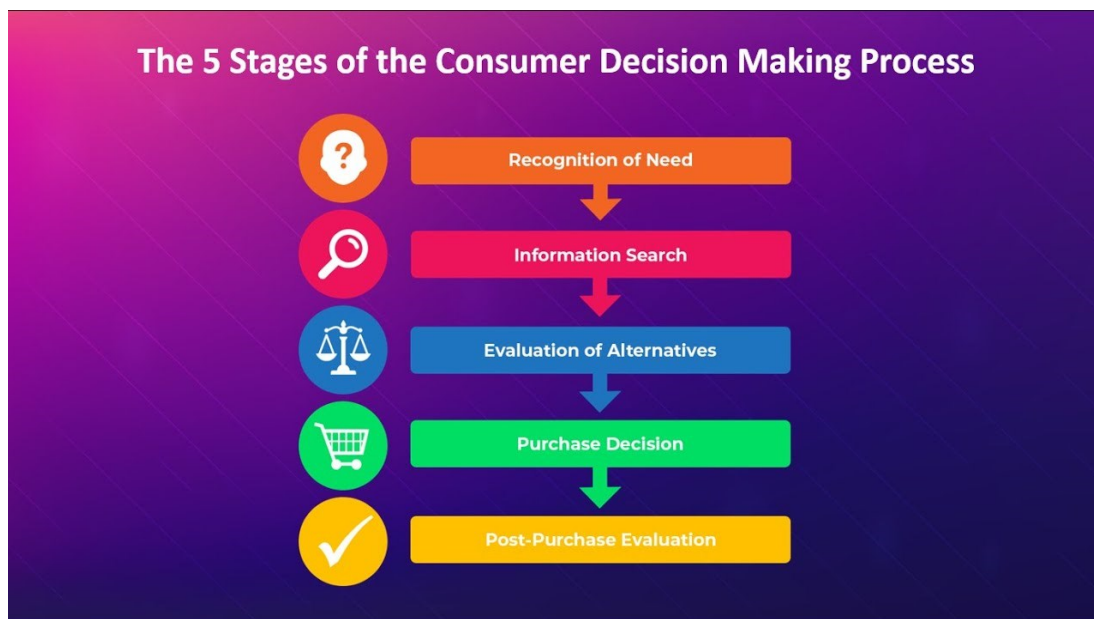


Figure 2. The 5 stages of the Consumer decision making process.

### 2.1.1 Need recognition

In a buyer decision process, the first step is needing recognition and in that there are two types of stimuluses – internal and external. Internal stimulus is called when a consumer makes an impulse decision and external stimulus is called when the consumer is affected from outside factors (Stankevich, 2017, p.10). Meaning that before consumer is making a decision of buying a product or service, they will have some kind of need that needs to be fulfilled. Internal stimulus can be for example if the customer is hungry and he or she will buy something from the shop for fulfil their need, which in this case is hunger. If a customer sees a product online and someone recommend it, which makes the customer desire to buy it, is external stimulus.

### 2.1.2 Information search

After creating a want, the next step towards buying is information search. In informational search there are also two factors - internal and external. The internal factor in this case is the customers previous experience with the product or service. If the customer does not have previous experience with the

desired product or service, they must use external information search. Nowadays the biggest role in this field plays online where the customer can search reviews about the product, for example from blogs, social media (Youtube, Instagram, Snapchat etc.) and other websites. Also asking advice or opinion from friends, co-workers or family is also concerned as an external factor. (Stankevich, 2017, p.10)

### 2.1.3 Evaluation of alternatives

Creating a want and information search, third step in buyer decision process is evaluation of alternatives. At this point consumer might think about the product or service and does they really need it or are there available similar kind of product that would fulfil their needs but is not that expensive (Stankevich, 2017, p.10). Meaning, the consumer is evaluating what is important to them using internal and external factors. Internal factor could be (concerning beauty products) does they need it right away, or they are not into any specific brand or the opposite: they are eager for certain brand and product. Additionally, external factors can play a huge role in evaluation of alternatives, for example if the certain product is on sale or if there are only a couple of products left (Zalewski, 2020). At this point consumer is making the best suitable decision for them regarding to all the findings and that their need will be fulfilled.

### 2.1.4 Purchase decision

The next step for buyer decision process is purchase. After the consumer had made the decision of buying, they need to make the actual purchase. There are factors that need to be recognized such as what is their budget, when is the right time for the purchase or from where they will buy (Stankevich, 2017, p.11). Also, in this step there are internal and external factors. Consumer might want to go to the familiar store to buy the product because they know there are good customer service, or they might have a lunch break and they will do their purchase at that time. Those are internal factors. Additionally, the external

factors could be the easiness of the purchase, for example it is available online and the consumer doesn't have to go to the actual store. The lack of the money can also be an external factor, if the consumer doesn't have enough money or the price of the product has risen (Zalewski, 2020).

### 2.1.5 Post-purchase behaviour

The last step of buyer decision process is post-purchase behaviour. In this step consumer will evaluate the product they have purchased, they can be satisfied or dissatisfied with the product. This is a big factor if they will buy the product again or go back to the same familiar store. As in previous four steps, also in this step there are internal and external factors. For example, if the consumer has bought the product and their colleague will give a compliment of it or the consumer got a great deal of the product – those are external factors. Additionally, the internal factors could be that the consumer is very satisfied with the product because it looks and feels comfortable, and it is multi-function (Zalewski, 2020). Factors influencing consumer buying behaviour.



Figure 3. What are the factors that influence consumer behaviour? (Website of Case Study Help 2022)

There are four factors which influence consumer buying behaviour such as cultural factors, social factors, personal factors and psychological factors (figure 1). There will be explained all the factors down below.

#### 2.1.6 Cultural factors

Cultural factors play the biggest role in consumer buying behaviour. While growing up, all of us have learned values and observe our family members behaviour etc. As mentioned, different cultures value different matters. For example, Finnish person does not value a new surfboard because you can not use it here in Finland, but Australian does value it because they can use it in Australia. (Kazi, 2013.)

In cultural factor there are included also subculture and social factors. Subcultures consist with different small groups who share the same value of life experience or situation they are at. It includes racial groups, religions, nationalities or geographic regions. About social class we can say that it is based on income, but it is not the only factor it is determined for, it can be also about education or wealth. (Kazi, 2013.)

#### 2.1.7 Social factors

Second factor which influence on consumer behaviour are social factors such as family, groups and roles and status. Making a buying decision by the family might be the most influencing factor for us. We are living with our parents, and we gather information from them and while growing up we will evolve and build our character. But also, we will shape our believes and opinions about society and our desires. (Rani, 2014, p.55)

Group factor can be related to social origin, hobbies, work etc. For example, ice hockey player can be influenced by its team member by recommending some good brand. Or someone who does not belong to specific group but

want's to, can be influenced by other who belong to that specific group. (Rani, 2014, p.55)

Role and social status in society play a role in behaviour as well. We have this vision of social status consumers that they must act and be in a specific form. For example, we assume that if we are in a high position in a company, we must drive a luxurious car and use high end clothes. That will influence our buying behaviour. It's not only the status of the company but also position of the family, which gender they are etc. (Rani, 2014, p. 55)

#### 2.1.8 Personal factors

Age, lifestyle, occupation and wealth are some of the personal factors which affect to our buying behaviour. In different age you value and need different product and the habits and needs evolve and differs through their life. Occupation is playing a role in buying behaviour, depends, if they are CEO in a big company or are they working in some factory, their needs are different, and they probably buy different style of clothes or cars. What kind of lifestyle the consumer has will affect their buying decisions, such as if the consumer is a vegan, they will only buy vegan food and vegan products. The lifestyle of the consumer is about their interests, values, activities etc. (Rani, 2014, p. 57-58)

Wealthy people may use more high-end products than not wealthy people and that is one of the factors that influence a lot of their buying decisions. For example, if they are not so wealthy, they probably can not buy all the products they want of need, they must find alternatives.

#### 2.1.9 Psychological factors

Psychological factors such as beliefs and attitudes, learning, motivation and perception are a significant determinant of consumer behaviour (Hill, 2021).

People has their own beliefs and attitudes to things and products; those may have been come from the past and it will influence their buying behaviour.

Some might think that this one specific brand isn't respecting human rights or animal rights and that is the reason they won't buy anything from that brand. In other hand, brand can change consumers attitude by releasing a new product or campaign. (Rani, 2014, p. 57-58)

People learn by doing, and for that reason majority of their behaviour is through learning. Once consumer have had a bad experience about specific product, they probably won't buy it ever again because they have learned that it was a mistake. In other hand, if they have had a good experience about the product, it is most likely that they will go back and buy it again. (Rani, 2014, p. 59-60)

Motivation is a one thing that makes people act, and a need is when consumers want something, and it must be satisfied. Whether it is a biological such as hunger etc or psychological such as esteem etc it will motivate people to act and purchase products and get the satisfaction they are looking for.

As mentioned before, if consumer is motivated, they are ready to act, but how they act depends on their own perception of the situation. (Kazi, 2013.)

Meaning, that if consumer sees an advertisement for example from the social media or they will start making a perception about the product and it will continue until the opinion about the product have been made. (Website of Clotrack)

## 2.2 Influencer marketing via social media

Grand Canyon university define social media influencer as: "*someone who has a reputation of authority or expertise in a particular area and who uses that authority to engage with large numbers of social media followers.*" (Grand Canyon university, 2022)

Nowadays companies use a lot of influencer marketing as their marketing strategy thus they have been noticed that it is more beneficial to them. Social media users such as potential customers follow their favourite influencers and therefore trust their product recommendations more than instead of the

traditional marketing such as banners and other advertisements (Marjerison. R. et al., 202, p. 2).

Influencer marketing combines old and new marketing tools. Celebrity endorsement is placed into a modern content-driven marketing campaign. Influencer marketing is a collaboration between brands and influencers. Not all the influencers are celebrities, influencers can be normal people who use social media and share their expertise in a specific field (Geyser, 2023).

Instagram influencers are shared in five different tiers by their following audience which are nano, micro, mid, macro and mega. In the following paragraphs there will be explained more about it.

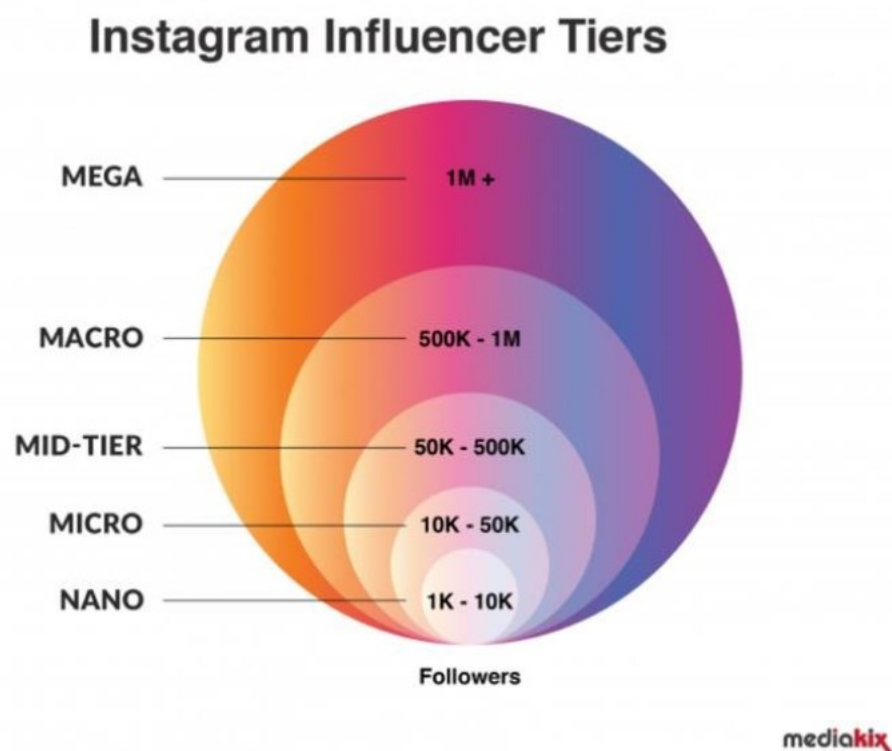


Figure 4. Instagram influencers tiers.

Nano-influencer has 1K up to 10K followers which means their audience is quite small and the influencer can interact with their audience more personal level. People tend to trust nano influencers more because they find like they are real and feel like friends. Nano-influencers are suitable for brands who has

limited budget and other hand wants to give a personal impact to its audience. (Santoro, 2022)

The influencers who have 10K to 50K followers is defined as micro-influencers. Micro-influencer differs from nano-influencer not only with the number of followers, but they already might have some previous experience about collaborating with brands (Santoro, 2022). According to Campbell (2023) micro-influencers are the most essential segment for the influencer marketing and especially in Instagram. He also states that beauty and fashion brands tend to use micro-influencers because of the popularity they have.

Mid-tier influencers have 50K to 500K followers and differ to micro- and nano-influencers they are the group who do influencing as their full-time job and can make reasonable income from it. (Santoro, 2022)

Collaborating with mid-tier influencers are more cost effective than working with macro or mega influencers but they still have stronger reach than compared with micro and nano-influencers (Wise, 2023).

Macro influencers have 500K to 1M followers and they can be considered as internet celebrities. Even if they have a lot of followers, it doesn't mean that their followers are engaged enough, although brands can get their message out for a larger audience than using the smaller influencers. As mid-tier influencers also, macro influencers get their entire income from social media. (Campbell, 2023)

Mega influencer is defined if there are 1M or more followers and they can be considered as celebrities and usually they have followers all over the world. Working with mega influencers brands must have a large budget, in other words mega influencers are not suitable for small businesses. Mega influencers are not as available and interact with their audience as nano and micro influencers. (Campbell, 2023)

### 3 SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Day by day the social media is growing, and developers develop new social media platforms. Social media has changed our way of communication and so-called social life. Nowadays people tend to communicate and connect more in different platforms of social media than in real life, face-to-face. It is easier to connect and interact with others via social media – even if you are in another side of the world. They can share their lifestyles and their lives in general, comment, read posts and reviews, share content and videos (Tuten & Solomon 2016). Therefore, also companies see their opportunity to adapt their marketing strategy in social media. One way to make their company and brand step up more, is collaboration with certain influencers, for example who have a lot of followers and their channel is suitable for the company and the brand – that is called paid media (Tuten & Solomon 2016).

There are various amount of social media platforms available nowadays, and they all have a different functions and purposes, but here we will focus on the three main categories such as publishing services, media sharing services and networking services (Newman, Peck, Harris & Wilhide 2013, p.3). Publishing services can be for example, platforms where can be shared ideas such as forums and blogs. Media sharing service such as TikTok where videos can be shared or Instagram where pictures and videos can be shared. Networking services is where people can easily connect with one another, such as Facebook or Twitter (Newman, Peck, Harris & Wilhide 2013, p.3-6) With all the different platforms it is easy to interact with one another and use different

platforms for different needs. Some of the platforms are introduced in this thesis because it seems like to be the most vital ones in influencer marketing. In next chapters there is an overview of Facebook, TikTok and Instagram. According to a recent study Instagram is the most important social media platform for influencer marketing. Influencer marketing is only beneficial if influencers can match the target audience and campaign goals, and Instagram is seen as the most suitable because there are various options to post, like photos, albums, videos and stories. (Website of Smart Insights, 2019). Therefore, the survey of this thesis is focused on Instagram users.

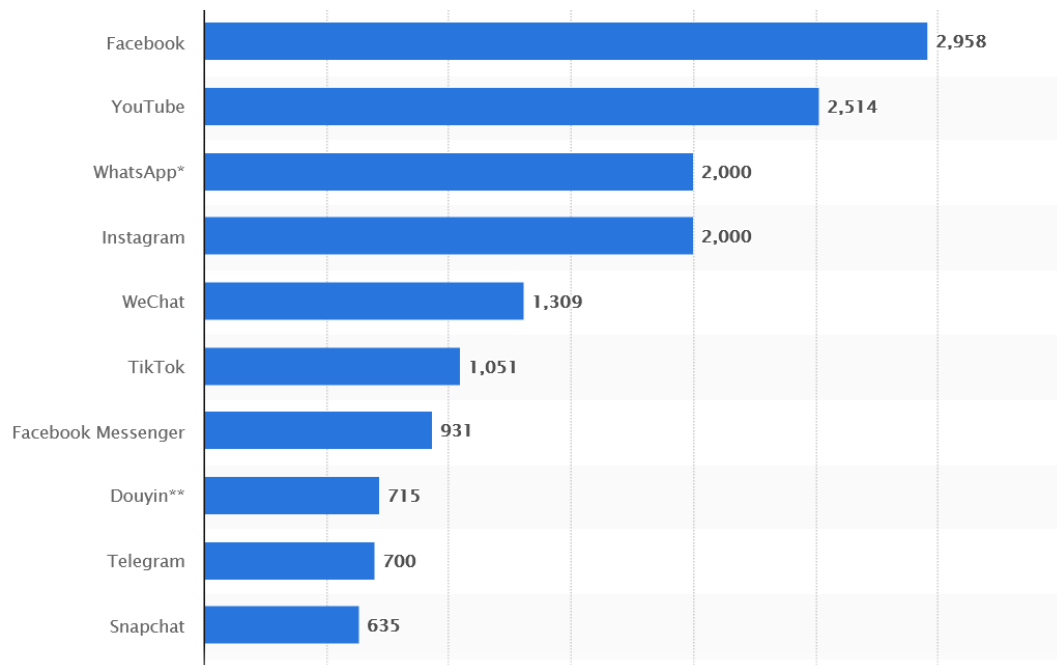


Figure 5. Most popular social media platforms in January 2023 (in millions). (Website of Statista 2023)

### 3.1 Facebook

Facebook is a networking service which was founded by Mark Zuckerberg in the year 2004 and is now owned by Meta Platforms (Website of Meta 2023). In a first quarter of 2023 Facebook had almost three billion users (Website of Statista 2023) which make it the most popular networking service (figure 2). Facebook is used for communication and users can also share content, join different community pages, interact with others who has the same interests,

users can send private messages one another and business owners can create their own business page as well (Hall, 2023). Facebook can be used with your laptop, and it can be downloaded into your phone or tablet. Because of the different variations of usage, Facebook can be used whenever and wherever you are, that makes it an excellent platform for business owners.

### 3.2 TikTok

TikTok is a sharing service platform where short-form videos can be shared with the audience. It was created by the Chinese company called ByteDance in the year of 2016 (D'Souza, 2023) and in early of 2023 TikTok had already about a billion users (figure 2). The most popular content in TikTok are beauty videos, cooking videos and funny content videos such as animal videos and other similar. There can be added music and sound effects on the videos. Also filters and sticker can be used on content, even split-screen duet videos are available between the two users (D'Souza, 2023). Dance videos are also very popular in TikTok, and there are a lot of dance video challenges with different dance styles.

### 3.3 Instagram

Instagram, which is combining names instant and telegram, is launched in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, and at first it was only available with iPhone iOS (Blystone 2020). As we can see from the figure 2, in the beginning of year 2023 Instagram has 2 billion monthly users and it keeps growing. Instagram app was launched for Android users in spring of 2012 and at the same time Facebook (Meta) bought Instagram with 1 billion dollars cash and stock (Blystone, 2020). Like mentioned, Instagram is a visual content app where can be shared pictures and videos. Videos and pictures can be edit with different filters or add music clips, add stickers or emojis. Furthermore, the users can comment and follow other users, share and like pictures with only selected group of friends or with everyone (Website of Instagram 2023). Instagram differ with Facebook that the content can be shared only with mobile

app, however it can be accessed with other devices such as laptop or tablet (Website of Instagram 2023).

On Instagram posts there can be added hashtags (#) under the description of the photo. With the hashtag other users can find similar images, photos and other content they are interested in. Hashtag also allows users to expand the reach of their post. If the user is interested in beauty and make up, he or she can look with the hashtag #makeup and all the post where has been used #makeup will show up. This provides for brands and companies market their products and services and it provides brands to get more exposure. Users tend to add a lot of hashtags to get more exposure on their post, some hashtags don't even match with the post.

Another feature on Instagram is "story". If user wants to capture and share their precious moments with others, but only for 24hours, they can add it to their own story. Story is a picture or video clip where can be added music, tag a location or friends and post it. As said, it can be seen only 24 hours and user can see who has been watching his or her story. It can be also called as users online diary. If a friend has been tagged, they will get notification about it and, they can share it in their story. It will benefit for example brands and companies if someone has tagged them on their post and people repost it.

Also, other users can be tagged on sharer own post. Influencers often tag the company who they do collaboration with. Their followers can be easily access to company's Instagram page. Instagram is one of the most popular platforms for people to connect with creators and beauty brands (Website of Business Instagram). There are over 392 million posts with the hashtag makeup (#makeup) on Instagram and it increases day by day (Instagram app 2023.). IGTV was launched in 2018 and provides users download up to 10-minute clips. If user has more than 10 000 followers, he or she are allowed to share a video up to 60 minutes. (Moeller, 2020)

## 4 BEAUTY INDUSTRY AND MEANING OF BEAUTY BRANDS

Appearance is the first thing that caught our eye while meeting someone. Beauty has always played a certain role in people's lives and since the ancient times people have been using makeup. When talking about beauty industry, it usually contains services (such as hairdressers, beautician etc.) and products. (Ketabchi, 2017) Beauty industry is evolving day by day and in the year 2023 revenue of the cosmetics market is almost 104 billion dollars (excluded skincare products) and expected to reach market value of 125,5 billion dollars by 2027. (Website of Statista 2023)

As mentioned above, beauty has always played a huge role in peoples' lives and people are searching for knowledge and inspiration from social media every day. And because there are thousands of different beauty brands out there, for customer it is quite hard to decide between different brands and their products. In social media brands like to collaborate with the beauty influencers who has a lot of followers. Consequently, in the influencer community the beauty influencers are the most popular and millions of followers trust their recommendations. (Website of promoty, 2023)

Beauty industry is very competitive thus there are big brands and smaller brands who wants to have their place from the field. The author remembers one story where one influencer showed a few makeup products she bought with her own money and told that the eyeshadow is very cheap, but the formula is very high ended and very beautiful. She told the name of the brand, which was "Morphe" and it was a small brand located in Los Angeles USA. After she mentioned the brands name, the followers were eager to get the same makeup. After that, Morphe contacted her, and they made a few collaborations – created three makeup pallets. Nowadays Morphe is a huge brand, but still have affordable price, and their products are available also in Finland. While talking about various beauty brands they all are divided in a certain category, meaning if they are high end, mid-end or low-end brands. There are briefly explained the differences between them.

High end brands are usually known as luxury or designer products. In fact, the beauty brand can define themselves as a luxury brand without having any connection or previous experience of the industry. Usually in luxury products there are premium ingredients, and the formula is much better than in a low-end product. To mention a few high-end brands such as Dior, Charlotte Tilbury, YSL (Yves Saint Laurent), Estee Lauder, Giorgio Armani and Clarins (Moody, 2016).



Picture 1. High-end beauty product: Estee Lauder (left) and Dior (right) luxury packages (website of Estee lauder and Dior 2023)

Mid-end brands are not sold in markets (Prisma, Citymarket etc), for example in Finland they are sold in Stockmann and Sokos emotion. Their price and quality are not as high as in high-end products, but their quality is better than low-end products. Mid-end brands are for example MAC, Anastasia Beverly Hills, Huda Beauty, Urban Decay and Body Shop (Moody, 2016).



Picture 2. Mid-end products: Urban Decay (left) and Huda Beauty (right) products. (Website of Urban Decay and Huda Beauty 2023.)

In other hand, in Finland we could define NYX and Morphe and Anastasia Beverly Hills to mid-end brands, because they are sold only in Stockmann, Sokos emotion and in Kicks.



Picture 3. NYX and MAC mid-end products (website of NYX and MAC 2023)

Whenever someone is talking about drugstore product, they are talking about low-end beauty products. In a low-end product there tend to be much cheaper ingredients and it's the reason why they are cheaper than the high-end or mid-end products. The pigmentation and the formula of the product may not be great because of the low-end brands uses a lot of talc in their products. Low end brands are for example, L'Oreal, Rimmel London, ELF, Max Factor, W7, Makeup Revolution (Moody, 2016). To mention, not all the low-end products are bad with a bad pigmentation as the author has been noticed from her own experience.



Picture 4. Low-end products: Rimmel London (left) and Max Factor (right) products. (Website of Rimmel London and Max Factor 2023.)

## 5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

By choosing a track either a qualitative research or quantitative research is based on the research problem and what kind of questions will be asked to adapt the asking question (Creswell, 2012, p.11). In this chapter is briefly explained quantitative method and how has it been used in this thesis. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods are necessary nevertheless most of the questions were quantitative, there were qualitative questions in the survey as well.

### 5.1 Quantitative Research

In quantitative research the result of the research is analysed mathematically, and because of that it collects numerical data. It contains for example, surveys and checklists. Quantitative methods are used when measuring the peoples' behaviours, trends and opinions. (Creswell, 2012. p14., Muijs, 2004. p.2-4)

The author selected the quantitative method for this thesis because it was more suitable for the topic of the thesis. The purpose was to research widely how the influencers influence among the responders who are the potential users of the cosmetics products and their consumer behaviour. However, also qualitative research method was used for the open format question in the survey to be able to get more specific responses from a certain question from the responders.

### 5.2 The Survey

The main tool which was used was a survey and it was conducted in Facebook groups. It was the best way for the topic to get the needed answers and was the convenient manner to get the answer faster. Because the research was about the social media, it was seen the best way to distribute the survey directly to the users. (Terttunen, 2017)

To obtain relevant data, certain people needed to be studied (Terttunen, 2017). For this research the target group were chosen mostly women who uses actively internet and especially are active in Instagram. Women were chosen for the target group mainly because of the topic of the thesis, but there are men as well who uses makeup, but in Finland is a small country and I wouldn't have enough of data to obtain the relevant data. The author didn't have the specific age group, because the authors interest to compare the buying behaviour between younger and older population. Unfortunately, there was no responses from 56+ years old and only six responses from the age group 36 to 55.

The survey was created with Microsoft office forms and was distributing in a few Facebook groups. The survey was released on 30<sup>th</sup> of May and the goal of 200 responses were met in a day, in other words the survey closed 31<sup>st</sup> of May. Even though 200 responses were collected, 6 of the answers are not included in the data collection because of lack of usage of Instagram. The survey had 22 questions and was made in English. Because of the research regarding Instagram all the questions were mandatory and in the first question if the responder answered no, his or her survey ended there. The author presents above the main questions which are crucial to this thesis.

### 5.3 Data Analysis

The process of cleaning, changing and processing raw data is called data analysis. It helps to make the data more actionable, and it aims to achieve more relevant information than the raw data itself. There are six steps in data analysis process which are 1) data requirement gathering, 2) data collection, 3) data cleaning, 4) data analysis, 5) data interpretation and 6) data visualization (Kelley, 2023). In this thesis, the purpose of gathering the data was to find out how social media users tend to react influencers' posts and product recommendations e. g. and if they buy any products the influencers recommend. Data was collected by a survey which was available on the

internet. Afterwards the data was cleaned by removing the irrelevant answers, e. g. those from the persons who didn't use any social media. Results and its analysis and interpretation is presented further in this thesis. When researching, data analysis plays a vital role because it separates the relevant data from the irrelevant data, and it provides a selection of useful tools to researchers to process the data. While the data is processed and analysed, it is better and more accurate to use in a study or in research (Kelley, 2023). These are the aims how data analysis is utilized in this thesis.

As mention above, the data analysis method that is used in this thesis is quantitative data analysis. Furthermore, the author used statistical analysis in this thesis to analyse the survey. In statistical analysis it explores enormous amounts of quantitative data to identify different kind of trends and patterns. "What happened" is the most relevant question to which quantitative data analysis answers to (Kelley, 2023). To specify, used tool was descriptive statistical analysis, where the responses were gathered and it has been summarised for a tables and charts, to clarify it to understandable format (Coursera 2023).

## 6 RESEARCH FINDINGS

Key findings of this survey are that influencers are very important to consumers and consumers benefit from influencers recommendations. Thanks to influencers the customers tend to find new brands and companies through them. Further in this section there will be the introduction of main findings of the survey. The respondents (N=194) 99% were women and 1% "prefer not to say", the percentage of women were expected thus it was a survey about beauty and makeup. And such as it was also distributed in a Facebook group called Naistenhuone and Naistenhuone special. They both have more than 150 thousand members.

In the survey were 5 different age groups and it wasn't surprise that 56% such as 109 respondents were in the age group 16-25. The second large group were 26-35 with total of 79 respondents (41%), 46-55 age group gather 2% with 4 respondents and 36-45 were 2 (1%) of the respondents. The last group 56+ didn't get any respondents as we see from the figure 6.

Professional background 57% (111) were in working life, 39% (76) were students and 4% (7) were unemployed.

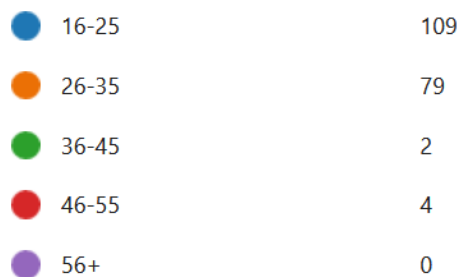


Figure 6. Age of the respondents (N=194)

The reason the author asked these questions three questions is to help to identify whether there are any differences between these segmentations. And because there weren't any male responders' author will continue with the female consumer behaviour research.

### 6.1 Interest of makeup and its usage

The next questions were to find out if the responders are interested in makeup, do they use makeup and how important it is in their life. Various of responders

such as 93% (181) were interested of makeup and 7% (13) were not interested. This was an important question because of the role of the thesis. Asking from the respondents how often they use make up (figure 7), up to 43% (83) use it daily but only 7% (14) consider makeup as very important. Only 1% (2) never use makeup products, this was not expected. 14% (28) use makeup products monthly and 4% (8) yearly. Average rating of how important makeup is, was 3,25 (seen in the figure 8). It was scaled from 1 to 5 (1 not important at all, 5 very important). Surprisingly 6% (11) of respondents doesn't find makeup important at all. 35% (68) consider makeup somehow important and various of responders 39% (75) consider makeup neutral.

As mentioned above 181 responders were interested of makeup but a various of respondents doesn't consider it very important in their lives. Basically, respondents like and love to use makeup and beauty products but small amount of them use it daily.

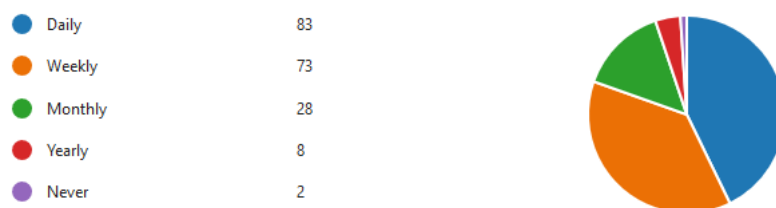


Figure 7. Usage of makeup.

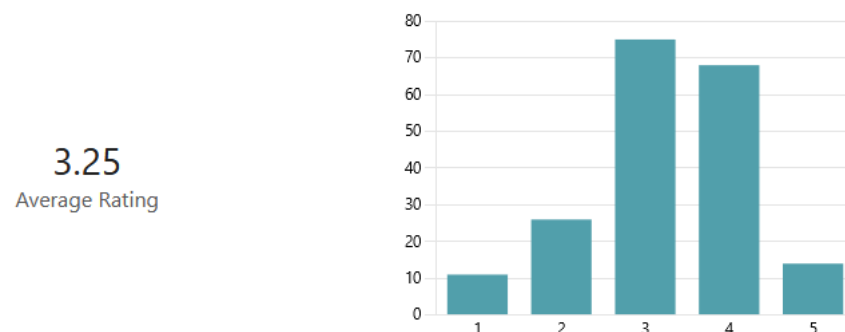


Figure 8. The importance of makeup

## 6.2 Following the influencers and the reason behind it

Asking the question if the responders follow any beauty influencers has an impact of this research of this thesis. 66% (128) of the responders follow some beauty influencers and 34% (66) do not follow. In the next question author wanted to find out what the reason of following influencer is and, in this question, responders could give multiple answers. 34% (135) follow because of the product tips, 23% (93) seek for inspiration and 22% (88) wants to see makeup tutorials. 19% (76) finds interesting content of the influencers feed. Other 2% (9) doesn't follow any or they like the influencer's personality and their feed in general (figure 9.). Asking what kind of content responders wanted to see from the influencer, the answers were quite equal. Only the video content with 39% (75) stood out. Others, like pictures 21% (40), reels 20% (38) and stories 21% (41) had only one percentage gap as seen in the figure 10.

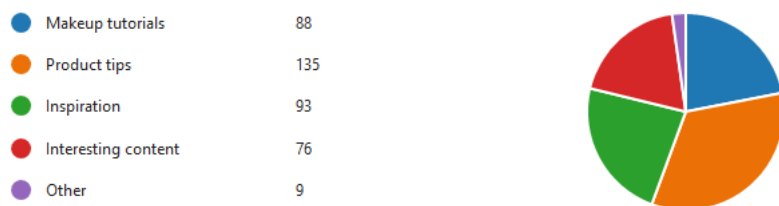


Figure 9. Reason behind following Instagram influencers

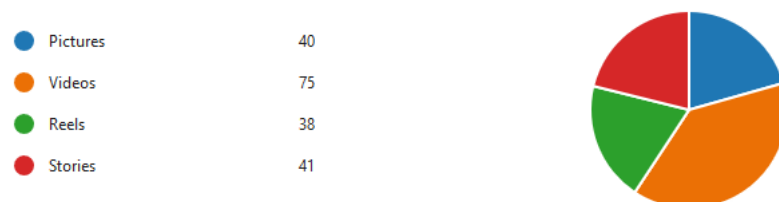


Figure 10. preferable content

One interesting question was if the responders have found any new makeup brands through the influencers. Seen in figure 11, 32% (63) of the responders said that they have found a new makeup brand. 16% of them (N=63) found a makeup brand called NYX Professional. 8% said they found a brand called Rare beauty. Morphe, Jeffree Star, Ikilalo and Charlotte Tilbury each got 6%.

Total of 53 different makeup brand have been found via Instagram influencers. It was not expected to be this many. To mention a few other brands which were found were: Too faced, Kakkobrows, Colourpop, Makeup geek, E.L.F., Indybeauty, Tonymoly and makeup revolution. There came up a lot of new brands as well what the author didn't recognize such as Tonymoly, Indybeauty and Ikilalo. There came up a lot of new brands as well what the author didn't recognize such as Ikilalo and Tonymoly.

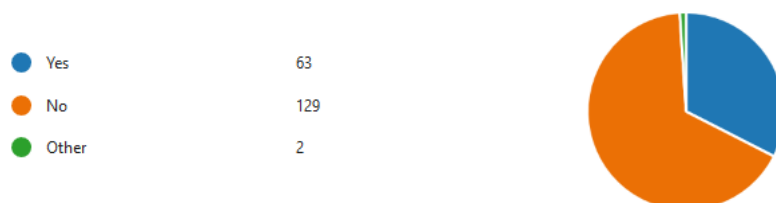


Figure 11. Finding new makeup brands

Finnish users prefer influencer who post content in Finnish 55%. 45% prefer influencer who post content in other language. This was quite expected result thus we live in Finland and there are more and more Finnish influencers out there. Asked about if the influencers are sincere while recommending the product 81% said that it depends on influencer. It might be that if the user follows many influencers, they will get to know their personality and the way of doing things. This might influence the trust of the influencer and impact the purchasing decision of the user.

Only 7% though that they are sincere. (Figure 12)

Relative question was that does it impact of their purchasing decision if the recommendation is based on paid post. 60% of the responders think that it will impact. Like in the previous question about if the influencers are sincere, it might also depend on the influencer. Nevertheless, 37% said that it has no impact whatsoever.

All in all, respondents like to follow influencers because they give good tips for beauty products and, because respondents like to find some inspiration for example redoing the same makeup look like the influencer. Respondents tend

to find various of new makeup brands through the influencers and some are brands which has not been sold in Finland, such as colourpop.



Figure 12. Trustworthy of influencer

### 6.3 Purchasing the product

The next question of the survey was about purchasing the product which influencer has recommended and the author wanted to know what kind of makeup products they have purchased. Majority of the responders have purchased a product which influencer has recommended, total of 71% which was 137 responders. 12% (23) of the responders would like to purchase, but the product has been too expensive, and they could not afford it. Only 18% (34) have not purchased anything what influencer has recommended. Here we can see that majority of the responders actually do buy beauty products what they see in Instagram.

However, 34% (66) of the responders do not follow any beauty influencers on Instagram, but 59% (39) of them have purchased the product, and majority (56%) have purchased at least one time and the rest have purchased three or more times, as seen in the figure 13.

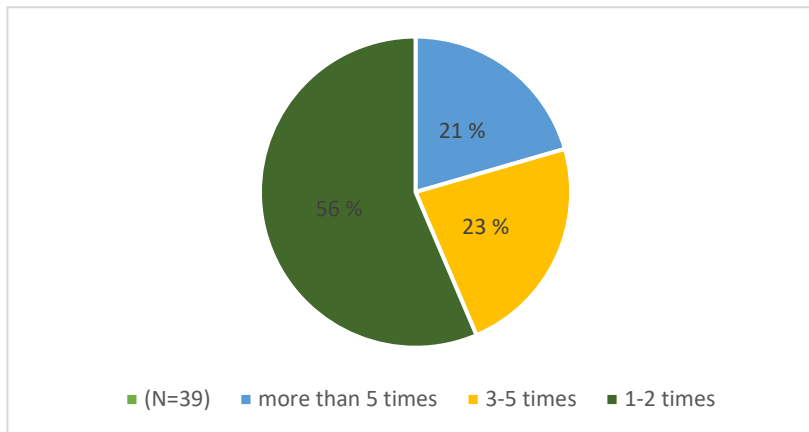


Figure 13. Respondents who don't follow influencers, but have bought products

By asking from the responders which product they have purchased, they could pick from multiple options (figure 14). Skincare was the most popular with the (N=404) 29% which has selected 115 of the responders. Skincare includes cleaners, toners, serums, moisturizers etc. Not very far behind came face products with 25%, face products contain i.e., foundation, blush, bronzer and highlighter. Very close was also eye products which contain eyeshadow, eyeliner and mascara, with 23%. Self-tanning (9%) and brushes (7%) weren't as popular as expected.

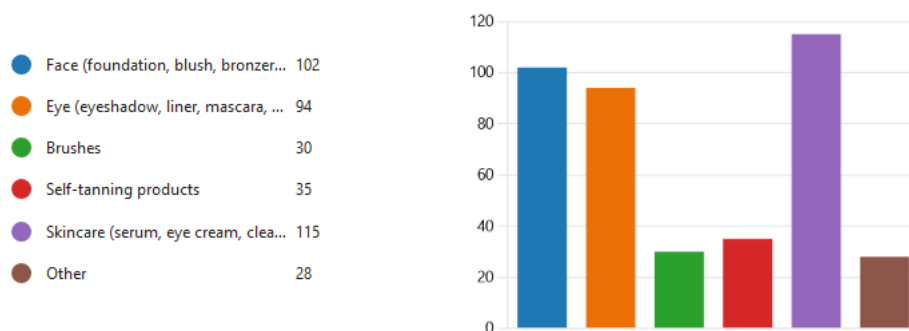


Figure 14. Product that has been purchased by recommendation

Author of the thesis also wanted to research what are the factors that make users purchase recommended products. Also, in this question responders had the opportunity to choose multiple answers (N=374). Usually, users purchase the product if the product is what they have looking for, with 33% and 31% (figure 15) choose that they need a similar product. Only 18% purchase the

product because it is beautiful and 10% buy it if the influencer is convincing enough.

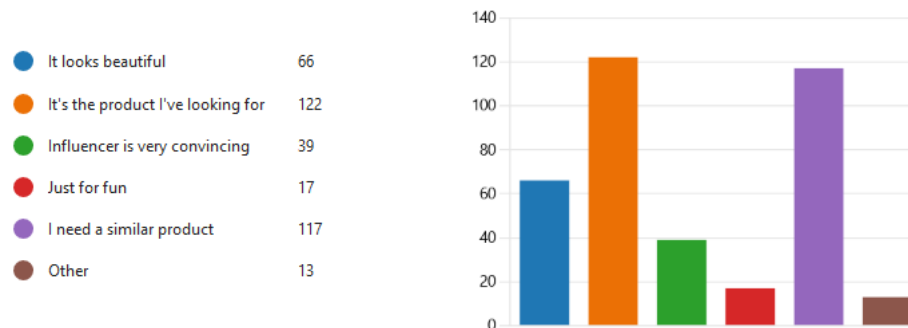


Figure 15. Reason why have purchased the product

While asking how many times they have purchased a product, no less than 83% (figure 16) have purchased at least once. Total of 17% have never purchased any makeup products from beauty influencer. From that 83% (N=161), 50% had purchased 1 to 2 times, 31% 3 to 5 times and 19% have purchased more than 5 times.

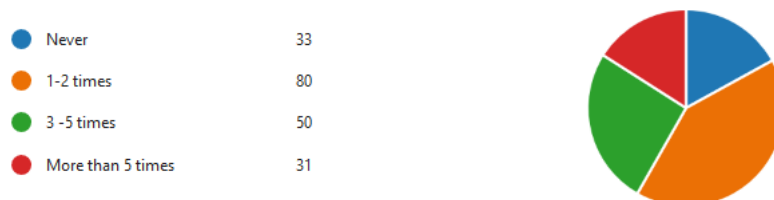


Figure 16. How many times has respondents purchased the recommended product

The next question was to find out how much Euros (€) users spends on the one purchase. Majority of the responders, 69%, says that they have spent 10€ to 50€ for one purchase. 16% have spent less than 10€ and 3% have spent more than 150€. As we can see from the figure 12, users have mostly spent less than 50€. Only 15% of the responders have spent more than 51€.



Figure 17. Money spent on the purchased product

## 7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### 7.1 Main Contribution of Thesis

In the beginning of this thesis three different research problems were set. Firstly, what kind of influence influencers have on the buying process of Consumers? After taking a closer look at the responses of the survey, we can see that the total of 71 % of the respondents had bought at least some cosmetic product which the influencer had recommended and 12 % more would have bought if the product wasn't too expensive. Therefore, we can see, that the influence of the influencer is rather significant. The most popular product genres among those who rely on influencers recommendations are skincare, facial- and eye products. Clearly can be seen too, that people who follow influencers tend to buy products at least one time. According to the survey, also those who doesn't follow influencers, buy the products that influencers recommend, such as facial products.

Secondly, the aim was to research which brands of beauty products stood out the most due to influencers. One key point the survey revealed, is the wide range of different cosmetic brands which people discover from influencers posts. There was a total of 53 different brands which is a big amount when it is compared to the amount of the respondents. It means that approximately one fourth has discovered a brand that has been unknown before influencer posting about it. NYX Professional and Rare Beauty were the most common discovered brands. It seems safely to state, that their influencer marketing is effective. Many of the discovered brands were international, but from the

Finnish point of view it was delightful to see, that Finnish brands also stood out among the respondents of which most were Finnish. Finnish brands mentioned in the survey were e. g. Ikilalo and Kakkobrows. Ikilalo was mentioned in four answers and Kakkobrows in two.

Because of the total of 53 different brands were discovered through the influencers, we can assume that because people nowadays are more aware of the beauty products and they seek more information about it, the influencers are the perfect platform to get more information and knowledge about the certain product.

Thirdly the research problem was which factors were the most important purchase motivation factors so that customers bought products suggested by influencers. Before looking at the purchase motivation factors, we should look at the reasons why people follow influencers in the first place. The most important reason to follow influencer was receiving the product tips, which tells that there really is a big impact which products the influencer recommends. Other popular reasons were interesting content, make-up tutorials and seeking inspiration. All this compared with the most common purchase motivation factors, which were needing the similar product and looking for the exact same product, tells that the influencer marketing answers the need of the audience.

## 7.2 Future Research

Social media marketing and influencers have a huge impact on customer purchasing decisions nowadays. In this thesis those aspects were reflected from the cosmetic buyers' point of view. For the further research it would be very interesting to research economical aspects of the beauty industry and social media marketing via influencers. Also, it would be very interesting to research how does the companies share their marketing budget between traditional marketing and influencer marketing and with how many influencers they cooperate with.

### 7.3 Reflection

I chose to do my thesis about this topic because I am very interested in beauty and makeup and wanted to know how much the influencers actually affect to peoples buying behaviour in general. Before I started my research, I had a slight hunch about the influencer marketing, but when I continued to study more, I noticed a few interesting points that I wasn't aware of. First of all, before this research I wasn't aware of that there are websites where companies and businesses can find suitable influencers for their purposes.

Secondly, it was delightful to notice that there are people who loves makeup as much as I do it also was surprising to see that so many different makeup brands were found via influencers and some of the brands were new to me as well. I found it easy to make a survey but there were a couple of mistakes I made, not adding the "I don't follow any influencers" to my questions, in other hand there was a "other" option where the respondents could write not following anyone. Also, in a one question where I was keen to know which influencers people tend to follow, I could have suggested more Finnish influencers thus the survey was made for Finnish Instagram users. Despite of that, they could have given the information in the "other" section, but they didn't specify which Finnish influencers they follow. I had a lot of answers "I follow Finnish influencers" and that's it. All in all, I didn't get as specific answers from the survey as I expected.

Getting almost 194 answers in total, which was quite much more what I expected for, but getting this many respondents I believe my research was reliable and some of the conclusions could be made. In a further notice, there could be more specific questions and could approach this kind of survey in different manner of approach.

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## APPENDIX 1: SURVEY

1. Are you using instagram regularly (at least three times per week)? \*

Yes

No

2. Gender? \*

Woman

Man

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

3. Age? \*

16-25

26-35

36-45

46-55

56+

4. Are you interested in makeup? \*

Yes

No

5. How often do you use makeup products? \*

Daily

Weekly

Monthly

Yearly

Never

6. Do you follow any beauty gurus a.k.a. influencers in Instagram? \*

Yes

No

7. How important makeup is for you? (1= not important at all, 5= very important) \*

1

2

3

4

5

8. What kind of content do you prefer from beauty influencers? \*

- Pictures
- Videos
- Reels
- Stories

9. What is the reason you follow a beauty influencer? (select at least one) other, why? \*

- Makeup tutorials
- Product tips
- Inspiration
- Interesting content
- Other

10. Have you purchased products which influencers had recommended? \*

- Yes
- No
- I wanted to, but couldn't afford it

11. How many times have you purchased a product which they have recommended? \*

- Never
- 1-2 times
- 3 -5 times
- More than 5 times

12. Which products have you purchased? \*

- Face (foundation, blush, bronzer, highlighter etc...)
- Eye (eyeshadow, liner, mascara, etc..)
- Brushes
- Self-tanning products
- Skincare (serum, eye cream, cleanser etc...)
- Other

13. Which makeup influencers do you follow in Instagram? If other, please specify \*

Nikke tutorials

Jaclyn Hill

Lauren Curtis

Jamescharle

Jeffree Star

Manny MUA

Huda

Safiyany

nikitadragun

leticiafgomes

I don't follow any

Other

14. Have you found any new makeup brands through the infleuncer? If yes, then specify which brands

Yes

No

Other

15. What is your favourite makeup brand? \*

Lumene

L'oreal

MAC

Dior

Maxfactor

Essence

NYX

EkoPharma

Joe Blasco

IT Cosmetics

Other

16. Do you think that beauty influencers are sincere while recommending the product? \*

Yes

No

Depends on influencer

17. Does it impact to your purchasing decision if the influencers recommendation is based on payed post?

Yes

No

Other

18. What factor makes you buy the recommended product? \*

It looks beautiful

It's the product I've looking for

Influencer is very convincing

Just for fun

I need a similar product

Other

19. Do you prefer the influencer who... \*

post content in Finnish

post content in other language

20. Professional background \*

- Student
- In working life
- Unemployed

21. How many euros have you spent on the recommended product? (one purchase) \*

- Less than 10€
- 10€ - 50€
- 51€ - 100€
- 101€ - 150€
- More than 150€