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Cross-Cultural Influencer Marketing

Lessons from K-Beauty

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Abstract

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This thesis researched the continuously changing world of cross-cultural influencer marketing and how Korean cosmetic brands can adapt their strategies to promote globally across cultures through influencers and influencer marketing. Culture is a constantly evolving phenomena that affects consumer behaviour and perceptions.

Korean beauty has boomed as a significantly popular industry globally, also among Western cultures regardless of the contrast between Southeast Asian and Western Cultures. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were carried out in the form of a survey to 23 participants and a single interview with a beauty influencer. The research investigated consumer perceptions and the effectiveness of influencer marketing strategies across cultures in the K-beauty industry.

The research identified key recommendations for enhancing influencer marketing strategies, including diversifying influencer partnerships, addressing cultural sensitivities, utilizing visual-centric platforms, and investing in brand education and awareness.

By adopting these strategies K-beauty brands can effectively engage with consumers from various cultural background and strengthen their global presence in the beauty industry.

Keywords: Korean Cosmetics, Influencer Marketing, K-Beauty, Marketing

The originality of this thesis has been checked using Turnitin Originality Check service.

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Glossary

CAGR Compound Annual Growth Rate

DMU Decision-Making Unit

K-BEAUTY South Korean Cosmetics

SMI Social Media Influencer

1 Introduction

The cosmetics business is a clear example of the global influence of South Korean skincare products, or K-beauty, with a projected market size of USD 18.32 billion by 2030 and a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 9.2 percent. K-beauty, which has its roots in South Korea, emphasizes the importance of having moisturized, healthy skin by using natural ingredients.

K-beauty distinguishes itself from many Western brands by utilizing distinctive ingredients and reasonably priced formulas instead of using harsh chemicals. The sector's expansion has been mostly attributed to the strengths of digital and e-commerce, together with creative marketing techniques that have increased demand globally. The K-beauty boom has been greatly boosted by the United States and South Asian countries (Straits Research, 2023).

The increasing global demand for Korean cosmetics has been fuelled by the rise in K-beauty's popularity as well as the phenomenon known as Hallyu, or the Korean Wave, which describes the spread of South Korean popular culture beyond its borders. At the same time, K-beauty influencers, defined as influential individuals further in this research, have become more well-known on social media as easily available information sources for customers looking for beauty tips. With the growing power these influencers have on consumer decisions, marketers are quickly adjusting to take advantage of their reach. As more companies use influencers in their marketing campaigns, it is important to consider how they have shaped the cosmetics business (Wang and Leem 2021),

In today's connected world, many businesses use social media to communicate with consumers like never before. However, this worldwide reach also presents a challenge: how to successfully communicate across cultural divides. In their study, Holzmüller and Stöttinger (2001) provide examples from a range of marketing disciplines, including sales management, strategic planning, and market research, to support their claim that cultural sensitivity is an essential for

effective international marketing. While cultural standards can offer a glimpse into cultural behaviour, they might not adequately convey the complex aspects of culture. As cultures evolve, new cultural norms may replace or alter longstanding ones.

The goal of this research is to determine if and how cultural identities and perceptions influence consumer behaviour. The purpose is to reveal how marketers can best address and leverage this when marketing Korean cosmetics globally, particularly through influencer marketing.

2 Literature Review

This literature review aims to explore the existing literature about marketing, influencer marketing and Korean cosmetics. It is necessary to explore the principles of marketing and how influencer marketing has developed to be able to research how culture relates to them.

2.1 Marketing

Philip Kotler describes marketing simply as delivering value and satisfying the needs of a customer (Kotler et al., 2013). The marketing process involves understanding customer needs, developing market offerings, and building relationships (Kotler et al., 2013). Strong marketing strategies require a thorough understanding of these concepts.

Fahy and Jobber (2015) described the modern marketing concept as “The achievement of corporate goals through meeting and exceeding customer needs better than the competition”. This modern approach to marketing requires a shift from product-centricity to customer-centricity. There is a need for integrated effort across all departments, not just marketing, and corporate management must understand that satisfied customers are the key to achieving corporate goals (Fahy & Jobber, 2015).

To reach their marketing goals companies have to go through the marketing process.

2.2 The Process of Marketing

Figure 1 represents a simplified five-step model of the marketing process as defined by (Kotler et al., 2013, p.4).

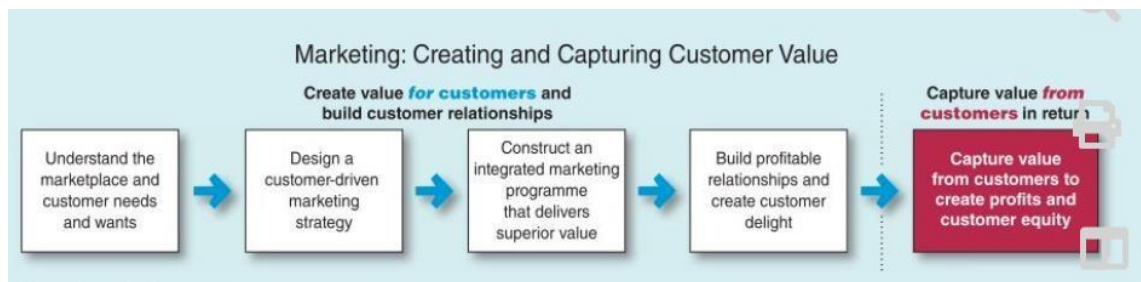


Figure 1 - The Marketing Process Simple Model (Kotler et al., 2013)

The description of the marketing process by Kotler et al., (2013) explains how every individual has basic needs which can include things such as food, safety, and a feeling of belonging, which form the foundation of marketing. These needs, influenced by culture and personal preferences, shape what humans want. For example, while everyone needs food, what they want and choose to eat can vary based on their culture and tastes. Kotler et al., (2013) also explain that market offerings are what companies use to fulfil consumer needs, they include not only physical products but also services such as banking or experiences, such as visiting a theme park (Kotler et al., 2013).

These authors state that if businesses want to be successful in their marketing strategies, they must understand their customers' desires by implementing thorough research and engaging with them directly. By getting to know their customers well, companies can create products and experiences that truly resonate with their target markets. Figure 2 depicts this model, and Figure 3 depicts the four Ps of the Marketing Mix.

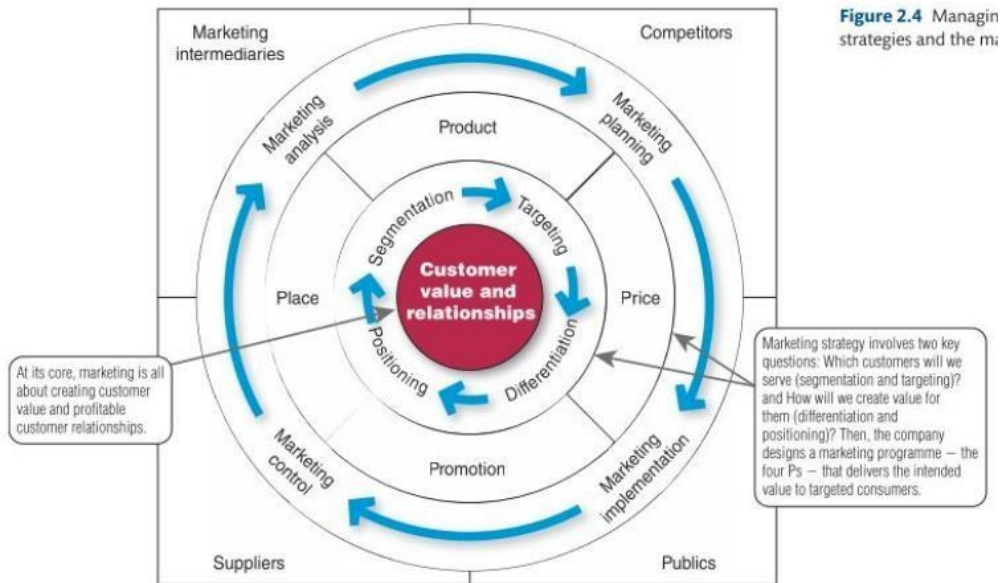


Figure 2 – Managing Marketing Strategies and the Marketing Mix (Kotler et al., 2013)

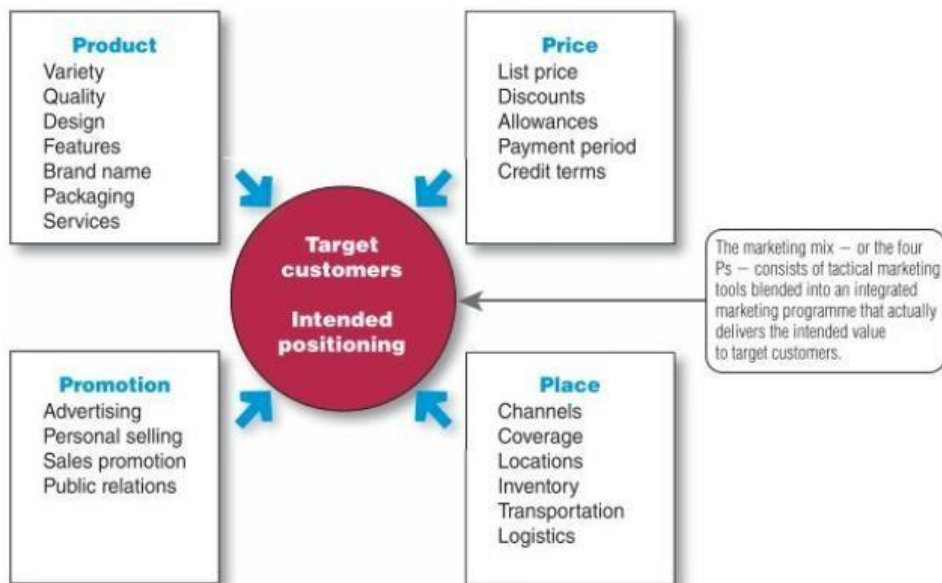


Figure 3 - The four Ps of Marketing Mix (Kotler et al., 2013)

The marketing process involves understanding customer needs shaped by culture and preferences, developing a customer-centric strategy through segmentation, targeting, differentiation and positioning, translating the strategy

into action through the “4Ps” (Product, Price, Place, Promotion), and building and maintaining strong customer relationships through Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and effective partnerships. Promotion is especially significant in this research as it refers to the activities that are done to communicate the product’s redeeming qualities and to convince the target customer to purchase it (Kotler et al., 2013), as later in this review influencers are discussed alongside their power of influence over consumer purchasing behaviour.

Kotler et al., (2013), define segmentation as the process of dividing a market into smaller distinct groups of consumers who have similar needs, preferences, or characteristics. These segments can then be targeted with tailored marketing strategies to better meet their specific needs and preferences. Market can be segmented based on geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioural segments. Kotler’s marketing model places customers as the focal point of marketing planning, and this requires understanding consumer behaviour.

2.3 Consumer Behaviour

Philip Kotler (2013) describes consumer behaviour stemming from consumers basic needs and wants. Needs can be described as something that is necessary for a human, such as food and water, and a want can be something non-tangible such as feeling of belonging, or simply desiring products that are not necessarily essential for living. Consumer behaviour can be affected by all external and internal factors, such as personality, culture, and experiences. Experiences are something that also drive change in consumer preferences as for example a bad experience can lead to never purchasing the product again, or finding the product for cheaper price can lead to changing brands. Experiences can also lead to the development of attitudes towards brands and products, and therefore affect consumer behaviours.

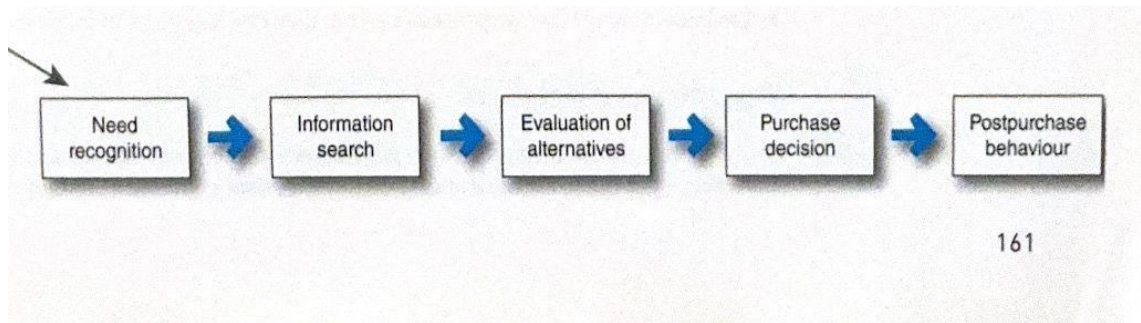


Figure 4 - The Decision-Making Process (Kotler et al., 2013)

Philip Kotler (2013) described a five-stage decision-making process as shown in Figure 4. The process includes need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase behaviour.

These stages include different actions, such as finding information about products and brands, evaluating features and prices, and finally making the purchase. Post purchase behaviour includes evaluating whether the consumer is satisfied with their purchase and what will they do next. It is necessary to understand all of these phases of decision-making process to plan strong marketing campaigns (Kotler et al., 2013).

Figure 5 depicts all the factors that can influence consumer behaviour according to (Kotler., 2013).

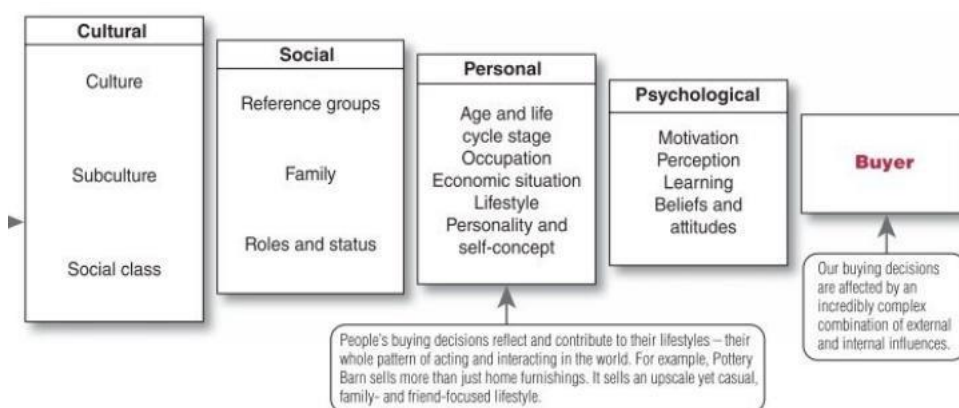


Figure 5 – Factors influencing consumer behaviour (Kotler et al., 2013).

Culture refers to a society's shared ideals, customs, and behaviours. (Solomon, Askegaard, Hog and Bamossy, 2016). According to Kotler et al., (2013), cultural influences have a major impact on consumer behaviour. Marketers must understand how socioeconomic class and culture, as well as subcultures (smaller groups with shared values), influence their target audience. Our core views, values and behaviours are influenced by the culture we are raised in and the institutions of our society. For example, European children frequently learn ideals such as achievement, individualism, and financial comfort. Marketers who fail to properly understand and respond to differences in cultural norms between countries and communities may result in poor marketing. Other important elements influencing consumer behaviour include social aspects like roles and family, personal factors like age, occupation and lifestyle and psychological factors such as motivation and perception. Culture is at the heart of all these characteristics, and it influences them all. Because culture shapes consumer behaviour, it also shapes consumer preferences for opinion leaders, or influencers.

2.4 Influential and Opinion Leader – Influencers

In their research on organizational purchase behaviour, Sethna and Blythe (2019), describe a decision-making unit (DMU) with shared roles and responsibilities. The study focuses on consumer behaviour in Business to Customer purchasing, but it also applies to individual consumers because they can be a part of an organization, such as a business or a family. Similarly, Solomon et al., (2016), argue that customers engage in a variety of roles, such as a parent purchasing clothing for a child, emphasizing the need to know these multiple viewpoints in consumer roles. Furthermore, influencers play an important role by making recommendations without necessarily engaging in the purchase or use themselves. An influencer can be a friend recommending a product, resulting in a purchase (Solomon et al., 2016).

Webster and Wind (1972, cited in Sethna and Blythe 2019), established a model that includes the following categories of DMU members: Initiator (people

who identify the problem first), Gatekeeper (people who control the flow of knowledge), Buyer (people tasked with making the actual purchase), Decider (people who make the final decisions), User (people who use the products), and Influential (the most relevant for this study). According to Sethna and Blythe (2019), influential are “People who are respected for their opinions and lifestyles, and who therefore inform purchase behaviour.” A professional, such as a consultant or engineer, can be influential, but so can the decider’s best friend or a family member. An excellent example of these influencers can be found by looking at the extensive human history of political leaders and celebrities influencing our ideas and choices. As a result, we can suppose that influential people have existed as long as humanity has.

One research examines opinion leaders, who were first identified in 1955 by Katz and Lazarsfeld (2005). In a social system, opinion leaders are individuals who are listened to and followed by others. Celebrities and professional athletes frequently function as opinion leaders due to their high reputation and fame. Opinion leaders play an important role in introducing new products, behaviours and services (Álvarez-Monzoncillo, 2022).

There are three stages in the opinion leader evolution: No opinion leader, one opinion leader, and several opinion leaders. The emergence of a new media paradigm, as well as the widespread use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, marked the peak of multi-opinion leaders’ success. At this point, having a large following of online users was sufficient for the opinion leader to have influence: being a media professional or authority in the field was not required. As opinion leaders create meaningful content for social media and social media is a platform which opinion leaders rely on, the evolution of opinion leaders follows the advancement of the internet (Balci, Tiryaki and Karakus, 2022).

2.5 Digital marketing – Are Social Media Influencers the Modern-Day Opinion Leaders?

Digital marketing, which combines digital media, data and technology to achieve marketing objectives, has altered how businesses interact with consumers. It involves managing online presences such as websites and social media, as well as online communication methods including search engine marketing and social media marketing (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). The rise of digitalization and the widespread use of social media have significantly altered the media environment, resulting in new modes of communication and content distribution. Social media can be roughly characterized as platforms that allow social interaction among groups (Álvarez-Monzoncillo, 2022). It includes prominent platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok and Facebook (Dixon, 2024).

Digital marketing and social media have also had a huge impact on the idea of content marketing. The term content marketing refers to the process of attracting customers by providing valuable information, it can comprise a variety of content on digital and media platforms (Lieb, 2012).

After the world digitalized, social media influencers (SMI)'s and influencer marketing surfaced. SMI's have been able to reach a status comparable to celebrities and they have strong influence over their audience and can even change the way their followers view and react to brands. SMI's can be simply defined as a strong modern form of opinion leaders (Álvarez-Monzoncillo, 2022).

2.6 Social Media Influencer Marketing

In today's digital world, SMI's have become an essential part of marketing and spreading brand awareness. This can be traced back to the way consumers have widely adopted mobile technology and social media platforms as tools for information search (Álvarez-Monzoncillo, 2022).

The appeal of influencer marketing arises from its ability to utilize the trust and authenticity that influencers have built with their following. According to research, customers trust social media influencers more than other types of endorsers, making influencer marketing an effective strategy for advertising products and increasing conversion rates. Beyond commercial reach, non-profit organizations understand the need to collaborate with influencers to increase credibility, develop brand images, and expand the message reach (Álvarez-Monzoncillo, 2022).

However, research has been conducted on how consumer trust in influencers is affected by brand control, and it has been suggested that whenever brands excessively control what influencers say, it results in avoidance of both influencers and brands. This is because consumers perceive concealed promotion as highly insincere and immoral. Therefore, brands should avoid trying to excessively control influencers because this may cause more harm to brands (Pradhan et al., 2022).

Social media platforms are excellent for influencer marketing campaigns, with Instagram emerging as the most effective channel, followed by YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Pinterest. Influencers use these platforms to create a variety of content types, such as images, short video content, and vlogs, effortlessly integrating advertising messaging into their posts while engaging with their audiences genuinely. The market value of influencer marketing has grown exponentially in recent years, reaching billions of dollars every year and is expected to continue rising (Álvarez-Monzoncillo, 2022).

As globalization reshapes consumer behaviour internationally, influencers play an important role in understanding regional differences and appealing to varied audiences in the global marketplace.

2.7 Globalization and the Global Consumer

Globalization has transformed consumer culture, making brands global symbols of cultural and commercial value. Understanding the complex connection

between global and local aspects of diverse cultures is essential for companies entering international markets (Solomon et al., 2016).

Solomon et al., (2016), describe the etic and emic perspectives: Etic: Emphasizes cross-cultural similarities (this viewpoint assumes that universal categories and metrics apply to all cultures). Emic: Concentrates on specific cultural experiences (for example, differing reactions to controversial advertising across cultures). Global marketing frequently targets “global citizens”, who have been exposed to a variety of cultures, but cultural disparities still exist. Global pop culture influences consumer behaviour, particularly among young people.

Solomon et al., (2016), introduce the concept of Glocalization, which emphasizes how global phenomena take on local importance (i.e., McDonald’s which, despite being similar, play different roles for consumers in different regions). Consumers seek “exotic authenticity”, which incorporates new aspects while remaining true to their cultural roots. This creates a fragmented global marketplace, where a comprehensive understanding of consumer behaviour across cultures and determining what drivers affect culture is the key to successful cross-cultural influencer marketing.

2.8 Hofstede’s dimensions and Ethnoconsumerism

De Mooij and Hofstede (2011), illustrate the relationship between culture and consumer behaviour using Hofstede’s five dimensions of culture. Hofstede’s Dimensions are depicted in Figure 6

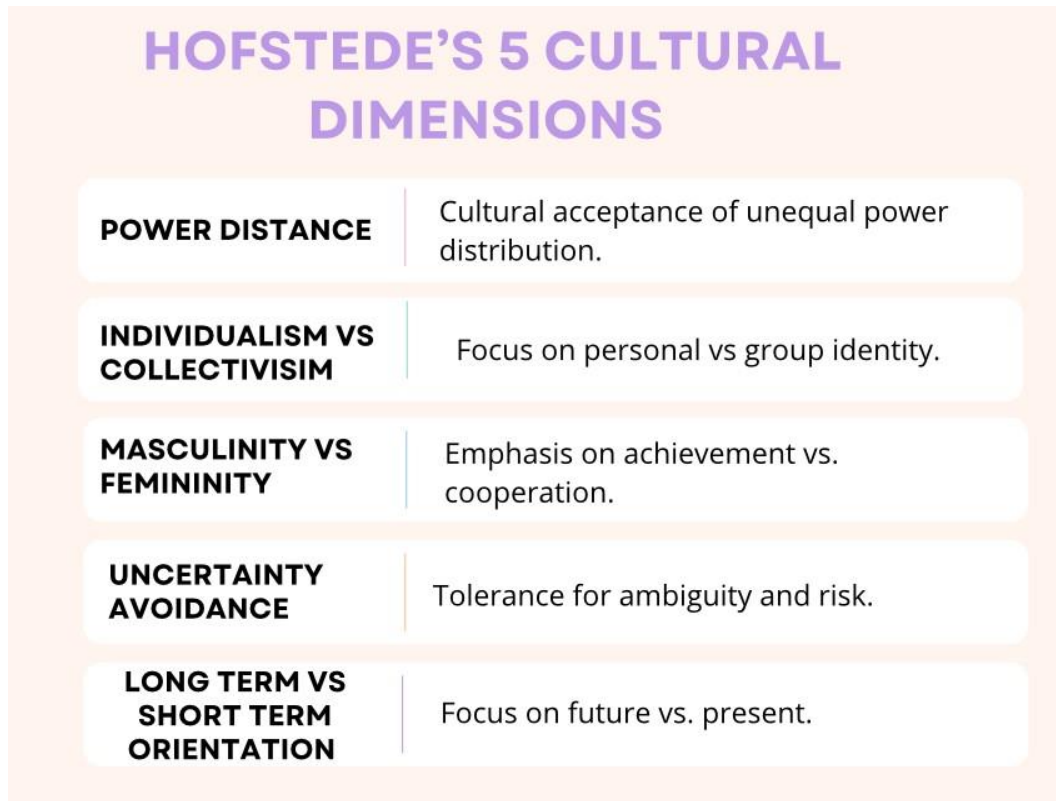


Figure 6 - Hofstede's Dimensions adapted from De Mooij and Hofstede (2011)

De Mooij and Hofstede (2011), emphasize the need-to-know customer traits such as self-concept, personality, identity and image. These characteristics are influenced by culture and affect how consumer view and interact with brands. Individualistic cultures, for example, may emphasize personal expression and individuality in brand selection, whereas collectivistic cultures may prioritize companies connected to family values or group affiliation. These authors study how cultural differences influence the way people think, process information and make decisions (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011).

Solomon et al., (2016) as well discuss these cultural dimensions. According to them, cultural differences cannot be reduced into small groups of features because culture is much more complex than just certain behaviours. These authors suggest an ethnoconsumerist methodology, focused on researching each culture as a separate entity. There is a need to understand how consumers from each culture behave, because it may vary across cultures. Understanding these cultural differences and moving away from stereotypes

and assumptions of a market based on their culture is necessary to strengthen marketing messaging.

Influencers may have an impact on consumer behaviour in many ways, even changing the way consumers perceive societal standards. However, consumers may show distrust on influencers as they suspect the authenticity of influencer endorsements and collaborations because of suspecting the motivations based on the compensation influencers receive for promoting a brand. Often influencers are setting new trends and can have an impact on changing societal beauty standards, which can have both negative and positive consequences (Álvarez-Monzoncillo, 2022).

Kim and Kim (2022) conducted a study on consumers who use social media, and they defined attachment as an important part of follower-influencer relations. Homophily (likeness to the influencer), social presence, and physical attractiveness can enhance followers' attachment and result in stronger emotional relationships. These attachments have a substantial impact on followers' loyalty and perceptions of advertising trustworthiness for successful influencer marketing initiatives.

Claeys, Charry, and Tessitore (2023) examined how influencers' genuineness affects followers' self-esteem, well-being, and purchase intention. Genuine influencers increase commercial effectiveness while also improving follower's self-esteem and well-being, implying that commercial and psychosocial goals can coexist. The research emphasizes the relevance of genuineness in influencer marketing, not just as a measure of authenticity, but also as an essential component in positively influencing consumer behaviour.

Jung, Min, Schiele, Kim, Hu, Liu, Haugtyedt and Kellaris (2022) describe differences across cultures in social media use. Strategies should be adapted both globally and locally in different regions. Cultures can be collective or individualistic, and adjusting brand identity and brand presence to fit these cultural features is important for strong marketing planning. For example,

certain features of a social media platform may be more appreciated in collectivistic cultures and the same features may not even work or be needed in individualistic cultures.

Garg and Bakshi (2024) found that followers are more likely to support influencers that are perceived as attractive. Attractiveness did not however directly influence direct purchase decisions, but these authors did define a concept called “influencer defence” that linked influencer attractiveness with purchasing intent.

This literature describes how culture can affect consumer behaviour in multitude of ways and marketing planning should be done so that these cultural differences are acknowledged in order to reach corporate goals and create meaningful relationships with consumers.

3 Research Methodology

Kotler et al., (2013) defined marketing research as systematically collecting, reporting, analysing, and designing data that is relevant in a specific marketing situation for an organization. Reasons for doing marketing research can vary, for example companies can do it in order to better understand their customers and make better offerings.

Research design is supposed to guide the researcher from the beginning of the research to the end of the research. It starts from defining a problem and finishes with objectives. There are different types of research design, and each researcher needs to determine which one fits their research the best. A universally “best” design does not necessarily exist, because each research is unique and may even require a multiple-method approach (Stevens et al., 2008).

Kotler et al., (2013) divide the marketing research process into four stages: Defining the problem and research objectives, developing the research strategy, implementing the research plan, and interpreting and reporting the findings.

There are two types of research methods: Qualitative and Quantitative. Quantitative research focuses on numerical data and statistical analysis, and qualitative research emphasizes understanding social processes through participant observation, interviews, or textual analysis. In this research, a qualitative approach of participant interviewing on influencers and surveying consumers was conducted. Through open-ended questions and qualitative data collection methods, this research examined influencer opinions and consumer opinions. Kotler et al., (2013), classify research objectives into three categories: exploratory, descriptive, and causal research.

Exploratory research collects preliminary data, then identifies new research problems and proposes a hypothesis. Exploratory research was chosen for this research because the aim is to find out if and how influencers adjust their content for different cultures. This is all new information that is not easily available and requires personal collection methods to find out about the actual strategies influencers use.

Descriptive research aims to describe the research subject. This can for example be certain characteristics of the research subject (Kotler et al., 2013). In this thesis the research descriptive research on consumer opinions and exploratory research on influencer strategies are used. This gives a wider viewpoint on the subject as it collaborates the two methods.

Causal research examines hypotheses based on the cause-and-effect relationship. Causal research is used to describe if changes in a variable can change another variable. In this research causal research could be useful when trying to find out how certain influencer tactics work on consumers, but it is difficult to implement without having access to an influencer profile or marketing

activities of a company. Additionally, executing controlled experiments may not be an accurate representation of real-world scenarios.

3.1 Sampling Choice

Sampling in marketing research involves studying a subset, or sample, of the total consumer population to conclude the larger population. This process involves three key decisions, determining the sampling unit (who to study), sample size (how many people to include), and sampling procedure (how to choose the sample). Deciding who to study can vary depending on the research question (Kotler et al., 2013). For this research that is related to influencer marketing, the author is using a qualitative approach to research, and the appropriate choice of people is consumers who are familiar with or purchase Korean cosmetics. These individuals are more likely to be interested and motivated to answer questions about the topic.

For this research, the aim was to choose respondents from Korean cosmetics communities. The participants are people who are readily available and willing to take part in the research. For interviewing K-Beauty influencers are reached out to. Those who had the time and interest to participate were chosen.

Kotler et al., (2013) state that larger research samples generally provide more reliable results than smaller ones, but they also tend to cost more. The sample size should be sufficient enough to present the population accurately, but it doesn't necessarily have to include the entire target market.

Because this research is qualitative and the survey conducted was focused on open-ended questions that give the respondents a possibility to freely describe their opinions, the sample size is smaller (23 participants). For influencer interview, because of time constraints, only one influencer was available to participate in the interview.

There are different sampling procedures available, categorized into probability and non-probability samples as shown in Figure 7:

Probability sample	
Simple random sample	Every member of the population has a known and equal chance of selection
Stratified random sample	The population is divided into mutually exclusive groups and random samples are drawn from each group
Cluster (area) sample	The population is divided into mutually exclusive groups and the researcher draws a sample
Non-probability sample	
Convenience sample	The research selects the easiest population members
Judgment sample	The researcher uses their judgment to select population members
Quota sample	The researcher finds and interviews a prescribed number of people in each of several categories

Figure 7 - Types of Samples (Kotler et al., 2013)

Probability sample: Every population member has a known and equal chance of being selected. This includes simple random samples, stratified random samples, and cluster (area) samples. Probability sampling allows researchers to calculate confidence limits for sampling error (Kotler et al., 2013).

Non-Probability sample: Population members are selected based on certain factors other than random chance. Examples include convenience samples, judgement samples and quota samples. While non-probability sampling can be more convenient, it typically comes with higher sampling error. Researchers should acknowledge things such as budget, time, objectives and research accuracy when choosing a sample (Kotler et al., 2013). Non-probability sampling is most appropriate in a qualitative study because members are chosen based on certain factors, in this case people interested in Korean cosmetics and willing to participate.

The chosen participants represent a convenience sample. The participants were chosen based on their willingness to participate in this research. Convenience sampling refers to choosing the participants based on who is available and accessible to the researcher (Kotler et al., 2013).

Convenience sampling can make research easier and cheaper, but biases are possible. Convenient and small sample may not represent the opinions of a broader population and therefore cannot be generalized (Simkus, 2023).

3.2 Contact Methods

In this research, beauty influencers were interviewed through email and Korean cosmetics consumers surveyed through online questionnaire. Figure 8 illustrates the various contact methods in marketing research and their respective strengths and weaknesses, as outlined by Kotler et al., (2013). The online approach is mostly described as good or excellent method in research.

	Mail	Telephone	Personal	Online
Flexibility	Poor	Good	Excellent	Good
Quantity of data collected	Good	Fair	Excellent	Good
Control of interviewer effects	Excellent	Fair	Poor	Fair
Control of sample	Fair	Excellent	Good	Excellent
Speed of data collection	Poor	Excellent	Good	Excellent
Response rate	Poor	Poor	Good	Good
Cost	Good	Fair	Poor	Excellent

Figure 8 - Research Contact Methods - Strengths and Weaknesses (Kotler et al., 2013)

Surveying through online platforms was chosen because it is the most convenient way to reach global participants and quickly collect responses. It also gives the participants anonymity and the possibility to openly express their opinions about influencer marketing and culture.

Influencer interview was conducted through email mainly because of time constraints and the influencers extremely busy schedule. Asking the interview questions through email and giving the influencer the chance to answer in their

own pace gives the participant a possibility to answer in the best way they possibly can and dedicate time to the answers whenever they are available.

The interview included 5 sections with open-ended questions to get a more in depth and freely flowing answers from the interviewed influencer. Sections explanation is shown in Table 1.

Section 1: Background info	The purpose of the first section was to gather basic demographical information about the influencer and her experience of Korean cosmetics. This helps reveal opinions and attitudes among influencers.
Section 2. Content Creation	The purpose of the second section was to gather information about how does the influencer approach content creation when marketing products across different cultures. This helps reveal possible strategies and recommendations.
Section 3. Influencer Marketing Practices	The third section was meant to reveal how the influencer experiences influencer marketing and collaborations with K-beauty brands.
Section 4. Consumer engagement and feedback	The fourth section was meant to reveal how the influencer engages with her audience and how does she collect feedback.

Section 5. Future trends and opportunities	The final section was meant to reveal what does the influencer see in the future for K-beauty marketing and influencer marketing, especially in a multicultural world.
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Table 1 – Influencer Interview Sections

The survey for consumers was structured to cover subjects relevant to the research objectives. The sections of the survey are in Table 2.

Section 1: Demographic information	Section one was meant to reveal demographic information about the respondents. Age, gender, occupation, ethnicity and country of residence. The section helps reveal trends and patterns in different demographics.
Section 2. Purchase behaviour	Section two was supposed to reveal participants purchase behaviour towards cosmetics, and especially Korean cosmetics.
Section 3. Awareness and perception of Korean cosmetics.	Section three was meant to reveal what is the awareness level of the participants about Korean cosmetics and how they perceive brand and product appeal.
Section 4. Influencer Marketing impact.	Section four was meant to reveal what kind of attitudes the survey participants have towards influencers

	and influencer marketing. This section helps reveal influencer impact on purchasing behaviour.
Section 5. Cultural Influences	The fifth and final section was meant to reveal how the participants view culture and its impact on influencer marketing, especially with Korean cosmetics.

Table 2 – Survey Question Sections

Surveys that are conducted through online platforms can be cheaper and more convenient to implement on a global group of participants. The participants had the chance to complete the survey whenever it best suited them, and this also helps increase response rate. The choice of online survey was especially efficient in research where the aim is to attract respondents worldwide.

Combining a personal interview with an influencer and an online survey can give a wider variety on research result and better describe the complex nature of cultural views.

This thorough methodology provides a good foundation for examining influencer marketing and how it can influence consumer perceptions of Korean cosmetics. To make sense of the data collected, proper research methodology design and execution must be followed by results analysis.

3.3 Limitations

There are limitations to this research. Because the research is qualitative the generalizability to a broader population is limited, as this research is context specific and exploratory.

Convenience sampling may lead to a non-representative sample, as the participants who are willing to engage in surveys may not reflect the broader population's diversity of opinions and experiences, and as the participants are reached through K-beauty communities online, they are only representative of the consumers who readily have interest in Korean Cosmetics and potential future customers are left outside of the research. The small sample size of 23 participants may further restrict the study's reliability and generalizability, although it is somewhat adequate for the qualitative approach and necessary for the convenience of gathering more detailed responses and opinions inside the time limitations of this research.

Because of time constraints and the influencer's busy schedules only one influencer was available for interview. Interviewing one influencer poses several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the findings lack generalizability, as they may not represent the broader population of influencers with varying demographics, content niches, and marketing strategies. The interviewed influencer is a K-beauty and skincare content influencer, who has audiences both globally and locally in Korea.

The perspectives and experiences of the interviewed influencer may be biased or subjective, potentially influenced by personal biases or promotional relationships with brands. Furthermore, the limited variation in perspectives and inability to capture industry trends results in the lack of a comprehensive understanding of influencer marketing practices. Moreover, establishing causality between influencer actions and outcomes may be challenging without any comparative data or multiple cases. To mitigate the limitations, the influencer interview is critically evaluated and complimented by the survey results made on consumers.

Online surveys offer convenience and cost-effectiveness, but they may raise concerns about sample representativeness and response bias, affecting the reliability of the study's findings. For example, the respondents in the research are likely to be mostly women as the communities they were reached out to

consisted mostly of women, which doesn't necessarily represent all K-beauty consumers. At the same time, while anonymous responses provide privacy and freedom of opinion expression for the participants, it poses a risk of unreliable answers. A participant may answer the survey to drive a certain agenda or answer the questions in a too general way to really be analysed properly.

Additionally, the design of survey and interview questions may be too leading and affect the reliability of the answers. If the participants are asked a question in a certain way, they may be more inclined to also answer in a similar way. Therefore, it is important to try to keep the questions as neutral as possible without introducing certain ideals to the participants.

Finally, the absence of controlled experiments or causal research may constrain the ability to establish definitive cause-and-effect relationships between influencer marketing strategies and consumer behaviour. These limitations should be acknowledged and considered when interpreting the research findings.

4 Research Results

4.1 Influencer Interview

One 25-year-old beauty influencer was interviewed in this research. This influencer makes content focused on skincare, for both Korean and English-speaking audiences. The influencer stated that she began creating content 3 years ago by making YouTube videos and then moved on to Instagram and TikTok. This influencer has a substantial following on all of these platforms and her content includes mostly of her trying new skincare or recommending products.

The influencers' responses display that to connect with multiple audiences, she needs to plan her content differently and consider what each audience values. For example, she noted that when promoting skincare, Korean audiences value

a flawless skin and aesthetic results, while international audiences appreciate seeing the transformation and realistic skin. Language and brand messaging is personalized based on the audience she is trying to reach in order to have concise messaging. She also highlighted a successful campaign where she worked together with an Indian-German influencer to promote a K-beauty store selection. In the content they addressed specific skin concerns and displayed more of K-beauty brands that offer inclusive foundation shades for multitude of skin tones. The influencer stated that this content was well accepted by the international audience and gained positive feedback.

The influencer said that she uses multitude of statistics to measure campaigns success, such as engagement rates, growth of followers, demographic of the content audience, and feedback from viewers.

She also identified what in her opinion has made Korean cosmetics globally attractive, and these factors were innovative formulations, affordability of products and the unique Korean approach to skincare.

The interviewed influencer also stated that in her opinion influencer marketing will continue to play a crucial role in the success of Korean cosmetics globally, with brands now prioritizing diversity and inclusivity in their collaborations to make K-beauty more accessible and approachable to global audiences.

4.2 Survey Results

A survey study was conducted using online Korean cosmetics groups to discover K-beauty consumers who were able to communicate their ideas on Cross-Cultural Influencer Marketing of K-beauty by answering mostly open-ended questions. These online communities included the 'Korean Cosmetics Enthusiasts' Facebook group and the '/Korean beauty' forum on Reddit. A total of 23 participant responses were collected.

4.2.1 Demographic information

The majority of the respondents, eleven respondents out of 23 in the survey were between the ages of 25 and 34. 6 out of 23 respondents were over the age of 34, and 3 were between the ages of 18-24. The last 3 respondents were under the age of 18. All of the respondents were female. The majority of respondents (14 out of 23) were employed, with students coming in second at 5 out of 23.

The questionnaire included respondents from Belgium, Finland, Denmark, Greece, Germany, Indonesia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Mongolia, Norway, and the United States. The majority of the respondents were from the USA (7 out of 23) and Finland (6 out of 23).

Respondents were asked to openly answer what best describes their ethnicity and various ethnicities were described, such as White, Mediterranean, Black, Finnish, Finnish-Filipino, Hungarian, Korean, Multi-Racial, Mixed White/Black African, White/Jewish, White American, Arab, Italian/Ashkenazi, Nigerian, Asian, and Hispanic-White.

4.2.2 Purchase Behaviour

The majority of respondents (22 out of 23) very frequently or somewhat frequently purchase cosmetics, particularly Korean cosmetics. Only one respondent reported not purchasing cosmetics frequently and none reported never purchasing cosmetics.

The respondents had a strong preference for Korean cosmetic products, with 6 out of 23 reporting that they only buy Korean cosmetics and an additional 10 out of 23 frequently choosing Korean brands over others. Furthermore, 3 out of 23 respondents preferred to choose Korean brands over others regularly, with 2 respondents doing so on occasion. Notably, no respondents stated that they never preferred Korean cosmetics over other brands.

11 respondents out of 23 learned about Korean cosmetics first through social media influencers. 5 respondents out of 23 discovered Korean cosmetics through recommendations from friends or family. Furthermore, 4 out of 23 respondents discovered K-beauty through online communities. The rest of the respondents stated a variety of other sources of information, including personal research, beauty conventions, and Korean media. These responses are illustrated in Figure 9.

HOW DID YOU FIRST FIND OUT ABOUT KOREAN COSMETICS ?

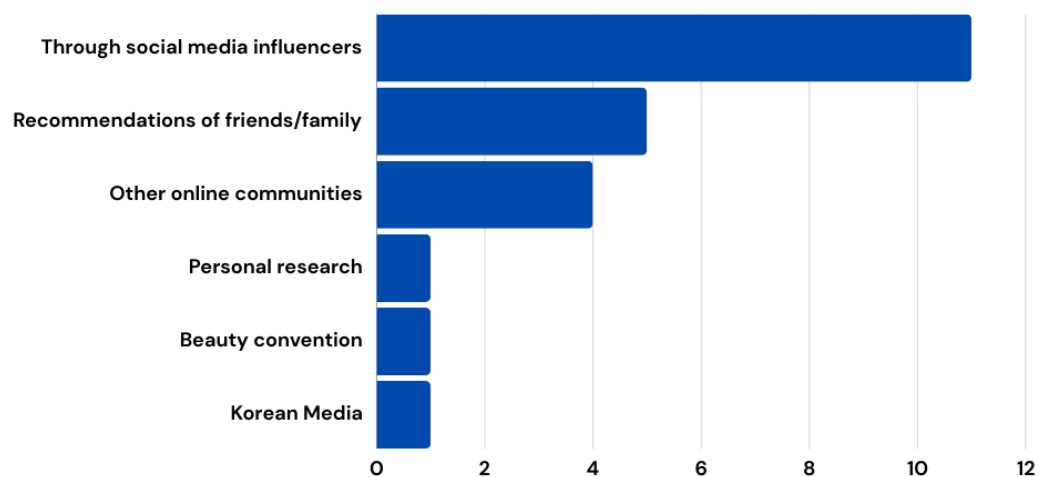


Figure 9 - How did you find out about Korean cosmetics ?

Ingredients emerged as having a considerable impact on the majority of respondents' purchasing decisions for Korean cosmetics, with 22 out of 23 citing them as most affecting their purchase decision. Recommendations from friends were identified as the second most relevant element, with 9 out of 23 respondents considering this while making purchasing decisions. In contrast, only one respondent chose influencers directly linked with the brand as an influencing driver in a K-beauty purchase. Eight of the respondents however

chose recommendations from a professional. Familiarity and brand image were seen as important by 6 of the respondents, and some respondents added a response stating a specific influencer by name.

4.2.3 Perception of Influencer Marketing

The majority of respondents, (15 out of 23), actively followed influencers. Instagram and TikTok emerged as the most popular sites for following influencers, indicating their significant influence on consumer preferences, and purchasing decisions. YouTube was also listed as a platform where influencers are followed, but it was less popular than Instagram and TikTok among the respondents.

Respondents placed a high value on particular attributes in influencers, with 21 out of 23 highlighting the knowledge of their niche, such as cosmetics, as the most valuable trait. Authenticity came in second, with 15 out of 23 respondents seeing it as important, followed by relatability as a response from 7 out of 23 respondents. Similar interests (6 out of 23) and humour (4 out of 23) were also noted as valuable characteristics. This is shown in Figure 10.

MOST VALUED ATTRIBUTES OF AN INFLUENCER

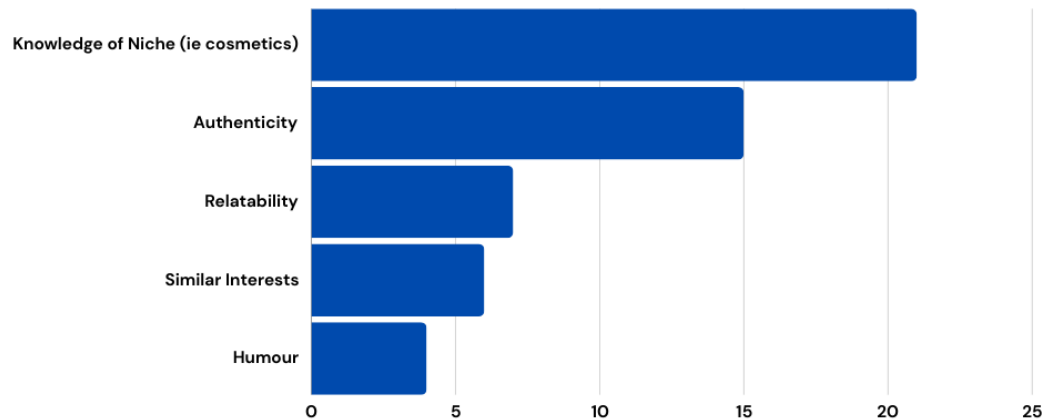


Figure 10 - Most Valued Attributes of an Influencer

Twelve out of 23 respondents stated that they are inclined to trust an influencer more if they share similarities with them. However, 5 respondents were unsure about the effect of similarity on trust. Meanwhile, 6 respondents did not feel more trust in influencers who shared similar characteristics.

The participants were asked to openly describe how they perceive influencer marketing in general and do they think influencers have an impact on their purchasing decisions. Respondents stated mixed responses, some consumers stated to be impacted while others stated to remain unaffected by influencers. While some stated that influencers contribute significantly to brand awareness, the responses about the impact on direct purchasing decisions were mixed. Concerns regarding sponsored collaborations were among the responses, and many respondents were suspicious about the authenticity of influencer recommendations.

When questioned directly about the impact of influencer-brand collaborations on purchase behaviour on a scale from 1-5 (1 = No impact and 5 = High impact) 12 out of 23 respondents stated no impact and only 2 respondents stated moderate impact or somewhat high impact. Nine of the respondents stated some impact or little impact.

The comparison between the first question about the broad impact of influencer partnerships on purchasing decisions and the second question on the same subject, which focuses on influencers who are already actively followed shows interesting results. When respondents were questioned to state from 1-5 (1 no impact, 5 high impact) the impact of collaboration with influencers they already actively follow, the perceived impact on purchasing behaviour increased significantly. Specifically, 10 out of 23 respondents reported a moderate impact, while 1 claimed somewhat high and 3 a high impact. The final 3 participants stated little impact. This shows that being familiar with an influencer increases their impact on purchasing decisions. However, a sizable proportion of respondents, 6 out of 23 still stated no impact. The comparison of the results is shown in Figure 11.

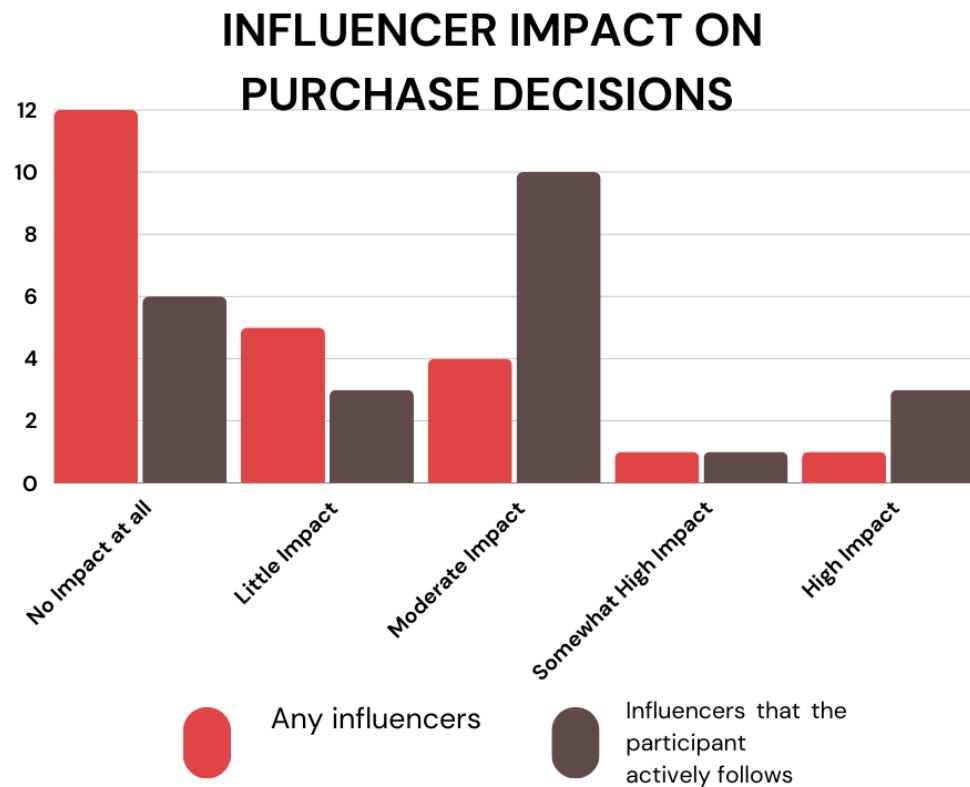


Figure 11 - Influencer Impact on Respondents Purchase Decisions

When asked about memorable influencer marketing campaigns for Korean cosmetics, most respondents (17 out of 23) struggled to recall specific examples. One respondent admitted not being able to recall any outright campaigns but speculated that they might have encountered some without realizing it. However, the remaining respondents remembered distinct campaigns. For instance, one respondent highlighted K-beauty brand Anua's Heartleaf oil campaign in Finland noting the widespread usage of it by major Finnish influencers which led to purchase. Additionally, three respondents mentioned memorable influencer campaigns by a Finnish K-beauty skincare brand, Smuti Skin, praising their widespread adoption among Finnish influencers and the fun lifestyle themes of the campaigns. Another respondent recalled frequently encountering the K-beauty brand Beauty of Joseon in their feed. A campaign by K-beauty brand Aromatica, collaborating with Korean YouTube beauty influencer Eunniesoo, left a significant impact due to its focus on product sustainability. Notably, collaborations between popular American

beauty YouTubers Megan Moon and Kennie JD with K-beauty brand Wishtrend were noted as impactful because it was the first time the respondent had seen K-beauty brands collaborate with people of colour. Lastly, the promotion of chemical sunscreens by UK beauty influencer Hiram was mentioned as particularly impactful by one respondent.

4.2.4 Perception of Korean Cosmetics

The respondents' general perceptions of Korean cosmetics were that Korean cosmetics are superior in quality compared to other beauty brands. Simplicity, transparency of ingredients, and purposefulness of Korean skincare was what made it attractive across all respondents. Overall, most of the respondents favoured Korean cosmetics because of the quality, effectiveness, and affordability.

The participants identified some differences in influencer marketing approaches from Korean brands and other beauty brands. Respondents thought that K-beauty influencers have a tendency to bring out the Korean identity excessively and praise "Korean Beauty" and "Glass Skin" concepts as unique selling points. Other respondents showed appreciation of the minimal makeup approach of K-beauty influencers, and also highlighted that K-beauty influencers are often very knowledgeable on ingredients and skincare benefits.

Respondents also stated that Korean celebrities are often endorsing brands and spreading awareness of Korean cosmetics both globally and locally.

4.2.5 Cultural Influences

The respondents' idea of cultural differences in perceiving Korean cosmetics, was that Western marketing may sometimes exoticize Korean culture in order to promote K-beauty. Participants of the survey preferred that K-beauty brands would emphasize on product benefits instead of over-romanticized. Cultural references.

Korean participants stated to have more trust in Korean skincare products because of familiarity with cultural traditions and beauty ideals. Other respondents had some initial scepticism towards foreign brands and products, because of their habit of questioning unfamiliar brands. Some also stated that there was not enough information available about Korean beauty products. Some respondents thought that media portrays Korean culture and beauty standards very differently from reality and this affects their views of K-beauty as well.

Cultural differences had an effect on what marketing was perceived as effective, and there were various perceptions across cultures on how skincare is viewed, i.e., it can be either a luxury or a need, and this also affected the respondents' opinion on the perceived effectiveness of influencer marketing efforts.

The survey respondents also expressed a need for a more inclusive representation in marketing, they highlighted a desire for brands to move forward from the traditional Korean beauty standard of flawless and fair skin into a more diverse approach that includes several ages, skin types, ethnicities, and body types.

Whenever the respondents were asked about their preferences of K-beauty influencers, multitude of opinions were expressed. Some of the respondents prefer influencers from similar cultural backgrounds, and they claimed that sharing ethnicity, skin tone or skincare concerns can increase their trust in an influencer. This response is rising from the idea that influencers with similar backgrounds may be better able to comprehend their skincare needs and experiences. Other respondents preferred K-beauty to be promoted by Korean influencers, because they perceived Korean influencers more experienced and knowledgeable on Korean cosmetics. Many of the respondents thought Korean influencers as experts in K-beauty, and this increased their credibility when recommending products.

Several of the respondents did not care what kind of background the influencer had and stated to be more interested in the influencer's personality and content quality. These respondents prioritized effective communication of product benefits over relatable cultural identities.

While many respondents valued diverse representation and relatability in influencer marketing, they also recognized the potential of Korean influencers providing expertise on K-beauty.

Furthermore, some of the respondents did acknowledge that celebrity endorsements, mentioning times when celebrities from different backgrounds have successfully marketed Korean cosmetics. This showcased the importance of credibility and reputation above cultural concerns in consumer decision making.

The responses given to the subject of whether individuals could better relate to an influencer if they shared a cultural background revealed mixed feelings. Nine out of 23 respondents said "maybe," indicating some ambiguity or fluctuations in their sense of cultural alignment with influencers. Five respondents said "yes," demonstrating a strong notion that having a similar cultural background helps them relate to influencers. On the other side, nine respondents answered firmly "no," showing that cultural background may not have a big impact on their capacity to relate to influencers.

The responses to the question of whether participants would be more likely to trust an influencer if they shared the same cultural background show a strong tendency to scepticism. Majority, 14 out of 23 said "no," showing that cultural background of the influencer may not have a significant effect on their trust in them. Five out of 23 responded with "maybe," and the rest (Four out of 23) said "yes," implying that for a subset of participants, shared cultural backgrounds may increase their trust in influencers.

WOULD YOU TRUST AN INFLUENCER MORE IF THEY HAD THE SAME CULTURAL BACKGROUND AS YOU?

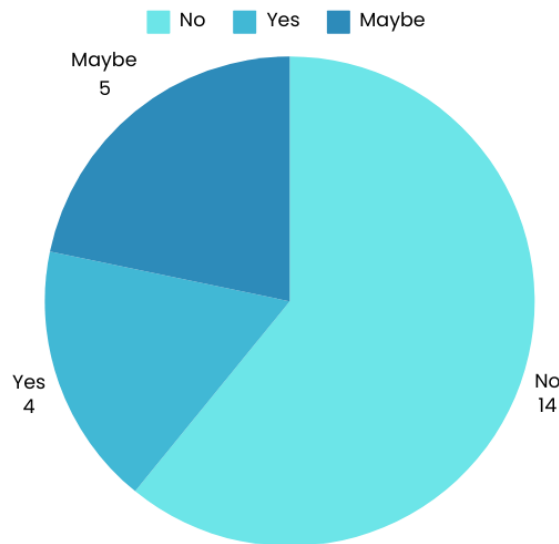


Figure 12 - Would you trust an influencer more if they had the same cultural background as you?

The respondents were asked to openly state the popularity of specific types of content or social media platforms in respondents' cultures, and the responses reflect a wide range of viewpoints and preferences. Some respondents mentioned age as a determining factor on the popularity of a platform. Several respondents (14 out of 23) noted popular platforms such as TikTok, Instagram and YouTube, with TikTok receiving the most mentions. However, there were also hints of scepticism or complete avoidance of social media, revealing a wide range of attitudes regarding online platforms. Furthermore, there were comments about toxicity or negativity connected with specific platforms, such as TikTok.

4.2.6 Diversity and Cultural representation

Most participants thought that diversity is an important part of influencer marketing and especially considering beauty brands and K-beauty. Many respondents stated to be more positive towards brands that expand their shade ranges and collaborate with influencers from different backgrounds. Other participants thought that there is a lack of representation in K-beauty influencer marketing and brands should be more inclusive. Many respondents stated to prioritize ingredients and product effectiveness over cultural representation.

Many participants thought that Korean beauty brands do not use diverse enough influencers for their marketing practices, and this could lead to some consumers feeling excluded from using the brands. Some participants thought that influencers may sometimes exaggerate the results and not have correct information about how products can fit diverse skin types. Some respondents said that they have not seen any misrepresentation or stereotyping in K-beauty influencer marketing and are pleasantly surprised by how inclusive K-beauty is with influencers. The replies show a multitude of awareness levels and sensitivity to cultural representation.

4.2.7 Trust and Authenticity

Influencer trust, authenticity and relatability are important according to the participants. One respondent noted that influencers who have built a reputation of trustworthiness are perceived as more reliable in their recommendations. Another respondent thought that brands that share their research results are more attractive, highlighting the role of brand transparency. Many respondents showed suspicions on influencer endorsements, as some influencers may be driven only by financial gain and do not actually offer genuine recommendations. This shows that authentic brand connections and brand fit is important in influencer collaborations. Relatability was also noted as essential, some of the respondents thought that they are more likely to engage with influencers that they find personally relatable.

4.2.8 The Impact of the Korean Beauty Standard

The majority of respondents (14 out of 23) believe Korean cosmetic companies do limit their influencers and collaborations to a specific type of beauty standard. In contrast, 4 out of 23 respondents say that Korean cosmetic companies do not limit their influencers and collaborations to a set beauty standard, revealing a different viewpoint. The remaining 5 express doubt, indicating some ambiguity or complexity in how consumers view the inclusion or exclusivity of beauty standards within Korean cosmetic marketing.

When respondents were asked if they had noticed any particular characteristics in Korean Cosmetics influencers, they gave a variety of answers on the perceived traits of influencers marketing Korean cosmetics. The participants had noted a common trend among K-beauty influencers: They are mostly white or pale East Asians, described as thin and conventionally attractive. The influencers often are young and have a smooth and flawless skin.

Many of the participants stated that they want to see a more inclusive approach from K-beauty brands in their influencer marketing. There were hopes for seeing diverse age groups, ethnicities and skin types represented. Especially noticeable skin defects were something the participants were hoping to see more, such as acne or hyperpigmentation.

These responses show how beauty standards can have an impact on influencer marketing and there is a need for a more diverse approach and inclusion of diverse influencers.

Most participants thought that influencer marketing does effectively communicate its distinctive qualities and benefits to all consumers, but some stated that influencers do not always give out correct information and some even spread false promises as facts. In this question some noted that there is an underrepresentation of influencers of Persons of Colour and that K-beauty brands limit their makeup shade selections and there are not enough shades for darker skin tones. However, some of the participants do admit that influencers

are effective in catching their interest and makes them research more about new and unfamiliar brands.

5 Discussion

The research results obtained can help plan a foundation for better understanding of cross-cultural influencer marketing. Gaining insights from global participants and an industry professional gave different viewpoints on the current state of influencer marketing and how brands can adapt their plans to better reflect consumer expectations.

The original literature revealed that K-beauty has gained popularity globally in recent years and the growth is continuing. The Korean wave has contributed significantly to the popularity of the K-beauty products as well, and this might be something that should be researched more thoroughly in the future.

Based on the research results, social media influencers can have an impact on consumer behaviour across variety of cultures. Influencer marketing is becoming a powerful force in marketing, and their influence has increased in recent years.

Influencers can also change consumer opinions and be effective in bringing foreign brands to the market. However, they do have their limitations, as trust, transparency and authenticity are the most valuable traits of an influencer collaboration. If the influencer does not have the trust of their audience, it can even harm brands that collaborate with these influencers. These findings are consistent on previous literature that states influencers as opinion leaders that can shape consumer opinions and purchasing behaviour (Álvarez-Monzoncillo, 2022). Additionally, most participants of the research struggled to recall any memorable influencer campaigns, which highlights that singular influencer campaigns may not leave a strong memorable impact, and there is a need for continuous collaboration with influencers to keep a brand relative and on top of consumers' minds.

Relatability was also noted as an important influencer trait by the research participants, and Claeys, Charry and Tessitore (2023) also highlighted how being genuine is the strongest way for influencers connect with their viewers. As relatability can be anything from looking similar from the outside to feeling related to the personality of the influencer, K-beauty brands should try to incorporate variety of influencers in their influencer brand collaborations, as this will make the brands more relatable and approachable.

Stereotyping and generalizing markets based on culture should be avoided, as this is viewed negatively by consumers. This is consistent with Solomon et al., (2016) research on ethnoconsumerist approach, where each culture and their identifying market traits should be researched individually. The influencer interviewed described how the best approach is to personalize content for different cultural audiences, and this is also consistent with Solomon et al., (2016) suggestions that a global and localized approach should be combined.

K-beauty brands should collaborate with influencers from different cultural backgrounds and promote more inclusive product lines. Currently consumers are noticing certain beauty standard in influencer marketing of Korean cosmetics and there is a need for change. Additionally, to cultural inclusivity, K-beauty brands should include influencers with different skin concerns and different body types.

The global appeal of Korean cosmetics is highly influenced by innovative formulas and affordability, and these should be utilized in the influencer marketing campaigns. According to this research consumers value skincare expertise in cosmetics marketing across many cultures and choosing skincare or beauty influencers for campaigns could be the most effective approach. Highlighting the universal benefits of K-beauty products is important to attract global audiences, and influencers should incorporate their knowledge and expertise in K-beauty marketing content.

Visual centric platforms should be utilized across many cultures, but marketers should focus on what kind of platforms are popular in the target market. Some platforms are generally used all over the world, but in other cultures certain platforms rise above others. This highlights once again the need for localized strategies in influencer marketing.

In the future, influencer marketing should be focused on combining global and localized strategies. Diversity and inclusivity should be emphasized, and informative influencer marketing campaigns should be implemented to increase accessibility and appeal to global audiences.

These findings however do have their limitations as they were conducted on only a small group of people already invested in the K-beauty market. Additionally, only one influencer was interviewed, and they cannot accurately represent strategies from beauty influencers, but however they do offer some insight into the subject. The results of the research however are in line with the previous research, and this enhances the credibility of the results.

Future studies could include more how to quantify the impact influencer marketing has on purchasing behaviour across cultures. Some possible research topics could include more ethical questions, such as how different culture's view influencer marketing from an ethical viewpoint. Another possible study direction could be cultural differences in the acceptance of AI generated influencers.

To strengthen the research results research should be conducted on larger populations of consumers and more personal interviews with influencers and possibly even influencer marketing professionals. This research mainly focused on the topic of beauty, and in the future research including influencers from variety of niches in addition to beauty, such as lifestyle or food influencers can also offer valuable insights about influencer marketing across cultures.

6 Conclusion

This research offered insight into how culture can affect consumer behaviour and consumer opinions on influencer marketing. The most important points that were found on this research were that social media influencers do have an impact on consumer behaviour across cultures, and they can shape consumer opinions. Building trust is essential to have successful influencer collaborations, and this should be carefully evaluated when planning influencer partnerships. In choosing influencers brands should avoid stereotypes and research each market individually for proper influencer content and approach. Collaborating with diverse influencers can be beneficial and skincare experts can be more effective. Choosing the right platform is essential and should be also individually researched based on the market.

For the future planning, brands should focus on diversity, inclusivity, and informative influencer campaigning to enhance accessibility and global appeal.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Influencer 1 Interview

<p>Can you tell me about your background as a beauty influencer?</p>	<p>I Am 25 years old, I started creating content 3 years ago, first making YouTube videos and then I moved to Instagram and TikTok as well. My content is mostly based on K-beauty content, and I make content both in Korean and English. I have gained a following of around 100,000 on TikTok and Instagram and 50,000 on YouTube.</p>
<p>How do you perceive the role of crosscultural influencer marketing in promoting Korean cosmetics globally?</p>	<p>I think us creators and influencers we can promote Korean cosmetics more globally and connect the brands better with their audiences. As a German influencer with Korean heritage, I believe i have a unique perspective that allows me to authentically connect with both Western and Asian audiences, and I think that is also why many K-beauty brands have collaborated with me.</p>
<p>What drew you to promoting Korean cosmetics specifically, and how do</p>	<p>It's really that I grew up in a Korean household and my mother especially was very into Korean skincare routines and I learned them from her. I love the</p>

<p>you tailor your content to resonate with diverse cultural audiences?</p>	<p>innovation, quality and uniqueness of Korean beauty products. I do try to combine korean and western beauty techniques such as showing makeup tutorials of both western and Korean styles and for example simplifying skincare routines which is something that I think western people especially love, and it can be very different from the Korean 12-step beauty routines.</p>
<p>Can you share insights into your experience promoting Korean cosmetics to audiences from different cultural backgrounds?</p>	<p>There are challenges sometimes in promoting K-beauty to different audiences. I think Kbeauty is nowadays globally appreciated because of the highquality but the differences in beauty standards and preferences require me to adapt my content strategies sometimes. For example, in my opinion Korean audiences can really love perfect skin content where there are no visible flaws in sight, but I think that does not work for German audiences, they want to see how the products actually work. So, in Germany showing flaws in skin and then showing the result of a better skin is something that works much better. In comparison I think in Korea simply showing</p>

	a perfect glass skin would encourage audience to purchase.
How do you adapt your content and messaging to align with different cultural preferences and beauty standards?	My followers consist both of Korean and International viewers since I do content in different platforms in both Korean and English. I do have to adapt the content, as language and the presentation in content is very different in both of my profiles.
Have you encountered any challenges or opportunities when promoting Korean cosmetics in different regions or to audiences with distinct cultural backgrounds?	In my opinion, one challenge I have encountered is whenever promoting Korean Cosmetics, you have to word things very differently when speaking to Korean vs international audiences. Korean people love phrases that basically refer to lighter and perfect skin and using words such as brightening/whitening don't necessarily resonate the same way with international audiences who are not looking for more brighter or fairer skin but instead want a hydrated or glowing skin.

<p>What strategies do you employ to ensure that Korean cosmetics appeal to diverse audiences worldwide?</p>	<p>To really appeal to international audiences, I emphasize the universal benefits of Korean cosmetics, such as hydration, anti-aging and variety and adaptability for different skin types and concerns. Also collaborating together with different influencers, for example me and another influencer whose heritage is Indian but she is a German creator with acne skin and we did a joint collaboration with a K-beauty store and helped her find the best products for her skin type and it really got a lot of attention with International audience</p>
<p>How do you measure the effectiveness of your crosscultural influencer marketing efforts for Korean cosmetics?</p>	<p>I measure all my content success through various kpis such as engagement rates, follower growth and audience demographics. I also pay a lot of attention on viewer feedback and how brands comment on our collaborations.</p>

<p>Can you provide examples of successful cross-cultural influencer marketing campaigns you've been involved in for Korean cosmetics?</p>	<p>Well I think the campaign I mentioned in the previous question was something that really worked out well. It really got some praise since we showed acne skin products and how they work, and also showed some of the few k-beauty brands that have foundations for darker skin tones</p>
<p>In your opinion, what are the key factors contributing to the global appeal of Korean cosmetics?</p>	<p>I think I mentioned some things that make me love Kbeauty, and in my opinion the same things are what makes it so popular globally as well. Innovative formulas, affordable price, and just unique approach to skincare.</p>

<p>Looking ahead, how do you see the future of cross-cultural influencer marketing in the beauty industry, particularly for Korean cosmetics?</p>	<p>In my opinion influencer marketing will keep playing an important role in the global spread and success of K-beauty. I can see a positive change in how kbeauty brands are now prioritizing diversity and inclusivity by collaborating with influencers from diverse cultural backgrounds. I think this will make kbeauty more approachable and attractive to global audiences and different cultures.</p>
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Appendix 2 – Consumer Survey Questions

What is your age?
What is your gender?
Country of residence?
Ethnicity: Insert what best describes your ethnicity
Occupation?
How often do you purchase beauty and cosmetic products, including Korean cosmetics ?
How often do you choose a Korean Cosmetic brand over another brand?
How did you first become aware of Korean Cosmetics?
What things affect your purchase decision most when buying Korean Cosmetics?
Do you follow any influencers?
If you previously answered yes, can you list on what platforms (i.e., Instagram, TikTok, YouTube) you most actively follow influencers?
What traits do you value the most in an influencer?

Do you feel that you might trust an influencer more if they share similar traits with you (traits can be anything from personality to skintype) ?
How do you perceive influencer marketing in general? Do you find influencer recommendations influential in your purchasing decisions?
In your opinion, how much of an impact a brand collaborating with a certain influencer has on your purchase decision?
Can you recall any specific influencer marketing campaigns for Korean cosmetics that left a strong impression on you? What aspects of those campaigns resonated with you the most?
How do you perceive Korean cosmetics compared to other beauty products?
What factors influence your decision to purchase Korean cosmetics?
Have you noticed any differences in influencer marketing approaches when promoting South Korean cosmetics compared to other beauty brands? If so, what are they?
Rate from 1-5, If an influencer you follow would recommend a product, how much would it impact your purchase decision?
How do you think cultural differences influence consumer perceptions of influencer marketing for Korean cosmetics? Can you provide examples from your own cultural background?
Do you prefer to see influencers from your own cultural background endorsing Korean cosmetics, or do you find influencers from Korea more convincing?
Why?
Do you feel that you could better relate to an influencer if they shared the same cultural background with you?
Would you trust an influencer more if they had the same cultural background as you ?
Do you think in your culture certain type of content or social media platforms are more popular? If yes, what platforms or what type of content?

How important is cultural representation and diversity in influencer marketing for Korean cosmetics? Do you feel more inclined to purchase from brands that feature diverse influencers?
Have you ever felt that influencer marketing for Korean cosmetics misrepresented or stereotyped certain cultural aspects? If so, how did it impact your perception of the brand?
What role do factors like trust, authenticity, and relatability play in your perception of influencer marketing for Korean cosmetics?
Do you feel like Korean Cosmetic brands are limiting their influencers and collaborations to a certain type of beauty standard?
What type of traits have you noticed in influencers who are promoting Korean Cosmetics?
Do you think influencer marketing effectively communicates the unique features and benefits of Korean cosmetics to consumers from different cultural backgrounds? Why or why not?
Do you have anything else to add related to influencers and Korean Cosmetics ?