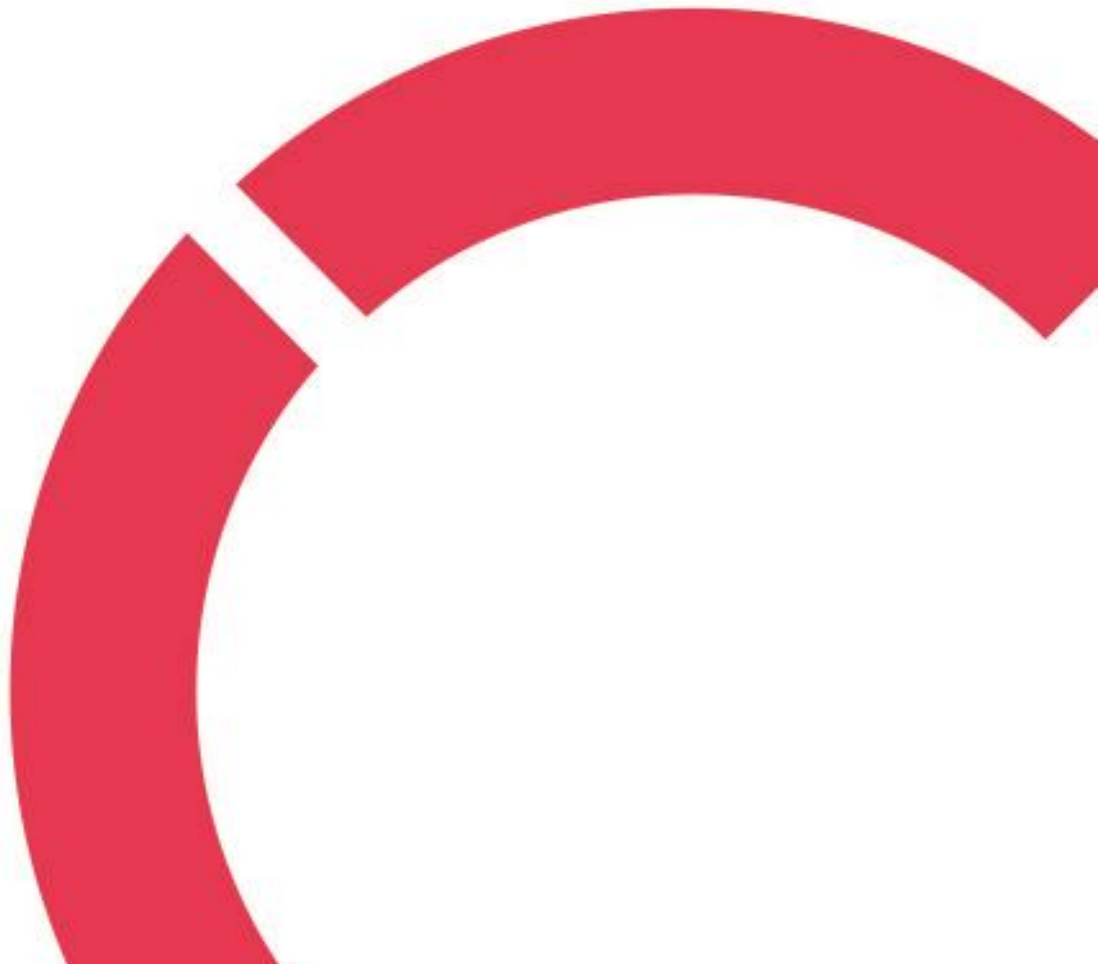Tuyen Du

VIRTUAL INFLUENCERS IN METAVERSE

Discussion and research on the impacts of the purchasing decisions of Generation Z

Thesis
CENTRIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
Business Management
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Customers are uncertain about whom to trust due to the market's diverse product selections and rising commercial advertising. It is difficult for businesses to keep up with the digital landscape because of their onerous restrictions such as budget or human resources. Besides, customers also tend to trust word-of-mouth marketing from their relatives and friends over brand-specific advertising. Influencer marketing may therefore turn out to be one of the most promising types of advertising. Moreover, the concept of virtual influencers is more and more popular thanks to the incredible results they bring to businesses from brand protection to a fresh direction for creative storytelling. Especially, with the strong development trend of the Metaverse, virtual influencers will soon take over digital marketing.

The main purpose of this thesis was to provide a reference for marketers keen on the idea of "Virtual Influencers" influencing the purchasing decisions of younger consumers due to the lack of relevant literature. In particular, examples of the achievements that real and virtual influencers bring to well-being companies such as Dior and Ikea were presented to demonstrate the validity of the hypothesis.

This thesis is carried out as a research-based thesis that uses the quantitative approach to obtain primary data from a random sample of 100 answers drawn from the research survey and secondary data from available sources. In addition, influencer marketing theory is reviewed carefully from instances of influencer campaigns to predictions for its future. The analysis's findings offer several hypotheses regarding consumers' interest in virtual influencers and the Metaverse, as well as comparisons between virtual and human influencers. Because the customer's approach to these two methods is different, the article also recommends that marketers should choose a reasonable method for each of their marketing strategies.

CONCEPT DEFINITIONS

CGI

Computer-generated imagery

KOL

Key opinion leader

SEO

Search Engine Optimization

VR

Virtual reality

ROI

Return on investment

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1 INTRODUCTION

The world is currently transitioning to the digital era. People are tinkering as well as finding their information with their smartphones or laptops. Using social media seems necessary in an individual's daily to-do list. Americans usually check their phones every 4 minutes, a total of 334 times per day (Wheelwright 2022). Moreover, according to a Kepios investigation, internet users in Finland increased by 6,906 (+0.1%) between 2021 and 2022. Finland's internet usage rate was 97% in 2022. (Kemp 2022a.) More interestingly, the "authentic" worldwide internet user now spends nearly 7 hours per day – 6 hours and 58 minutes approximately on the internet (Kemp 2022c). The emergence of social networks has contributed to promoting businesses to create new marketing methods, which leads to becoming an essential element in their marketing campaigns.

However, brands are finding it increasingly difficult to gain traction on the internet. It is partly due to the fact that every business, large or small, has made an enormous amount of noise in the online realm. Consumers feel annoyed and disgusted when businesses overuse paid ads on social networking sites. Ad blockers are used by 42.7% of internet users worldwide (Dean 2021). Therefore, global profit loss due to ad blocking was estimated to be $21.8 billion in 2015 (Sovrnmarketing 2015). Consumers lack official and reliable information channels. They become skeptical and distrust the information provided by businesses. Therefore, the recommendations and reviews from friends, relatives, or other users on social networks have become more crucial than ever. Many marketing professionals have become social media influencers or opinion leaders, directly influencing customer consumption through virtual platforms. This new mainstream form is gradually gaining popularity because it effectively conveys messages and is a much better investment than investing in celebrities. Recently, it has been noticed that many companies are collaborating with virtual influencers and still achieving admirable sales. Although they were born from the brain of machines, they have a large number of followers and fans. For example, "Lil Miquela" (3 million Instagram followers), "Shudu" (227k), and "Noonoouri" (398k) all have large followings and promote various products and services in their posts and stories (Hutchinson 2022).

The thesis aims to understand the impact of virtual influencers on the customer's buying decisions, especially in gen Z. By responding to the following questions, the goal can be attained: Why virtual influencers will become the trend of future marketing strategy? First of all, the definition of "Metaverse"

and the virtual economy is explained clearly in the literature of theories part. Metaverse is a new environment where young customers and virtual influencers will interact with each other soon. After that, the thesis will figure out the potential of influencer marketing, its impact on customers' purchasing decisions, and a discussion about the future of this marketing form. There are examples of human and virtual influencer marketing campaigns. Therefore, there is one more question made: What factors can influence customers' purchasing decisions when comparing virtual and real influencers? The final part is a report to measure the effects of virtual influencers and compare them to their counterparts in a marketing campaign having Gen Z as its target customer segmentation. The questionnaire and samples of answers will be provided in the appendix.

Furthermore, this study has two layers of significance: theoretical and practical meaning. Firstly, about the theoretical contributions, this thesis still contributes to the existing theoretical framework of virtual influencers becoming the future of marketing strategy. Secondly, on the practical side, marketers can apply this theory to stay up-to-date on trends in the new influencer genres and develop strategies to penetrate the Metaverse. This thesis also benefits businesses to be able to significantly increase their profits by changing their mindset in marketing and entering the virtual economy. In addition, they can also review the comparison results between real and virtual influencers to be able to make the right choices for each of their marketing strategies.

2 THEORY OVERVIEW

In this chapter, there are smaller headers. The first one is explanations of the Metaverse and new opportunities in virtual economics. The concept of the Metaverse firstly appeared in 1992, but it has been a trending keyword recently (Canavesi 2022). This trend creates not only opportunities and environments for brands to grow but also challenges to conquer a new generation of customers. After that, influencer marketing also is discussed in more detail. There is an example of Dior's influencer campaign. Besides, this chapter describes the rise of influencers and KOLs in the social network era, where the buy decisions of customers are affected by the person they follow. Last but not least, the future of this marketing form in the Metaverse also is revealed clearly. From that, a theoretical framework of the impacts of virtual influencer marketing on customers' purchasing decisions will be progressed.

2.1 "Metaverse" and opportunities

The Metaverse is a popular keyword nowadays. The Metaverse, which combines virtual reality, augmented reality, sensory technology, and spatial computing, promises to provide humans with new experiences in the exciting virtual multiverse. However, the Metaverse is not simply a virtual world but a sci-fi fantasy that comes naturally. It is not limited by technology companies; it can become an entirely new economy in the world. Even well-known corporations such as McDonald's and Nike envision the Metaverse as a place where consumers may go dining, shopping, playing games, making friends, attending concerts, and creating a virtual existence. The Metaverse seems ready to continue breaking platform barriers and bringing previously isolated eco-systems together in a new decentralized universe (Kilzi 2022). Picture 1 shows the elements which construct Metaverse. The important components which create the economy in the digital era are digital currency and non-fungible tokens. Users use these to buy and sell digital and physical products and services such as concerts, social and entertainment events tickets. Furthermore, people can meet, work, and have a conversation using social media and virtual offices (Masterson 2022).
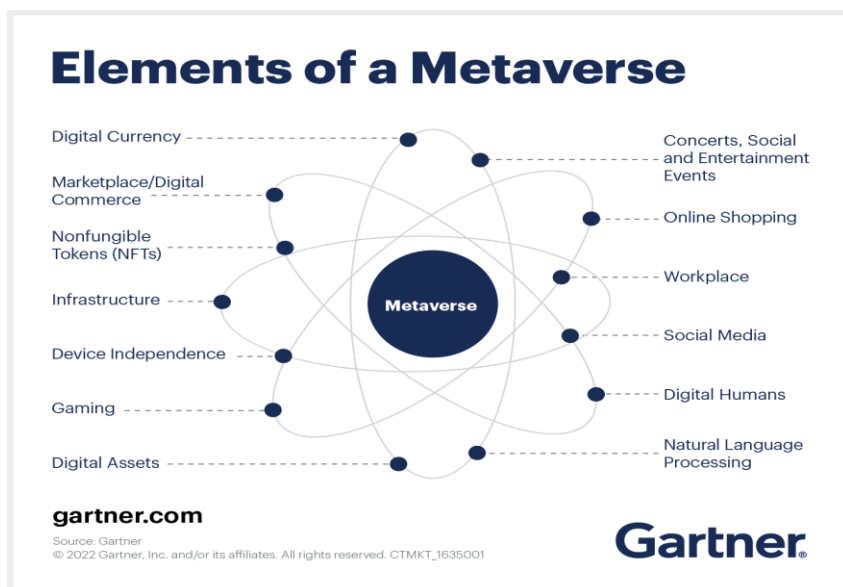
PICTURE 1. Elements of Metaverse (Masterson 2022)

The phrase "virtual economy" was initially applied to the exchange or business of virtual products in online games, especially large multiplayer online games. Players can buy products from each other and trade real money from game money in several of these games. Cryptocurrencies and non-fungible tokens can now be included in virtual economies (Reaume 2022). Many businesses wonder if the virtual environment really makes sense and what their brands can do there. These new and immersive environments have the potential to provide a novel approach to remaining relevant to current customers while attracting new ones. Hence, long-established and newer businesses must consider various engagement strategies to reach audiences of all shapes, sizes, and ages. Brands can reach out to consumers in the Metaverse in many different ways. The potential for Metaverse market size in 2025 and 2030 is identified below (FIGURE 1). The market size is expected to be 476.4 billion USD and 1542.9 billion USD by 2025 and 2030.
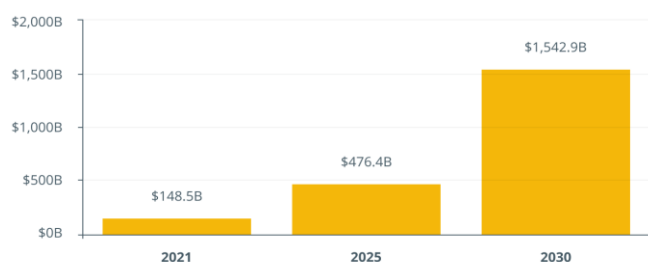
FIGURE 1. Metaverse market size forecast until 2030 (Varchev Traders 2022)

Lately, Epic Games, the creators of Fortnite, has raised $1 billion, incorporating Sony's contribution of $200 million in the funding round to invest in Metaverse projects. Facebook is heavily funding and investing in Horizon, a new platform for the workplace, and proto-metaverse VR. Virtual reality is also used by brands strongly for their business. More interestingly, Gucci even sells a virtual bag that is more expensive than the real thing. Nike has begun selling virtual Jordan shoes in Fortnite (PICTURE 2), and Coca-Cola has begun selling virtual wearables in Decentraland. According to Bloomberg, the Metaverse universe market is worth $800 billion. Although this is still in its early stages, experienced crypto investors can help to boost meta-universes and the token trading of high-growth start-ups. As a result, many wise investors are placing bets that the virtual reality boom will pick up speed. That one day, a virtual reality platform that can compete with major social networks may exist within the next five years. (Varchev Traders 2022.)

PICTURE 2. Fortnite collaborated with Nike to sell shoes in their game (Sawyer 2019)

2.2 Influencer marketing

Influencer marketing is a collaboration formation in which companies work with an online influencer to promote their products or services. This partnership boosts brand recognition meanwhile other influencer marketing relationships are less tangible. Unlike celebrities, influencers are from diverse backgrounds, nationalities, knowledge, and social status. Influencers can include well-known fashion photographers on Instagram, well-read cybersecurity bloggers on Twitter, and well-known marketing executives on LinkedIn. While many influencers seem to be regular people, some of them have hundreds of thousands or even millions of followers. They are who will have recognized themselves as experts

in their field. Indeed, customers usually follow influencers to turn to for answers to their questions about the products. Based on their field of expertise, they have a habit create the most engaging social posts on their specific topics. They share the best photos, create the most engaging movies, and host online educational forums (Geyser 2022a). An example of TikTok creators making content promoting beauty products is shown below (PICTURE 3).
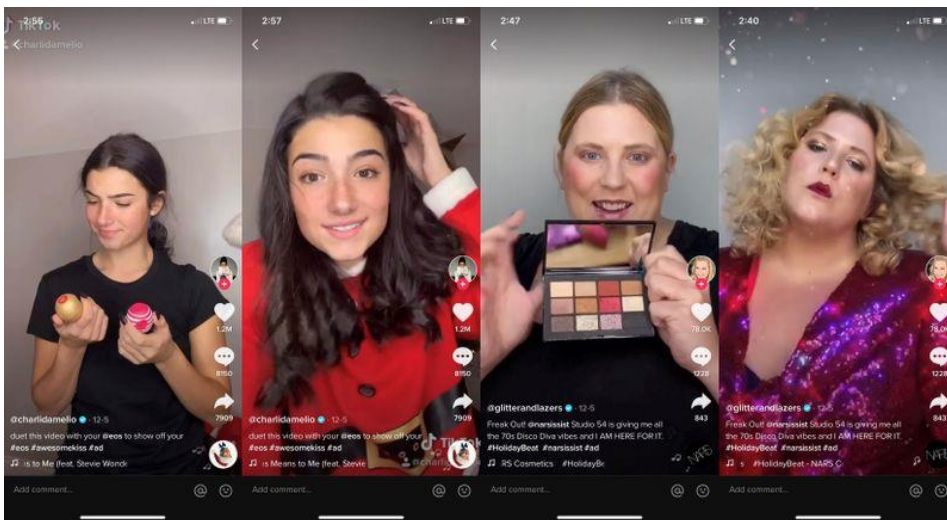
PICTURE 3. TikTok beauty influencers (Investing Editors 2019)

Influencer marketing is among the most successful social media marketing strategies. This way takes advantage of influencers' attraction on famous social media platforms such as Tiktok, Facebook, and Instagram to affect consumers' purchasing decisions and advertise products or services of the business. Firms want their influencers to tell their stories and convince their customers. These influencers' suggestions will bring effective value to the company's products because they already have certain spots in their followers' hearts based on their knowledge and experience in a given industry, such as food, cinema, and fashion (Chen 2020). The more social media users are, the more necessary influencer marketing is. According to recorded data, consumer behavior is influenced significantly by one-third of the world's population who are utilizing social media platforms gradually (Awobamise 2018). Even though influencer marketing started in 2006, it has evolved significantly over 15 years. At the same time, Twitter and Facebook were still in their early stages, but Instagram would not launch until 2010. Traditionally, Influencers were originally mostly bloggers who shared personal experiences and marketed items they utilized daily. Today, influencers have many more options and create a wide range of content from social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook Live (Corbitt 2022).

2.2.1 Five types of influencer marketing examples

Sponsored content is the first type of influencer marketing. This type of campaign is more straightfor-ward. Typically, influencers are approached by brands to promote one of their goods or services or vice versa. Some influencers engage in outreach as well. According to the influencer's channels, the finished product is typically a photo, video, or blog post. These campaigns usually start with the brand providing the influencer with a campaign brief stating the precise rules, requirements, and specifica-tions. In essence, influencers are those who are adept at interacting with their audience. Additionally, if a post is incongruous with the influencer's persona, style, or voice, their followers will undoubtedly notice (Gaid 2021). An instance of a sponsored post on Instagram is described below (PICTURE 4). The content introduces new Chelsea boots from ECCO Shoes.

PICTURE 4. Sponsored post on Instagram (Gaid 2021)

The second typical influencer marketing example is a product or service review. Similar to sponsored posts, this kind of relationship is predicated on a set of liberal and flexible rules provided by the com-pany. The notion of this content involves brief or lengthy videos in which the influencer first unboxes and tests out the product on camera without having previously seen or used it. This material has a high potential for error and unethical situations. Especially, when the brand expects the influencer only to say positive words about the brand or if the influencer is not afraid to tell the world that they despise the brand's products (Gaid 2021). The picture shows an example of YouTuber Marques Brownlee, who has 15.8 million subscribers (PICTURE 5). He did videos about new smartphones and reviews based on his experiences and usage. His video named "Nothing Phone 1" and released on 15 July 2022 got 2.3 million views after one day.
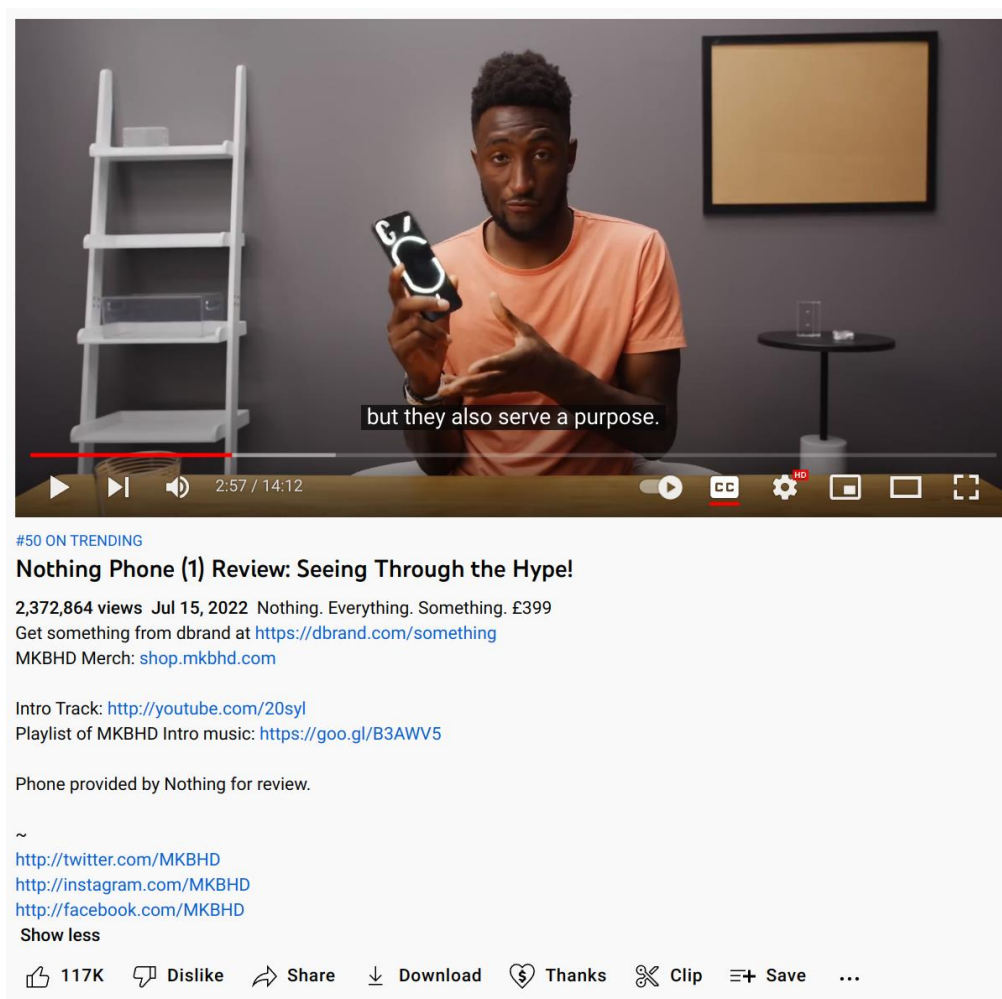
PICTURE 5. Youtuber Marques Brownlee reviews the new release "Nothing Phone 1" (Nothing Phone (1) Review: Seeing Though the Hype!. 2022.)

The following one is a competition and giveaway. These influencer marketing campaigns can benefit brands, influencers, and their fans all at the same time. Typically, brands provide the influencer with a free product or service to distribute to their followers. Engagement with the influencer's post or with the brand outside of the post, such as 'liking' the post, can be included in competitions and giveaways. Followers may be required to comment on a post containing a specific phrase, hashtag, or photo. They can tag up to three friends in the comments, or they can go to the brand's website and sign up via a form or mailing list. In addition, they may be required to submit photos, stories, or other types of 'entries' for the brand to judge (Gaid 2021). An example giveaway post from an Instagram influencer named "angigreene" is displayed (PICTURE 6). The giveaway campaign is a collaboration between a brand named "Natural Life" and an influencer. The followers need to follow and tag friends to have a chance to receive gifts.

PICTURE 6. Account "angigreene" gives away gifts from the brand Natural Life (Gaid 2021)

Product and content collaboration between brands and influencers is the fourth type. The more common is the association between brands and celebrities. Some firms have worked closely with influencers to co-create goods or content as opposed to the one-off campaigns seen in the other forms of influencer marketing. This is common in the fashion and beauty industries, where influencers develop their own brand of clothing, accessories, or beauty goods. If influencers manufacture the products themselves, this is a very involved strategy, and it is more common among brands that have already established a name for themselves in their fields (Gaid 2021). The poster of cooperation between McDonald's and South Korean boy band BTS is also mentioned (PICTURE 7). In this partnership, McDonald made a set of meals including favorite tastes from idols. In the marketing campaign, the company used the images and music of the band to promote the menu to their fan and people who are interested. In fact, BTS has the biggest fandom in the world, which is more than 11 million (Milakovic 2022).

PICTURE 7. BTS meal from McDonald's (Chan 2021)

Finally, brand ambassadors are considered one of the types of influencer marketing. As the name suggests, a long-term ambassador is an influencer who collaborates with a brand for a longer period of time. They serve as the brand's or company's public face, similar to how spokespeople serve in traditional advertising campaigns. In contrast to other influencer marketing examples, which may be one-time or limited to a few posts, a brand ambassador may promote the brand for a few months to a year or more. This type of influencer marketing campaign can produce excellent results because repetition keeps the brand at the forefront of the ambassador's audience's minds. The increased frequency of promotion provides more opportunities to demonstrate the versatility of the company's offerings. In addition, a more solid relationship with the influencer increases the audience's perception of that person as trustworthy, credible, and real. A marketing strategy has a lower churn rate, which generally translates to less uncertainty and more convenience (Gaid 2021). The picture is an example Instagram post tutorial about date night hair between Beauty Work Online and their ambassador Molly Mae (PICTURE 8).

PICTURE 8. Beauty Work Online with their brand ambassador Molly Mae made an Instagram post (Gaid 2021)

2.2.2 67 shades of skin: Dior's most inclusive campaign to date

In 2020, Dior launched the 67 Shades of Dior Campaign, which helped Dior become the gold winner for the Best Beauty Campaign at the 2020 Influencer Marketing Awards. The campaign was created to promote the launch of Dior's Forever Foundation, a collection of 67 different foundation tones (Geyser 2022b). Dior decided to collaborate with Buttermilk - an influencer marketing agency, to have a unique campaign and that symbolizes 67 long-lasting shades. For 67 consecutive days, each influencer in 15 different countries will post their picture with Dior forever foundation on their personal pages, which matches their skin tone (Buttermilk Editor 2022). In detail, Buttermilk researched reasonable criteria to select the right influencers for Dior.

There are some specific requirements listed. Firstly, they have a high degree of engagement and reside in significant consumer markets, including the following countries: UK, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Poland, Greece, Malaysia, USA, France, Canada, Nigeria, Dubai, China, and South Africa, and Thailand. Secondly, most of their viewers are interested in beauty and live in those countries. Finally, they usually share the beauty and cosmetic-related content. Consequently, their posts received 592 thousand engagements and 1.85 million impressions. There were 2.66 million audiences reached from their posts. Besides, 72% of content was recycled and used as shoppable items on owned channels. The content was also used in paid advertisements and PR releases (Writer 2020). The picture illustrates general information about the campaign (PICTURE 9). The campaign is held on Instagram using posts and stories. The result of the campaign costs 0.9 USD per engagement and reached a 6.6% engagement rate. 67 influencers created new 260 content which achieved 591 thousand engagements in total.
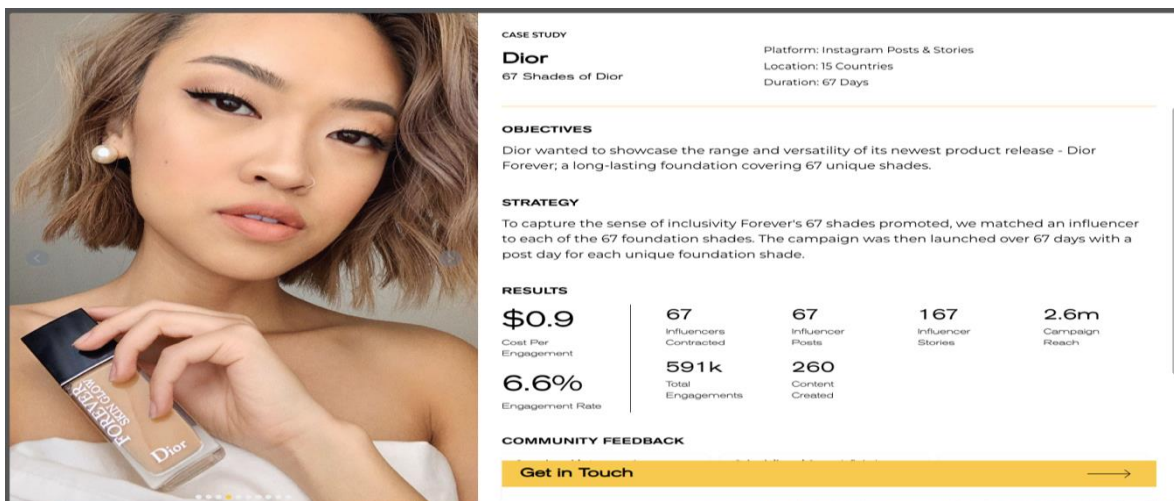
PICTURE 9. "67 Shade of Dior" campaign by Buttermilk agency (Buttermilk Editor 2022)

2.2.3 How Ikea's virtual influencer Imma entered the physical world

"Imma," which means "now" in Japanese, is Japan's first virtual human and model, created by Aww Inc. Her famous bubble gum pink bob and ultra-fine fashion have taken the internet by storm. Her creators have gone to great lengths to make her facial expressions and appearance as realistic as possible. She was even named a "New 100 Talent To Watch" by Japan Economics Entertainment, and she has been cast for top brands such as Porsche Japan, IKEA, Dior, Puma, Nike, Valentino, Amazon, Calvin Klein, and Valentino, to mention a few (Wilson 2022). In 2020, a special installation featuring a virtual human was displayed at the Ikea store in Tokyo's Harajuku district. The retail behemoth collaborated with online influencer Imma to investigate the idea of "happiness at home." Over the course of three days, everyone walking by the first floor could look into Imma's living room and observe her lazing on a couch while aimlessly scrolling through her phone. In the meantime, a streamed view of her bedroom was visible from Harajuku Station on a screen on the second story (Webster 2020). Imma has a good excuse thanks to Covid spending almost the entire day indoors while promoting home goods in a typical urban resident's modest apartment. She vacuums, practices yoga, learns to cook, and Instagrams her puppy in peace. This is Imma's first time "existing" outside of the virtual world (Natividad 2020).
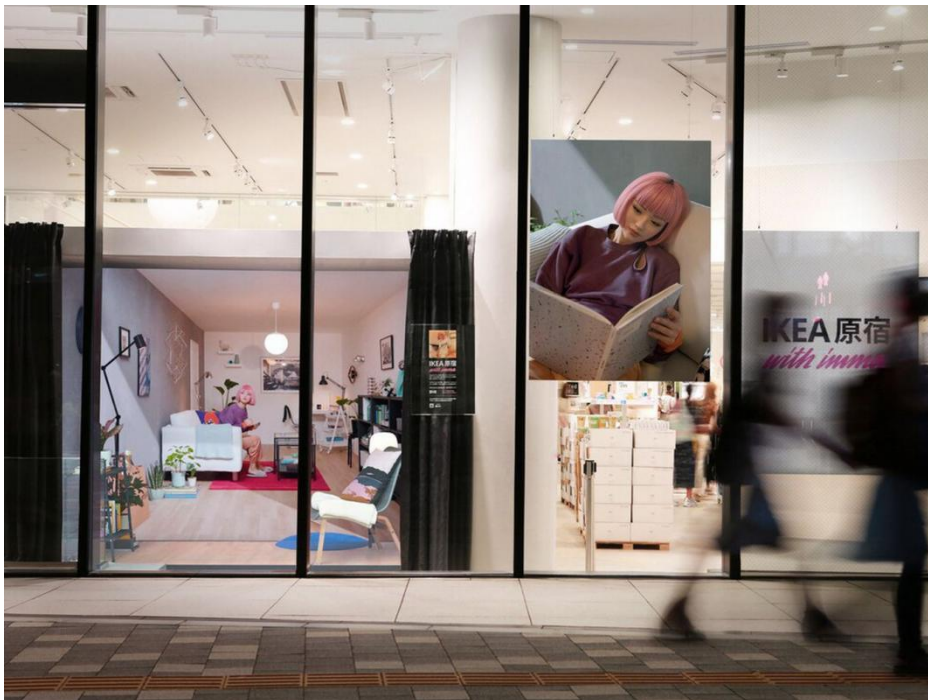
PICTURE 10. Imma's home at Ikea store in Harajuku, Japan (Natividad 2020)

This project is created by Wieden+Kennedy Tokyo, which is an independent, global creative company having over forty years of experience. As the result of the campaign, Ikea and Imma earned international acclaim with more than 80 media stories worldwide. There are more than 110 thousand commuters who walk in front of the store to see the project (Natividad 2020). For those who do not have a chance to visit the store, they can watch Imma's daily activities on the Ikea Japan Youtube Chanel as picture 11 shows.

PICTURE 11. IKEA with Imma live stream on Youtube Channel (Maxpilwat Editors 2022)

2.2.4   Impacts of influencers

According to Datareportal, there are 4.62 billion individuals using social media, with 424 million new users joining in the last year around the world (Kemp 2022d). Consumers have started sharing their points and experiences about services and goods with other buyers due to the rise of social networks. Therefore, many negotiations have taken place thanks to social influencers' comments and reviews (Jalilvand and Samiei 2012). According to GlobalWebIndex, 54% of social media customers utilize social media to research products' information, and 71% of them tend to have a deal based on social media referrals (Barysevich 2020). Besides, more and more marketers use social media influencers to

spread word of mouth (WOM) about their products and companies. Moreover, influencers also help to bridge the gap between product and customer. The Deloitte report mentioned that 29% of buyers are more inclined to make a payment directly when they use social media simultaneously (Lobaugh, Simpson & Ohri 2022). It is convenient to be at home and review product stories on Youtube, Tiktok, or Instagram. A deal takes some minutes to complete without spending time shopping at the stores. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdown laws have been enacted, leading to a substantial boost in online shopping. The figure states that the coronavirus has contributed $102.08 billion to US e-commerce in 2020 and $116.45 billion in 2021 (April 2022).

Pandemic adds extra $218.53 billion to US ecommerce sales in 2020-2021

Pandemic boost in sales as a portion of overall ecommerce sales

$578.50 billion — 2019
$762.68 billion — 2020
$870.78 billion — 2021
$102.08 billion — 2020 (Pandemic boost)
$116.45 billion — 2021 (Pandemic boost)

Online sales in $billions

● Pandemic boost
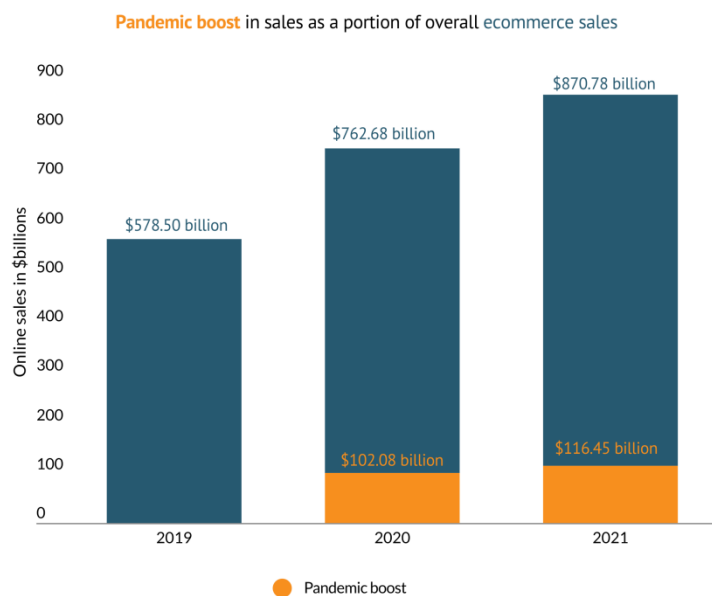
Source: Digital Commerce 360 2022

FIGURE 2. Pandemic adds an extra $218.53 billion to US e-commerce sales in 2020-2021 (April 2022)

In Smallbiztrends.com's survey report, among the reasons why Generation Zs and Millennials follow CGIs, 38% are interested in the influencers' stories. CGI or virtual influencers are digital pictures with a managed online presence created by tech-savvy teams utilizing computer-generated imagery. They come in various body shapes, ages, genders, and nationalities, much like actual people (Sobande 2021). Furthermore, the percentage of younger people caring about influencers' entertainment value and their creators is 34% and 32% respectively. Besides getting helpful advice account for 32%, and 31% of customers voted for the same interests. Additionally, like their human counterparts, CGIs help customers make purchases 55% of the time and attend events 55% of the time. They help promote

brand loyalty with a 53% rate and research brands and products with a 52% rate. Even though CGIs are impressive, there is some differentiation, with humans gaining favor across the board. Human influencers (41%) are perceived as more authentic than CGIs (23%). (Haileyesus 2021.)

Regarding credibility, humans are twice as likely to gain trust, with 30% of respondents favoring human influencers. When it comes to entertainment value, humans have a 44% approval rating, while CGIs have a 28% approval rating. In terms of being inspirational, humans have a 5% lead over CGIs, which is at 27%. Both Generation Z and Millennials believe that full disclosure is critical. Fifty-four per cent agreed that they want to know who is behind the CGI influencer's persona. Furthermore, they want to know which brand supports a CGI influencer (42%). It is said that if brands want to tap into this emerging social influencer, they must strike a balance between mystery and transparency (Haileyesus 2021). Picture 2 shows CGI influencer "Lil Miquela" wrote advertising content about Samsung smartphones. This post has more than 39 thousand likes. They used the hashtag "#TeamGalaxy" to connect with other posts in the campaign.
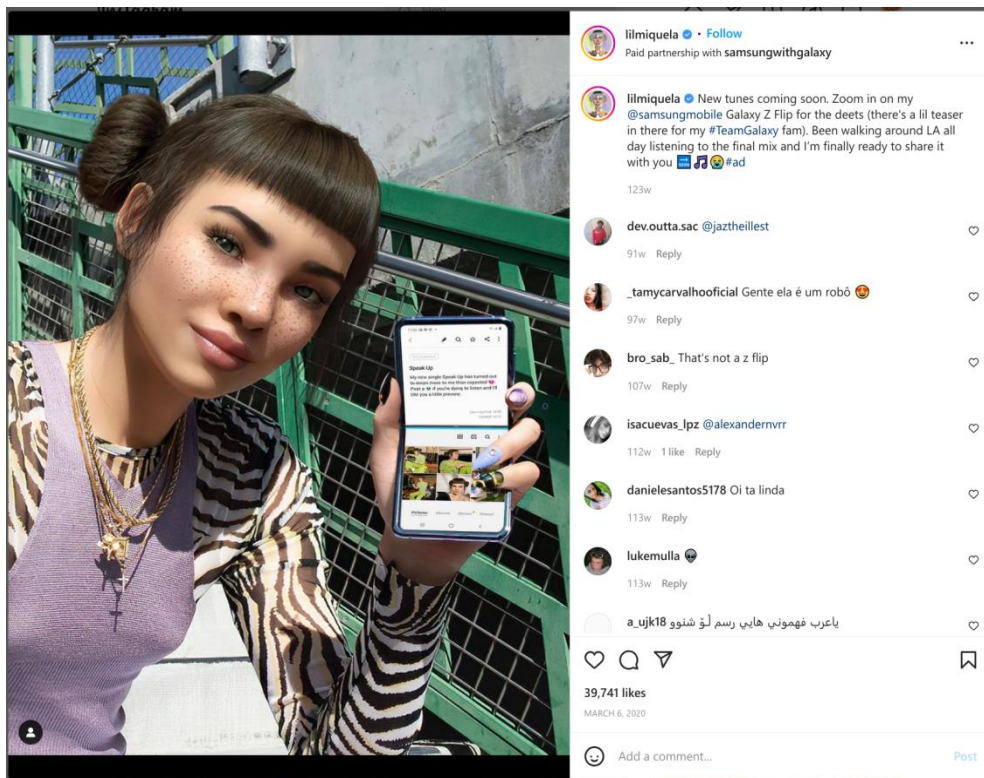
PICTURE 12. CGI influencer "Lil Miquela" posts content about Samsung Galaxy Z Flip (@Lilmiquela 2020)

2.2.5 Future of influencer marketing

Influencer marketing is already big business, and it will undoubtedly get more extraordinary in the future. Every year, new social media platforms, content categories, and channels for brands to reach out to potential customers appear. The top influencers create their content in accordance with the most recent trends to give brands the necessary tools they need to succeed. With the social media world evolving so rapidly, it is critical that influencers abuse the current influencer marketing trends as soon as possible to establish their authority and expertise to make them more appealing to companies. Brands will want to take advantage of these influencer marketing trends to grow their audience, generate fresh leads, and increase income. There are three major trends in influencer marketing in 2022. (Santora 2022.)

The first trend is shifting away from text and graphics to audio and video. Recently, global bandwidth has improved. 5G technology benefits the transmission speed in wireless connections, while fiber internet is becoming more widespread in many places. Accordingly, people are increasingly consuming more video and audio information as a result. Internet users will see more video material than ever before, thanks to the growing popularity of TikTok and the debut of Instagram Reels. In early 2020, the number of users watching live videos on Facebook climbed by 50%. There was a global pandemic and lockdowns, but a 50% rise is significant (Santora 2022.) While Millennials and older audiences are more inclined to conduct product research on YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook, TikTok is preferred by 30% of Gen Z social media users. This means that firms aiming at a younger audience would benefit from actively practicing social listening on the platform, publishing helpful information that encourages purchases, and collaborating with influencers to develop trust and brand exposure (Sheikh 2022). The figure shows the advertising audience profile of TikTok in January 2022 (FIGURE 3). The most common age on this platform is from 18 to 24 years old and the least common is more than 55 years old. Females use more than males this platform (Kemp 2022b).
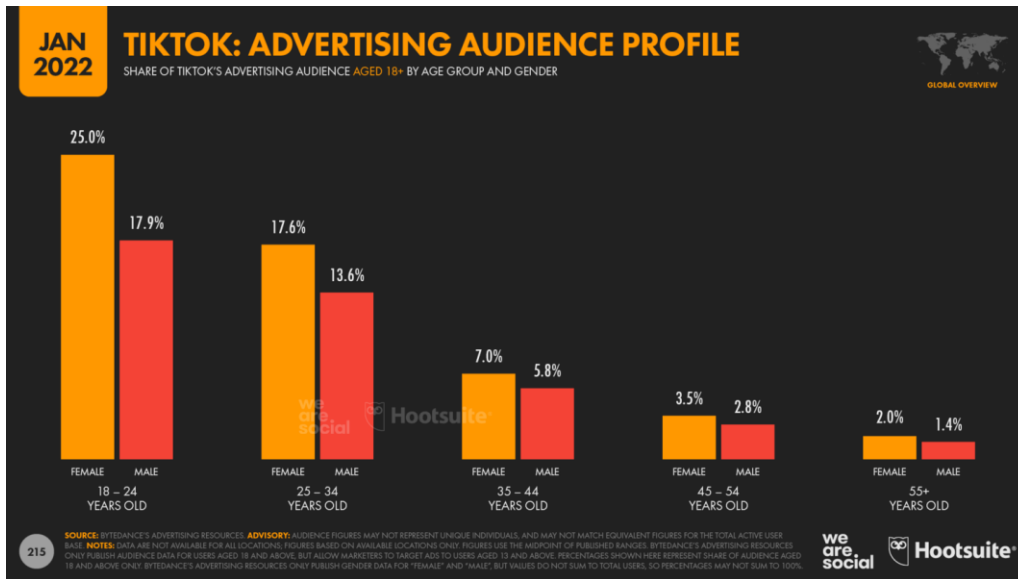
FIGURE 3. TikTok advertising audience profile (Kemp 2022b)

Secondly, micro and nano influencers will get more attention. Influencers come in various sizes and characteristics, ranging from nano influencers with a few thousand followers to famous influencers with millions. Micro-influencers, whose followers are fewer than 25,000, had the highest engagement rates at roughly 7%, according to Later and Fohr's analysis report in 2019. Because Instagram engagement rates have been falling, businesses are giving more attention to influencers who have large, engaged followers. Brands can stretch their influencer marketing costs by concentrating on nano and micro-influencers while still working with influencers strongly linked to their audiences. Partnerships with a growing number of brands will benefit influencers (Santora 2022). Influencity's study has conducted influencer studies in LATAM, the United States, and the European Union, with promising findings. The study looked at over eight million influencers in the United States. The nano influencers were determined to account for 93.7% of all influencers. Micro-influencers, on the other hand, made up 5.2% of the influencers studied. Nano influencers were found to be the largest group in Europe, accounting for 92.6% of the total. They were followed by only 6.3% of micro-influencers. Even in Latam, these numbers were similar. Nano-influencers accounted for 95.6% of all influencers, followed by micro-influencers at 3.7% (Influencity's Editors 2021).

Last but not least, the rise of CGI influencers (Computer Generated Imagery) is to meet the exact requirements of a specific brand or firm. It is difficult to tell CGI influencers apart from real-life ones, even though they are not genuine. Designers, programmers, and social media managers collaborate to bring CGI influencers to life. Followers may see them hanging together in beautiful locales and ex-

pressing their opinions on social issues on their social media sites. Influencer marketing with CGI influencers opens up new options. They provide brands with complete control over how their tales are presented. They have a voice on everything, from captions to planning posts. Brands are already collaborating with CGI brands, realizing their potential. For their 40th anniversary, UGG - a part of Deckers Brands and an American footwear company, collaborated with Lil Miquela, one of the most prominent CGI influencers. Besides, Lil Miquela has collaborated with high-end labels such as Diesel and Prada. Importantly, she has also been featured in GQ and Vogue. Her rise to fame demonstrates how influencer marketing is going to shift in a variety of ways. The other example is Imma who is a fashion influencer who lived in Tokyo (PICTURE 13). She is the owner of the Instagram channel with 406 thousand followers. In a short, influencer marketing is a futuristic trend that will not go away anytime soon. (Barker 2019.)
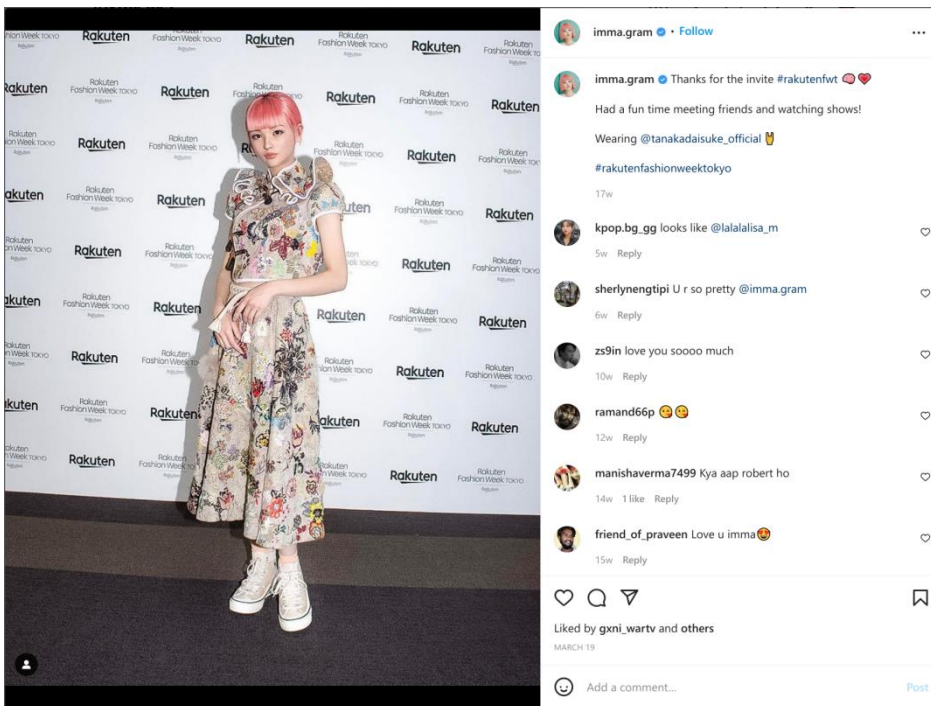
PICTURE 13. Virtual influencer "Imma" at Rakuten Fashion Week in Tokyo (@imma.gram 2022)

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this chapter is to describe the research's objective, method, and questionnaire design. Besides, it also explains in more detail the reasons for these methodologies selections and how they are conducted. The result analysis will be discussed and reviewed. Finally, there are recommendations gained from the analysis result.

3.1 Research methods

The research method is the quantitative methodology and data collection is using a survey. These methods help to collect a large quantity of data relatively, quickly, and cheaply. Besides, quantitative research methodology was selected because this way measures the problem through using online surveys or sampling techniques to gather numerical data from a certain group of potential viewers (Questionpro Editors 2022). Furthermore, the collected data can be used for deeper analysis to get insights into the performance of virtual influencer marketing with Gen Z as the customer segmentation. The probability sampling method is simple random sampling. The sample size is 100 participants, and the answer rate is 100%. The questionnaire can be answered online by the participants. The survey included 33 questions about the response background and their knowledge about influencers in social media. The participants also answer about Metaverse information, virtual influencers, and the comparison between virtual and human influencers in the same campaign or brand. The question forms are multiple choices, rating scales, matrix, image choice, and slider.

3.2 Data collection

The information that has previously been gathered from primary sources and made available for use by researchers in their own study purpose is known as secondary data (Agarwal 2019). Secondary data are accessible from a wide range of sources, including books, personal sources, journals, newspapers, websites, and government records, both internal and external, including the internet and published documents. In this research, secondary data help the author better comprehension of the topic as well as increase the consistency of each factor while it also saves time and expenses to conduct the research. Conversely, there are some drawbacks when collecting secondary data. For example,

depending on the generation, interest in virtual influencers can shift throughout time. In order to prevent the information from being out-of-date for an extended period of time, the author must review the secondary data before choosing any particular information.

Primary data is information that was created firstly by the researcher through their own efforts and time in order to address their particular study challenge (Surbhi 2020). It is real-time data composed of observations, interviews, surveys, observations, focus groups, and other sources (Bouchrika 2021). After gathering secondary data, the author will create a survey to collect data directly from a group of real people for a more objective analytical view. Although the collected data are more accurate, it might take more time to make a plan, develop of questionnaire structure and get enough quantity of the participants' answers.

3.3 Questionnaire design

Data for this study were gathered online through the creation of a survey. There are four main parts to the questionnaire. The most important part is also the first one that asks if they are in the generation Z. They have 3 choices which consist of "Under 19 years old", "From 19 to 25 years old" or "Over 25 years old". If they choose the first 2 options, they can continue the survey, otherwise, they have to stop the survey at this stage. After that, the second part asks about the gender of the respondents. Turning to part 3, there are questions related to participants' habits on social media and their perception of influencers via selection and multiselection questions. Besides, there are also questions were constructed based on a five-point Likert scale to measure identified variables from various opinions ranging from 1 to 5 (for example from totally disagree to totally agree). Lastly, like the question structure of part 2, this part will ask questions about the respondents' understanding of Metaverse and CGI influencers. In addition, there are also slider questions to rank their knowledge and there are a few final questions that choose the attractive images between human influencers and virtual ones.

3.4 Sampling design

Targeted customers are ranging under 25 years old (for 2022) and are using social media and are interested in CGI influencers as well as Metaverse. The sample size is 100 respondents, and the answer rate is 100%. The questionnaire was answered online.

There are two typical kinds of sampling methods composed probability and non-probability sampling. Firstly, probability sampling describes the process by which each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. This method is based on the randomization principle, where the mechanism is set up to ensure that every person in the population has a right to select (Shurbhi 2022). On the other hand, when a sample is produced via a non-random technique, it is referred to as non-probability sampling. This type of sampling would include any focused research that purposefully selects participants from particular lists, such as employees in a company or students enrolled in a particular training program. Consequently, the probability sampling method is used in this study since it is difficult for the author to poll gen Z's interest in virtual influencers in the Metaverse and not everyone is ready to put in the time. Therefore, this method can support the writer to collect information from participants easily and flexibly.

3.5 Result analysis

The first stage inquiries about the respondents' backgrounds. In the beginning, the question required participants to provide their ages. This question aids in the elimination of participants who are not members of generation Z. Gen Z refers to people born between 1995 and 2012. As a result, they are under the age of 25 at the time of the survey. In a random sample of 100 participants, 86% met the required conditions to continue with the survey (FIGURE 4). The rest comes to an end with this question. The participants responded to the next question about their gender identity. The majority of the participants are female, with only 17% being male and 5% being other (FIGURE 5).
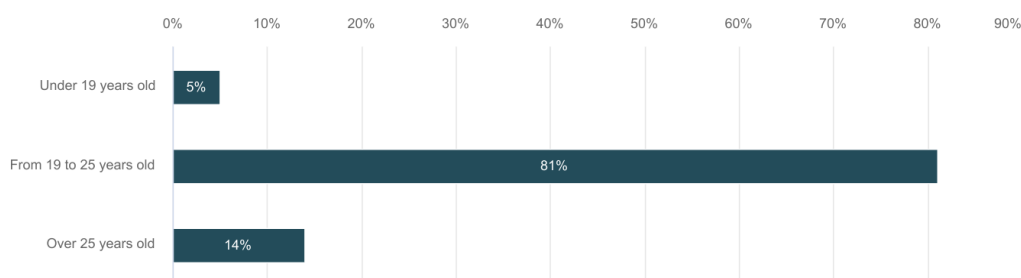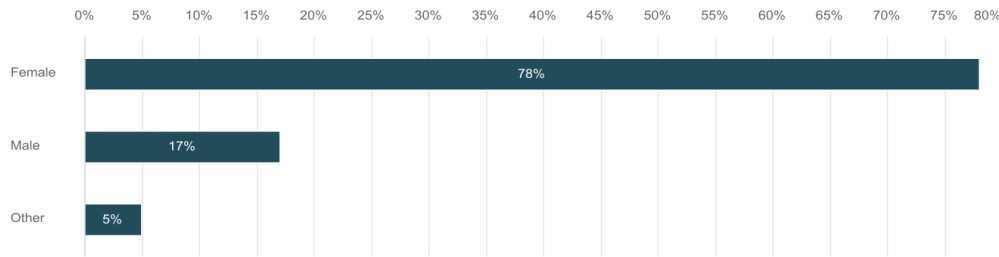

FIGURE 4. The age of respondents

FIGURE 5. The gender of respondents

Next, participants were asked to answer three questions about their internet and social media habits. For example, they responded to a question about how much time they spent on social media in a day (FIGURE 6). How many social accounts do they have (FIGURE 7)? Finally, on which platform do they spend the most and least time (FIGURE 8)? Thirty-three per cent of answerers spent less than three hours on social media. Most of younger people spend three to six hours per day on social media, while the percentage of people using more than six hours is the smallest. Besides, the most common response is that they have more than five accounts. The simplest answer is to have only one account. The following answers having two, three, and four accounts are about 11%, 28%, and 22%, respectively. In addition, Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram have the most users, while Snapchat has the fewest. The suggestion in the "other" option demonstrates that, in addition to the top three, there is still another platform being popular.
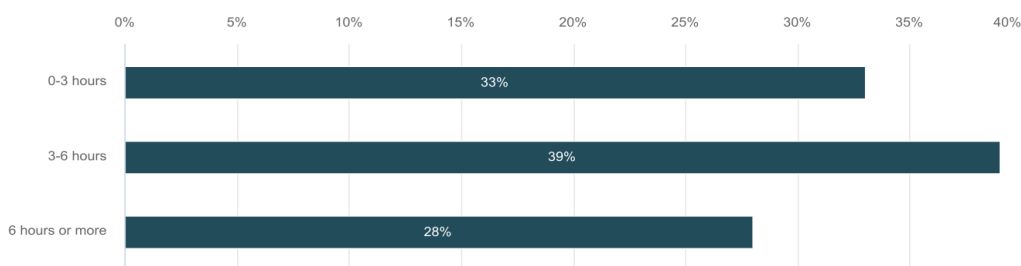

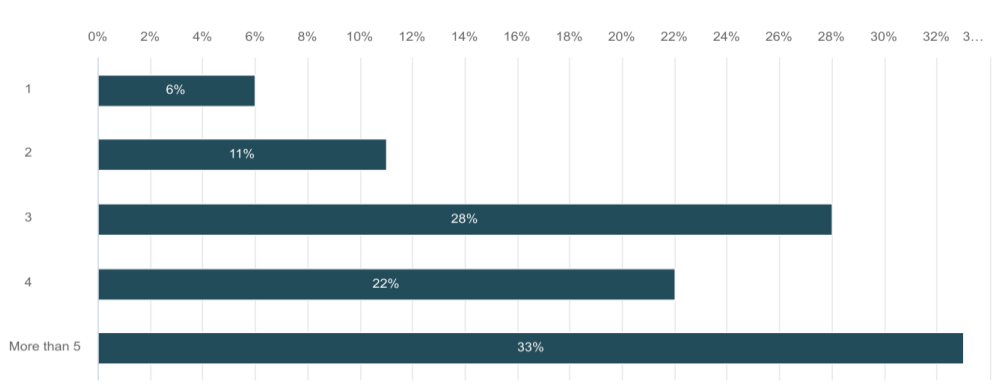FIGURE 6. Question 3. How many hours per day do you spend on social media?

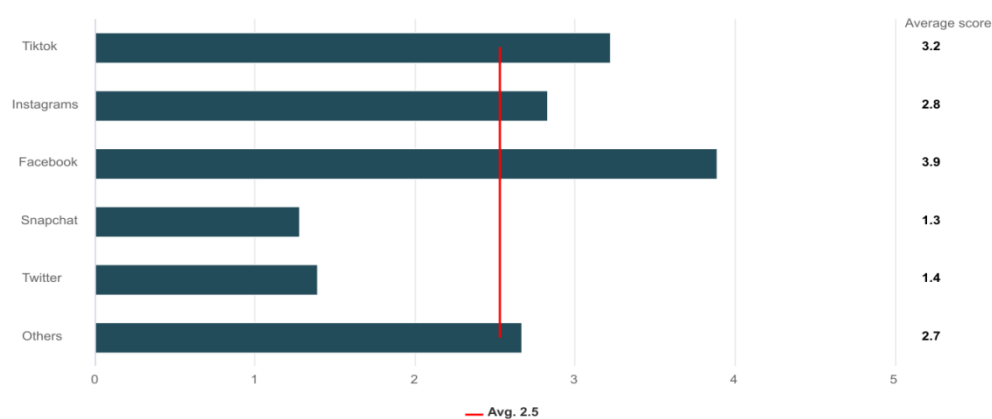FIGURE 7. Question 4. How many social networks do you have an account?

FIGURE 8. Question 5. Which platform do you spend the most time and the least on? (5: the most and 1: the least or not having an account)

The following five questions concern the interaction between participants and their human influencers. According to figure 9, only 11% of the respondents do not follow any influencer. 83% of those who follow at least one influencer continue to follow them on other platforms (FIGURE 10). Then, there is a multiple-choice problem set up. When asked why they follow their influencer, the majority of people (89%) say it's because of the content, knowledge, and interests of the influencer. The second answer is 67% based on the lifestyle of influencers. The influencers' appearance receives the least attention accounting for 39%. Commonly, roughly 61% of followers are interested in influencers in the education industry. Lifestyle and fitness influencers and food influencers are tied for second place (56%) while technology accounts for 22%. Last but not least, others such as beauty, streaming, and entertainment fields are at 17% of the total.
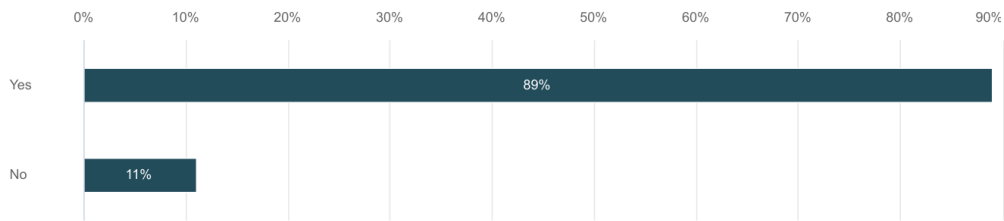
FIGURE 9. Question 6. Do you follow any influencers on your favorite social network?
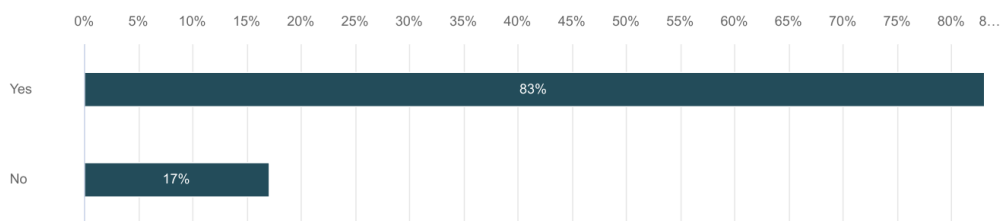

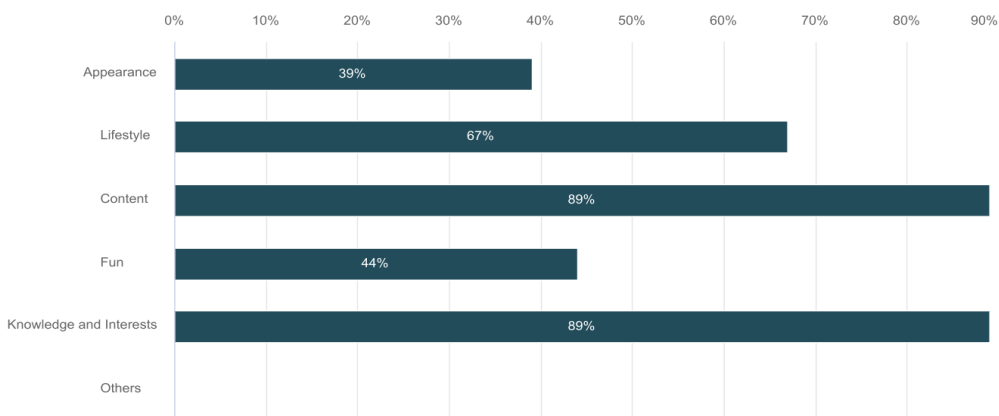FIGURE 10. Question 7. Do you follow them on other platforms?

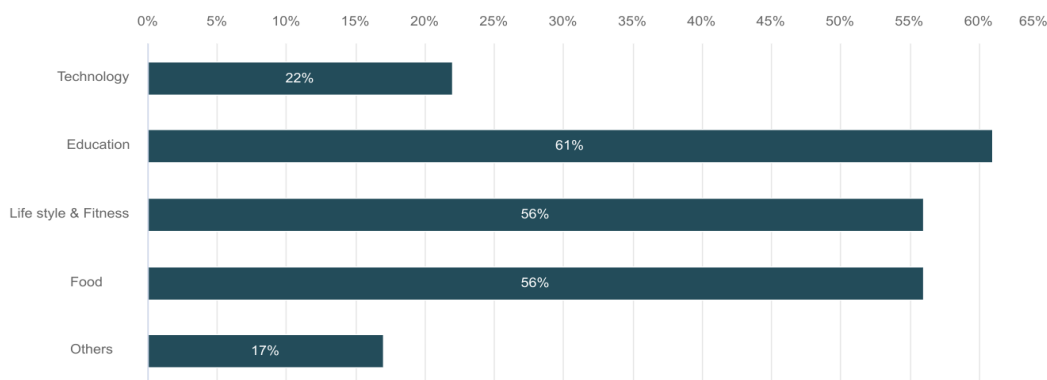FIGURE 11. Question 8. Why do you follow those influencers?

FIGURE 12. Question 9. Could you name your favorite influencer industries?

Moreover, the following questions provide insights into the people who purchased products from their influencers. Those who purchased answered different questions than those who did not. In the survey, 78% of respondents purchased items from influencers. Respondents who answered "yes" above or purchased products or services based on the recommendations of influencers continue to answer the next questions. The column chart shows that 50% (21%: Agree + 29%: Totally agree) of people agree that influencers assist them in purchasing needed products. Only 7% (Disagree) of respondents disagree with this statement (FIGURE 14). According to the survey research, 36% (29%: Agree + 7%: Totally agree) of participants believe influencers do not distort product or service functions, while the majority (50%) still hesitate between believing and not believing in influencers (FIGURE 15). There is a difference of about 7% between believing and disbelieving a few ideas from influencer ads (FIGURE 16). Especially, one hundred per cent of participants conduct additional research on the product or service (FIGURE 17). Half of the answerers just believe about 60% of the content promoted by influencers. Only 29% of the rest trust 80% of the contents (FIGURE 18). When asked how satisfied they are with the product or service, over half of respondents are happy at 80% of the product's quality, and the least common response (7%) is they satisfy with the 40% of items' functionalities. Moreover, only 14% of people were completely satisfied with their products, while the rest (22%) were satisfied at 60% (FIGURE 19).
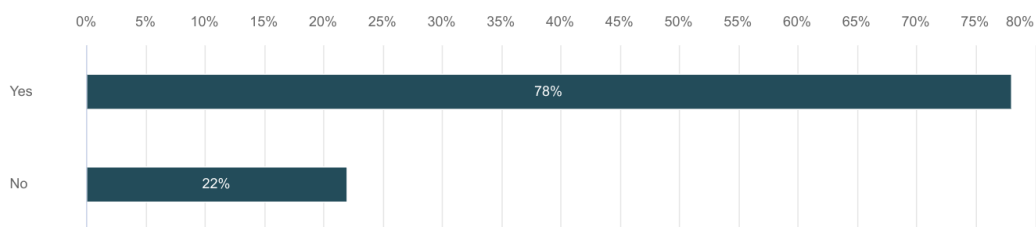

FIGURE 13. Question 10. Have you purchased a product or experienced a service recommended by your influencers?
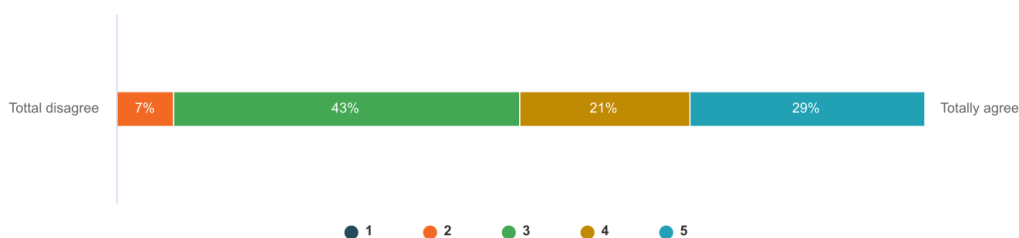
FIGURE 14. Question 11. Do you agree that your influencer helps you to buy needed products and services? (5: totally agree and 1: totally disagree)
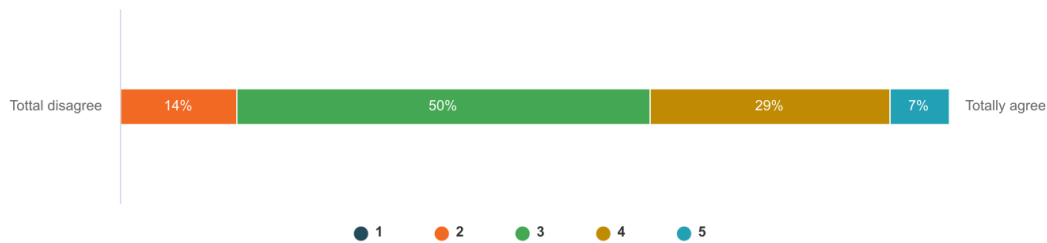
FIGURE 15. Question 12. Do you agree that your influencers do not exaggerate the product or service functions? (5: totally agree and 1: totally disagrees)
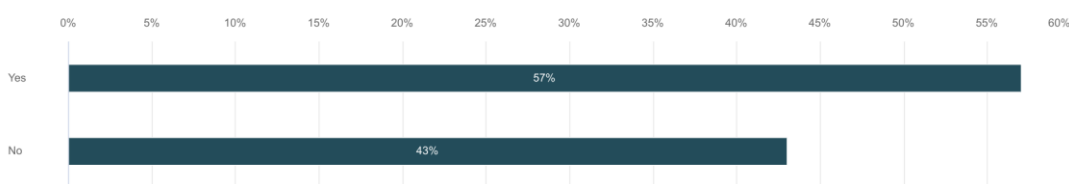
FIGURE 16. Question 13. Do you disagree with some points when influencers promote products and services after using them?
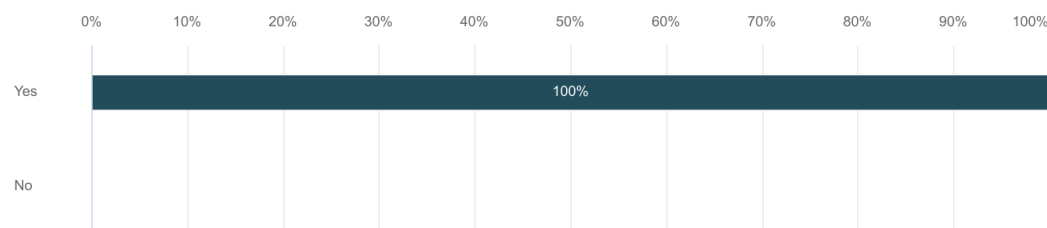
FIGURE 17. Question 14. Do you research the products or services from other sources before you buy?

FIGURE 18. Question 15. How many percentages did you believe in the recommendations content of your influencers before you decide to buy?

| 7% | 22% | 57% | 14% |

● 0% ● 20% ● 40% ● 60% ● 80% ● 100%
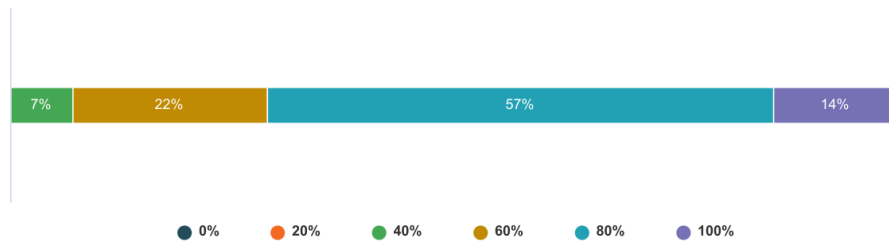
FIGURE 19. Question 16. How many percentages did you satisfy with the products or services' usage and functionalities?

On the other hand, the following two questions are designed for people who do not buy products or services from influencers. The first question concerns the reasons for what occurred. About 75% of people believe influencers' recommendations are not related to their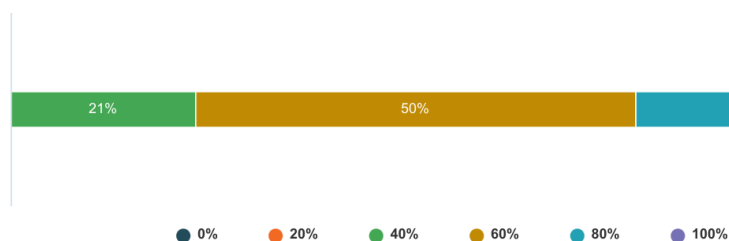 needs (FIGURE 20). The second statement (50%) is that they are having personal financial difficulties. According to the final factors, influencers provide incorrect information and product usage. The following question is a matrix question, which allows people to select which factors have the greatest and least impact on influencer engagement rate (FIGURE 21). However, there are two opposing factors in three options that influencers can affect customers' purchase decisions. These three ideas are "providing facts," "providing discount vouchers," and "uploading new content frequently." Half of the respondents quite agree that influencers support them to buy faster while the rest don't platform. Moreover, buyers also do not admit that uploading content on every platform helps them make shopping decisions.
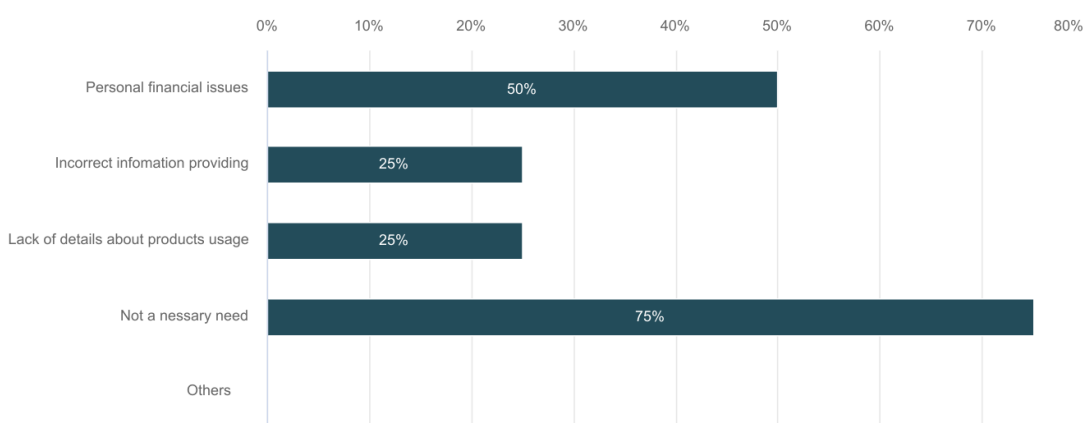
FIGURE 20. Question 17. Why did you not use the products or services based on your influencers' recommendations?
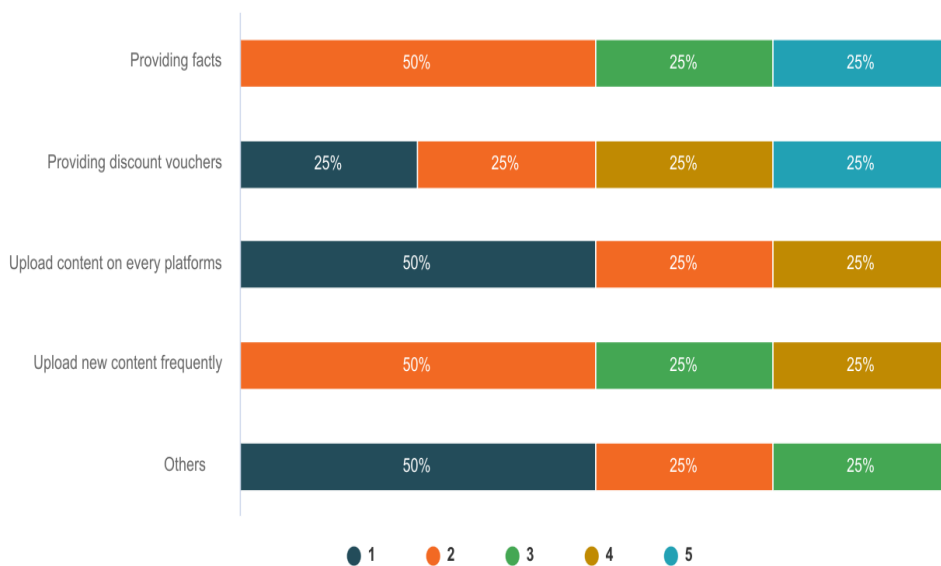
FIGURE 21. Question 18. What do you think your influencers can do to help you make shopping decisions? (5: high impact and 1: low impact)

Continuously, the Metaverse and virtual influencers are discussed specifically. People are asked whether they are familiar with Metaverse. 39% of respondents are aware of Metaverse (FIGURE 22). The slider in the following question rates their understanding of the Metaverse. The response average is less than 3.9 (TABLE 1). Therefore, Metaverse is still a new concept that takes time to research. There is 83% of respondents have heard of virtual influencers (FIGURE 23), and they believe that Tik-Tok, Instagram, and Facebook are the most popular platforms for virtual influencer growth. As shown in the graph, the supporting rate is 82% (23% + 59%), 70 per cent (29% + 41%), and 76 per cent (53% + 23%) respectively. On the other hand, Snapchat and other options receive only 36% (18% + 18%) and 26% (13% + 13%) of total support respectively. If CGI influencers join Metaverse, about 71% of people are willing to follow them immediately (FIGURE 25).
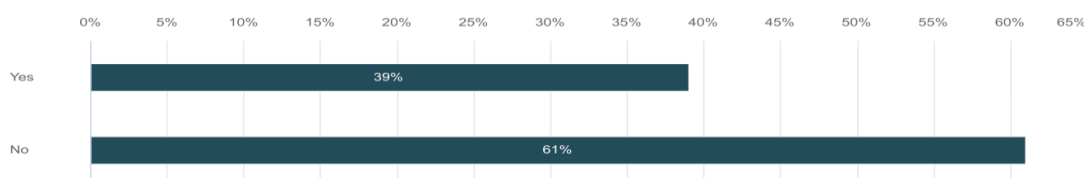
FIGURE 22. Question 19. Did you hear about Metaverse?

TABLE 1. Question 20. On a scale from 0 to 10, how could you rate your understanding of the Metaverse?

Min value	Max value	Average	Median
0.0	10.0	3.9	4.5
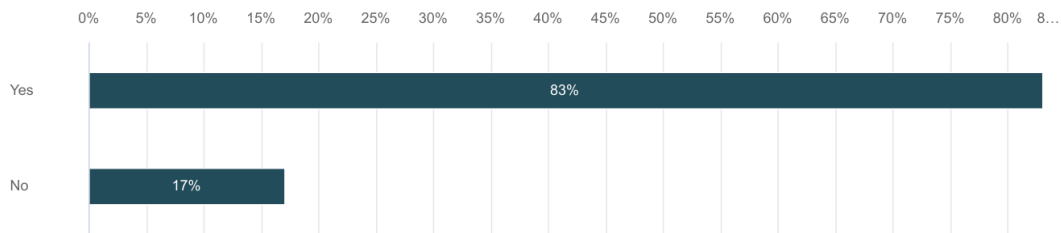
FIGURE 23. Question 21. Did you hear about virtual influencers?
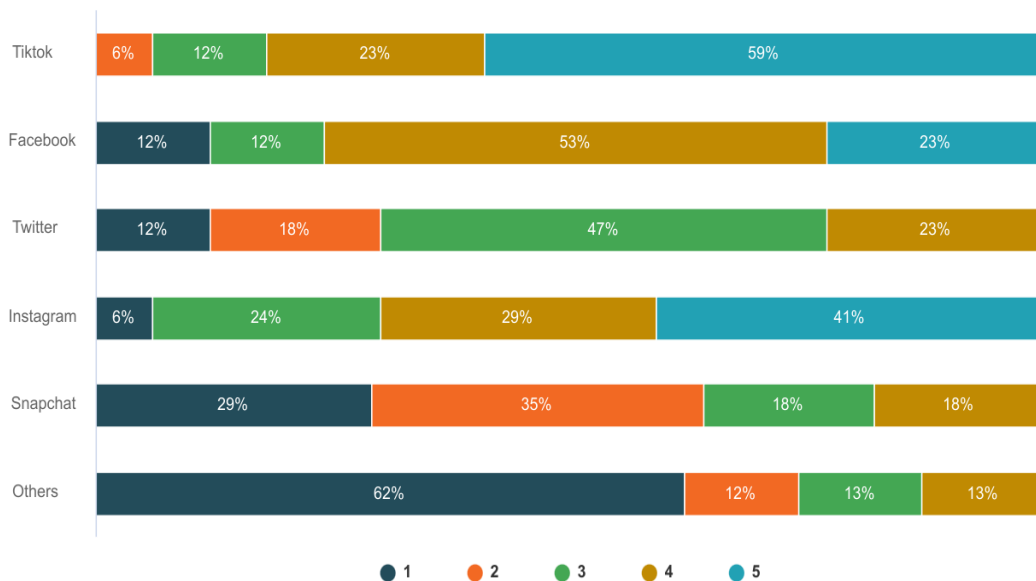
FIGURE 24. Question 22. Which platform do you think is suitable for virtual influencers to grow? (5: the most appropriate and 1: the least appropriate)
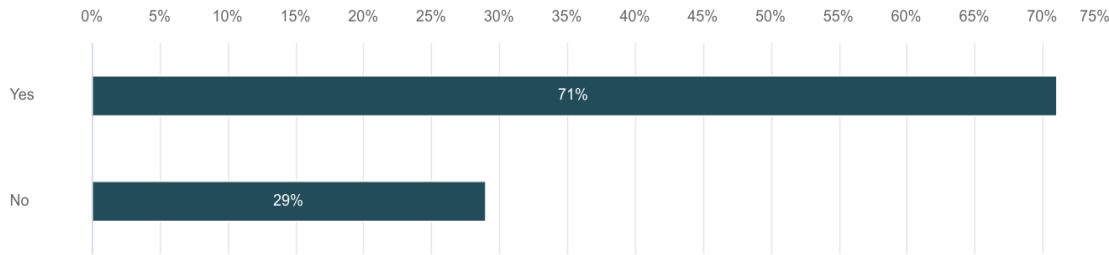
FIGURE 25. Question 23. If these virtual influencers participate in the Metaverse, will you be willing to follow them?

When asked why they follow virtual influencers in the Metaverse, the top three reasons given were appearance (56%), interesting content (78%), and stories (66%). However, two options such as "Curious" and "Expertise" are not vital factors that people follow CGI influencers (FIGURE 26). Especially, approximately 50% of participants agree that human influencers are preferred in marketing campaigns. According to the chart, the majority of people usually choose the third level (neutral) to express their hesitation about the events surrounding virtual influencers. Besides, the percentages at (totally) disagree levels are quite high in the "do not know" option (28%) and the "not interested in" option (56%) indicating that the respondents are also quite interested in virtual influencers' existence and Metaverse (FIGURE 27). Furthermore, as illustrated in the chart, the ideas of virtual influencers in tourism and fashion receive more attention than others (FIGURE 28). Virtual influencers can have a flexible appearance (72%) and create content in a variety of industries, according to everyone (61%). According to the figure, creating more interesting content does not have a high level of agreement (45%) (FIGURE 29).
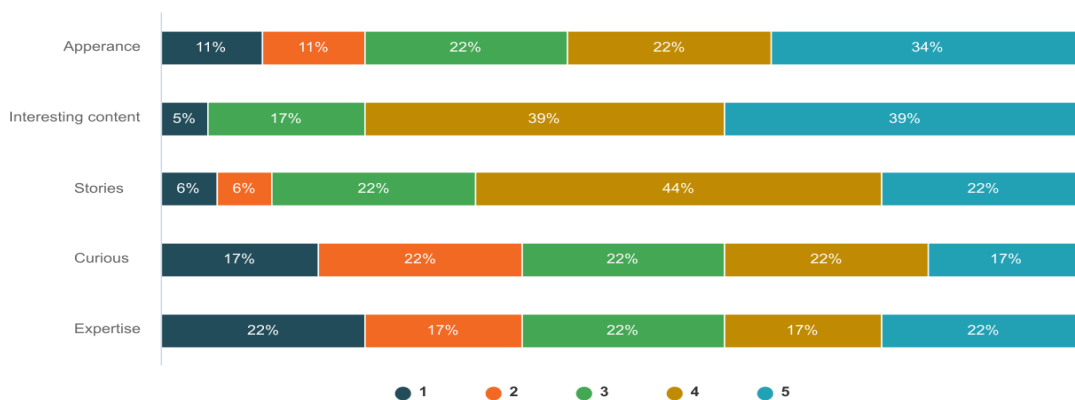
FIGURE 26. Question 24. Would you agree with these factors to make you follow virtual influencers on the Metaverse? (5: totally agree and 1: totally disagree)
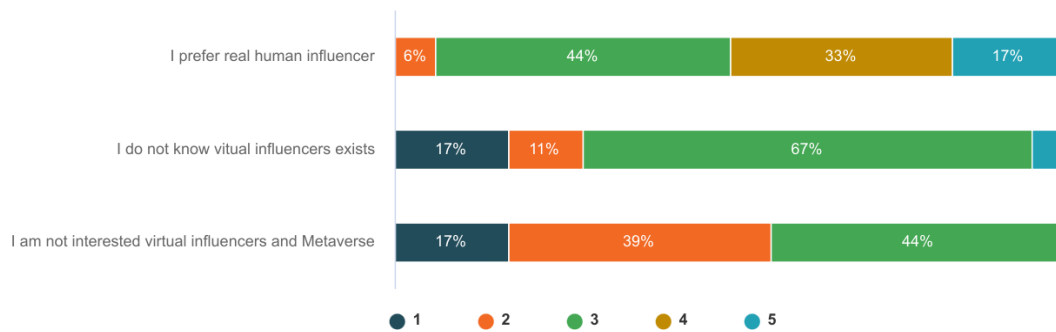
FIGURE 27. Question 25. Do you agree or disagree with these opinions? (5: totally agree and 1: totally disagree)
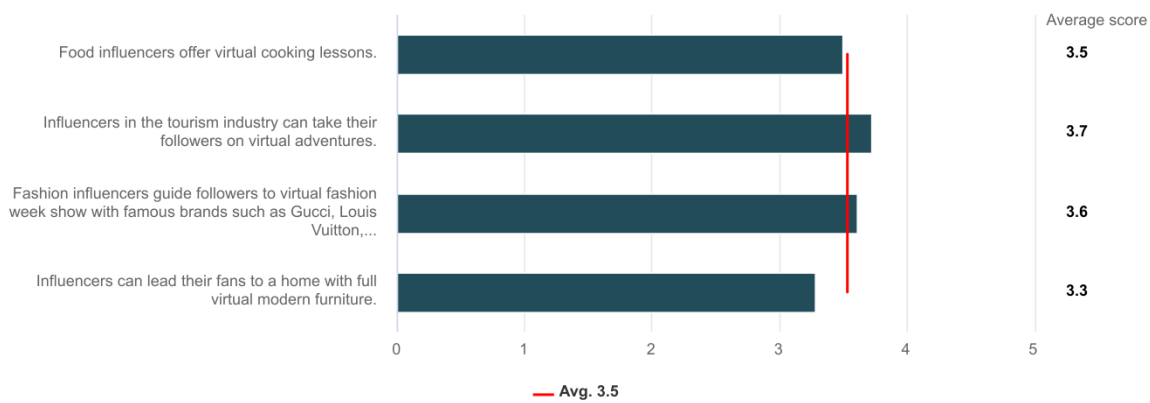
FIGURE 28. Question 26. Some interesting ideas about virtual influencers' activities in the Metaverse are below. Please objectively rate your interest with the following options (5: very interested and 1: not interested at all)
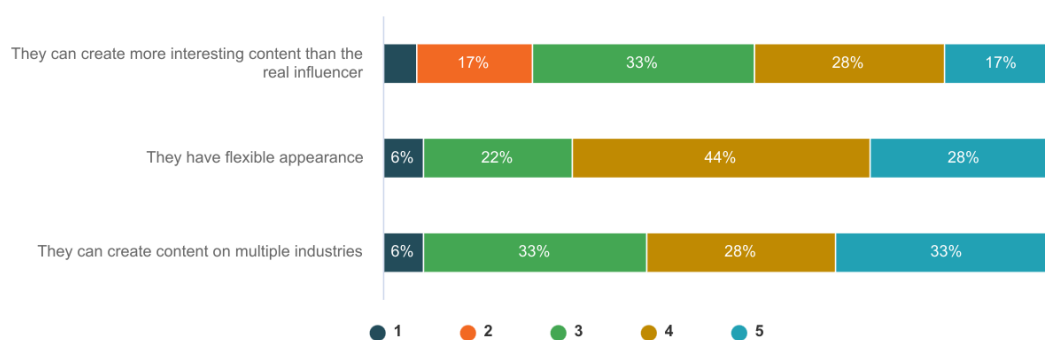
FIGURE 29. Question 27. Do you agree or disagree with these opinions about virtual influencers? (5: totally agree and 1: totally disagree)

Participants are asked to rate their trust and willingness to buy and share content from virtual influencers in the following three questions. According to tables 2, 3, and 4, two of the three are close to the average of ten, while the third is lower (4.4). These numbers also show that participants only have 50% of their confidence in believing in a brand's collaboration with virtual influencers or purchasing a product promoted by them and are still not ready to share their posts widely. After that, participants select the image with which they want to interact with the post, such as liking, sharing, or purchasing the advertised product. Two-thirds of the images chosen are of human influencers (FIGURE 30, FIGURE 31). The virtual influencer won the final vote with a 56:44 ratio (FIGURE 32).

TABLE 2. Question 28. On a scale from 0 to 10, how could you rate your trust in a brand advertised by virtual influencers?

Min value	Max value	Average	Median
1.0	8.0	5.1	5.0

TABLE 3. Question 29. On a scale from 0 to 10, how could you rate your engagement to buy a product advertised by virtual influencers?

Min value	Max value	Average	Median
0.0	8.0	4.7	5.0

TABLE 4. Question 30. On a scale from 0 to 10, how could you rate your engagement to share posts by virtual influencers?

Min value	Max value	Average	Median
1.0	8.0	4.4	4.5
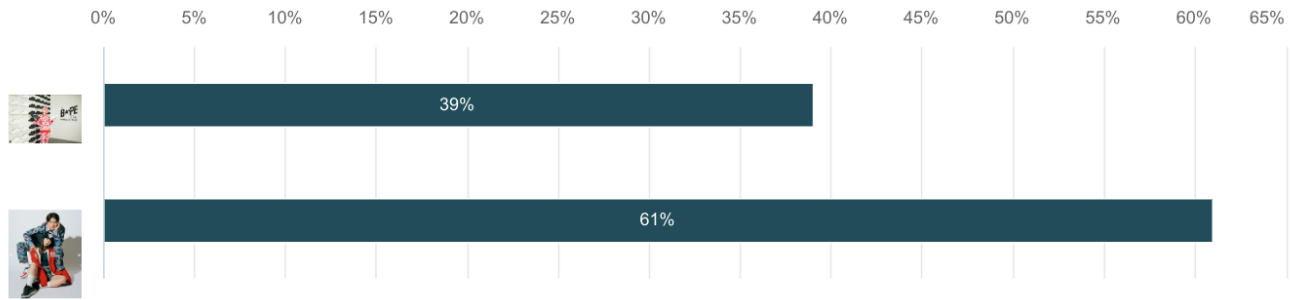
FIGURE 30. Question 31. Which image do you feel more engaging (buy, share or react posts) than the other?
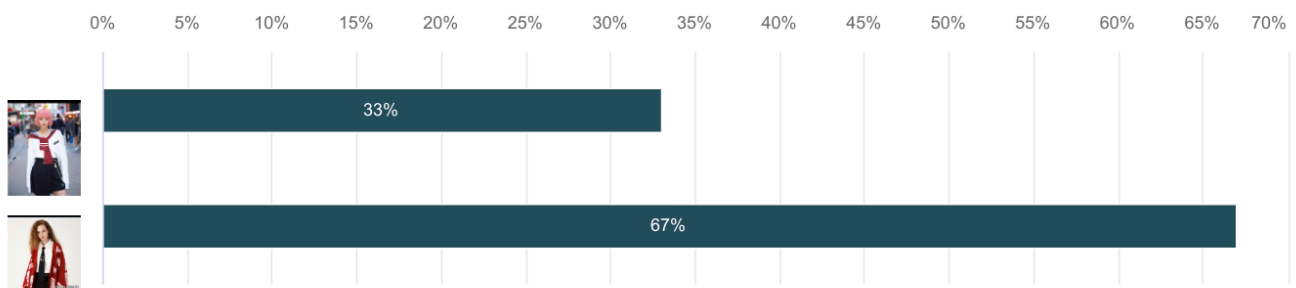
FIGURE 31. Question 32. Which image do you feel more engaging (buy, share or react posts) than the other?

FIGURE 32. Question 33. Which image do you feel more engaging (buy, share or react posts) than the other?

3.6 Discussion of findings

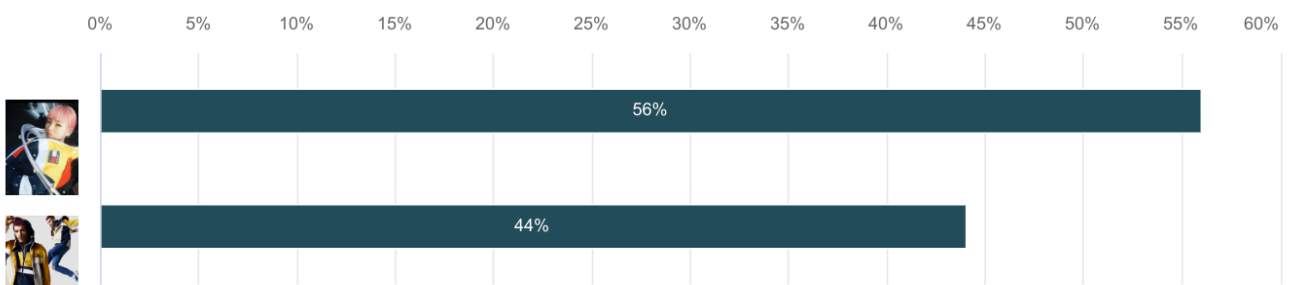The purpose of this research is to consider the interest of gen Z in virtual influencers in the Metaverse. There are some important findings discussed in more detail. Firstly, almost respondents, especially

young people, are aware of the importance of influencers in supporting their purchasing decisions. There are 89% of answerers following at least one influencer on the Internet. Besides, customers usually are attracted by the following elements of influencers such as content, knowledge, interests, and lifestyle. More importantly, they like influencers who have expertise in the fields of education, lifestyle and fitness, and food. Besides, these buyers are also quite satisfied with the quality of the services and products they have purchased thanks to the recommendations of the influencers. Therefore, it is stated that they are willing to continue following these influencers if they move to another platform such as Metaverse.

Secondly, although social media users cannot fully understand the concept of the Metaverse, in general, 61% of the respondents know about its existence. However, approximately 83% of respondents know about the concept of CGI virtual influencers. Besides, they also revealed that they are quite excited about the combination of virtual influencers and Metaverse since they believe in these influencers' growth in content creation, storytelling, and outstanding visuals. In addition, even though at this stage, people are quite hesitant about choosing between human and CGI influencers, it is undeniable that the appeal of this influencer in the future. Hence, this research provides a helpful hint for marketers leading to they need to consider reasonably when choosing the type of influencers in a certain marketing campaign.

3.7 Recommendations

The right audience must be targeted for any campaigns involving virtual influencers. The more marketers can create a virtual influencer to engage their audience, the better they can identify who they will be marketing. People who are aware of virtual influencers and want to follow them in the Metaverse, for example, maybe a good fit for audience segmentation. Maps of empathy should be made, too (Peertopeermarketing Editors 2022). Brands will be able to better understand their audience by doing this. Brands can then develop a virtual influencer to appeal to those feelings. Companies might make virtual influencers as human-like as possible, even though they do not show emotion in the same manner as people. Furthermore, people think that because virtual influencers are not constrained by real-world constraints, they can produce content that is both entertaining and excessive. Companies do not have to worry about the risks associated with working with humans because they can control the visuals, content, and language of their influencers.

The campaigns of the virtual influencers have restrictions. While real people need to physically partici-pate in the campaign, virtual influencers remain on screen (Huberman 2021). Digital campaigns, which constitute the setting for virtual influencers, are made possible by COVID-19. They can be a low-cost solution for any brand in the digital space. However, other than user participation, they inherently have no links to the outside world. In the survey, 50% of respondents said they still preferred marketing campaigns with human influencers. Although marketers can tailor any of the virtual influencers to fit their tales and the campaign's subject, human stories are simpler to connect with fans and customers. Moreover, when comparing the identical brand with its equivalent, just one-third of the virtual influ-encers' photographs receive votes. Hence, companies might carefully consider the proper types of in-fluencers in their campaigns.

4 CONCLUSION

The purpose of the thesis was to examine the effects of virtual influencer marketing in the digital age as well as the emerging Metaverse trend. One of the most effective tactics in social networks is influencer marketing. It is appropriate for all sizes of businesses and aids in growing brand recognition and reach, establishing credibility and trust, enhancing content strategy, boosting SEO, ROI, and bottom line, and driving buy decisions and sales. Brands and businesses may take their social media marketing initiatives to the next level by selecting the right virtual and human influencers and creating an impactful influencer marketing plan, especially startups that have been finding it difficult to acquire momentum. Understanding how fast influencer marketing can achieve their online goals and then applying it to other campaigns will get more results. Influencer marketing generates more revenues than it costs, as long as they can see its potential and collaborate with the right influencers in an effective digital marketing strategy. Applying influencer marketing to other initiatives after seeing how quickly it may help them achieve online objectives will produce better outcomes. As long as they can understand its potential and work with the proper virtual or human influencers in an efficient digital marketing plan, influencer marketing gains more than its cost.

This study has several areas that could use more exploration. There is a recommendation regarding the questionnaire first. Due to COVID-19, the survey was conducted online with 100 participants, who responded. With a higher sample size, such as 1000 or 10,000 participants, the result analysis can have a significant impact. Second, it ought to gather the respondents' academic standing. In order to perform the analysis and uncover insights into the disparities in educational status. The study could provide answers to issues like which industry of influencers university students follow more closely than high school students. Or does the same age and content of the product affect the decision to buy regardless of academic level? Furthermore, there are no in-depth Metaverse-related research questions. Because each business has its own Metaverse platform and activity, Metaverse is soon to be a reality. It might be challenging for interviewers and interviewees to have questions with the same intent and focus. In the same marketing campaign, there should be more comparisons between people and virtual influencers.

Moreover, this study can make future outcomes more precise. If possible, the author should enhance the sample size. Because more research is required to support the application of these findings to a larger scale, larger sample size may reveal additional elements that may influence gen Z's interest in

CGI virtual influencers. Furthermore, data collection methods such as offline surveys can be implemented more variously because the outcome from the respondents will be particular as well as assist the study findings.

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Questionnaire Survey

THE INTEREST OF GEN Z IN VIRTUAL INFLUENCERS IN THE METAVERSE SURVEY

▦ Mandatory questions are marked with a star (*)

Hi, My name is Tuyen Du. I am conducting a survey on the topic "The interest of gen Z in virtual influencers in the Metaverse" that supports my bachelor thesis. I greatly appreciate your precious time in completing this research survey. Your answers will help me to collect helpful information for my analysis significantly. I promise that all information will just be used for educational purposes.

PART I

1. How old are you? *

◯ Under 19 years old

◯ From 19 to 25 years old

◯ Over 25 years old

PART II

2. What is your gender? *

◯ Female

◯ Male

◯ Other

PART III

3. How many hours per day do you spend on social media? *

◯ 0-3 hours

◯ 3-6 hours

◯ 6 hours or more

4. How many social networks do you have an account? *

○ 1

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ More than 5

5. Which platform do you spend the most time and the least on? (5: the most and 1: the least or not having an account)

	1	2	3	4	5
Tiktok *	○	○	○	○	○
Instagrams *	○	○	○	○	○
Facebook *	○	○	○	○	○
Snapchat *	○	○	○	○	○
Twitter *	○	○	○	○	○
Others _____	○	○	○	○	○

6. Do you follow any influencers in your favorite social network? *

○ Yes

○ No

7. Do you follow them on other platforms? *

○ Yes

○ No

8. Why do you follow those influencers?

☐ Appearance

☐ Lifestyle

☐ Content

☐ Fun

☐ Knowledge and Interests

☐ Others

9. Could you name your most favorite influencer's industries? *

☐ Technology

☐ Education

☐ Life style & Fitness

☐ Food

☐ Others _____

10. Have you purchased a product or experienced a service recommended by your influencers? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

11. Do you agree that your influencer helps you to buy needed products and services? (5: totally agree and 1: totally disagree) *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Tottal disagree	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Totally agree

12. Do you agree that your influencers do not exaggerate the product or service functions? (5: totally agree and 1: totally disagree) *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Tottal disagree	○	○	○	○	○	Totally agree

13. Do you disagree with some points when influencers promote products and services after using them? *

○ Yes

○ No

14. Do you research the products or services from other sources before you buy? *

○ Yes

○ No

15. How many percentages did you believe in the recommendations content of your influencers before you decide to buy? *

0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
○	○	○	○	○	○

16. How many percentages did you satisfy with the products or services usage and functionalities? *

0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
○	○	○	○	○	○

17. Why did you not use the products or services based on your influencers' recommendations? *

☐ Personal financial issues

☐ Incorrect infomation providing

☐ Lack of details about products usage

☐ Not a nessary need

☐ Others _____

18. What do you think your influencers can do to help you make shopping decisions? (5: high impact and 1: low impact) *
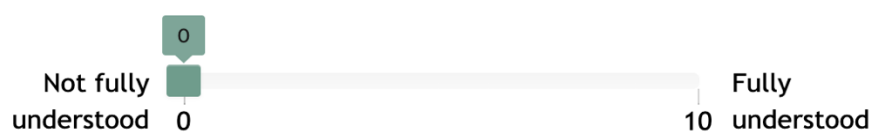
	1	2	3	4	5
Providing facts	○	○	○	○	○
Providing discount vouchers	○	○	○	○	○
Upload content on every platforms	○	○	○	○	○
Upload new content frequently	○	○	○	○	○
Others	○	○	○	○	○

PART IV

19. Did you hear about Metaverse? *

○ Yes

○ No

20. On a scale from 0 to 10, how could you rate your understanding of the Metaverse?

0

Not fully understood 0   10 Fully understood

21. Did you hear about virtual influencers? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

22. Which platform do you think is suitable for virtual influencers to grow? (5: the most appropriate and 1: the least appropriate)

	1	2	3	4	5
Tiktok	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Facebook	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Twitter	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Instagram	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Snapchat	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Others	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

23. If these virtual influencers participate in the Metaverse, will you be willing to follow them?

◯ Yes

◯ No

24. Would you agree with these factors to make you follow virtual influencers on the Metaverse? (5: totally agree and 1: totally disagree) *

	1	2	3	4	5
Apperance	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Interesting content	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Stories	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Curious	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Expertise	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

25. Do you agree or disagree with these opinions? (5: totally agree and 1: totally disagree) *

	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer real human influencer	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I do not know vitual influencers exists	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I am not interested virtual influencers and Metaverse	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

26. Some interesting ideas about virtual influencers' activities in the Metaverse are below. Please objectively rate your interest with the following options. (5: very interested and 1: not interested at all) *

	1	2	3	4	5
Food influencers offer virtual cooking lessons.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Influencers in the tourism industry can take their followers on virtual adventures.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Fashion influencers guide followers to virtual fashion week show with famous brands such as Gucci, Louis Vuitton,...	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Influencers can lead their fans to a home with full virtual modern furniture.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

27. Do you agree or disagree with these opinions about virtual influencers? (5: totally agree and 1: totally disagree) *

	1	2	3	4	5
They can create more interesting content than the real influencer	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
They have flexible appearance	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
They can create content on multiple industries	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

28. On a scale from 0 to 10, how could you rate your trust a brand advertised by virtual influencers? *

0

0   10

29. On a scale from 0 to 10, how could you rate your engagement to buy a product advertised by virtual influencers? *

0

0   10

30. On a scale from 0 to 10, how could you rate your engagement to share posts by virtual influencers? *

0

0   10

31. Which image do you feel more engaging (buy, share or react posts) than the other? *

32. Which image do you feel more engaging (buy, share or react posts) than the other? *

33. Which image do you feel more engaging (buy, share or react posts) than the other? *