Analysis of Social Media Influencer Marketing in the Beauty Industry

Abstract

Author(s)	Publication type	Completion year
Linh Dong	Thesis, UAS	2024
	Number of pages 55	

Title of the thesis
Analysis of social media influencer marketing in the beauty industry

Degree, Field of Study
Business Administration, International Business

Abstract

This thesis investigates the impact of influencer marketing on consumer behavior in the beauty industry, with a special focus on Generation Z customers. The main objectives of the study are understanding the role of influencer marketing, the kind of contents that appeal most to Generation Z, and the level of trust Gen Z consumers place in influencers when making beauty-related purchase decisions.

First, an analysis the research was done to develop a theoretical framework and identify important factors related to consumer behavior and influencer marketing. Second, a survey asking a group of Gen Z customers about their thoughts and actions with relation to influencer marketing in the beauty industry was used to gather primary data.

The findings show that Gen Z consumer behavior is significantly shaped by influencer marketing, with relatability and authenticity appearing as key elements influencing trust and engagement. Gen Z consumers are more likely to follow influencers who generate real and useful content when making selections about what to buy. This study offers knowledge about the role of influencer marketing in the beauty industry and how it affects Gen Z consumers. Beauty brands may create more engaging and meaningful marketing strategies to reach their target audience by learning about the preferences and behaviors of this group.

Keywords

Beauty industry, influencer marketing, social media

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

One of the industries in the current global market that is both strongly developed and continuously growing is the beauty industry. This sector, which has a significant impact on both individual self-expression and society's beauty standards, has changed dramatically globally. The skincare, makeup, haircare, and perfume industries, among others, are included in the beauty market, which reached about 430 million dollars in revenues overall in 2022. According to the figure 1 below, after a quick recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the beauty market is expected to increase at an anticipated 6% yearly rate and reach over $580 billion by 2027. (Berg 2023.) The figure 1 below illustrates how the beauty industry has changed from 2015 to 2027.
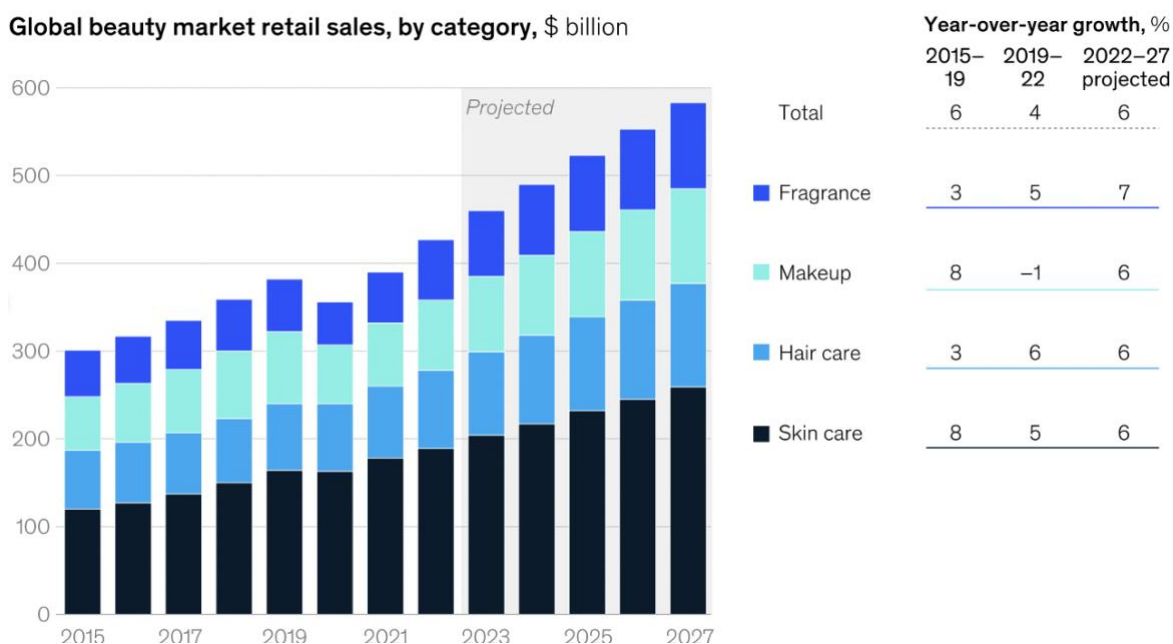
Figure 1. The global beauty market in 2015-2027 (Berg 2023.)

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly changed customer behavior, which led to an increase in online purchasing as a means of reducing the risk of infection. Additionally, the beauty business was severely impacted by the epidemic, which sped up the change from traditional physical stores to e-commerce. Lockdowns and other social distancing ways became necessary, which pushed the beauty industry's digital transition ahead and required enterprises to quickly adjust to the new

environment. (Charm 2020.) Lockdowns and social distancing measures reduced the number of traditional in-person engagement opportunities. As a result, social media became an essential lifeline for beauty industries to stay in touch with customers. In an era of physical seclusion, beauty lovers and influencers on social media sites like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok were essential in promoting products, offering guides, and creating a feeling of community. In addition to responding to the pandemic's restrictions, the beauty industry's use of social media marked a strategic shift toward using these channels as effective tools for marketing, brand building, and direct customer involvement. (Schwarz 2022.)

Influencer marketing is the process of companies collaborating with famous social media users to advertise their products and services. Influencer marketing is one of the best advertising strategies for growing the business's reach, boosting the reputation in the industry, and positioning oneself as a thought leader in the field of expertise. The influencers have been using many social media platforms like TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, etc to promote the brand's products or services, that is the relationship between the company and influencers or celebrities. Now that the internet has been developed and social media sites such as Youtube, Instagram and Facebook are widely used, users have an infinite amount of freedom and choice in what they are interested in viewing. For brands, this poses a challenge. It's getting harder and harder to reach their target audience as they spread further across several methods. Therefore, influencer marketing is one of the best options to offer the solution to this problem. Influencers can evaluate and promote the goods or services by uploading a one-minute promotional video, updating their blog, or sending a status update. This allows them to share their opinions and experiences with the audiences and attract the consumers' attention. In summary, influencer marketing is a better option than traditional advertising in a number of ways, including a more sincere and personal feel, a more focused audience, lower costs, and measurable outcomes. It is a desirable choice for companies trying to increase sales and market their goods and services because of these benefits. (Mathew 2018.)

This thesis concentrates on Gen Z due to the author's familiarity with the revolutionary impact this generation has had on the modern consumer landscape, especially in the beauty business. Generation Z (Gen Z) consists of individuals born

between the middle 1990s and the early 2010s, who are leading the way in both social and technological innovation. Thanks to their unique ideals, interests, and digital proficiency, Gen Z represents a revolutionary change in the way consumers behave. Being the first generation of digital natives, they are an interesting and powerful group to research because of their involvement in influencer marketing and their discriminating taste in beauty products. Gaining insight into how Gen Z navigates the world of influencer-driven beauty trends might help us better understand how consumer-brand interactions are changing in the era of social media and digital communication. (Biondi 2021.)

According to Thomas (2016), Kiehl's Cosmetics is one of the most well-known skincare brands in the beauty industry. The company is well known for creating skincare products that are kind to even the most sensitive skin types and are effective and mild. Dermatologists can therefore always depend on the ingredients as a reliable skincare option. Established more than 165 years ago, Kiehl's was first an old-world pharmacy in the East Village district of New York. The unique and wide background shows a combination of expertise gained and maintained over centuries in the fields of cosmetics, drugs, herbal treatment, and medicine.

Kiehl's relaunched its Ultra Facial Cream in the United Kingdom market in March 2019, featuring an advanced formula and new clinical claims. This launch was one of the most significant marketing initiatives and brand moments for Kiehl's cosmetic. For this campaign, this brand was looking for an influencer with a paid relationship to advertise their products to the consumers and then they partnered with Anna Newton, who is one of the well-known influencers or content creators in social media with a huge passion for Kiehl's products. (Lyons 2019.) Kiehl's company has taken advantage of using influencer marketing to develop its reputation with the audiences, this is also the way that they advertise their products and compete with other brands in the beauty industry. Therefore, there has a lot of sources and information to analyze the research.

The goal of the thesis is to offer insight on how Generation Z consumers' purchasing decisions and consumer behaviour in relation to beauty industry are influenced by social media influencer marketing. This thesis will use Kiehl's as a case study to demonstrate how businesses in beauty industry have used influencer marketing on

social media. The case will provide a better understanding of the chosen issue and act as an example.

1.2 Thesis Objectives, Research Questions and Limitations

As mentioned, the role of influencer marketing is essential and important in the beauty industry to promote products or services to consumers in light of advantages. (Cohen 2023.) This thesis aims to conduct a study of social media influencer marketing in the beauty industry. The thesis aims to examine how Gen Z consumer behavior and purchase decisions are influenced by social media influencer marketing in the beauty industry. The thesis research figures out what types of influencer content are attractive and effective in influencing Gen Z customer decision-making in the beauty industry. The goal of this research is to gain deeper information and knowledge on influencer marketing in the beauty industry. Moreover, the research will be helpful if the readers have a better understanding of marketing strategies by influencer marketing and know how the marketing plan attracts the Gen Z consumer's attention to the beauty products.

The research question defines the subject topic of the study and will act as its primary objective. The study topic is addressed by one or more research questions. (Saunders et al. 2016, 45, 60.)

The main question is:

What impact does influencer marketing have on Gen Z consumer behavior and purchasing decisions within the beauty industry?

The sub-questions:

What is the role of influencer marketing in beauty industry?

How has Kiehl's Cosmetics used influencer marketing to promote their products?

What types of influencer content are most effective in influencing consumer (Gen Z) decisions in the beauty industry?

How much do Gen Z trust the advice of influencers when choosing which beauty products to buy?

To define the topic of this thesis study, the following research topics are addressed throughout. Through addressing these questions, the thesis seeks to offer detailed understanding of the intricate relationship among consumer behavior, influencer marketing, and purchase decisions within the ever-changing beauty industry landscape.

When doing research for a thesis, there are always limitations. Only influencer marketing in the beauty industry is the focus of this thesis research. Although this study's focus is on the beauty industry and how influencer marketing affects consumer behavior, it's vital to recognize some limitations in the context of Kiehl's, case study that was selected. This study uses Kiehl's cosmetics as a case study to research to figure out the understanding of social media influencer marketing in the beauty industry. It is important to know that limiting the study mostly to Generation Z might restrict the generalizability of the results. This is because the insights obtained from this specific group of people may not consist of the diversity of perspectives found in other age groups and demographics within the larger consumer population. The fact that Kiehl's focuses primarily on skincare products could be a limitation when taking results to the larger beauty brand market, which frequently includes a wider variety of goods including makeup, fragrances, and hair care.

1.3   Theoretical Framework

The opening section of the thesis report should include the theoretical framework, which is an essential part of the study. It helps define the scope of the research and demonstrates comprehension of the theories and concepts relevant to the study. The theoretical framework helps support and describe the theories. (Sreekumar 2023.)

In the rapidly changing field of marketing, influencer marketing that utilizes the persuasive power of individuals with a significant social media following has developed as an effective strategy. Influencer marketing is a collaborative approach that has developed with the growth of social media platforms. It involves brands collaborating with well-known individuals to promote their goods or services. Influencer marketing has grown to be a major force in the beauty industry, changing how customers connect with companies and beauty goods. (Liu & Zheng 2024.)

This study examines the nuances of the practice and looks at how Gen Z behavior and purchase decisions in the beauty industry are affected by influencer marketing. The e-marketing on social media are explored as well, providing insight into the intricacies of how influencers interact with their audiences and spread information. The study intends to provide insight into the factors that explain Generation Z reactions to influencer marketing in the beauty industry by being based on theories of consumer behavior.

This thesis research concentrates on marketing strategies such as influencer marketing on social media to consumers. By addressing the research, the investigation examines how customer behavior and purchase decisions are affected by social media influencer marketing in the beauty industry. Reading this research, the readers can get a better understanding of marketing strategies by influencer marketing, and know how the marketing plan attracts the Gen Z consumer's attention to the beauty products. The theoretical framework will be divided into two chapters to clarify the thesis research. The figure 2 below illustrates the theoretical framework this thesis research.

Influencer Marketing in the Beauty Industry

Case study as example: Kiehl's

Figure 2. The theoretical framework

The theoretical framework will be separated into two chapters to give insight to the thesis research. The first chapter will focus on influencer marketing in the beauty industry, exploring its various aspects and significance. The second chapter will present a case study on Kiehl's company, examining its strategies and practices within the realm of influencer marketing.

1.4   Research Methodology and Data Collection

The research methodology and data collection techniques utilized for the report are shown in figure 3 below.

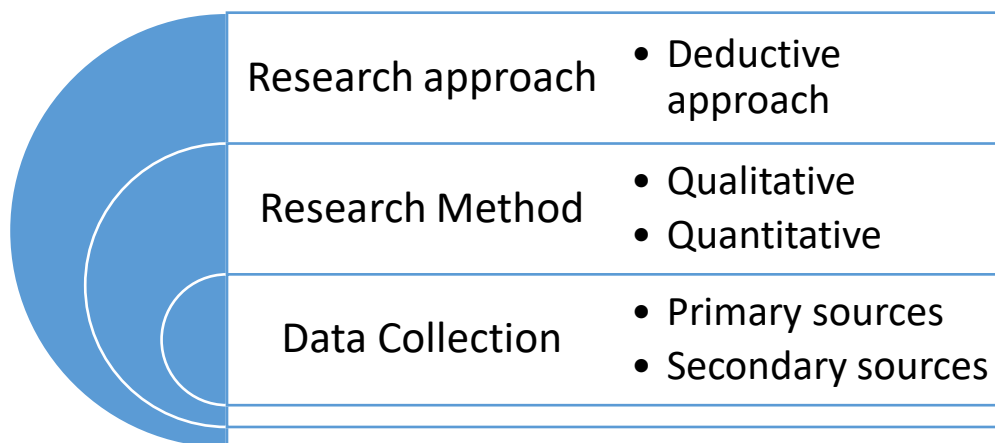|	
Research approach	• Deductive approach
Research Method	• Qualitative • Quantitative
Data Collection	• Primary sources • Secondary sources

Figure 3. Research Methodology and Data Collection

According to Hassan (2024), researchers conduct their studies in a logical and structured method using research methodology, which are defined by their underlying logic and methods of inquiry. There are 2 different types of research methodologies: deductive and inductive. The deductive method begins with a theory, which the researcher then gathers and assesses to verify it. Using from the theory or hypothesis, the researcher designs the study and devises methods for gathering data. The goal of this strategy is to either confirm or reject the theory. The collection and analysis of data are the initial phases of the inductive technique. The researcher formulates a theory or explanation in regard to the themes and patterns in the data. This method seeks to improve upon current theories or develop new ones.

This thesis research is based on deductive research to conduct the study. This study starts with the general theories in the beauty industry, beauty marketing by influencers on social media, and then tests it to collect and analyze the data.

To address research questions, a research technique is a methodical, empirical method for gathering, analyzing, and interpreting quantitative or qualitative data. There exist three distinct categories of research methodologies: mixed-method research, quantitative research, and qualitative research. The primary objectives of quantitative research methods are the measurement and testing of numerical data. This is an effective way to get in touch with many people rapidly. People's opinions, deeds, and experiences are valued in qualitative research methods. Data and words

written down are collected and analyzed. It takes less time but requires fewer participants because each person in this research methodology invests a lot of work. Mixed-method research refers to studies that combine quantitative and qualitative approaches. (Sreekumar 2023.)

This study used a mixed-methodologies approach to its research, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. Qualitative research will provide a review of the content of influencer marketing campaigns, customer reviews, and social media interactions, using Kiehl's as an example, to show how influencer marketing affects consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions in the beauty industry. Conversely, quantitative data from a consumers will be gathered through surveys and questionnaires, offering empirical evidence to support the findings of the qualitative analysis.

Primary sources are first-hand accounts or concrete proof related to a subject of study. It is impossible to assess a source's nature and worth without considering the subject matter and inquiries it is intended to address. (Veccia 2004.) The survey represents as the key primary source for gathering data on Generation Z consumers' perceptions and behaviors related to influencer marketing in the beauty industry.

According to Streefkerk (2023), primary sources consist of first-hand knowledge and findings made by other researchers. Journal articles, books, and reviews are a few examples of academic works. Therefore, primary sources are described, interpreted, or synthesized by secondary research.

This research will apply both primary sources and secondary sources to explain and address the research questions and issues.

1.5   Research Structure

To demonstrate the thesis research by following the figure 4 below:

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│        Introduction         │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Influencer marketing in the │
│ beauty industry on social   │
│          media              │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│     Case study: Kiehl's     │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Empirical research and data │
│          analysis           │
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│        Conclusion           │
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│          Summary            │
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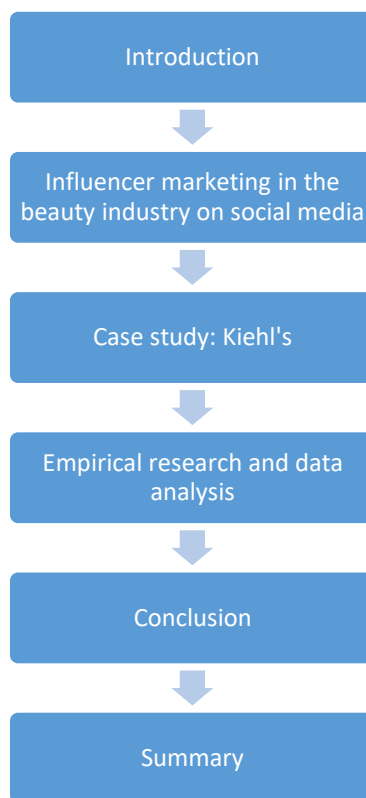
Figure 4. Research structures

This study starts with the introduction including the research thesis objectives, background, research questions and limitations, theoretical framework, research methodology, and data collection and thesis structures to let the readers understand brief information about the thesis research.

After that, this study continues to the theoretical part in chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 2 discusses and analyses social media influencer marketing within the beauty industry, it points out the answers to the research questions. Chapter 3, will be a case study – of Kiehl's cosmetics, including some history of the company and market strategies by influencer marketing, etc.

Chapter 4, to provide answers to research topics, empirical research entails the collecting and analysis of data. The empirical research part of the study on influencer marketing in the beauty industry concentrates on obtaining information that is directly related to the research goals.

Chapters 5 and 6, this research is brought to a close with your thesis's conclusion and summary, which highlight the most important conclusions, consequences, and overall contribution to the topic of influencer marketing in the beauty industry.

2   Influencer Marketing in Beauty Industry

2.1   E-Marketing environment on social media

E-marketing: What is it? Electronic marketing is known as e-marketing. Online or internet advertising, sometimes referred to as e-marketing, leverages internet technology to enhance online communications delivered to consumers. Using electric marketing tools is similar to marketing products and services online. Since many consumers use social media to learn about products and services, it is more efficient and convenient to reach and connect with a wide range of potential customers. Additionally, applying through social media saves time and money compared to more traditional methods like news or program shows, etc. (Jasper 2022.)

The figure 5 below illustrates some of the main types in electric marketing:

Figure 5. The main categories of electric marketing (Gustavsen 2023.)

According to Gustavsen (2023), the eight fundamental categories that digital marketing may be divided into affiliate marketing, mobile marketing, content marketing, pay-per-click, influencer marketing, email marketing, (SEO) search engine optimization, and social media marketing. The efficacy of influencer

marketing campaigns in the beauty industry can be increased by incorporating these e-marketing channels into the entire plan.

The e-marketing objectives are obvious in the fields of influencer marketing and beauty. To establish the brand as a leader in the online beauty market, the brand wants to include influencer collaborations into our digital strategy effectively. They're telling authentic tales that connect with the audience by collaborating with influencers, not merely to promote items. Creating a network of beauty enthusiasts is another goal of the e-marketing strategy. The e-marketing goals ensure relationships with influencers uphold the brand's core values and remain genuine. It all comes down to developing a digital strategy that, in addition to increasing reach and loyalty, helps them project a favorable image in the always-changing beauty industry. (Rozario 2023.)

2.1.1 Processes and strategies for the e-marketing

According to Shahzeidi's (2024) analysis of the six-step process for developing e-marketing strategies, the focus of these processes and strategies should be on the social media e-marketing environment, specifically about consumer behavior, influencer marketing in the beauty industry, and Gen Z targeting. The figure 6 below is the 6-step process to build the e-marketing strategies:

Identify the audience personas | Identify the goals and objective | Conduct the competitive research | Define the marketing channel | Define the content strategy | Find ways to amplify the content
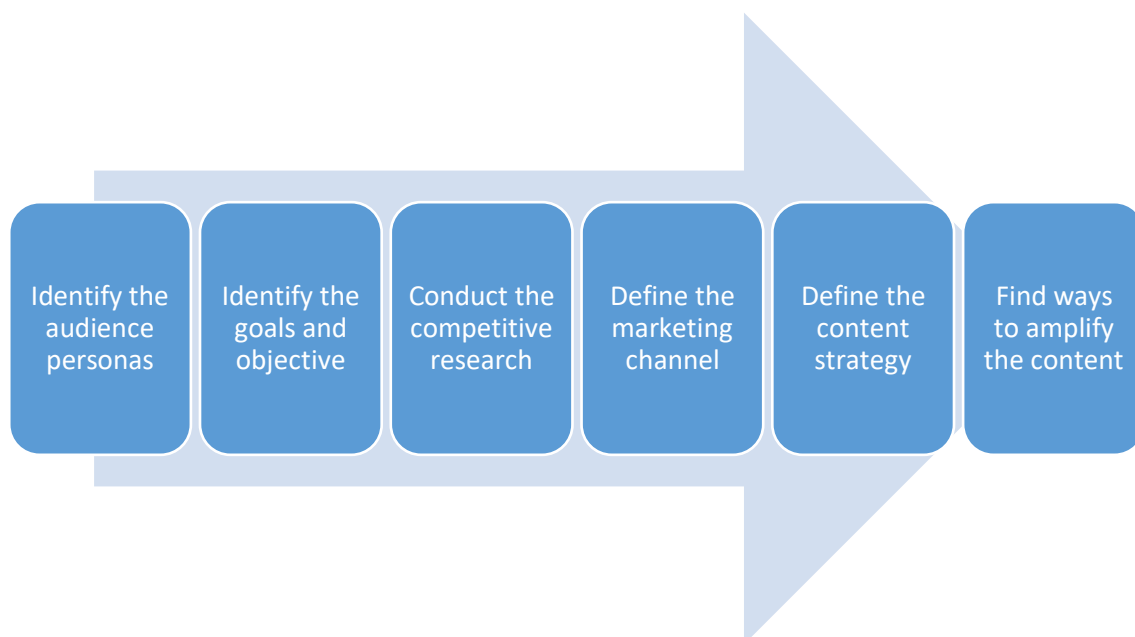
Figure 6. The 6-step process to build the e-marketing strategies (Shahzeidi 2024.)

Identifying audience personas in detail is the first step. Understanding the preferences, routines, and actions of the various Gen Z demographic segments on social media platforms requires a thorough investigation of these segments. Brands may improve the targeting and efficacy of their marketing campaigns by developing comprehensive audience personas that provide them with important insights into the complex requirements and interests of Gen Z consumers. (Nealon 2018.)

After defining audience personas, the following step is to link e-marketing objectives to influencer marketing campaigns' more general goals. Beauty brands need to set clear, quantifiable goals, like raising brand exposure, encouraging interaction, and eventually increasing sales among Gen Z customers. Brands can concentrate their attention and resources on projects that directly lead to the achievement of desired results by establishing clear targets. (Shahzeidi 2024.)

To understand effective influencer strategies in the beauty market, competitive research is important. In this step, competitors' influencer marketing plans are analyzed, significant players are identified, and their collaborations, content strategies, and engagement methods are examined. Through an in-depth understanding of what makes the competition work, brands can draw insights from current trends and find chances to stand out and attract Gen Z consumers. (Allen 2021.)

By utilizing competitive research findings, companies may identify the best marketing channels to attract Gen Z customers. The next phase entails choosing social media sites, such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, where Gen Z audiences are most engaged and active. Influencer marketing campaigns can be made even more effective for brands by carefully selecting the appropriate channels that will allow them to interact and engage with their target audience. (Melgaard 2024.)

According to Forsey (2024), engaging Gen Z consumers on social media channels effectively requires an intelligent content strategy. Gen Z's beliefs, interests, and goals must be authentically connected through the creation of influencer marketing content. While adhering to the broader brand identity and messaging, brands must concentrate on producing visually appealing, innovative, and relatable

content. Brands can attract Gen Z consumers and establish deep relationships with their target demographic by creating appealing content.

Finally, to maximize the reach and effect of their content, brands need to put plans into place. Creating interactive campaigns, challenges, and user-generated content projects are some of how this is accomplished. Companies may build a feeling of community and belonging among Gen Z followers, which will increase brand recognition, campaigns, and trust. (Shewan 2023.)

2.1.2   Demographical environment: Understanding Gen Z consumer behaviors

In the world of beauty, understanding the demographics is essential, especially when aiming to attract Gen Z customers. This section examines the various characteristics and actions of Generation Z and looks at how influencer marketing and consumer preferences relate to one another in this group.

Gen Z, which represents the ages of 10 to 25, is accustomed to using technology. Born into a world of technologically enabled possibilities, they are more ethically conscious and hopeful about spending than their prior generations. They also are unlikely to consider twice to back out of a purchase if they find it to be too costly, too complicated, or too slow. (Born 2023.) The figure 7 below demonstrates the factors important to purchasing decisions.
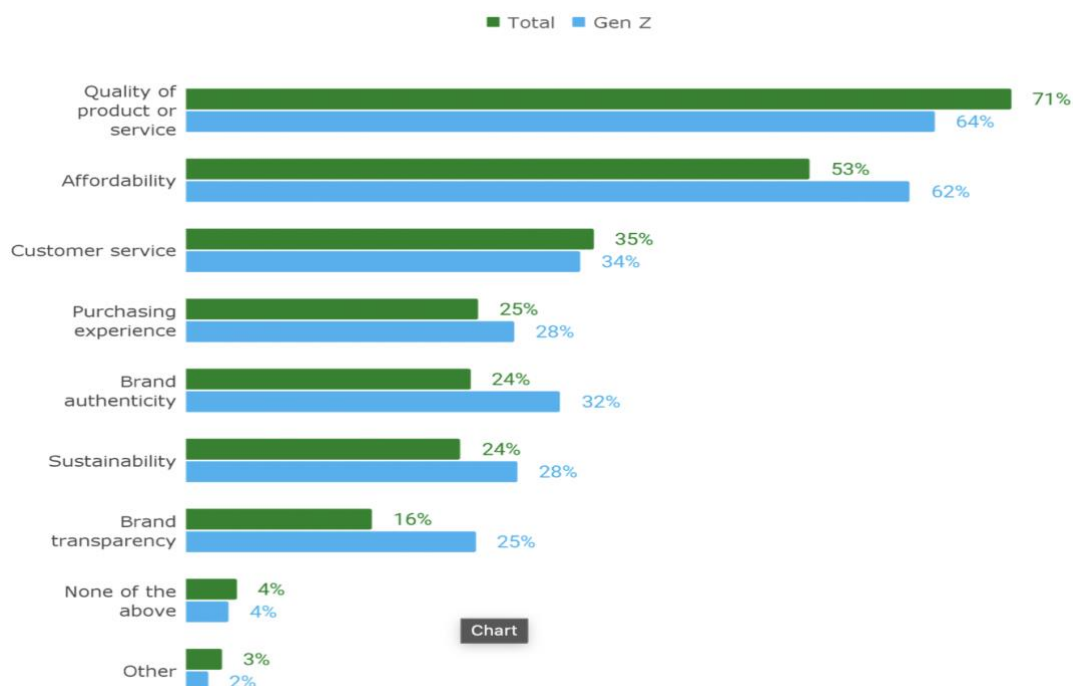
Figure 7. Factors important to purchasing decisions (Gutierrez 2021a.)

According to Gutierrez (2021)'s SurveyMonkey study: Gen Z social media and Shopping behaviors, in the beauty industry, Gen Z customers display distinct behaviors and preferences. They tend to stick to companies who share their beliefs, quality of product or service, affordability, customer service, or sustainability which are the important factors in their purchasing decisions. Additionally, digital content and peer recommendations have a big impact on them. Percentage of global social media users that follow brands, as demonstrated in the figure 8 below.
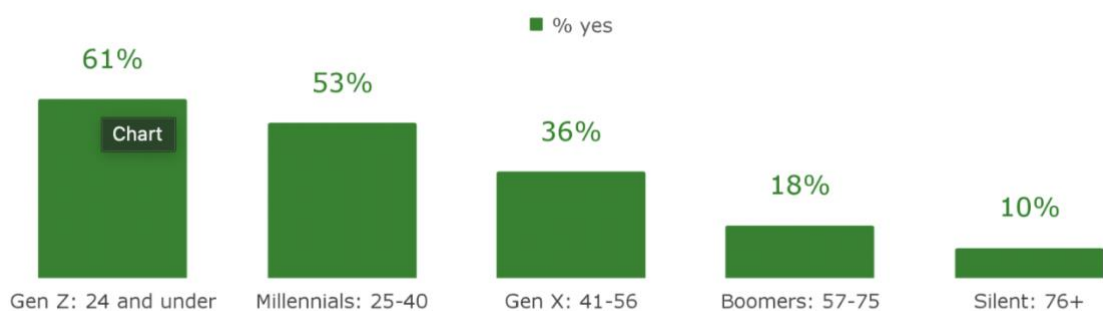

Figure 8. Percentage of global social media users that follow brands (Gutierrez 2021b.)

Compared to one in three (34%) older consumers, the majority of Gen Zers (61%) follow businesses they enjoy on social media. Compared to people who follow no companies at all, 43% of those social media users who follow brands on social media believe they are more likely to buy goods or services from such businesses.

Gen Z and Millennials are the most active and influential social media users, therefore using influencer marketing to reach and interact with them can be very effective. Gen Z's attitudes and purchasing decisions in the beauty industry are greatly influenced by influencer marketing. Influencers are people that people can relate to; they give real product recommendations and show how using cosmetics may improve confidence and self-expression. (Bewicke 2024.)

2.1.3   Regulatory changes

Understanding influencer marketing strategies in the beauty sector requires an understanding of regulatory change situations, especially when aiming

to attract Gen Z customers. This section analyses the different elements of the economic and political environment that impact influencer marketing strategies and customer behavior.

The popularity of influencer marketing over the last decade has presented a new issue for the twenty-first century. The majority of campaigns in a developing business necessitate increasingly strict controls to protect customers from unethical activities. The US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is leading the way in assessing companies' content and marketing strategies, with a renewed emphasis on influencers. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has issued guidelines to ensure that influencers disclose any material relationships to brands when promoting products or services. These standards encourage influencers to properly identify their brand affiliations, such as sponsorships or sponsored partnerships, to maintain transparency and prevent false advertisements. (Jackson 2024.)

These regulations have a huge impact on influencer-brand partnerships. Brands and influencers must follow these standards to avoid legal consequences and preserve trust with their target audience. Failure to disclose paid relationships or sponsored content may result in fines, legal action, and harm to brand reputation. Furthermore, open communication between influencers and their audiences increases credibility and develops beneficial relationships, which benefits both parties. (Monteros 2023.)

2.2 Social Media Marketing

Companies utilize social media platforms to market their brands and products to their target audience through a form of digital marketing known as social media marketing. It involves far more than just random posts on company accounts, despite what the general public believes. An effective social media marketing campaign requires careful preparation and strategy. (Baluch 2024a.) In this study, social media platforms are critical channels for engaging Gen Z consumers in the beauty sector and applying influencer marketing methods.

Social media marketing is a dynamic and effective way of connecting with target audiences through influencer collaborations. Brands use platforms such as

Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to maximize influencers' reach, authenticity, and creativity to communicate with consumers authentically.

Instagram's sponsored posts and stories allow influencers to seamlessly integrate branded material into their feeds, reaching millions of followers with visually appealing visuals. TikTok, known for its viral trends and creative challenges, allows marketers to connect with influencers to create engaging and relatable content that appeals to younger populations. YouTube, a platform for long-form video content, enables marketers to collaborate with influencers to create in-depth product evaluations, lessons, and lifestyle vlogs, building consumer trust and credibility. Across multiple channels, influencer marketing on social media allows brands to build valuable connections with their customers, raise reputations, and eventually inspire actions. By using social media marketing for influencer collaborations, brands may explore the digital world with authenticity and relevancy, connecting with audiences in meaningful ways that generate company success. (Baluch 2024.)

2.2.1 Demographical social media Gen Z users

Understanding the demographic details of Generation Z's social media behavior allows organizations to customize their marketing strategy to effectively interact with these digitally aware individuals and establish meaningful connections on the platforms that Gen Z consumers are most interested in. The figure 9 below illustrates Gen Z's social media usage.
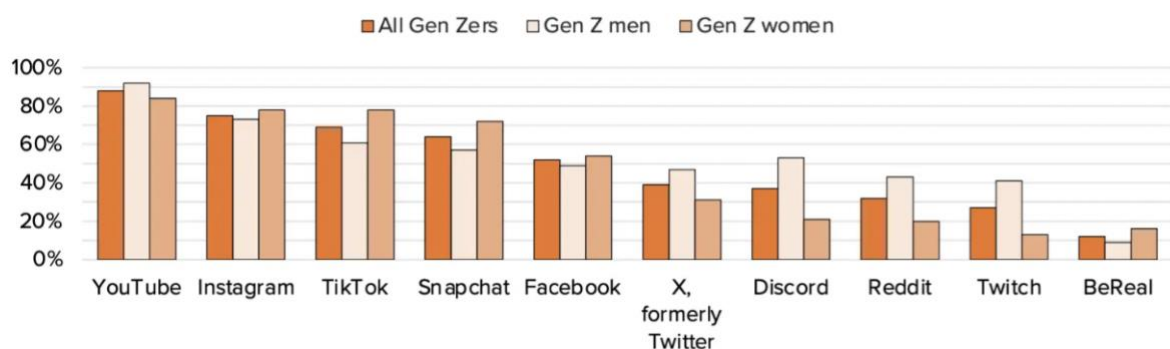

Figure 9. Global Social Media Usage of Generation Z (Thomas 2024.)

The Morning Consult survey provides a view of the social media environment among Generation Z, exposing YouTube as the main platform, with more than 80% of respondents spending time on the app. Instagram follows closely after, with 75%

of Gen Z users regularly engaging with the platform, debunking claims of its decline in significance. TikTok and Snapchat are close following, with 69% and 63% usage, demonstrating a major presence in Gen Z's digital habits. Interestingly, there is a significant gender gap in platform usage, with more male respondents preferring YouTube, Discord, Twitch, Reddit, and Twitter. Female Gen Zers, on the other hand, had the highest engagement on Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and Facebook. This demonstrates the different preferences and behaviors of the Generation Z demographic. While networks such as Facebook and Twitter are supposed to drop in usage among Generation Z, they continue to have a presence in the social media ecosystem. In addition, despite decreased overall usage rates, innovative platforms such as BeReal are gaining traction among Generation Z. As Generation Z continues to change the digital environment, marketers must understand their platform preferences and behaviors to effectively engage with this potential targeting customers. (Thomas 2024.)

2.2.2 Social Media Online Advertising

Social media online advertising is an essential part of current advertising strategies, particularly when aiming to attract Gen Z customers in the beauty industry. Brands may effectively promote their products and services by using the enormous reach and engagement potential of platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat through well-designed advertising campaigns. Social media online advertising refers to the paid marketing campaign on social media applications. (Sprout Social 2023.) The image 1 below illustrates the social media online advertising.
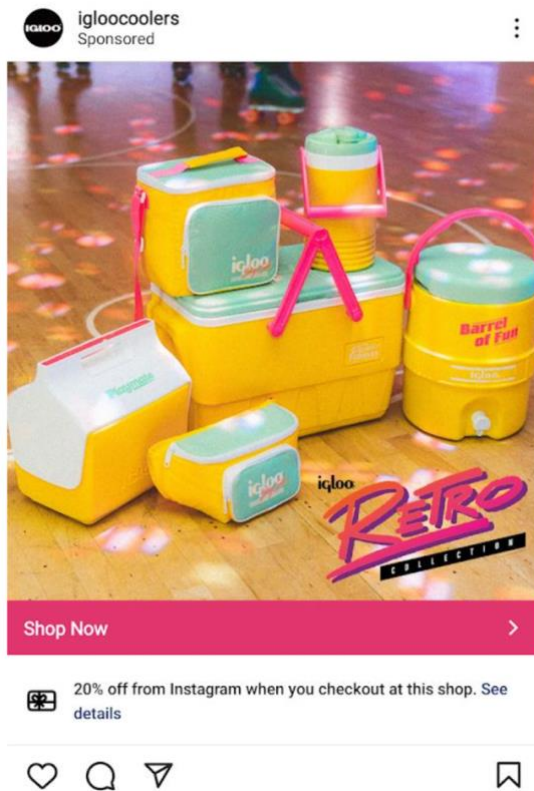
Image 1. Example of the online advertising on Instagram (Sprout Social 2023.)

Based on their behaviors, interests, and demographics, these advertisements are directed towards specific audiences. Through advertising, brands may provide customized offers to current as well as potential clients.

2.3 Influencer Marketing

To put it simply, an influencer is a person who has the power to influence others. One kind of social media marketing is called influencer marketing, in which companies pay an influencer to tell their followers about their products or services. Influencer marketing is a way of advertising the products and services by partnership with individuals who have an enormous fan base and impact on social media channels. These influencers have the ability to change people's opinions, affect their decisions to buy, and increase engagement among their followers. They are frequently recognized as reliable sources of information in their specialized communities. Influencer marketing presents organizations with a special chance to connect with Gen Z meaningfully and authentically, a demographic that values relatability and authenticity. (Newberry & Kwok 2023.)

According to Kesner (2023), influencer marketing is crucial to influencing consumer views and promoting brand engagement in the beauty sector. Brands looking to market their products to Gen Z audiences are very interested in beauty influencers because of their skill, innovative thinking, and authenticity. Influencers in the beauty industry provide insightful opinions and motivation that connect with their audience, covering everything from product evaluations and suggestions to skincare processes and cosmetic tutorials. Beauty companies may use influencer marketing to increase their popularity, boost brand credibility, and increase sales of their products by collaborating with influencers who share their values and target audience.

2.3.1 The role of influencer marketing

Influencer marketing has changed significantly in the beauty industry, changing from traditional promotional techniques. In the past, beauty firms mostly depended on traditional marketing platforms like billboards, print ads, and television commercials to market their goods. However as social media and influencers gained popularity, the beauty industry started to turn its attention to influencer marketing as a more genuine and successful way to reach customers. Influencer marketing in the beauty industry was first developed around promoting products by well-known personalities and celebrities through compensated collaborations with brands. These recommendations frequently lacked authenticity and failed to reach a personal connection with customers. But when social media sites like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok became more popular, a new generation of influencers appeared; these people built devoted fan bases in particular areas, like makeup and beauty, using their knowledge, enthusiasm, and genuineness. With their frequently smaller but extremely engaged followings, these micro-influencers gave marketers a chance to establish a more sincere and relevant connection with customers. (Kalantaryan 2022.)

Peer-to-peer recommendations and user-generated content have emerged as key trends in the evolution of influencer marketing in the cosmetics industry. Customers started to place more trust in the advice and opinions of regular people and other beauty lovers than in traditional advertising messages. To provide real and interesting content that connected with their target audience,

beauty firms began working with a wide variety of influencers, such as makeup artists, skincare specialists, and lifestyle bloggers. Overall, influencer marketing in the beauty sector has changed from traditional celebrity-driven promotions to a more authentic, influenced-by-communities strategy that makes use of social media influencers' ability to build personal connections with customers and encourage brand engagement and loyalty. (Awan 2024.)

Gen Z users look to influencers as reliable information providers and advisors, and they depend on their knowledge to choose cosmetic procedures and goods wisely. Gen Z customers' perceptions and purchase habits are influenced by the social evidence and validation that influencers' engagement and popularity on social media platforms provide for beauty items and trends. Influencers are also essential in identifying and popularizing new beauty trends and products, encouraging their followers to try out novel looks and methods. Influencers provide a forum for Gen Z consumers to interact, exchange stories, and talk about beauty-related subjects by building a sense of community and engagement among their followers. This promotes brand loyalty and continuous engagement with influencer content and brand partnerships. (Mintel 2023.)

Successful influencer marketing campaigns in the beauty industry have shown a major impact on sales, brand awareness, and customer engagement. An outstanding illustration of an effective influencer marketing strategy in the cosmetics sector is Dior's partnership with Jisoo, a member of the hugely popular K-pop group BLACKPINK. The partnership, which made Jisoo a Dior Beauty brand ambassador, had a big effect on sales, engagement, and brand awareness. (Gaillot 2024.)

The image 2 below shows how the beauty brand collaborate with the influencer as an example.

Image 2. Dior's partnership with Jisoo (Gaillot 2024)

Dior's collaboration with Jisoo is an excellent instance of the influencer marketing power in the cosmetics business, showing how partnerships with powerful people can boost brand awareness, engagement, and sales success. Dior successfully reached and engaged with more consumers by utilizing Jisoo's star power and social media presence, thereby maintaining its position as a top beauty brand in the worldwide market. (Gaillot 2024.)

2.3.2 Effective content strategies for influencer marketing

The process of creating and disseminating timely, relevant, and well-structured material with the ultimate goal of drawing in and keeping a specific audience and, ultimately, promoting profitable consumer behavior is called content marketing. This might be anything from buying something to interacting with the company on social media or subscribing to a newsletter. By using content marketing, companies hope to become recognized in their field as reliable and authoritative sources, which will increase brand awareness and loyalty as well as boost sales and expansion. Delivering content that meets the requirements and interests of your audience while being in line with your overall business objectives is crucial, whether you're writing blog articles, videos, social media postings, or email newsletters. (Paruch 2023.)

The best content marketing strategies for companies with an internet presence are listed in the figure 10 below.
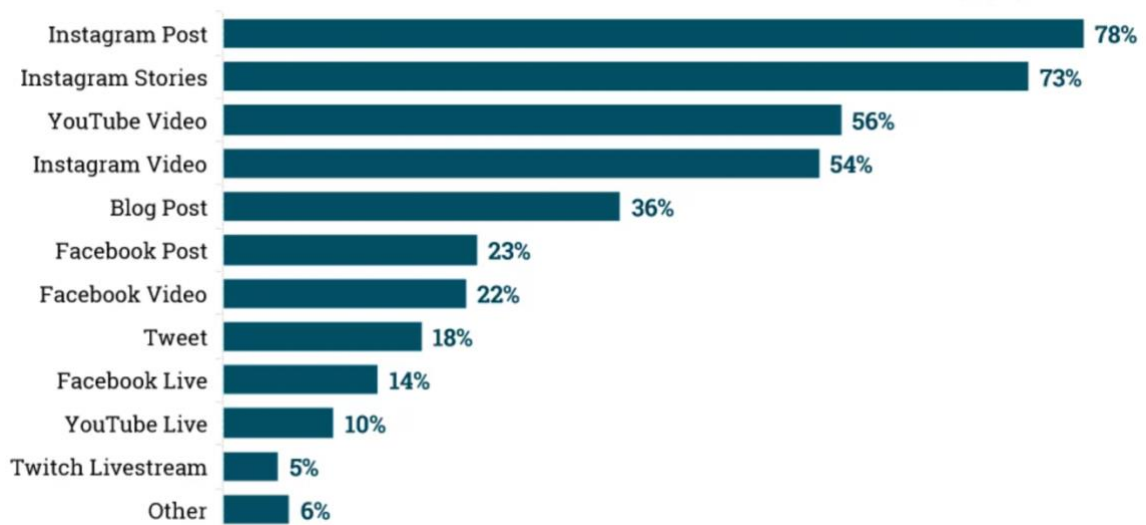

Figure 10. The most effective content marketing formats (Marketing charts 2023.)

According to the graphic above, Instagram posts and stories are highly valued, with 78% and 73% effectiveness respectively, demonstrating the strength of visual content on this platform. YouTube videos and blog posts are still effective forms in the content marketing environment. The image 3 below is the advertising post on Tiktok.
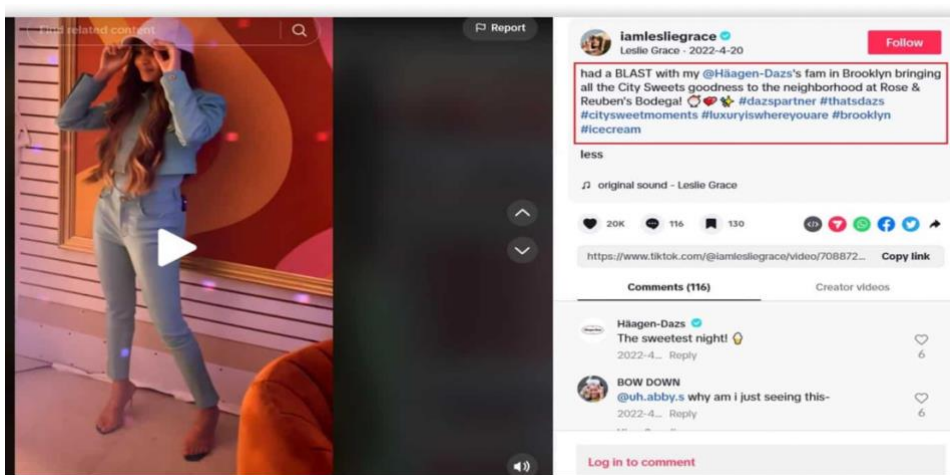

Image 3. Tiktok video promoting Häagen-Dazs (image via Tiktok)

Häagen-Dazs is no stranger to generating remarkable influencer marketing campaigns. The brand collaborates with influencers from various fields. Chef Paola Velez, actress Marika Sila, singer Leslie Grace, and nail artist Zola Ganzorigt are a

few examples. This makes it possible for it to connect with a wide variety of audiences and clients. Leslie uploaded a video to Instagram during the event, and it has amassed 20.8 million views. (Sharma 2023.)

2.3.3   Consumer trust and influencer recommendation

Consumer trust in influencers is based on several fundamental criteria, which can be summarized by the abbreviation "HCTR": humanity, capability, transparency, and reliability. Humanity emphasizes the value of influencers sharing genuine experiences and emotions that relate with their audience on a human level, generating connections and trust. Capability is exhibited by an influencer's competence and understanding in their sector, which increases their trust and authority with followers. Transparency is vital for developing trust since influencers must disclose any ties or sponsorships, allowing their audience to assess the credibility of their recommendations. Finally, reliability requires consistency in content quality, messaging, and behavior, which strengthens trust through dependable delivery and ethical standards. (Freedman 2019.)

According to Baluch (2024), Generation Z, as a digitally native generation, frequently relies on social media influencers for product suggestions and purchasing advice. Influencers, both virtual and real, rely on trust and authenticity to connect and maintain their audience, with virtual influencers having the ability to reach millions via social media. It is expected that the virtual influencer market, which is currently valued at $4.6 billion, would expand by 26% by 2025, with 35% of American consumers basing purchases on recommendations from virtual influencers. Major companies such as Calvin Klein and Prada have cooperated with virtual influencers like Lil Miquela, who earns around 8000 dollars per post. However, issues such as trust and authenticity persist, with only 12% of customers feeling confidence in virtual influencers compared to human equivalents. This emphasizes the significance of trust and authenticity in influencer marketing, as firms must carefully handle virtual influencer partnerships.

3 Case study: Kiehl's cosmetic

3.1 Company Background

This research uses Kiehl's as a case study to investigate how influencer marketing is used in the skincare sector, with a focus on Generation Z. With its headquarters located in New York City, Kiehl's is a well-known skincare brand that has American roots. A small clinic he established in Manhattan's East Village in 1851 led pharmacist John Kiehl to launch the business. The original goal of Kiehl's was to provide premium skincare products made with natural components that were imported from all over the world. With the same commitment to natural ingredients and efficacy, the brand has grown over the years to provide a comprehensive selection of skincare, haircare, and body care products. There are several ways to get Kiehl's goods, including department stores and freestanding stores. (Kiehl´s 2024)

3.2 Influencer Marketing strategies

Influencer marketing is a crucial part of Kiehl's marketing strategy, which it uses to interact with consumers, especially the Gen Z audience. Influencers who share the brand's values of inclusivity, sustainability, and authenticity are partnered with. Through collaborations with social media influencers on sites like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, Kiehl's successfully connects and interacts with its target market. Influencers share their own stories and product recommendations with their audience through the creation of content that highlights Kiehl's offerings. The use of relatability and transparency in brand interactions is valued by Gen Z consumers, who are won over by Kiehl's authentic stories. (Marketing Strategies 2024)

The image 4 below showcases Anna, an influencer or content marketer, promoting Kiehl's beauty products.

Image 4. Anna Newton-blogger and content creator collaboration with Kiehl's cosmetic (Bharath 2020.)

According to Lyons (2019), with an enhanced formula and fresh clinical claims, Kiehl's reintroduced Ultra Facial Cream to the United Kingdom market in March 2019. The objective was to draw in a larger group of ladies looking for a trustworthy, daily moisturizing cream in addition to the company's present clientele. To ensure authenticity and target the intended audience to boost sales, Kiehl's looked to collaborate with influencers on this campaign. They worked with content creator and lifestyle blogger Anna Newton, who is located in the UK and is well-known for her sincere affection for Kiehl's products. In contrast to other partnerships, this one involved a variety of deliverables across many platforms, such as blog entries featuring shoppable links, Instagram posts and stories, and a special discount code exclusive to Anna's followers.

4 Empirical research and data collection

This chapter provides the reader with an overview of the empirical research conducted for the thesis and an analysis of the findings. The study's empirical part is a survey conducted among Gen Z consumers of the thesis issue. This chapter presents and examines the survey results.

4.1 Empirical Research

Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies are the two main categories, as was covered in the introduction chapter. The focus of qualitative research is gaining an understanding of the problems and non-numerical data. Comparatively, quantitative research uses statistical methods to measure variables and focuses on numerical data. (Saunders and others, 2012, 161–164.) As the objective of the thesis research is to get knowledge how customer behavior in the beauty industry is affected by influencer marketing, with a focus on Generation Z consumers.

To get knowledge and information on the research issue, the author used Kiehl's as case study, to provide an analysis of the ways in which influencer marketing impacts consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions in the beauty business. At last, the study of findings and conclusion was carried out between May 10 and May 20, 2024. During this phase, the collected data was systematically analyzed, the findings were combined, and conclusions were based on the empirical study that was done. To understand factors like the extent to which influencers impact purchasing decisions, the reliability of influencer recommendations, and the platforms that Gen Z consumers prefer to read influencer material on, a survey was conducted, and 65 Gen Z consumers responded. We were able to obtain important information from the survey about how influencer marketing affects customer behavior and preferences in the beauty industry, especially regarding Gen Z consumers. The following subchapters contain the data analysis of the gathered information.

4.2 Data Collection

Each step of the data collection process is introduced in this chapter. The phases involved in data gathering are shown in the table 1 below.

Date	Action
January- Middle April 2024	Theory Research for Literature review
April 16-26, 2024	Compilation of the Questionnaire
May 1- 8, 2024	Conduction of the Survey
May 10-20, 2024	Analysis of the Results, Conclusion

Table 1. Empirical research timeframe

The empirical study conducted for this thesis project was divided into several sections and lasted from January to May of 2024. Theoretical research for the literature review took up the first part of the thesis, which lasted from January to mid-April. To better understand the thesis, the author carefully examined and analyzed existing theories, frameworks, and academic articles during this time. Next, from April 16 to April 26, 2024, attention turned to putting the questionnaire together. To obtain meaningful data relevant to the research objectives, this phase involves developing targeted questions. The second phase, which took place from May 1 to May 8, 2024, focused on conducting interviews after the questionnaire compilation.

The survey was prepared at the same time with the final sections of the literary review. The survey was available for more than seven days after it was released in May 2024. The author used Google Forms to complete the questionnaire and shared the link with her friends and classmates Gen Zers. Additionally, the author shared the link via her personal connections in the guiding and scouting society, many of whom are Gen Zers on social media.

A total of 65 people answered the survey; this was enough to allow for analysis and a clear understanding of the findings. The survey results are introduced and analyzed in the following sub-chapter.

4.3   Data analysis

The information gathered from the empirical research is examined in this sub-chapter. The survey's results are shown and examined. Since all survey questions were required of the respondents, the number of responses to each question matched the total number of responses, or 65 Gen Zers.

The first question is to find out how the survey respondents are distributed by gender. To evaluate the gender representation in the sample, data analysis will determine the percentage of male, female, and non-binary respondents. According to the survey results, 46 out of the 65 respondents, or 70.8% of the sample, identified as female. Furthermore, 16 responders or 24.6% of the sample identified as male. Three respondents would prefer to not disclose the gender. It is shown in figure 11 below.
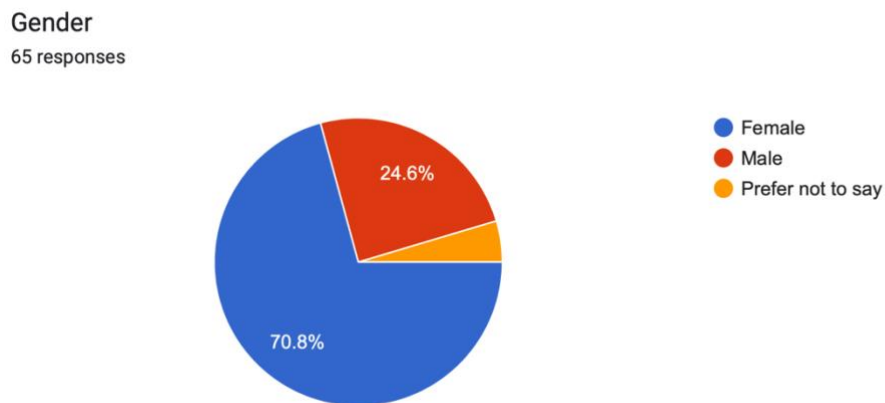

Figure 11. Question 1 Gender

The following question comes to the respondents' frequency of use of social media. The majority of respondents clearly use social media often, as evidenced by the survey results, where 48 people (73.8%) said they use it more than once a day. On the other hand, 3 respondents (4.6%) said they use social media less frequently than once a day, and 14 respondents (21.5%) said they use it once a day. Not a single responder stated they had never used social media. Figure 12 below shows the respondents' frequency of use of social media.

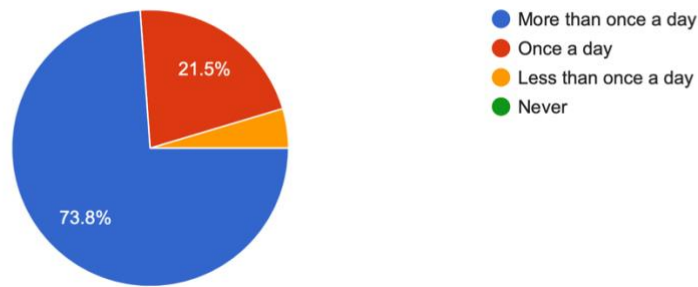How often do you use social media?
65 responses

Figure 12. Question 2 Social media usage frequency

Question 3 asks how frequently customers use the social media sites that participants use; Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok are the most popular options. According to the survey, TikTok is the platform that beauty influencers use the most regularly, as most of the those reported using it every day. Although the frequency of social media platform varies, TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube are other popular sites for following beauty influencers. It's interesting to note that although TikTok has the most daily followers, major daily interaction is also generated by other platforms, such as Instagram and YouTube. This indicates that even if TikTok might be the platform of choice for certain respondents, a large portion of Gen Z users are likely to regularly use numerous platforms as figure 13 below.

How often do you follow beauty influencers on social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok?
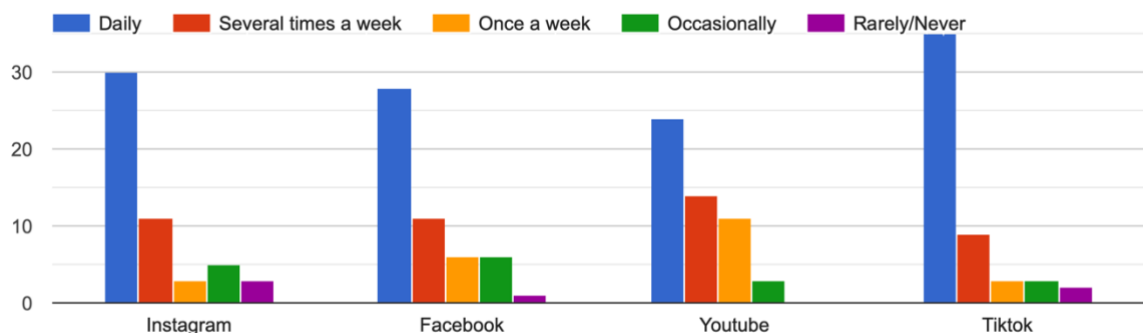

Figure 13. Question 3 Social media channels

The following question is to determine how much respondents rely on influencer recommendations when making purchases of beauty products. The survey's findings show that a large number of the respondents bought beauty products on the advice of influencers, and most of them somewhat relied on these recommendations. Thirty respondents specifically stated that they regularly bought stuff based on suggestions from influencers, and another thirty said they only occasionally bought things. It is important, therefore, that quite a few of participants have never bought anything thanks to influencer recommendations. This means that although influencer marketing might have a significant impact on many consumers, some customers still rely on their decisions to buy beauty items on other sources or considerations. The figure 14 below illustrates the distribution of responses based on the frequency of influencer-recommended beauty product purchases.

Have you ever purchased a beauty product based on the recommendation of an influencer?
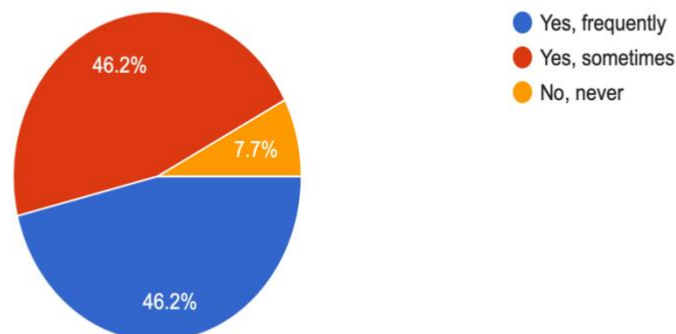65 responses

Figure 14. Question 4: Have you ever bought a beauty product based on the influencer's referral?

This question explores respondents' level of trust in beauty influencers' product recommendations, providing insight into the impact of influencers in the beauty industry, on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being "Completely trust" and 5 being "Completely distrust". The distribution of answers shows the respondents' varying levels of trust in beauty influencers. With 11 respondents (16,9%) saying they completely trust beauty influencers, and more respondents 26, or 40% say they trust

them somewhat. This suggests that the beauty industry heavily depends on influencer recommendations, as suggestions have a big influence on customers' buying decisions. Additionally, 20 respondents (33.3%) express neutral indicating some uncertainty or hesitation regarding influencer referrals. On the other hand, a lower percentage of participants exhibit differing levels of distrust; six individuals (9,2%) indicated a moderate level of distrust, while only two persons (3.1%) expressed completely distrust. These data number shows in the figure 15 below.
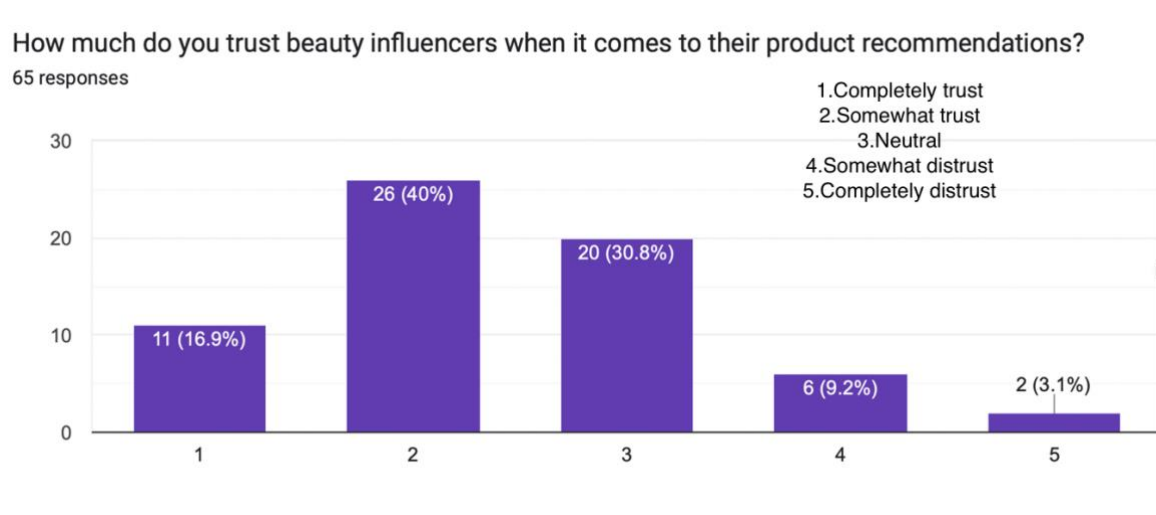

Figure 15. Question 5 The level of trust in beauty influencers' product recommendations

The next question seeks to determine how respondents feel different forms of influencer material affect their decisions to purchase beauty products. Respondents can score the perceived effectiveness of each category of content by using a multiple-choice grid with a scale from 1 to 5. A significant number of respondents regarded product reviews highly, according to the survey's results, making them the most successful kind of influencer material. It also means that customers put a high importance on honest and thorough product reviews from influencers who have used the products firsthand. Day-in-the-life vlogs, which provide an insight into influencers' actual use of beauty products, are closely following in terms of popularity and ability to affect consumer decisions. Positive evaluations are also given to tutorials, suggesting that buyers are greatly informed about the uses and advantages of products by way of detailed instructions and examples. Product reviews, and day-in-the-life vlogs have higher scores than haul/unboxing videos and sponsored postings, showing that although they may still have some influence on

purchases, most respondents do not think they are very effective. The significance of relatability and authenticity in influencer material is highlighted by these findings, which also highlight the possible influence of direct experience and personal recommendations on customer behavior in the beauty industry. The figure below illustrates the effectiveness of various types of influencer content.
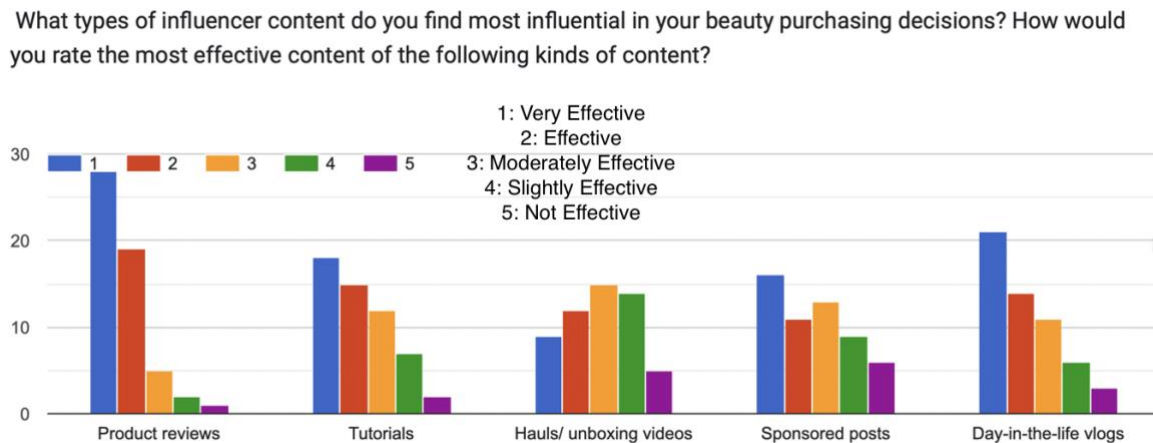

Figure 16. Question 6 Types of influencer content

Consumer trust in influencer recommendations when they disclose brand aid or payment is the focus of this investigation. Understanding this aspect is crucial for influencers and businesses to maintain credibility and transparency in influencer marketing campaigns. Most respondents 53.8% say they believe these recommendations, with "very likely" and "likely" being the most frequently chosen answers. As seen by the fact that a sizable percentage of respondents are inclined to trust sponsored content, clarity regarding sponsorship doesn't always undermine trust. Still, a sizeable portion of participants 36.9% adopt a neutral position, indicating uncertainty or ambivalence regarding influencer endorsements in sponsored content. Conversely, a smaller portion of respondents 9.2% express distrust over sponsored recommendations, choosing instead to select options that are "unlikely" or "very unlikely." The figure 17 below shows that views of influencer recommendations that have been identified as sponsored or compensated material vary widely.

How likely are you to trust an influencer's recommendation if they disclose that the content is sponsored or paid for by a brand?
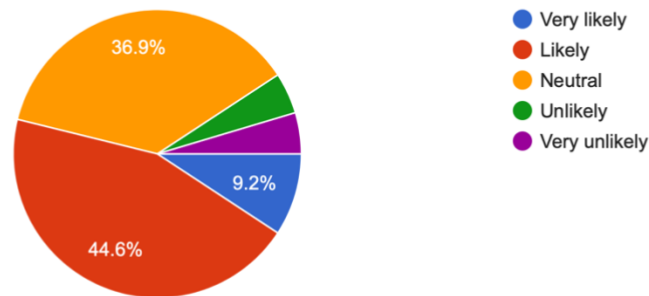65 responses

Figure 17. Question 7 How likely are you to trust an influencer's recommendation if they disclose that the content is sponsored or paid for by a brand?

To determine the extent to which influencer marketing impacts consumers' preferences for beauty products, respondents were asked to consider their own experiences. According to the survey, a significant number of the respondents indicated that influencer marketing had various levels of influence. A sizable the percentage 39.4% of respondents choose "Significantly influenced" to imply a significant level of influence. This means their preferences for beauty products are significantly influenced by influencer marketing. Furthermore, more than half of respondents 55.5% express moderate to light impact, with the categories "Moderately influenced" and "Slightly influenced" accounting for the majority of responses. This suggests that influencer marketing has varied degrees of influence over their preferences. On the other hand, a small percentage of participants 5.1% state that influencer marketing has had no bearing whatsoever on their preferences for beauty products. The figure 18 below illustrates the extent to which influencer marketing has influenced overall beauty product preferences.

To what extent do you believe influencer marketing has influenced your overall beauty product preferences?
65 responses

- Significantly influenced
- Moderately influenced
- Slightly influenced
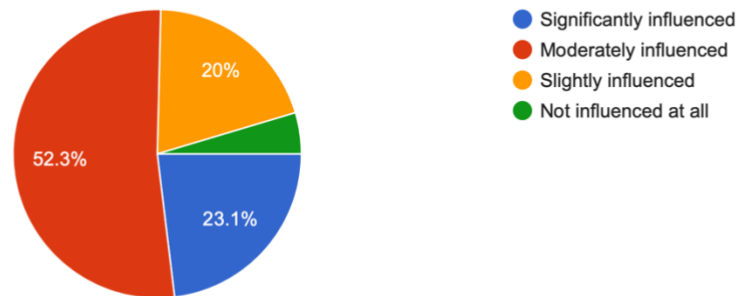- Not influenced at all

20%

52.3%

23.1%

Figure 18. Question 8 To what extent do you believe influencer marketing has influenced your overall beauty product preferences?

Respondents were asked to consider their prior experiences when answering a question regarding feelings of being misled by influencer marketing campaigns when buying beauty goods. According to the survey results, the largest quantity of all respondents stated they felt mislead. More specifically, a majority of respondents 86% selected "Yes" to indicate that they had felt this way. According to this, a numerous customers may have experienced situations in which influencer marketing campaigns caused them to feel misled or misinformed about making purchases of beauty products. In contrast, 14% of respondents, or a smaller portion of the sample, selected "No" when asked if they had ever been deceived by influencer marketing campaigns. Even though this percentage is small, it emphasizes how crucial authenticity and transparency are in influencer marketing to build customer trust and reduce emotions of dishonesty. As shown in Figure 19 below, the responses from Gen Z regarding the question "Have you ever felt misled by influencer marketing campaigns when purchasing beauty products?" are presented.

Have you ever felt misled by influencer marketing campaigns when purchasing beauty products?
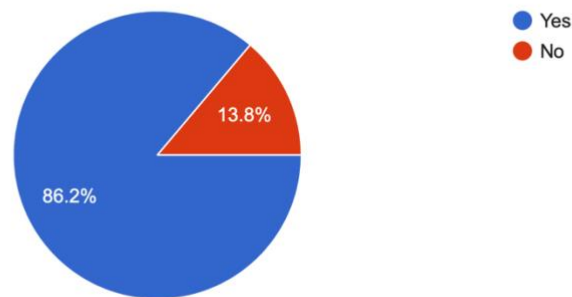65 responses

Figure 19. Question 9 Have you ever felt misled by influencer marketing campaigns when purchasing beauty products?

To look into the significance of influencers regularly utilizing items before promoting them to their followers, respondents were asked to rank the significance on a 5-point rating system, with 1 indicating "very important" and 5 indicating "not important at all." The survey's findings show that the respondents' views on the significance of this practice. With 22 respondents choosing scale 1, the majority of respondents, or 33,8% of the total, assessed this behavior as relatively essential. Furthermore, 19 respondents (29,2% of the total) selected scale 2 and gave the importance a slightly lower rating. Additionally, 12 respondents or 18,5% of the total selected scale 3 to indicate neutral. On the other hand, 6 respondents selected scale 4 and 5, indicating that a smaller percentage of respondents 9,2% of the total rated as somewhat insignificant. By following the figure 20 below:

How important is it for influencers to use products consistently before recommending them to their followers?

65 responses

1. Extremely important
2. Somewhat important
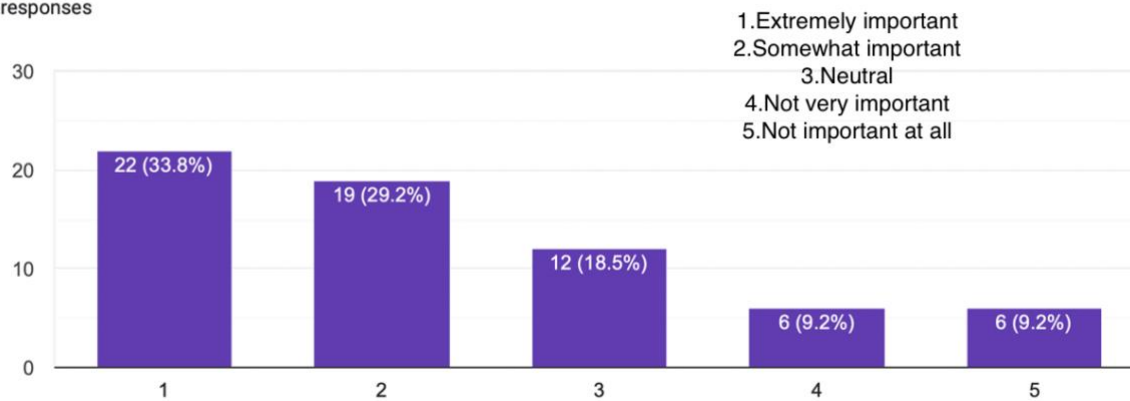3. Neutral
4. Not very important
5. Not important at all

Figure 20. Question 10 How important is it for influencers to use products consistently before recommending them to their followers?

The ten-question survey collected data from 65 respondents, exposing patterns in the use of social media, trust in influencers, consumer behavior, and opinions about sponsored content in the beauty industry.

5   Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the thesis and offers answers to the research questions, addressing the main subject as well as any related topics that might have been posed. The report provides an overview of the key findings gathered from the research questions. Furthermore, the validity and dependability of this thesis will be assessed. Several suggestions are made for further investigation in the conclusion.

5.1   Answers for Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to find out how Gen Z customer behavior and purchase decisions in the beauty industry are impacted by influencer marketing. The study aims to answer the main research question "What impact does influencer marketing have on Gen Z consumer behavior and purchasing decisions within the beauty industry?" by looking at sub-questions. These sub-questions perform as crucial points for explaining the broader impact of influencer marketing strategies aimed at the Gen Z audience within the beauty industry. The table 2 below shows research questions and key findings in this thesis research.

Research questions	Key findings
What is the role of influencer marketing in beauty industry?	Enhances brand visibility Engagement Purchasing decisions.
How has Kiehl's Cosmetics used influencer marketing to promote their products?	Effective use of influencer marketing strategies.
What types of influencer content are most effective in influencing consumer (Gen Z) decisions in the beauty industry?	Effective content: Product reviews, tutorials, day-in-the-life vlogs, ad posts.

How much do Gen Z trust the advice of influencers when choosing which beauty products to buy?	Trust Influencer's recommendations Influenced by authenticity and transparency
What impact does influencer marketing have on Gen Z consumer behavior and purchasing decisions within the beauty industry?	Influencer marketing Gen Z consumer behavior Purchasing decisions Beauty industry

Table 2. Research questions and key findings

Sub-questions

What is the role of influencer marketing in beauty industry?

Influencer marketing is an essential strategy used by brands in the beauty industry to reach a wider audience, increase awareness of the brand, and build relationships with their targeted demographic. Beauty brands who collaborate with influencers can increase consumer trust and increase sales by using the influencers' authority and reputation to support their products. Additionally, influencer marketing gives companies a chance to reach specialized audiences and builds genuine connections with customers, which eventually shapes trends and affects consumer choices in the beauty industry.

How has Kiehl's Cosmetics used influencer marketing to promote their products?

Kiehl's successfully reaches its target demographic by collaborating with influencers who share the brand's values of inclusivity, sustainability, and authenticity. Through partnerships with influencers on social media sites like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, Kiehl's is able to build deep connections and establish a personal connection with its audience. Influencers assist promote Kiehl's brand message and services to their devoted followers by telling real stories and making product suggestions. This strategy appeals greatly to Gen Z customers who desire real brand relationships since it is transparent and relatable. The well-known content creator and blogger Anna Newton is an excellent example of Kiehl's influencer

partnerships. The two collaborated to promote the comeback of Kiehl's Ultra Facial Cream in the UK market in 2019. Influencer marketing works wonders to drive brand engagement and revenue. This partnership included a range of deliverables across many platforms, such as Instagram content, blog posts with links, and special offers for Anna's followers.

What types of influencer content are most effective in influencing consumer (Gen Z) decisions in the beauty industry?

In the beauty industry, video content—specifically product reviews and tutorials—has a significant impact on consumer choice, especially with Gen Z. Influencers can use these formats to share their real experiences and demonstrate how to use products, which appeals to Gen Z customers who value relatability and transparency. Day-in-the-life vlogs and haul/unboxing videos are also powerful because they provide viewers a behind-the-scenes peek at influencers' daily lives and beauty regimens, which fosters stronger relationships with viewers. Although sponsored posts are still powerful, Gen Z consumers value authenticity in influencer material, so they could view them with some mistrust.

How much do Gen Z trust the advice of influencers when choosing which beauty products to buy?

When it comes to choosing what beauty products to buy, Gen Z shows a level of trust in the advice given by influencers. The poll results, which show that a sizable majority of respondents either completely or highly believe influencer recommendations, confirm to this trust. Furthermore, the data shows a lower proportion of participants who indicate different levels of mistrust or indifference towards advice from influencers. Overall, the results illustrate the significance of influencer marketing in this demographic by indicating that influencers have a significant impact on Gen Z consumers' decisions to purchase beauty products.

Main-question

What impact does influencer marketing have on Gen Z consumer behavior and purchasing decisions within the beauty industry?

In the beauty industry, influencer marketing plays an important role in determining the behavior and purchase choices of Gen Z consumers. Beauty

brands successfully use social media channels to interact with Gen Z customers by carefully selecting influencers that are similar to their target market. Influencers function as reliable sources of information, offering genuine product recommendations and showcasing how to use them through interesting content formats including sponsored posts, reviews, and tutorials.

Furthermore, influencer marketing helps the beauty industry embrace trends and find new products. When looking for advice on the newest trends, product reviews, and suggestions, Gen Z customers actively seek out influencer content. Beauty industries may take advantage of Gen Z customers' aspirational lifestyle and beauty needs by coordinating their marketing efforts with influencer-generated content. This will increase engagement and support for the brand.

Influencer marketing has a direct impact on Gen Z customers' purchase decisions in addition to raising brand awareness. Research shows that a significant number of Gen Z buyers have made purchases based on suggestions from influencers, demonstrating the power influencers have in influencing consumer choices. Influencer content's relatability and authenticity appeal greatly to Gen Z customers, who are more likely to convert and show greater trust.

To sum up, influencer marketing is an effective tool that beauty firms can use to reach Gen Z consumers, influence their decisions about what to buy, and foster brand loyalty in a competitive market. Beauty companies may successfully manage the changing preferences and habits of Gen Z consumers by using the reach and influence of influencers, resulting in growth and success in digital age.

5.2   Validity and Reliability

The accuracy of a study in measuring what it sets out to measure is referred to as validity. The consistency of the measurement is referred to as reliability. (Frost 2022.)

 Validity in this thesis ensures that the research questions are adequately addressed by the data gathering and research methodologies. Reliability in this thesis ensures that the research findings may be verified or repeated by other researchers.

The aim of this thesis was to address the research question and its sub-questions by studying the ways in which influencer marketing affects the behavior and

purchasing decisions of Gen Z customers in the cosmetics sector. The answers provided were accurate and in line with the findings of this research.

Providing accurate answers to the primary and secondary questions received enough attention. A range of primary and secondary sources provided the data for this thesis. Respondents in the beauty community who belonged to Generation Z were asked to complete the survey to collect the primary data. It was possible to gather secondary data by using a literature review.

5.3   Suggestions for Further Research

Further research could go into the relationship between influencer marketing and sustainability initiatives within the beauty industry. Studying how influencers may best market eco-friendly goods and sustainable beauty products to their audiences could provide insightful information about the attitudes and preferences of consumers about sustainability. Furthermore, examining how influencers support free of animal testing formulas, ethical purchasing methods, and eco-friendly packaging may help show how influencer marketing might affect good change in the beauty industry.

6   Summary

This study's goal is to research the value of influencer marketing in the beauty industry, especially as it relates to attracting Generation Z customers. The study attempts to shed light on the main research issue, which is, "What impact does influencer marketing have on Gen Z consumer behavior and purchasing decisions within the beauty industry?" by addressing related questions. The nature of influencer marketing, Kiehl's Cosmetics' use of this strategy, the effectiveness of various types of influencer content, the level of trust Generation Z places in influencer recommendations, and the wider impact of influencer marketing on the behavior and purchasing decisions of Generation Z consumers within the beauty industry are some of the sub-questions that have been developed in order to address this main question. This study uses both empirical and quantitative research approaches in an effort to provide a detailed knowledge of the role and impact of influencer marketing in the beauty industry through the use of information from a variety of sources, including primary and secondary data sources.

The first chapter gave a summary of the background research, the thesis's goals, and the research questions. It then went on to the theoretical framework and the limitations. After that, a brief of the research methodology, the data collection procedure, an overview of the thesis structure, were provided.

The theory of Influencer Marketing in the Beauty Industry was introduced in the second chapter. An overview of several marketing ideas, such as influencer marketing, social media marketing, and e-marketing, was given in this chapter. It went into great detail about how these ideas interact in the beauty business, emphasizing the importance of influencers as major forces behind brand promotion and customer engagement.

The third chapter of the thesis explores influencer marketing using Kiehl's Cosmetics as a case study. A detailed examination of Kiehl's use of influencer marketing techniques to advertise its goods and interact with its target market is given in this chapter. This chapter presents insightful information about the real-world application of influencer marketing in the beauty industry.

In the fourth chapter provides the reader with an overview of the empirical research conducted for the thesis and an analysis of the findings. The study's empirical part is a survey conducted among Gen Z consumers of the thesis issue.

This thesis was ended in the last chapter. Both the main-question and its sub-questions were addressed. Furthermore, the study's validity and reliability were examined. Finally, suggestions for further research were made.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Survey

Influencer Marketing Impact on Beauty Consumer Behavior Survey

Welcome to my survey aimed at gathering valuable insights for my thesis on "Understanding the Impact of Influencer Marketing on Gen Z Consumer Behavior in the Beauty Industry." This survey seeks to explore how influencer marketing influences the behavior and purchasing decisions of Gen Z consumers in the beauty industry. Your participation is crucial in helping me gather data to analyze the evolving landscape of consumer preferences and marketing strategies. Rest assured, your responses will remain anonymous to ensure your privacy. The survey is estimated to take approximately 10 mins to complete. Thank you for your valuable contribution to my research!

nhalinhdong010103@gmail.com Switch account

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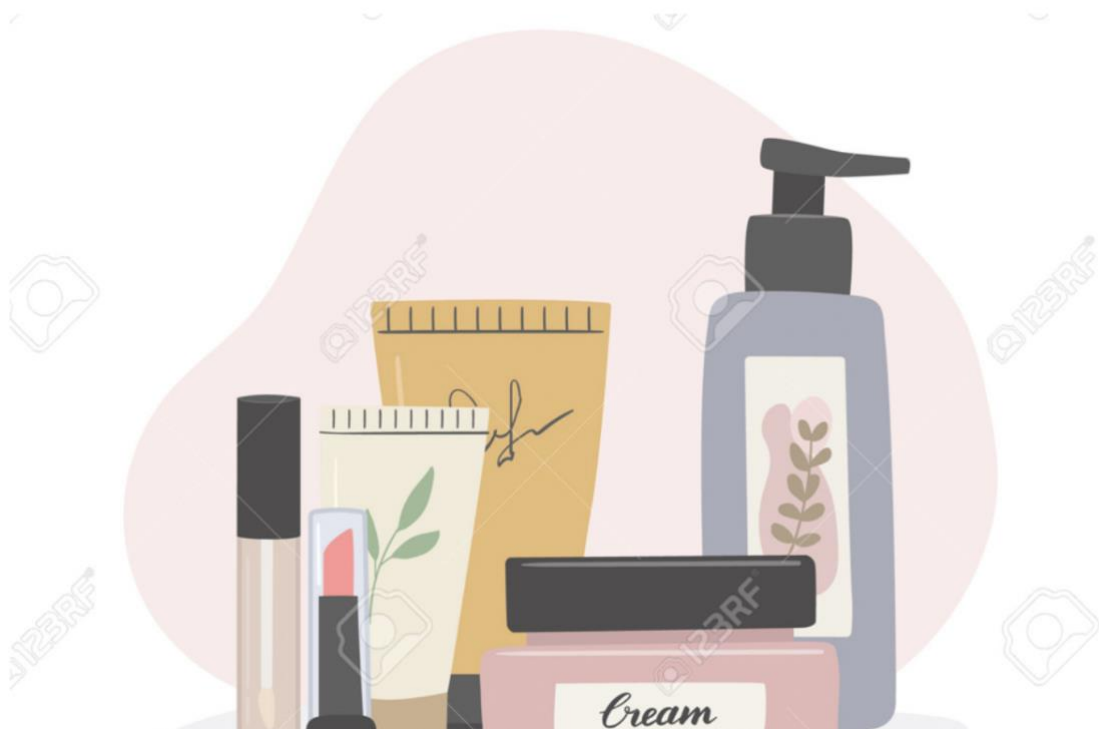
How often do you follow beauty influencers on social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok?

	Daily	Several times a week	Once a week	Occasionally	Rarely/Never
Instagram	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Facebook	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Youtube	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Tiktok	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Have you ever purchased a beauty product based on the recommendation of an influencer?

◯ Yes, frequently

◯ Yes, sometimes

◯ No, never

How much do you trust beauty influencers when it comes to their product recommendations?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Completely trust	○	○	○	○	○	Completely distrust

What types of influencer content do you find most influential in your beauty purchasing decisions? How would you rate the most effective content of the following kinds of content?

	1	2	3	4	5
Product reviews	○	○	○	○	○
Tutorials	○	○	○	○	○
Hauls/ unboxing videos	○	○	○	○	○
Sponsored posts	○	○	○	○	○
Day-in-the-life vlogs	○	○	○	○	○

Gender

○ Female

○ Male

○ Prefer not to say

How often do you use social media?

○ More than once a day

○ Once a day

○ Less than once a day

○ Never